

Table of Contents

- ***Anti-Semitic gang-rape of a 12-year-old Jewish girl by teenagers***
- ***Administrative court finds MIVILUDES' statements about Jehovah's Witnesses defamatory***
- ***Should Muslim soccer players refusing to wear an anti-homophobia badge be sanctioned?***
- ***366 anti-Semitic incidents in 3 months in 2024, increase of 300%***
- ***Spectacular simultaneous SWAT raids on Romanian yoga centers (II): Fact-checking of the operation in Buthiers***
- ***Controversial new law against "cultic abuses" to be checked by the Constitutional Council***
- ***Vatican vs France on religious liberty***
- ***Raids spectaculaires de police dans des centres de yoga roumains en France : les faits à Villiers-sur-Marne (I)***
- ***Spectacular simultaneous SWAT raids on Romanian yoga centers in France: Fact checking in Villiers-sur-Marne (I)***
- ***Malgré le rejet du Sénat, la France adopte une nouvelle loi anti-sectes***
- ***The EU Court of Justice protects converts to Christianity***
- ***France passes new anti-cult law against Senate's opposition***
- ***Près de 1 000 actes anti-chrétiens enregistrés en 2023, selon le ministère de l'Intérieur***
- ***Nearly 1,000 anti-Christian acts in 2023, according to the Ministry of the Interior***
- ***FECRIS, atheism, and support for the Russian war against Ukraine***
- ***Sarkozy urges Macron to recognize the genocide of the Assyro-Chaldeans***

Anti-Semitic gang-rape of a 12-year-old Jewish girl by teenagers

The French authorities go on keeping silent about the family background of the rapists, most probably to avoid a social explosion and a landslide victory of the far-right

By Willy Fautré, director of Human Rights Without Frontiers

HRWF (20.06.2024) - Three under-age boys, aged 12 and 13, were indicted on Tuesday 18 June for the anti-Semitic rape of a 12-year-old girl in Courbevoie, a Paris suburb. They were taken into custody after being arrested on Monday.

Two of them, both aged 13, were charged with gang [rape](#), anti-Semitic insults and violence and issuing death threats. The third boy, 12, was also charged with anti-Semitic insults and violence and issuing death threats, but not with rape. He was allowed return home after being charged.

The [anti-Semitic](#) attack has sent shockwaves in [France](#) in the run-up to a [general election](#) that could bring the far-right [National Rally](#) to power for the first time.

What is known about the facts

The case began last Saturday evening after "denunciations" from the young girl, accompanied by her parents to file her complaint. According to a police source, the minor explained that she was approached that same afternoon by three teenagers and dragged into a shed while she was in a square near her home with a friend in the *La Défense* business district. She claimed to know one of them personally, who turned out to be her former boyfriend. The three boys then allegedly hit her and "forced anal and vaginal penetration on her, fellatio, while uttering death threats and anti-Semitic remarks," said the same source.

During her first statements to investigators, the young girl claimed to have been treated as a "dirty Jew", several police sources reported. One of the teenagers involved allegedly "asked her questions about her Jewish belonging", asking her why she did not talk about it and asking her questions about Israel, this source further details. The victim then replied that she wanted to "protect herself" from a possible attack. After the anti-Semitic comments, two of the teenagers present raped the young teenager successively, according to the victim's initial statements.

According to other details she provided, one of the attackers filmed the scene. Another allegedly threatened to kill her if she reported the facts to the police. The young girl was taken care of by the firefighters and transported to the medical-judicial unit of Garches, in Hauts-de-Seine, where a gynecological expertise confirmed the rape, informed *Le Parisien*.

Independent political analysts and commentators are stunned by the young age of the perpetrators. They estimate that the influence of the social media in the coverage of the 7 October attack of Israel by the Hamas and the ongoing war in Gaza cannot explain everything. Most of them wonder what is the nature of the family and socio-political environment in which the criminal teenagers have been raised and why the French authorities keep silent about it, suspecting they want to avoid violent confrontations between several communities.

Some political reactions

The case has sparked outrage among political leaders, who are denouncing a "heinous crime" and a "horrible anti-Semitic rape" ahead of snap parliamentary elections later this month.

President Macron "spoke solemnly and seriously about the scourge of anti-Semitism" in a cabinet meeting earlier this week. He asked the Minister of Education, Nicole Belloubet, to ensure that over the next few days schools hold a dialogue on the topics of racism and hatred of Jews to prevent "hateful speech with serious consequences" from "infiltrating" classrooms. A number of commentators of political life share the opinion that his reaction does not match the seriousness of the facts as it is more and more difficult and dangerous for teachers to speak about the Holocaust, extremism, terrorism and anti-Semitism in class. Everybody

remembers the murder of Samuel Paty on 16 October 2020 by an 18-year-old Chechen Muslim refugee who beheaded him on the street with a cleaver. A social media campaign against Paty was at the origin of his killing.

Prime Minister Gabriel Attal sent a thought to the victim and her loved ones and said "What happened is absolutely despicable, unbearable, unspeakable. I really call on all political leaders to put barriers on the issue of anti-Semitism."

Opposition political leader [Marine Le Pen](#) of the far-right party *National Rally (Rassemblement National/ RN)* attacked "the extreme left" and its "stigmatisation of Jews over the past months through the instrumentalisation of the [Israeli-Palestinian conflict](#)". The leader of the current campaign of the RN [Jordan Bardella](#) called for a "combat" against the "anti-Semitism that has swept down on France since 7 October", referring to the [Hamas](#) attacks on [Israel](#).

[Jean-Luc Mélenchon](#), leader of the far-left [France Unbowed](#) party (**La France Insoumise/ LFI**), who is increasingly accused by his political opponents and political commentators of ambiguous comments on anti-Semitism and controversial statements about the Israeli-Palestinian said he was "horrified by the rape," anti-Semitic racism and criminal male behavior from a young age. However, he is more and more targeted, including inside his party, for his

François Ruffin, rebellious deputy for the Somme and one of the figureheads of the **New Popular Front** created in a hurry by far-left parties (La France Insoumise, Communist Party...), the Ecologists, the Socialist Party of former President François Hollande, was also indignant on the social network about a "horrible anti-Semitic rape of a child".

On the eve of the snap parliamentary elections in two rounds to be held on 30 June and 7 July, current polls respectively put the voting intentions in favor of the coalition of far-right parties and candidates at 35% and 28% for the coalition of far-left and left parties. President Macron's party would only collect 18%.

Administrative court finds MIVILUDES' statements about Jehovah's Witnesses defamatory

The Paris Administrative Court has concluded that it is "factually incorrect" to claim that Jehovah's Witnesses do not report cases of child sexual abuse to secular authorities or that they discourage children from pursuing education.

by Massimo Introvigne

[Bitter Winter](#) (19.06.2024)- [MIVILUDES](#), the controversial French governmental Mission for Monitoring and Combating Cultic Deviances ("dérives sectaires": note that the French "secte" and its derivative words should be translated into English as "cult" and not as "sect"), lost a case against the Jehovah's Witnesses on June 14 at the 6th Section of Paris Administrative Court. The Jehovah's Witnesses attacked two short statements and two longer ones included in the MIVILUDES's report 2018–20 and in the February 24, 2021, report "Lutte contre les dérives sectaires" (Fight Against Cultic Deviances). The court found the two longer statements defamatory and the two shorter ones non-defamatory. In case MIVILUDES would try to imitate [the private anti-cult federation FECRIS](#) and claim it succeeded in a case it actually lost, the golden rule to ascertain who won a case of defamation is in which direction the court ordered money to change hands.

In the Paris case, the French government was asked to pay money to the Jehovah's Witnesses rather than vice versa.

The MIVILUDES published four statements the Jehovah's Witnesses found objectionable. The shorter statements concerned blood transfusions and the so-called ostracism, themes often found in anti-cult literature attacking the Jehovah's Witnesses. According to the first, "The difficulties encountered in the testimonies stem from the principled refusal of blood transfusion..." The second stated that, "Other difficulties have also been reported, relating to the 'brutal' isolation of followers (...) and the genuine ostracism implemented for those who decide to leave the Jehovah's Witness community." Here, the MIVILUDES was saved by quotation marks. The court concluded that the MIVILUDES, "in particular by using the quotation marks," was not expressing its own position and the statements were "limited to reporting the content of the testimonies received," in a "succinct" way and without especially elaborating on them.

