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PRINCIPAL ANTISEMITIC ATTACKS in FRANCE

1 JANUARY - 12 MAY 2002

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From 1 January to 12 May 2002

1 January 2002 Créteil (Paris suburb)	A classroom of the Jewish "Ozar Ha'Torah" school was destroyed by a fire started by a Molotov cocktail.
6 January 2002 Goussainville (Paris suburb)	Rocks and firebombs were thrown at the oratory; no one was injured.
23 January 2002 Sarcelles (Paris suburb)	Rocks were thrown at a bus from the "Sinai" school, shattering windows.
25 January 2002 Aubervilliers (Paris suburb)	The "Chné Or" school bus was attacked.
30 January 2002 Montreuil (Paris suburb)	Students leaving the "ORT Jewish high school" were ambushed and attacked.
5 February 2002 Paris	The statue of Captain Dreyfus was profaned.
7 February 2002 Toulouse	Antisemitic graffiti on a store front.
22 February 2002 Paris	Yellow David stars were thickly painted on the windows of two stores on the Rue de la Croix Nivert in the 15 th Arrondissement.
14 March 2002 Paris	In the 20 th Arrondissement, the "Benjamins of the 11 th " day-care center was vandalized with antisemitic inscriptions on the walls.
16 March 2002 Pierrefitte (Paris suburb):	A gang of young Arabs insulted, and then physically attacked two young (16-year-old) members of the Jewish community and one's father. No serious injuries, no counterattack. An hour later, youths (the same ones?) threw stones at the synagogue, breaking the windows on the street side.
29 March 2002 Lyon	A fire was set in the 9 th Arrondissement "La Duchère" synagogue.
30 March 2002 Union (near Toulouse):	Drive-by shooting at the show window of a kosher butcher shop by hooded individuals.
31 March 2002 Strasbourg	The doors of the "Cronenbourg" neighborhood synagogue were burnt Saturday near midnight; no victims.
1 April 2002 Marseille	A synagogue in the 11 th Arrondissement was burnt to the ground near midnight. No victims, but some Torah scrolls were destroyed in the fire.
1 April 2002 Sarcelles (Paris suburb):	The doors of a Jewish school were broken during the night.
3 April 2002 Marseille	Two men threw two Molotov cocktails at the 14 th Arrondissement synagogue, despite the policemen on guard.

3 April 2002 Saint Denis (Paris suburb):	A Jewish journalist was manhandled at the local University campus.
4 April 2002 Aubervilliers (Paris suburb)	A school bus and a car from the local Jewish school were burnt during the night in a parking lot only 100 yards away from the school, despite the reinforced police surveillance around Jewish sites in the town.
4 April 2002 Montpellier	Several Molotov cocktails were thrown against one of the three local synagogues.
4 April 2002 Kremlin-Bicêtre (Paris suburb)	Several firebombs were thrown against the local synagogue.
4 April 2002 Garges-les-Gonesse (Paris suburb)	Several Molotov cocktails were thrown against the local synagogue during the night.
5 April 2002 Toulouse	Several Molotov cocktails were thrown in the night against the local “Maccabi” Jewish athletics association.
6 April 2002 Marseille	Four Molotov cocktails were thrown against the local synagogue.
6 April 2002 La Courneuve (Paris suburb)	Four Molotov cocktails were thrown against the local synagogue during Shabbat services; no casualties.
7 April 2002 Marseille	The cellar of the “Gan Pardess” nursery school in the 13th Arrondissement was set on fire.
8 April 2002 Strasbourg	A bomb exploded in a Jewish cemetery; no casualties.
9 April 2002 Paris	Three Molotov cocktails were thrown at a local Union of French Jewish Students (UEJF) office inside the Jussieu University, causing a fire in the building.
10 April 2002 Paris	A school bus was stoned in the 20th Arrondissement.
19 April 2002 Paris	A councillor of the 19th Arrondissement, Ms. Jocelyne Malai, was hit in the face on a bus by a woman screaming “dirty Jew!”
19 April 2002 Paris	Antisemitic graffiti were found on the “Wall of Peace” on the Champ de Mars, close to the Eiffel Tower.
21 April 2002 Montpellier	Three Jewish lawyers received antisemitic threats by mail, stating “we will gas you.”
24 April 2002 Yerres (Essonne)	A school bus full of local Jewish students was stoned while taking the children back to their homes in the Saules estate near Orly. Twelve impacts were reported, no injuries.
1 May 2002 Lyon	Release of four suspects of arson against a synagogue.
9 May 2002 Ivry (Paris suburb):	Rocks were thrown against a kosher butcher shop.