On the contrary, the MIVILUDES 2018-20 report did elaborate on the subjects of child sexual abuse and education of children. On the first, the MIVILUDES had written that, "With regard to the recourse to the council of elders in the event of a dispute within the community, the difficulty lies in the recommendation made to members not to take their cases to the [secular] courts, even in the event of serious offence-related problems. This recommendation, and the internal handling of a complaint, contravene the laws of the Republic and can lead to certain vulnerable victims, children in particular, being deprived of adequate treatment of their grievances, and to the repetition of similar incidents." On education, the MIVILUDES wrote that, "Concerning the education of children (...) the teaching received is discredited (...) and they are discouraged from pursuing long studies." The Jehovah's Witnesses attitude was presented as "contravening the laws of the Republic and liable to have negative consequences on the children's education."

The Court noted that, in general, "the MIVILUDES must respect the obligations of balance, impartiality, and neutrality incumbent on any administrative authority, and in particular must refrain from publishing erroneous, misleading or defamatory information in its annual report." The Court held that MIVILUDES had failed that duty and the two statements were in fact erroneous, misleading, and defamatory.

The decision notes that to argue that the Jehovah's Witnesses do not report cases of children sexual abuse to secular authorities, the MIVILUDES relied on "three testimonies to this effect, and argues that they are corroborated, on the one hand, by the work carried out by an enquiry commission of the Australian Senate [in fact, the [Australian Royal Commission Committee](#)] in a report published in 2017, by two decisions handed down by a court and a court of appeal in the State of California in 2012 and 2015, as well as by a press article reporting on a case and, secondly, by the contents of the 2020 edition of the book 'Shepherd the Flock of God' presented as a pastoral guide for the elders. However, the work carried out under the aegis of the Australian Senate [i.e., by the Australian Royal Commission], which is limited to the territory of that state, and the jurisdictional decisions handed down by American courts several years before the period covered by the disputed report, do not constitute elements enabling the cultic risk in France to be evaluated. In addition, the Jehovah's Witnesses produced a series of testimonials from members, certifying on their honour that they have forwarded [abuse] reports to the French authorities, and, secondly, a communiqué from the movement dated January 18, 2008, addressed to the members and sent to the Minister of Justice, who acknowledged receipt on the following February 11, in which, firstly, the reporting obligation specific to French law was reiterated and, secondly, it was emphasized that the internal ecclesiastical disciplinary procedure was no substitute for any proceedings initiated by the authorities."

Additionally, the court noted that, “while the plaintiff association maintains, without being challenged on this point, that the 2019 edition of the guide ‘Shepherd the Flock of God’ produced by the Minister [responsible for the MIVILUDES] is a generic document whose publication is worldwide, it provided an extract from the France-specific supplement to this guide, also dated 2019, which explicitly recalls the obligation to report any abuse of minors and asks elders to contact the organization’s legal department immediately ‘for receiving advise to ensure compliance with French law on reporting child abuse,’ and points out that the reminder of the existence of national legal obligations has been present since the 2010 edition of the pastoral guide.” Finally, “the existence of an internal disciplinary procedure among the Jehovah’s Witnesses, even though its definition in the pastoral guide borrows from the vocabulary of criminal justice, does not allow us, in view of the preceding elements, to consider that the organization would hinder reporting to the French authorities.”

In light of the above, “three testimonies” and one press article are not enough to support the allegations of the MIVILUDES, which “must be considered to have committed an error of fact,” the court said.

As far as the education of children is concerned, the judges observed that “the Minister has not produced any recent testimonies, and confines himself to quoting extracts from the Jehovah’s Witnesses theological magazine ‘The Watchtower’ dated 1975, 2005, and 2015, two testimonies given before the National Assembly commission of inquiry into the influence of cultic movements and the consequences of their practices on the physical and mental health of minors, whose report was published on December 12, 2006, as well as the results of a study carried out in the United States between 2007 and 2014.” None of the above quotes, however, refers to the period 2018–20 in France, or supports the “factually incorrect” allegation by the MIVILUDES that French Jehovah’s Witnesses discourage education.

The MIVILUDES has been sentenced to delete the incorrect statements within 15 days. While this is satisfactory, the problem remains of the presence within the French government of an agency that spreads false information and defamation of religious minorities at the expenses of French taxpayers.

Should Muslim soccer players refusing to wear an anti-homophobia badge be sanctioned?

As it happened in 2022 and 2023, those who invoked “respect for their beliefs” are stigmatized and threatened. But the case is less simple than it may seem.

by Massimo Introvigne

[Bitter Winter](#) (21.05.2024) - It would be much easier to remain silent on a delicate case of conflict between two different human rights, freedom of religion or belief and the right of the LGBT persons not to be discriminated against and targeted by violence. Yet, the case is important and needs to be publicly discussed.

For the third consecutive year, in France the Football League has asked the players in the country's top soccer championship, Ligue 1, to wear a rainbow badge on their shirts, this year in the games of May 18 and 19, to celebrate the International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia. And, again for the third consecutive year, [some Muslim players refused to participate](#) in what they perceived as a promotion of homosexuality forbidden by their religion.

As he did last year, Mostafa Mohamed of FC Nantes refused to play. Mohamed Camara of AS Monaco did play, but covered with tape the rainbow badge. As he scored and celebrated, what he did became visible. Camara also refused to participate in a group photo celebrating the Anti-Homophobia Day. Other players who had boycotted the Day in 2023 probably did not change their mind as they were either injured, suspended, or no longer playing in France.

Even foreign sport newspapers, [including in Italy](#), stigmatized the behavior of the Muslim players as "shameful." Both [the French Minister of Sport Amélie Oudéa-Castéra](#) and the LGBT organizations called for sanctions.

Since pretty much everybody (including the undersigned) agrees that violence and discrimination against LGBT persons should not be tolerated, it would seem that the Minister and those who denounced the Muslim players who boycotted the Day, and called for sanctions, are right about a case that is basically simple.

In fact, it is less simple than it may seem. The players have been very careful in releasing statements where they expressed their respect for those with a different sexual orientation and stated that they do not promote or condone violence or discrimination. At the same time, they called for their religious beliefs to be also respected. It should also be noted that Mohamed and Camara are not French. Mohamed is Egyptian and Camara is Malian.

The two players, as did their Muslim colleagues in previous years, implied that they have no problems in condemning discrimination and violence, while wearing a badge with the rainbow symbol would have been tantamount to expressing their support for behaviors and lifestyles their religion does not approve of.

One question is whether their interpretation of the badge was correct. One of those who promoted the initiative [stated](#) that players were asked to "repudiate homophobia" rather than to "promote homosexuality." However, the two players' subjective perception of the badge was different.

France has a disturbing tendency to ideologize questions that could be solved peacefully with a modicum of common sense. Should those who promote discrimination and violence against the LGBT persons, or any other group, be condemned and sanctioned by the law—and by sport regulations if they do this while competing in professional sport? The answer is yes. Can wearing a badge internationally identified with LGBT activism be mandatorily imposed to all those who play in the French Ligue 1, including foreign players? Is the refusal to wear the badge equivalent to promotion of violence and discrimination, even when the players have stated that this was never their intention? Should the principle that the use of the badge is mandatory prevail on the freedom of religion or belief of players who claim that wearing the badge is against their religion? The answer is much less clear-cut, but my candid opinion, while admitting that the case

is difficult and delicate, is that there would be good reasons to answer all the last three questions in the negative.

366 anti-Semitic incidents in 3 months in 2024, increase of 300%

European Jewish Press (07.05.2024) – French Prime Minister Gabriel Attal announced on Monday that 366 anti-Semitic incidents had been recorded in France in the first quarter of 2024, representing “a 300% increase on the first three months of 2023.

“No one can deny this surge in anti-Semitism. Nobody can deny the fact that French Jews represent an estimated 1% of the French population, but that over 60% of anti-religious acts are anti-Semitic,” he declared in a speech at the annual dinner of Crif, the representative Council of French Jewish institutions in Paris.

“Not one act must go unpunished, not one anti-Semite must have peace of mind”, the Prime Minister, who is himself from a Jewish family, said. He promised to “show exemplary firmness with every act”.

The French Union of Jewish Students has called for sanctions against people who have written antisemitic and homophobic comments about France’s [new prime minister, Gabriel Attal](#), on the social network X.

Attal, 35, is France’s [youngest Prime Minister](#). His father, a lawyer and film producer who died in 2015, was Jewish and his mother is Orthodox Christian. He was baptised as Christian but Attal has said his father told him he would feel Jewish all his life and would always face antisemitism because he had a Jewish name. Since his nomination last January he has been the target of antisemitic comments on social media.

“My family name stirs up a lot of hatred”, he noted in his speech.

“We are facing a wave of anti-Semitism on a rare scale, stronger, more violent, more widespread and more established than in recent years,” he stressed, opening his speech by telling his personal and family history.

“It’s a document that never leaves me. It’s framed in my office. It’s a little yellowed with age, the ink has faded slightly, but its meaning and horror are intact and have survived the years. On this document, I read the name of my grandmother, Jeanine Weil (...). This document is the receipt given to her after she removed her yellow star at the police station,” he said.

Deploing the fact that it is not possible to know precisely the number of cases and convictions for acts committed because of religion, he announced that he had asked the Minister of Justice, Eric Dupond-Moretti, "to find the means to implement a census of these cases and convictions throughout France".

"Islamism is a serious threat to our Republic, and one of the most dangerous and destructive faces of anti-Semitism", he added, promising to "tackle Islamism and separatism head-on".

Attal also lashed out at the extreme-left La France insoumise party and its leader Jean-Luc Mélenchon, whom he accused of "stirring up hatred as well as the most outrageous undertones".

"I've often felt ashamed lately. Ashamed to listen to certain elected members of the France insoumise party talk about a resistance movement" in relation to Hamas, he asserted. But he also criticized the far-right Rassemblement National, saying: "Let's not be fooled by the absolute cynicism of those who claim to support French Jews out of an anti-Muslim reflex."

A few days after pro-Palestinian mobilizations in the student world, mainly at Sciences Po University in Paris, the Prime Minister assured that "there will never be a right to blockade" because "we will never accept that a manipulated minority claims to make the law".

Citing the names of the three French-Israeli nationals still held hostage in Gaza – Ohad Yahalomi, Ofer Kalderon and Orión Hernández-Radoux, Attal shared the testimony of the family of one of the October 7th victims. "When I hear this, I find it very hard to listen to the moral lessons of those who are snug and warm and who explain to Israeli society that it is overreacting," he hammered, directly targeting La France Insoumise. "

Since the bloody attacks by Hamas in Israel on October 7, anti-Semitism has exploded around the world and particularly in France, where it now seems to have become uninhibited and commonplace, with anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism becoming confused, according to a survey recently unveiled by daily Le Parisien.

44% of Jews no longer wear a kippah in the street, survey shows

A quarter of the country's Jews say they have been the victim of a verbal or physical anti-Semitic act, with 12% claiming to have been subjected to such acts several times. Fear has prompted 33% of Jewish respondents to reduce or stop their Uber trips, while 44% of those who used to wear it no longer wear their kippah in the street.

The main cause of anti-Semitism, according to 57% of French people in general, and 73% of those of the Jewish faith, is "hatred of Israel".

The survey also points to a "rejuvenation of anti-Semitism", with 35% of the under-25s believing it justified to attack Jews because of their supposed support for Israel, compared with 21% of the general population.

A quarter of the country's Jews say they have been the victim of a verbal or physical anti-Semitic act, with 12% claiming to have been subjected to such acts several times.

Spectacular simultaneous SWAT raids on Romanian yoga centers (II): Fact-checking of the operation in Buthiers

Disproportionate use of police forces in search of... inexistent victims of MISA

[En français](#)

Willy Fautré, director of *Human Rights Without Frontiers*

[The European Times](#)/ HRWF (06.05.2024) - On 28 November 2023, just after 6 a.m., a SWAT team of around 175 policemen wearing black masks, helmets, and bullet proof vests, simultaneously descended on eight separate houses and apartments in and around Paris but also in Nice, brandishing semi-automatic rifles.

These searched places were being used for spiritual retreats by practitioners of yoga connected with MISA yoga school in Romania. On that fateful morning, most of them were still in bed and were awakened by very loud noises and shouting.

The first objective of the police forces was to identify, arrest, detain and indict suspects of "trafficking in human beings", "forcible confinement" and "abuse of vulnerability", in organized gang. The second goal was to obtain declarations of their victims as elements of evidence.

In Buthiers (Paris Region), 20 people – 15 women and 5 men - were having their retreat at the time of the raid. They included engineers, designers, teachers, psychologists, a student in psychology, a philologist, a sociologist, a medical doctor, an actor, and so on. They had graduated from high schools, faculties of sociology, psychology, electronics, mathematics, IT science in Bucharest, Cluj Napoca, Chisinau (Moldova), Buenos Aires (Argentina)...

Human Rights Without Frontiers interviewed one of the residents, Ms S.C. (*), an Orthodox woman who had been practicing Hatha, Tibetan and other forms of yoga in Romania for 32 years. She had come from Iasi to Buthiers in the car of her boyfriend who had other things to do in Paris. They both knew that retreat center where they had already spent several weeks a few years ago. It was spacious, comfortable and well-equipped.

Interview

Q.: What happened in the spiritual retreat center of Buthiers in the early morning of 28 November 2023?

A.: I was suddenly woken up by a lot of noise and shouting. It was still dark outside and all I could see looking out of the window were beams of light from flashlights. I could hear people shouting, running and violently banging objects around the house.

At first I didn't even realize what was going on. I thought that a gang of villains had broken into the house and they were going to kill us. Shortly after this first frightening thought, I began to understand some words in the shouting and I realized that it was actually a raid by the French police.

At that moment I began to wonder about the reasons of such a brutal and unexpected action. There were only peaceful people in the house who had come to the spiritual retreat center to regenerate through relaxation practices and walks in the wonderful natural environment.

Ignoring the proposals of the guests to quietly open the doors with the keys of the house, the police smashed the entrance doors of the building as well as various premises with battering rams, and hereby caused a lot of damage.

Several men and women were violently pinned to the ground and handcuffed with their hands in their back although they had not shown any sign of resistance.

After about three hours we were told to quickly pack all our bags because we would be taken to another place for questioning and we would not be allowed to return to the retreat center.

The police thoroughly checked the things we were putting in our luggage: clothes, underwear, notebooks, etc. Our personal electronic items were confiscated on the grounds that they were 'evidence' although we were never told about any charge. We had to leave behind many of our personal belongings, even medicines. We were not allowed to take food or water with us but I managed to keep one bottle.

Q.: Where were you taken to and what happened there?

A.: We were sent by bus to the headquarters of the National Police Academy in Cannes-Ecluse and gathered in a conference room. Eight hours had already passed since the raid began. For the first time, one of the policewomen told us the reasons for the raid and the fact that we were considered possible victims of trafficking, deprivation of freedom and sexual abuse.

We asked all very surprised to hear such an explanation. We replied that the only people who had deprived us of our freedom in France were the police who had confiscated our identity papers and personal phones.

Most of us were still in a state of emotional shock, scared and traumatized by all the events that had unfolded. We asked several times for the assistance of a lawyer but our request was turned down on the grounds that our status did not allow us to do so. They tried in various ways to get us to "talk" including under pressure of keeping us locked up for up to 96 hours (legal duration of a "garde à vue", deprivation of freedom).

Without a lawyer, I refused to answer any questions because I was still under the emotional shock of that event.

We were also proposed to talk to a representative of an association helping victims of trafficking and/or sexual abuse but I refused because I was not a victim.

They kept telling us that we were victims and that they had rescued us but this was a kafkaesque situation, a real dialogue of the death. We had not been trafficked into France, we were not victims of MISA and we did not need to be rescued.

Q.: How were you finally released and in which conditions?

A.: After about two or three hours they gave me back my ID but I could not get back my personal belongings. I did not get a copy of the list of personal items they had confiscated and I did not sign any report or declaration. I was escorted to the gate of the huge property of the National Police Academy and only shown the local bus stop.

Basically I was left on the street in a foreign country and in a town I didn't even know where it was located. I had no possibility to go back to the MISA center in Buthiers as it had been sealed off. My phone had been confiscated for the investigation, I was unable

to call anyone for help and I had no money with me, just a bank card with a small amount on it.

After a few hours spent on the street in the cold, one of my friends remembered a friend's phone number and asked someone on the street to call that person for help. After a few more hours we reached that person who hosted us and helped us to go back to Romania.

Q.: What about travelling again to France in the future?

A.: Never again. Five months after that experience, I am still emotionally fragile. When I see a picture of the Eiffel Tower in a movie or when I hear a sudden loud noise, I start shivering. It is like a post-traumatic syndrome. It will take time to get rid of it.

Some comments

One can wonder on which basis it was decided to launch several simultaneous SWAT raids of such a magnitude – 175 heavily armed policemen – on yoga centers all over France. Dangerous people, weapons and drugs did not seem to be what they could have expected to face if the places had been under serious preliminary police scrutiny.

One can wonder why destructive battering rams were used while residents were offering keys to safely open the entrance and other doors without any damage.

One can wonder why and on which basis several yoga practitioners were handcuffed although they offered no resistance when they were arrested.

One can wonder why they were denied the assistance of French lawyers.

One can wonder why over five months after the raid the Romanian yoga practitioners have not heard from the French police anymore or a prosecutor and have not got back their telephones and other confiscated belongings.