12 May 2002 Arsonval (Paris suburb)	Jewish teenagers again attacked on a soccer field.
<p>Sunday 12 May 2002, 15:00: five Jewish teenagers were insulted and physically attacked by 15 young Arab men aged 20-25 on the soccer field of Arsonval (Saint Maur des Fossés), a Paris suburb in Val de Marne (94). Antisemitic remarks were reported, such as: “Dirty Jews, go home, this is not your territory.” The assault was carried out with deliberate violence, causing a dislocated jawbone, bruised eyebrows, cuts and other injuries, and included the theft of personal belongings and damage to a car. The aggressors were put off by the intervention of a dog-handler, who testified on the assault at the police court and stated: “The worse was avoided, but I was very scared for them.” The Jewish community denounced this “inadmissible act of antisemitism” and demanded the protection of France’s Jewish citizens and institutions and severe punishment for perpetrators of such crimes.</p>	

PRINCIPAL ANTISEMITIC ATTACKS in France throughout 2001

31 January 2001 Strasbourg	While jogging, a young Jew in a skullcap was slashed in the arm by a gang of knife-wielding Arabs.
25 February 2001 Sarcelles (Paris suburb)	Burning objects were thrown into the "Tiferet Israel" school. The building was totally destroyed.
8 March 2001 Julien La Croix (Paris)	On the eve of Purim, young men broke into the synagogue throwing firebombs.
1 April 2001 Garges les Goneses (Paris northern suburb)	Burning objects thrown into the local synagogue.
5 August 2001 Saint Augustin (Suburb of Nice)	On Shabbat, petrol was poured through a broken window of the synagogue, which is situated in a neighbourhood predominantly populated by Arabs.
1 September 2001 Paris	Orly Airport, swastika on door of El Al Israeli airlines office.
1 September 2001 Meudon (Paris suburb)	Arabs on motorbikes threw rocks at a Rabbi's son, injuring him lightly.
5 September 2001 Paris	Antisemitic mail sent to "La Victoire" synagogue.
7 September 2001 Paris	Antisemitic mail sent to "La Courneuve" synagogue.
9 September 2001 Paris	Arab youths chase Jews into a restaurant, resulting in a brawl.
10 September 2001 Paris	A gang of Arabs attack worshippers leaving the "Henri Murger" synagogue.
10 September 2001 Drancy (Paris suburb)	Antisemitic threats sent to a local synagogue.
11 September 2001 Paris	A window is smashed at "Beit Eliahou" synagogue.
11 September 2001 Aubervilliers (Paris suburb)	A 13-year-old pupil is beaten up on leaving the "Shneour" school; his eye-glasses are smashed.
12 September 2001 Paris	Antisemitic slogans on the wall of the "Turgot" secondary school.
12 September 2001 Villeneuve la Garenne (Paris suburb)	The synagogue received a bomb threat and the police discovered an explosive gas canister without a detonator in front of the building.
13 September 2001 Villepinte	Antisemitic graffiti on wall of the synagogue.
14 September 2001 Paris	Antisemitic letter sent to the CRIF.
15 September 2001 Clichy (Paris suburb)	8 Arabs throw rocks at a local synagogue.
15 September Massy (Paris suburb)	Synagogue windows smashed by rocks.
15 September 2001 Villepinte (Paris suburb)	A group of 15 Arabs threw stones at synagogue during services.
15 September 2001 Garges les Goneses (Paris suburb)	Beer cans thrown at the local synagogue and Rabbi threatened.
17 September 2001 Paris	Antisemitic graffiti scrawled on "Ohel Baruch" school.
18 September 2001 Sarcelles (Paris suburb)	Arab throws knife at Jewish passer-by.