One can wonder how the French authorities will move forward with a case where six people were put in pre-trial detention (several were still detained after five months) and no complaint had been lodged by any of the dozens of interrogated yoga practitioners.

() Out of respect for the privacy of the interviewee, we only put her initials but we have her full name and contact data.*

Controversial new law against “cultic abuses” to be checked by the Constitutional Council

[The European Times](#) (29.04.2024) - On 15 April, over sixty members of the National Assembly and over sixty senators referred the newly adopted law “to reinforce the fight against cultic abuses” to the Constitutional Council for an *a priori* control of constitutionality pursuant to Article 61-2 of the Constitution.

The law creates new articles in the penal code in order to criminalize the act of “psychological subjugation” and the promotion of therapeutic or preventative unconventional practices.

In support of the argumentation developed by the Members of the French Parliament in their referral, an External Contribution was filed by Patricia Duval, Attorney at the Paris Bar, at the Council on Friday 26 April.

The said Contribution addresses the following controversial issues:

- I. On Article 3 which creates the specific offence of putting a person under a state of psychological or physical subjugation (former Article 2)
- II. On Article 12 which creates the offence of incitement to refuse treatment or to adhere to non-conventional practices (former Article 4)

[French version](#)

[English version](#)

Vatican vs France on religious liberty

The Holy See reminded France that when civil courts second-guess the decision of expelling a nun from her religious order (Dominican Sisters of the Holy Spirit), freedom of religion is "gravely violated."

by Massimo Introvigne

[Bitter Winter](#) (19.04.2024) - If some believe that the attack against religious liberty in France only targets "cults" and Islam, they are wrong. On April 13, a religious organization in an official statement lamented that it is a victim in France of "a serious violation of the fundamental rights to religious freedom and freedom of association." The name of this religious organization is the Roman Catholic Church, and the statement came from the [Holy See Press Office](#).

In short, a religious order called the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Spirit asked the Vatican to investigate the behavior of one of its nuns, Sabine de la Valette, who had taken the religious name of Sister Marie Ferréol. As usual in these cases, the Vatican ordered an apostolic visitation of the convent, under the authority of Cardinal Marc Ouellet. Following the visitation's report, the Vatican decided in 2020 that Sister Marie should be dismissed from the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Spirit.

Unhappy with the decision, Sister Marie sued and asked the Tribunal of Lorient to declare that she had been wrongfully dismissed from her order. On April 3, the Tribunal found in favor of the ex-nun and ordered the religious order, Cardinal Ouellet, and the two Vatican envoys who conducted the apostolic visitation to pay more than Euro 200,000 to her as damages. According to [media reports](#), the Tribunal found the visitation biased as Cardinal Ouellet was "friendly" with another nun known as an opponent of Sister Marie.

On April 13, the Vatican stated that it had learned of the case only from the media, Cardinal Ouellet "never received any summons from the Lorient Tribunal," and neither the Cardinal nor the Holy See have been served with a copy of the verdict.

Assuming that what the media reported about the decision is true, the Vatican stated that what it still calls an “alleged” ruling (since it has not seen an official copy of it) “could raise not only significant issues concerning immunity, but if it ruled on internal discipline and membership in a religious institute, it might have constituted a serious violation of the fundamental rights to religious freedom and freedom of association of Catholic faithful.”

The Vatican is, of course, right. The decision has been appealed and may well go to Strasbourg to be examined by the European Court of Human Rights. The latter, as did courts in the United States and Canada, has constantly ruled that the decisions of expelling members from a religious body are based on theological and not only on legal reasons, on which secular courts cannot interfere without seriously violating religious liberty—just as the Vatican said. But it seems that violating religious liberty is now a daily occurrence in France.

Raids spectaculaires de police dans des centres de yoga roumains en France : les faits à Villiers-sur-Marne (I)

Témoignage

Par Willy Fautré, directeur de *Human Rights Without Frontiers*

HRWF (16.04.2024) - Le 28 novembre 2023, peu après 6 heures du matin, une équipe SWAT d'environ 175 policiers portant des masques noirs, des casques et des gilets pare-balles, ont simultanément fait des descentes dans les locaux de huit maisons et appartements situés à Paris et dans la région parisienne mais aussi à Nice, fusils semi-automatiques en mains. Ils ont défoncé les portes d'entrée et couru dans les escaliers tout en criant des ordres.

Les lieux perquisitionnés étaient utilisés pour des retraites spirituelles par des pratiquants de yoga liés à l'école de yoga MISA en Roumanie. En ce matin fatidique, la plupart d'entre eux étaient encore au lit. Quelques-uns étaient dans la cuisine en train de faire bouillir de l'eau pour une tisane. Les policiers masqués ont menotté un certain nombre d'entre eux, les ont obligés à rester dehors sans manteau ni chaussures dans le froid, puis les ont emmenés en bus au commissariat.

Bilan de cette vaste opération : quelques dizaines de personnes ont été arrêtées, dont 15 – 11 hommes et 4 femmes, tous de nationalité roumaine – ont été inculpées pour « traite d'êtres humains », « séquestration » et « abus de faiblesse » en bande organisée.

Gregorian Bivolaru (72 ans), l'un des fondateurs et chef spirituel de MISA, faisait partie des personnes arrêtées, mais dans son cas, il était recherché par la Finlande sous l'accusation d'abus sexuels commis sur des femmes finlandaises en France il y a plusieurs années.

Dans le cadre d'un travail de recherche intitulé "[The Controversies Around Natha Yoga Center in Helsinki: Background, Causes, and Context](#)", le professeur Liselotte Frisk, décédée depuis lors, (Université de Dalécarlie, Falun, Suède) a mené une enquête approfondie sur les allégations retenues contre Bivolaru en Finlande (pp 20, 21, 27).

Une femme (D.S.) a aussi été arrêtée à Villiers-sur-Marne et placée en détention provisoire. Au moment de publier cet article, cinq mois plus tard, elle était toujours en prison.

Tant qu'une décision de justice n'a pas confirmé la validité desdites accusations, Gregorian Bivolaru jouit de la présomption d'innocence, comme n'importe quel citoyen ordinaire ou célèbre personnalité publique.

Aucune femme interrogée dans le cadre de l'opération du 23 novembre 2023 n'a porté plainte contre lui.

Depuis cette perquisition, Bivolaru et cinq autres personnes sont toujours maintenues en détention provisoire en France.

Human Rights Without Frontiers a pris contact Me C. C. (*), qui pratique le yoga avec MISA depuis 20 ans. Elle était dans le centre de yoga de Villiers-sur-Marne au moment des faits. De 2002 à 2006, elle a étudié à la Faculté d'histoire et de philosophie de l'Université Babeş-Bolyai de Cluj-Napoca (Roumanie). En 2005-2006, elle était journaliste au quotidien national Roumanie Liberă. Voici son témoignage sur le raid :

Q. : Vous pratiquez le yoga dans le groupe MISA en Roumanie depuis 20 ans mais alors que vous étiez en retraite spirituelle à Villiers-sur-Marne, il y a eu une opération musclée contre le groupe. Pouvez-vous me dire ce qui s'est passé ?

Je suis allée plusieurs fois en France pour de telles retraites depuis 2010 et j'aime beaucoup ça. C'est pourquoi l'année dernière j'avais prévu de rester encore deux mois à Villiers-sur-Marne, de fin septembre à fin novembre. J'ai réservé un vol pour Paris et des amis sont venus me chercher à l'aéroport pour m'emmener au centre de yoga.

Tôt le matin, des forces de police ont fait une entrée spectaculaire dans notre centre où des dizaines de pratiquants de yoga étaient hébergés pour leur retraite. Les policiers ont tout mis sens dessus dessous, créant un désordre épouvantable et cassant même beaucoup de choses.

Dans mon cas, ils ont emporté mes sacs, mes papiers, mon téléphone, ma tablette, mon ordinateur, une enveloppe de 1000 EUR et mon portefeuille d'environ 200 EUR. Quatre mois plus tard, on ne m'a toujours pas restitué mon argent ni mon matériel. Il faisait froid dans ma chambre car la porte était ouverte et j'étais juste en pyjama. Les policiers m'ont emmenée, ainsi que beaucoup d'autres, au poste de police.

Q. : Que s'est-il passé au commissariat ?

Tout d'abord, je dois dire que je portais juste mon pyjama, un manteau et une paire de chaussures de ville. Lorsque nous sommes arrivés au poste de police, personne ne m'a donné d'explications sur la procédure, l'accès à la nourriture et à l'eau ou d'autres choses de base. J'avais souvent besoin de boire, mais je n'avais qu'un très petit verre d'eau en plastique. Il y a aussi eu un malentendu concernant la nourriture. Ils m'ont mis dans une cellule froide avec un sol en béton. Sur le lit, il y avait un fin matelas et je n'avais qu'un seul drap tout fin. Il n'y avait pas de toilettes dans la cellule, je ne pouvais pas me laver le matin ni me brosser les dents.