18 September 2001 Villepinte (Paris suburb)	Synagogue stoned again in drive-by attack by Arabs screaming, "We will burn you!"
21 September 2001 Villepinte (Paris suburb)	15 Arabs harass and threaten the local Rabbi.
22 September 2001 Paris	Glass bottle thrown at worshippers at the "MJLF" (Reform) synagogue.
22 September 2001 Paris	Knife-wielding Arabs threaten worshippers at the "Henri Murger" synagogue again (see 10 September).
22 September 2001 Sarcelles (Paris suburb)	Stones thrown at women on their way to Torah classes at the synagogue.
22 September 2001 Les Lilas (Paris suburb)	Youth attacked at "Les Epinettes" synagogue.
23 September 2001 Sarcelles (Paris suburb)	Antisemitic graffiti reported to have been scrawled overnight on city buildings.
27 September 2001 Issy les Moulineaux (Paris suburb)	Eggs thrown into synagogue.
27 September 2001 Vitry (Paris suburb)	During Yom Kippur, a gun was pointed from the window of a flat upon worshippers in the synagogue opposite.
27 September 2001 Paris	Arabs drove past Yom Kippur worshippers at the "Yavneh" school, screaming threats.
3 October 2001 Paris	The Simon Wiesenthal Centre, France-Israel Association and the ACIP received antisemitic mail.
6 October 2001 Paris	"Death to the Jews," "Vive Bin Laden" scrawled on walls around Place Robert Desnos.
6 October 2001 Stains (northern Paris)	A firebomb was thrown at the synagogue's outside wall.
13 October 2001 Asnières (Paris suburb)	Arabs attack worshippers entering the synagogue.
17 October 2001 Paris	Swastikas and graffiti desecration of "Trois Luc" Jewish cemetery.
17 October 2001 Marseilles	Arson at Jewish school.
24 October 2001 Paris	CRIF (Representative Council of French Jewry) received an envelope, postmarked Nîmes, which contained white powder and a message: "the biological war against the Jewish lobby has begun," signed "friends of Bin Laden." A similar letter was sent on the same date to the BBYO of Paris.
28 October 2001 Marseille	The "Gan Pardes" school in a northern suburb was firebombed, and pro-Bin Laden and antisemitic graffiti were scrawled on the walls.
2 November 2001 Julien La Croix (Paris)	For the second time (see 8 March), the local synagogue was firebombed. Arab youths were seen fleeing the scene, leaving behind unexploded Molotov cocktails.
4 November 2001 Nice	A central city synagogue was firebombed.
9 November 2001 Toulouse	A gang of Moslem youth stood in front of the Jewish school harassing the pupils with antisemitic slurs and threats.
30 November 2001 Rouen	Leaving the synagogue service, the Rabbi, community Vice-President and her husband were attacked by an Arab wielding a truncheon. The husband was hospitalised and was incapacitated for several weeks.
1 December 2001 Nantes	Arabs threaten the Rabbi's son.
1 December 2001 Nantes	Antisemitic graffiti, "Death to the Jews" at the cathedral.

14 December 2001	French Ambassador to Britain, Daniel Bernard, called Israel “that shitty little State” at a dinner given by the editor of the <i>Sunday Telegraph</i> . The ambassador refused to apologise.
16 December 2001 Paris	A Hanukkah screening of “Harry Potter”, reserved by the Jewish National Fund for Jewish children, was cancelled by the cinema management following Palestinian pressure and threats. The JNF organised a demonstration against this discrimination outside the cinema.
18 December 2001 Marseilles	A knife-wielding Arab threatened Jewish children in a schoolyard.
30 December 2001 Créteil (Paris suburb)	Two youths were arrested while throwing stones at the “Fredj Halimi” synagogue and attempting to break in carrying incendiary devices.
30 December 2001 Créteil (Paris suburb)	The “Otzar Ha Torah” school was firebombed, destroying a classroom and leaving further structural damage.

BACKGROUND TO THE ATTACKS AGAINST JEWS IN FRANCE **(period 1990-2000)**

1) Numbers of threats against Jews in France 1990 / 2000

The recent report by the National Consultative Commission of Human Rights (NCCHR) submitted to the French Prime Minister in 2000 makes telling reading. It traces the pattern of antisemitic threats against Jews in France over the past decade.

That pattern shows a sharp rise in the number of antisemitic incidents recorded in the wake of the desecration of the Jewish cemetery at Carpentras in May 1990:

- 372 reported acts of antisemitism in **1990**
- 143 in **1991**
- 94 in **1992**
- 156 in **1993**
- 120 in **1994**
- 86 in **1995**
- 90 in **1996**
- 85 in **1997**
- 74 in **1998**
- 60 in **1999**, but then
- 603 in **2000**, an unprecedented level, **85%** of which concentrated in the last quarter of the year.

2) Acts of violence 1991-2000

The NCCHR report also lists antisemitic acts of violence reported over ten years.

- From 1991 (24) onwards, the pattern of the number and gravity of such acts of violence aimed at members of the Jewish community gradually dwindled
- 20 in 1992
- 14 in 1993
- 11 in 1994
- 2 in 1995
- 1 in 1996
- 3 in 1997
- 1 in 1998
- 9 in 1999, until
- 116 in 2000. The last quarter of 2000, the reports notes, shows a veritable eruption in terms of the number of incidents (111), due to events in the Middle East.

3) Overall Antisemitism in 2000

The political commentators Mayer and Michelat writing the report paint a fairly alarming picture of the situation. Clearly there were not necessarily more anti-Semites in French society in 2000 / 2001 than in 1990, but there are fewer unashamed anti-Semites, note the researchers at the French politics study centre: *"The rise in overt anti-Semitism is to be found in all sectors of the population: men and women, young and old, workers and executives, left and right (p.100)"*.

4) Breakdown of recorded acts of violence in 2000

116 antisemitic acts of violence were recorded:

- 44 attempted arson attacks
- 33 acts of damage by shots, stone-throwing or breaking of windows
- 33 attacks injuring 11 persons
- Synagogues and other places of worship targeted on 43 occasions
- 3 Jewish cemeteries desecrated
- 39 acts of violence targeting Jews leaving places of worship
- Teachers, pupils or coaches transporting pupils attacked on 9 occasions.

5) Sensitive period - October 2000

For 1-25 October, we can point to 50 and 80 acts of aggression in Paris and the Paris area respectively. The first set of indicators shows the breakdown of acts of violence committed over this period:

Type		%
Arson	6	12
Molotov cocktails	18	36
Physical attack	7	14
Objects thrown	12	24
Attempted arson	1	2
<u>Vandalism</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>Total</u>	<u>50</u>	

Most common was the throwing of cocktails and other missiles at schools or synagogues. The second set of figures below shows the breakdown by target.

Attacks on buildings

Synagogues, schools	37
Private property	5
Cemetery	1

It is alarming to note that private property, in the form of apartments or business premises was targeted during this period. As for acts of aggression against the person, the attacks spare no one:

Assaults on individuals

Community leaders	5
Jews at home	11
Jews outside	13
<u>Acts in public</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>Total</u>	<u>40</u>

The geographical distribution of these antisemitic attacks and assaults on Jews is provided in a third set of figures. It shows more precisely that it is notably in East Paris - i.e. the 19th and 20th arrondissements, which have high concentrations of multiethnic populations and the highest numbers of immigrants and Jews - that the most attacks took place. Of the 14 acts perpetrated over this period in just one such arrondissement, 3 involved threats, 3 insults, 3 throwing of objects, 3 Molotov cocktails, 1 physical attack, 1 act of vandalism and 1 arson attack.

6) Attacks on Jews in October 2000 in France / abroad

70 perpetrated in France, 29 in Canada, 22 in the US and 20 in the UK.

7) Profile of the perpetrators

A detailed report on these attacks – an extract of which was published in the weekly *Marianne* (17 – 23 September 2001) – was prepared at the Interior Ministry. It is based on the questioning of 42 suspects interviewed by the police. It specifies their profile: *"Most are individuals largely involved in delinquency and claiming adherence to no particular ideology. They nevertheless seem driven by a fairly general feeling of hostility towards Israel, exacerbated by the exaggerated media coverage of the clashes in the Middle East. This facilitates their identification with a conflict which, from their viewpoint, reflects the patterns of exclusion and failure of which they themselves feel victim in France."*

As the second Intifada is also a war of images and symbols, the force of the images has its effect. It is the images that impress on people's minds and demonise. It is with these images - and the reality they portray, imbued with violence - which the young identify with.