Chaque fois que je devais aller aux toilettes, je devais faire signe à la caméra de surveillance intérieure mais bien souvent je devais attendre une ou deux heures avant qu'on s'occupe de moi. Les toilettes ne fermaient pas correctement et un policier se tenait à l'extérieur.

On m'a dit que j'étais soupçonnée de complicité de viol et de trafic d'êtres humains. Je voulais être assistée par un avocat mais on m'a répondu que c'était impossible car trop de personnes avaient été arrêtées et on m'a dit qu'au bout de deux heures on pouvait commencer l'interrogatoire si aucun avocat n'était disponible.

Le deuxième jour de ma détention, ils ont pris mes empreintes digitales et ma photo. Lors de l'interrogatoire, il était clair qu'ils voulaient que je dise que je jouais un rôle important au sein du MISA, mais ce n'était pas le cas. Ils m'ont relâchée à 21h30 mais j'ai d'abord dû signer un formulaire de mise en liberté qui ne mentionnait aucune liste des objets saisis ni le montant de l'argent confisqué. Malheureusement, je n'en ai pas reçu de copie.

Sans argent ni téléphone, on m'a laissée devant le poste de police dans cette froide nuit de fin novembre pendant près de 9 heures, jusqu'à 6 heures du matin, lorsque j'ai finalement pu joindre quelqu'un qui pouvait m'aider.

Q. : Franck Dannerolle, le chef de l'Office central pour la répression des violences contre les personnes (OCRVP) chargé de l'enquête, a été cité par certains journaux français affirmant que les pratiquants de yoga étaient « hébergés dans des conditions difficiles, avec une promiscuité importante, pas d'intimité. » (). Pouvez-vous m'en dire un peu plus sur vos conditions de vie à Villiers-sur-Marne ?**

Ce n'est pas vrai du tout. Dans mon cas, j'avais choisi de vivre dans un petit pavillon confortable (environ 7 mètres carrés) à l'extérieur du bâtiment principal car je souhaitais pratiquer ma retraite de yoga seule et méditer en silence, parfois sans dormir ni manger pendant 24 heures.

D'autres avaient choisi de partager une chambre dans le bâtiment principal : 2, 3 ou 4 ensemble, hommes et femmes séparément. Le bâtiment appartient à Sorin Turc, violoniste ayant joué avec l'orchestre de Monaco et soutenant MISA. Il est spacieux et confortable : il y a suffisamment de salles de bains et de douches pour les pratiquants de yoga. Il y a une grande salle pour la pratique collective du yoga. Il y a une grande cuisine avec des cuisinières, deux grands congélateurs, un distributeur de boissons, des presse-agrumes, des grille-pains et d'autres équipements tels que des machines à laver et des séchoirs

Pour nos repas, nous allions faire nos courses dans un supermarché local et nous préparions notre nourriture nous-mêmes.

Si les conditions de vie étaient aussi mauvaises que le disait Dannerolle, il n'y aurait pas autant de pratiquants et je ne serais jamais revenue autant de fois à Villiers-sur-Marne.

Au moment du raid, il y avait un air de fête de Noël et de nombreuses décorations avaient déjà été disposées un peu partout. Tout se passait bien et était en ordre, mais après l'opération de police, les locaux ont été laissés dans un état désastreux.

Q. Comment se fait-il que vous ayez rejoint le groupe de yoga MISA ?

J'ai aujourd'hui 39 ans mais lorsque j'étais adolescente, j'étais et je suis toujours en quête de vérité sur le sens de la vie et sur l'existence de Dieu. A l'âge de 16 ans, j'ai même fait une retraite de deux mois dans un monastère orthodoxe et je voulais devenir religieuse. Ensuite, j'ai rencontré les baptistes. Par la suite, des hindous et des adeptes de Hare Krishna avant d'entrer en contact avec le groupe de yoga MISA. J'étais attiré par

la méditation et la spiritualité. Je crois en Dieu, je suis orthodoxe et je me sens bien avec MISA.

À propos de certaines médiatisations : la présomption de culpabilité

Bon nombre de médias français se sont déchaînés dans la couverture de toute cette affaire et ont tenu leur propre tribunal, comme le montrent certains de leurs titres délirants, même si aucun tribunal français n'a, à ce stade, établi la vérité, ou non, sur les faits allégués :

L'homme qui a contribué à faire tomber la secte de yoga tantrique

Viols, lavage de cerveau, yoga tantrique : l'effrayant parcours de Gregorian Bivolaru, le gourou roumain mis en examen et écroué en France

Secte Misa : « Le gourou Bivolaru aurait pu faire de moi ce qu'il voulait »

Viols, fuite et yoga ésotérique : qui est le gourou Gregorian Bivolaru arrêté ce mardi ?

Agressions sexuelles sur fond de yoga tantrique : un gourou interpellé en France. « Il préférerait les vierges »: des victimes du gourou Bivolaru témoignent

Deux points communs à tous ces articles. Primo, les auteurs n'ont pas rencontré et interrogé les pratiquants de yoga qui ont été arrêtés et détenus pour une garde à vue de 48 heures. Secundo, ils se sont fait l'écho de ragots et d'assertions non prouvées, ce qui n'est pas du journalisme et ce qui défigure la noble image du journalisme.

Il y a des normes éthiques dans le journalisme et il existe en France une autorité supérieure chargée de veiller à leur respect.

En 2016, la couverture médiatique des enjeux de MISA en Roumanie a fait l'objet d'un document de recherche intitulé «[The Effect of the Persistent Media Campaign on the Public Perception – MISA & Gregorian Bivolaru Case Study](#)» et publié par le *World Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*. Les spécialistes français des sciences religieuses seraient bien inspirés de réaliser une étude comparative sur le même sujet dans leur pays.

Human Rights Without Frontiers défend la liberté de la presse et la liberté d'expression des journalistes mais lutte également contre les discours de haine, les fausses nouvelles et la stigmatisation. *Human Rights Without Frontiers* défend le respect du principe de présomption d'innocence et reconnaît les décisions de justice définitives comme la vérité judiciaire.

(*) *Par respect de la vie privée de la personne interrogée, nous ne mettons que ses initiales mais nous avons son nom complet et ses coordonnées.*

(**) *Le centre de retraite spirituelle de Villiers-sur-Marne n'a jamais été accusé ni même soupçonné d'insalubrité. [Voir une série de photos ici.](#)*

Spectacular simultaneous SWAT raids on Romanian yoga centers in France: Fact checking in Villiers-sur-Marne (I)

Testimony

By Willy Fautré, director of Human Rights without Frontiers

[The European Times](#) (16.04.2024) - On 28 November 2023, just after 6 a.m., a SWAT team of around 175 policemen wearing black masks, helmets, and bullet proof vests, simultaneously descended on eight separate houses and apartments in and around Paris but also in Nice, brandishing semi-automatic rifles. They smashed in the entrance doors and ran up and down the stairs, shouting orders.

These searched places were used by practitioners of yoga connected with MISA yoga school in Romania for spiritual retreats. On that fateful morning, most of them were still in bed. A few were in the kitchen boiling water for herbal tea. The masked police handcuffed a number of them, made them stand outside without coats or shoes in the freezing courtyard, then took them by bus to the police station.

Results of this vast operation: a few dozens of people were arrested, 15 of whom – 11 men and 4 women, all of Romanian nationality – were indicted for “trafficking in human beings”, “forcible confinement” and “abuse of vulnerability”, in organized gang.

Gregorian Bivolaru (72), one of the founders and the spiritual leader of MISA, was among the arrested people but in his case, he was wanted by Finland under the accusation of sexual abuse of Finnish women in France several years ago. In the framework of a research paper titled “[The Controversies Around Natha Yoga Center in Helsinki: Background, Causes, and Context](#)”, late Prof. Liselotte Frisk (Dalarna University, Falun, Sweden) solidly investigated the allegations against Bivolaru in Finland (pp 20, 21, 27).

A woman (D.S.) was also arrested in Villiers-sur-Marne and put in pretrial detention. At the time of publishing this article, five months later, she was still in jail.

As long as a court decision has not confirmed the said accusations, Gregorian Bivolaru must continue to enjoy the presumption of innocence, as any ordinary citizen or famous public personality.

No woman interrogated in the framework of the SWAT operation on 23 November 2023 has filed a complaint against him.

Since the raid, Bivolaru and five other people have remained in pretrial detention in France.