The analysis carried out by sociologist Laacher at a school of advanced social science studies of the profile of the youngsters having carried out such acts deserves to be underlined: it is the force of the images seen on TV that has pushed those most inclined to delinquency. For many observers, the impact of TV pictures is the main explanation for the escalation into violence. For Lallaoui, a community leader, these young people see very violent clashes on TV. They feel a sense of solidarity and, in empathy, attack Jewish symbols for lack of Israeli targets. The impact of the pictures is also the explanation given by Muslim youth leaders like Ali Rahmi, who runs a 'meet and discuss' group at Roubaix. He firmly condemns these *"unpardonable"* acts.

Lallaoui, a film director active in suburban movements for over twenty years, does not split hairs. *"We have been fighting for years against racism (...). We hear unacceptable things said in certain associations. The emotion stirred by certain pictures does not justify any of the violence. We have to say things as they are. Clearly these acts of violence are a tiny minority, but if we activists stay silent, that is a message we send to the most organised groups, who will understand that they can go ahead. I do not want to hear "Death to the Jews" chanted every time there is a demo. And even if things calm down, we are obliged to tackle this issue. We should be careful not to let a trend set in. A certain form of intellectual reasoning consists in not facing matters head on. During the Gulf War, we did not see such excesses. We had succeeded in channelling the anger. We need to do that again now ..."*

In a recent interview (December 2001), the French political commentator Mayer argues that there is within a disadvantaged population of Magreb immigrants a feeling of resentment towards society and towards the Jews, who are perceived, rightly or wrongly, as faring better than the Arabs in France. There is on the part of these youngsters a knee-jerk reaction of solidarity prompted by the TV pictures and an identification with what is happening in the Middle East.

8) Numbers questioned and arrested

On 22 October 2000, the Interior Ministry announced that its authorities had questioned 55 suspects since the start of the attacks, 38 who were subject to ongoing legal proceedings.

In all cases, the suspects were youths from the suburbs some of which had already been in trouble with the authorities. Six were to answer for the arson attack on the synagogue at Trappes, Les Yvelines. Twelve were charged with arson attacks on shops belonging to Jewish businesses and four for violence against the person.

According to the information at our disposal, it seems that the bulk of those questioned were interviewed in October and to a lesser extent in November 2000. At that time, the pressure was high. The authorities were sensitive to the requests emanating from the various communities. But the pressure seems to have died down subsequently, with the numbers questioned tailing off significantly.

One wonders what impact (if any) this questioning of suspects might have had, since the acts and repression are continuing to this day.

The CNCDH report also states concerning the hundreds of acts of intimidation of an antisemitic nature, of sixty-odd persons questioned by the police, only five were subject to legal proceedings, being far Right. As if the others were not really antisemitic and their exactions not just as serious.

9) Silence in political circles

The silence of the political class in the face of these attacks against Jews has been deafening. During the past year, few politicians have reacted, as they seemed embarrassed or disinclined to do so. It is interesting however to contrast this surely troubling silence with the increasing numbers of public pronouncements that have been made by French politicians following the 11 September terrorist attacks on the United States, warning that the Republic could not accept Muslims being subjected to racism or discrimination and that Islam on the one hand and the Islamic extremism on the other should not be tarred with the same brush.

10) Jewish community figures

During the period October 2000 to December 2001, the Jewish community authorities recorded over 350 antisemitic incidents. The list can be consulted and verified.

11) Interior Ministry figures

For 2001, the Interior Ministry, which suddenly rushed to release figures and comment, announced it had recorded, up to 15 November 2001, in all 26 acts of violence - but only those acts causing the victim to be laid off work for a week were included - and 111 acts of intimidation or threats. Its conclusion was that the levels of violence had been exaggerated and it thus played down the figures provided by Jewish institutions. However,

- The Ministry experts admit that their statistics are far from complete
- Unreported incidents are excluded from their figures, whereas the Jewish institutions record all such acts
- Complaints had to have been registered.

The hurried and sudden reaction of the Ministry was designed to appease and silence the criticism emanating from the French Jewish community. The statistics and position taken by Ministry advisers seek to provide reassurance that the acts of violence are decreasing and that the Ministry is in control of the situation.

Conclusion

The continuing attacks on Jews in France – which have been more numerous than in any other Western country – are being carried out against the background of an alarming indifference, with public opinion and the political class preferring to appear ideologically blind. This indifference, coupled with the threat of anti-Semitism and the verifiably documented acts of violence, are prompting a feeling of utter abandonment within France's Jewish community.