Human Rights Without Frontiers contacted Ms C. C. (*), a MISA practitioner for 20 years. She was at the yoga center of Villiers-sur-Marne at the time of the raid. In 2002-2006, she studied at the Faculty of History and Philosophy from Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca (Romania). In 2005-2006, she was a journalist at the national daily Romania Liberă. Here is her testimony about the SWAT operation:

Q.: You have been practicing yoga in the MISA group in Romania for 20 years but while you were in a spiritual retreat in Villiers-sur-Marne, there was a Swat operation against the group. Can you tell me what happened?

A.: I have been a lot of times in France for such retreats since 2010 and I like it very much. That is why last year I had planned to stay for two months again in Villiers-sur-Marne, from late September until the end of November. I booked a flight to Paris and friends picked me up at the airport to take me to the yoga center.

In early morning, a SWAT team made a spectacular entry in our center where dozens of yoga practitioners were hosted for their retreat. The policemen put everything upside down, creating an awful mess and even breaking a lot of things.

In my case, they took away my bags, my papers, my phone, my tablet, my computer, an envelope with 1000 EUR and my wallet with about 200 EUR. Four months later, I still have not been given my money back and my material. It was freezing in my room because the door was open and I was just in pyjama. The officers took me and many others to the police station.

Q.: What happened at the police station?

A.: First of all, I must say I was just wearing my pyjama, a coat and a pair of street shoes. When we arrived at the police station, nobody explained me anything about the procedure, access to food and water or other basic things. I often needed to drink but only got a very small plastic glass of water. There was also misunderstanding about the food. They put me in a cold cell with a concrete floor. On the bed, there was a thin mattress and I just got one thin sheet. There was no toilet in the cell, I could not wash in the morning or brush my teeth.

Every time I needed to go to the bathroom, I had to wave at the internal surveillance camera but quite often I had to wait for one or two hours before I was being taken care of. The toilet could not be closed properly and a policeman was standing outside.

I was told I was suspect of complicity of rape and trafficking. I wanted to be assisted by a lawyer but they answered it was impossible because too many people had been arrested and after two hours they could start the interrogation if no lawyer was available.

On the second day of my detention, they took my fingerprint and my photo. During the interrogation, it was clear that they wanted me to say I was playing an important role in MISA but I was not. They released me at 9.30pm but first, I had to sign a release form which did not mention any list of seized items or the amounts of confiscated money. Unfortunately, I did not get a copy of it.

Without money and any telephone, I was left outside the police station in that cold late November night for almost 9 hours, until 6am, when I finally could reach someone who could help me.

Q.: Franck Dannerolle, the head of the Central Office for the repression of violence against people (OCRVP) in charge of the investigation, was quoted by some French newspapers as saying that the yoga practitioners were "housed in difficult conditions, with significant promiscuity, no privacy." () Can you tell me more about your living conditions in Villiers-sur-Marne?**

A.: It is not true at all. In my case, I had chosen to live in a small comfortable pavilion (about 7 square meters) outside the main building because I wanted to practice my yoga retreat alone and meditate in silence, sometimes without sleeping or eating for 24 hours.

Others had chosen to share a bedroom in the main house: 2, 3 or 4 together, men and women separately. The building belongs to Sorin Turc, a violinist who played with the Monaco orchestra and is a supporter of MISA. It is spacious and comfortable: there are enough bathrooms and showers for the yoga practitioners. There is a big room for the collective practice of yoga. There is a large kitchen with cookers, two big freezers, a drink dispenser of fruit juicers, toasters and other facilities such as washing and drying machines.

For our own meals, we were going to a local supermarket for shopping and we were preparing our food ourselves.

If the living conditions were so bad as Dannerolle was saying, there would not be so many practitioners and I would have never come back so many times to Villiers-sur-Marne.

At the time of the raid, Christmas was in the air and lots of decoration had already been installed. Everything looked nice but after the SWAT operation, the premises were left in a disastrous mess.

Q. How comes that you joined the MISA yoga group?

A.: I am now 39 but when I was a teenager, I was, and I am still, in search of truth about the meaning of life and the existence of God. At the age of 16, I even made a retreat of two months in an Orthodox monastery and I wanted to become a nun. Then, I met the Baptists. Afterwards, Hindus and Hare Krishna followers before coming in contact with MISA yoga group. I was attracted by meditation and spirituality. I believe in God, I am Orthodox and I feel well with MISA.

About some media coverage: the presumption of guilt

A number of French media outlets went wild in the coverage of this whole affair and held their own tribunal, as some of their delusional headlines can show, although no French court has established the truth about the alleged facts at this stage:

L'homme qui a contribué à faire tomber la secte de yoga tantrique/ The man who helped bring down the tantric yoga sect

Viols, lavage de cerveau, yoga tantrique: l'effrayant parcours de Gregorian Bivolaru, le gourou roumain mis en examen et écroué en France/ Rape, brainwashing, tantric yoga: the frightening journey of Gregorian Bivolaru, the Romanian guru indicted and imprisoned in France

Secte Misa : « Le gourou Bivolaru aurait pu faire de moi ce qu'il voulait »/ Misa Cult: "Guru Bivolaru could have done with me what he wanted"

Viols, fuite et yoga ésotérique: qui est le gourou Gregorian Bivolaru arrêté ce mardi?/ Rape, flight and esoteric yoga: who is the guru Gregorian Bivolaru arrested this Tuesday?

Agressions sexuelles sur fond de yoga tantrique : un gourou interpellé en France. "Il préférait les vierges": des victimes du gourou Bivolaru témoignent/ Sexual assaults against the backdrop of tantric yoga: a guru arrested in France. "He preferred virgins": victims of guru Bivolaru testify

Two common points of all these articles. First, the authors failed to meet and interview the yoga practitioners who were arrested and detained for questioning ("garde à vue") for up to 48 hours. Second, they echoed gossip and unproven assertions, which is not journalism and disfigures the noble image of journalism.

There are ethical standards in journalism and there is a higher authority in France responsible for ensuring they are respected.

In 2016, the media coverage of MISA issues in Romania was the object of a research paper titled "The Effect of the Persistent Media Campaign on the Public Perception – MISA & Gregorian Bivolaru Case Study" and published by the World Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities. French scholars in religious studies would be well inspired to make a comparative study about the same topic in their country.

Human Rights Without Frontiers defends freedom of the press and freedom of expression of journalists but also combats hate speech, fake news and stigmatization. *Human Rights Without Frontiers* defends the respect of the principle of presumption of innocence and recognizes final court decisions as the judicial truth.

(*) *Out of respect for the privacy of the interviewee, we only put her initials but we have her full name and contact data.*

(**) *The spiritual retreat center in Villiers-sur-Marne was never accused or even suspected of unsanitary conditions. See the [gallery of pictures](#) of the place.*

Malgré le rejet du Sénat, la France adopte une nouvelle loi anti-sectes

La loi crée un nouveau délit de « sujétion psychologique », restreint la possibilité de critiquer les traitements médicaux « officiels » et met gravement en danger la liberté de religion ou de croyance. (Les titres dans le texte sont ceux de HRWF)

[Bitter Winter](#) (13.04.2024) - Le 9 avril, la France a finalement adopté sa nouvelle loi anti-sectes modifiée, après des mois de débats au cours desquels le gouvernement n'a pas réussi à convaincre le Sénat, qui, le 2 avril, a une nouvelle fois [rejeté le texte](#) dans son intégralité.

Cependant, selon le système français particulier, si le Sénat et la Chambre expriment des positions inconciliables sur un projet de loi, c'est le vote de la Chambre qui prévaut. Alors que le gouvernement a exercé une forte pression sur les parlementaires en faveur du texte, l'opposition a été importante même à l'Assemblée, où la loi a été approuvée [par 146 « oui » et 104 « non »](#).

Pourtant, la loi a été adoptée, bien que l'opposition massive qu'elle a rencontrée puisse peut-être influencer sa mise en œuvre. [Le nom de la loi](#) fait référence au « renforcement de la lutte contre les dérives sectaires ». La raison invoquée pour justifier une répression renforcée des « sectes » est que le nombre de « saisines » reçues par la MIVILUDES, l'agence gouvernementale de lutte contre les sectes, est en augmentation. Comme « [Bitter Winter](#) » [l'a documenté](#), les « saisines » ne sont pas des rapports d'incidents réels, elles comprennent de simples questions envoyées à la MIVILUDES, et peuvent facilement être fausses ou manipulées.

Traitements médicaux: une recommandations du Conseil d'Etat écartée

Il est également allégué que des « sectes » se sont développées pendant le COVID et que certaines d'entre elles ont diffusé des idées anti-vaccination. Un nouveau délit est donc créé, celui de « provocation à abandonner ou à s'abstenir de suivre un traitement médical thérapeutique ou prophylactique », généralement recommandé par la communauté médicale, qui est puni d'une peine d'emprisonnement d'un an et d'une amende. Évidemment, les implications vont bien au-delà du COVID et des vaccins. A noter que le Conseil d'Etat, lors de l'examen du projet de loi, a recommandé de supprimer cet article au motif qu'il est dangereux pour la liberté d'expression et « la liberté des débats scientifiques ». Cependant, le gouvernement a rejeté la recommandation du Conseil d'Etat et a maintenu l'article. La bataille au Sénat n'a abouti qu'à l'introduction d'un nouveau paragraphe protégeant les « lanceurs d'alerte » qui révèlent les pratiques douteuses des entreprises médicales.

Les mesures anti-sectes sont également renforcées en permettant aux associations anti-sectes d'être parties civiles dans les procès contre les « sectes » et en encourageant les juges et les procureurs à demander l'avis de la MIVILUDES sur les groupes qu'ils jugent ou poursuivent. Des amendements parlementaires ont également donné un statut nouveau et renforcé à la MIVILUDES.

Création d'un nouveau délit, sujétion psychologique, et peines

Le cœur du nouveau projet de loi est la création d'un nouveau délit de « sujétion psychologique ». « Est puni de trois ans d'emprisonnement et de 375 000 euros d'amende le fait de placer ou de maintenir une personne dans un état de sujétion psychologique ou physique résultant de l'exercice de pressions graves ou réitérées ou de techniques propres à altérer son jugement et ayant pour effet de causer une altération grave de sa santé physique ou mentale ou de conduire cette personne à un acte ou à une abstention qui lui sont gravement préjudiciables ».

Toutefois, la peine encourue sera de « cinq ans d'emprisonnement et de 750 000 euros d'amende » lorsque les actes de « sujétion psychologique » ont été commis sur « une personne dont la particulière vulnérabilité, due à son âge, à une maladie, à une infirmité, à une déficience physique ou psychique ou à un état de grossesse, est apparente ou connue de leur auteur ».

La même aggravation de peine est appliquée « Lorsque l'infraction est commise par le dirigeant de fait ou de droit d'un groupement qui poursuit des activités ayant pour but ou pour effet de créer, de maintenir ou d'exploiter la sujétion psychologique ou physique des personnes qui participent à ces activités » (lire un dirigeant de « secte ») ou « lorsque l'infraction est commise par l'utilisation d'un service de communication au public en ligne ou par le biais d'un support numérique ou électronique » (visant la propagande « sectaire » par l'intermédiaire de sites internet et de médias sociaux).

Les peines sont portées à sept ans d'emprisonnement et un million d'euros d'amende lorsque deux des circonstances ci-dessus sont réunies ou « L'infraction est commise en bande organisée par les membres d'un groupement qui poursuit des activités ayant pour but ou pour effet de créer, de maintenir ou d'exploiter la sujétion psychologique ou physique des personnes qui participent à ces activités ». Pour les activistes anti-sectes, les « sectes » qui pratiquent la « sujétion psychologique » sont par définition des « bandes organisées ».

Abus de faiblesse et sujétion psychologique

Il est important de comprendre la différence avec les dispositions antérieures sur l'« abus de faiblesse » et la raison pour laquelle le gouvernement estime que le nouveau délit permettra de criminaliser des « dérives sectaires » qui n'étaient pas couvertes par la loi antérieure. L'abus de faiblesse était puni lorsqu'une victime se trouvait dans une « situation de faiblesse » et avait été (prétendument) amenée par des techniques psychologiques à faire quelque chose de préjudiciable pour elle-même, par exemple faire un don important ou se livrer sexuellement au chef de la « secte ». Dans le [commentaire introductif](#) de la nouvelle loi, le gouvernement affirmait que « la loi About-Picard [c'est-à-dire la loi anti-sectes de 2001] ne permet pas dans sa rédaction actuelle d'appréhender directement l'état de sujétion psychologique ou physique qui résulterait de manœuvres et techniques destinées à soumettre la victime à l'emprise de son auteur ».

Le nouveau crime diffère de l'abus de faiblesse à deux égards. Tout d'abord, il n'est pas nécessaire que la victime soit en situation de « faiblesse ». Tout le monde peut être victime d'une « sujétion psychologique ». Deuxièmement, l'utilisation de « ou » plutôt que de « et » dans la phrase reliant la détérioration de la santé mentale de la victime et

le fait que les techniques de « sujétion psychologique » peuvent conduire la personne manipulée à faire quelque chose de nuisible pour elle-même est très importante. Comme l'explique le même rapport introductif, ce « ou » permet de sanctionner la « sujétion psychologique » même lorsqu'il n'est pas possible de prouver que la victime a été incitée à un comportement autodestructeur. Il suffira d'affirmer qu'une « détérioration de la santé mentale » s'est produite.

Le rapport précise que, presque par définition, les situations de sujétion psychologique génèrent normalement une « détérioration de la santé mentale de la victime ». Par conséquent, l'utilisation des mystérieuses « techniques créant une situation de sujétion psychologique » sera punie même si la victime n'a pas adopté un comportement spécifique pouvant être qualifié d'autodestructeur. En effet, les activistes anti-sectes soutiennent que l'adhésion ou le maintien dans une « secte » est en soi un danger pour la santé mentale. Et n'oubliez pas que les associations anti-sectes participeront aux procès pour défendre cette théorie, et qu'en cas de doute, il est conseillé aux procureurs et aux juges de demander l'avis de la MIVILUDES.

Les croyances religieuses en état de siège

La plupart des spécialistes des nouveaux mouvements religieux s'accordent à dire que [le « lavage de cerveau » n'existe pas](#) et que son incrimination est fondamentalement une fraude. Lorsque le processus normal de persuasion religieuse a pour objet des croyances et des pratiques que les pouvoirs en place considèrent comme « normales », on affirme qu'il n'y a pas de « lavage de cerveau ». Lorsque les croyances et les pratiques sont non conventionnelles ou impopulaires, cela est présenté comme une preuve que seules les victimes d'un « lavage de cerveau » peuvent les adopter parce qu'elles ont été placées dans un état de « sujétion psychologique ».

Le gouvernement français proclame solennellement qu'à travers la nouvelle loi, il ne criminalise pas les croyances, mais seulement les techniques par lesquelles certaines croyances sont promues. Mais en réalité, la preuve qu'une croyance a été inculquée par des techniques « illégales » est que les militants anti-sectes, la MIVILUDES, la majorité de la société ou les médias la considèrent comme une « dérive sectaire ». L'obsession de la France pour les « sectes », comme le notent [d'éminents spécialistes internationaux](#), continue de faire de ce pays l'un des pires endroits du monde démocratique pour la liberté de religion ou de croyance.

The EU Court of Justice protects converts to Christianity

Why is an Iranian Christian in France subject to a deportation order?

[ECLJ](#) (11.04.2024) - *According to the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU), an asylum application based on a religious conversion that occurred after the foreigner left their country of origin cannot be automatically rejected as abusive. This is a strong decision for the protection of Christians of Muslim origin, who still face difficulties in proving the sincerity of their conversion and the reality of the threats they face.*

Today in France, an Iranian Christian, threatened with death for apostasy in his country, is subject to a deportation order (OQTF) This [disturbing case](#), closely followed by the European Centre for Law and Justice, echoes that of another Iranian whose initial request for international protection was definitively rejected by Austrian authorities in 2018. He later submitted a new request ("subsequent application") for international protection in Austria, claiming that he had converted to Christianity in the meantime and feared

persecution in his country of origin as a result. The Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum (BFA) recognizes his conversion and the risks he faces in Iran, granting him subsidiary protection and temporary residence.

However, it denies him refugee status on the grounds that: *"A foreign national who files a subsequent application [...] shall normally not be granted asylum status if the risk of persecution is based on circumstances which the foreign national has created by his or her own decision since leaving his or her country of origin, unless the activities in question are permitted in Austria and it is established that those activities constitute the expression and continuation of convictions held in the country of origin"* (second sentence of Paragraph 3(2) of the Federal Law on the Granting of Asylum of 2005).

The Iranian brings the case before the Austrian justice, which does not detect any abusive intent or manipulation of the procedure on his part. Furthermore, the Federal Administrative Court considers that a conversion process started only on site is not sufficient to justify the refusal to recognize refugee status. After an appeal on a point of law (*revision*) against that decision by the BFA, the Supreme Administrative Court observes that Austrian law has transposed Article 5(3) of Directive 2011/95 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and that the interpretation of this article determines the outcome of the dispute. This article states that, *"[w]ithout prejudice to the Geneva Convention, Member States may determine that an applicant who files a subsequent application shall not normally be granted refugee status if the risk of persecution is based on circumstances which the applicant has created by his or her own decision since leaving the country of origin."*

Asylum for the Christian converted by inner conviction

The Supreme Administrative Court stays the proceedings and refers the question for a preliminary ruling to the CJEU of whether the on-site conversion must be the expression and continuation of a belief already expressed in the country of origin. For the CJEU, which rendered its [decision](#) on 29 February 2024, the fact that an applicant cannot "normally" be recognized as a refugee due to "circumstances which the foreign national has created by his or her own decision since leaving his or her country of origin" is only meant to limit the abuse of the procedure. The adverb "normally" does not exclude that, even in such circumstances, an applicant may, under certain conditions, be granted this status.

Thus, an asylum application based on a religious conversion that occurred after the foreigner left their country of origin cannot be automatically rejected as abusive. The proof of conversion by inner conviction, as in this case, excludes the existence of an abusive intent. The authenticity of the conversion is not conditioned by the expression and continuation of a belief already expressed by the applicant in the country of origin.

With this decision, the Court of Justice of the European Union advocates for the examination of asylum applications from individuals who convert once they have arrived in Europe. Therefore, France must even more consider the case of Ata Fathimaharlooeei, who converted to Christianity while still in Iran.

France passes new anti-cult law against Senate's opposition

The law creates a new crime of "psychological subjection," restricts the possibility of criticizing mainline medical treatments, and seriously endangers freedom of religion or belief. (Titles in the text are those of HRWF)

by Massimo Introvigne

[Bitter Winter \(11.04.2024\)](#) - On April 9, France finally passed its new amended anti-cult law, after months of debates in which the government failed to persuade the Senate, which on April 2 once again [rejected the text](#) in its entirety. However, under the peculiar French system, in the end if the Senate and the House express irreconcilable positions on a draft law, the vote of the House prevails. While the government lobbied heavily the parliamentarians in favor of the text, the opposition was significant even in the House, where the law was approved [with 146 "yes" and 104 "no."](#)

Yet, the law has now been passed, although the significant opposition it encountered may perhaps influence its enforcement. The [law's name](#) refers to "reinforcing the fight against cultic deviances." The reason offered for a new crackdown on "cults" is that the number of "saisines" received by the governmental anti-cult agency MIVILUDES is growing. As "Bitter Winter" [has documented](#), the "saisines" are not reports of actual incidents, include simple questions sent to the MIVILUDES, and may easily be false or manipulated.

Medical treatment: a recommendation of the Council of State disregarded

It is also alleged that "cults" grew during COVID and some spread anti-vaccination ideas. Hence, a new crime is created of "provocation to abandon or not to undertake a needed medical or prophylactic treatment," generally recommended by the medical community, which is punished with a jail penalty of one year plus a fine. Obviously, the implications go well beyond COVID and vaccines. Note that the State Council, when examining the draft law, [recommended to drop this article](#) as dangerous for freedom of speech and "the freedom of scientific debates." However, the government rejected the recommendation of the State Council and kept the article. The fight in the Senate only led to the introduction of a new paragraph protecting the "whistleblowers" who reveal questionable practices of medical companies.

The anti-cult measures are also reinforced by allowing the anti-cult associations to be present in the court cases against "cults" as civil parties and by encouraging judges and prosecutors to seek the opinion of the MIVILUDES on groups they are judging or prosecuting. Parliamentary amendments also gave a new and reinforced status to the MIVILUDES.

Creation of a new crime, psychological subjection, and penalties

The heart of the new draft law is the creation of a new crime of "psychological subjection." The law states that, "It is punishable by three years' imprisonment and a

fine of 375,000 euros to place or maintain persons in a state of psychological or physical subjection resulting from the exercise of serious or repeated pressure or techniques likely to impair their judgement and having the effect of causing serious deterioration of their physical or mental health or leading them to commit an act or refrain from acting that is seriously prejudicial to them.”

However, the penalty will be “five years’ imprisonment and a fine of 750,000 euros” when the “psychological subjection” involves a minor or “a person whose particular vulnerability, due to age, illness, infirmity, physical or mental deficiency or pregnancy, is apparent or known to the perpetrator” The same increased penalty is applied “when the offense is committed by the de facto or de jure leader of a group pursuing activities with the aim or effect of creating, maintaining or exploiting the psychological or physical subjection of the persons taking part in these activities” (read a “cult” leader) or “when the offense is committed through the use of an online public communication service or through a digital or electronic medium” (targeting “cultic” propaganda through websites and social media).

Penalties are further increased to seven years’ imprisonment and a fine of one million euros when two of the above circumstances occur together or “the offense is committed as part of an organized gang by members of a group pursuing activities with the aim or effect of creating, maintaining or exploiting the psychological or physical subjection of persons taking part in these activities.” For anti-cultists, “cults” that practice “psychological subjection” are by definition “organized gangs.”

Abuse of weakness and psychological subjection

It is important to understand the difference with the previously existing provisions on “abus de faiblesse” (abuse of weakness) and why the government believes that the new crime will make it possible to criminalize “cultic deviances” not captured by the previous law. The “abus de faiblesse” was punished when a victim was in a “situation of weakness” and had been (allegedly) led through psychological techniques to do something harmful to herself, for example making a large donation or surrendering sexually to the “cult” leader. In the [introductory comment](#) to the new law, the government claimed that “the About-Picard law [i.e., the anti-cult law of 2001] in its present text does not allow to incriminate directly the psychological or physical subjection status determined by operations and techniques aimed at putting the victim under the control of the perpetrator.”

The new crime is different from the “abus de faiblesse” in two respects. First, it is not necessary that the victim is in a situation of “weakness.” Everybody can be the victim of “psychological subjection.” Second, the use of “or” rather than “and” in the sentence connecting the deterioration in the victim’s mental health and the fact that the “brainwashing” techniques may lead the manipulated person to do something harmful to herself is all-important. As the same introductory report explains, this “or” allows to punish the “psychological subjection” even when it cannot be proved that the victim was induced to a self-damaging behavior. It will be enough to argue that “a deterioration of mental health” has occurred.

The report specifies that, almost by definition, the situations of psychological subjection normally generate a “deterioration in the victim’s mental health.” Hence, using the mysterious “techniques creating a situation of psychological subjection” will be punished even when the victim did not engage in any specific behavior that can be classified as self-damaging. After all, anti-cultists maintain that joining or remaining in a “cult” is in

itself a danger for mental health. And remember, the anti-cult associations will be part of the trials to push this theory, and when in doubt the prosecutors and judges are counseled to seek the opinion of the MIVILUDES.

Religious beliefs under siege

Most scholars of new religious movements agree that ["brainwashing" does not exist](#), and its incrimination is basically a fraud. When the normal process of religious persuasion has as its object beliefs and practices that the powers that be regard as "normal," it is argued that there is no "brainwashing." When the beliefs and practices are non-conventional or unpopular, this is offered as evidence that only "brainwashed" victims can embrace them because they have been put in a status of "psychological subjection"

The French government solemnly proclaims that through the new law it is not criminalizing beliefs, only the techniques through which certain beliefs are promoted. In fact, however, the proof that a belief has been inculcated through "illegal" techniques is that the anti-cultists, the MIVILUDES, the majority of society, or the media regard it as a "cultic deviance." France's obsession for "les sectes," as noted by [leading international scholars](#), continues to make the country one of the worst places in the democratic world for freedom of religion or belief.

Près de 1 000 actes anti-chrétiens enregistrés en 2023, selon le ministère de l'Intérieur

Grégoire Gindre

[RCF](#) (26.03.2024) - [L'Invité de la Matinale](#) 'Urgence attentats' : "Le gouvernement n'est pas inquiet", assure Camille Chaize, porte parole du ministère de l'Intérieur

Quelques jours après la diffusion des chiffres des atteintes à caractère raciste, xénophobe, ou antireligieux en France en 2023, le ministère de l'Intérieur assure également avoir enregistré "un petit peu moins de 1 000 actes anti-chrétiens" l'année dernière. "À 90 %, ce sont des atteintes contre les biens comme des cimetières ou des églises", a précisé Camille Chaize, porte-parole du ministère de l'Intérieur, invitée de la matinale RCF.

Une tendance terrifiante : **la religion est toujours une cible en France**. Depuis le 7 octobre et les événements au Proche-Orient, la communauté juive est victime d'actes antisémites en hausse. Mi-janvier, le Crif, le Conseil représentatif des institutions juives de France, déplorait **1 676 actes recensés en 2023 sur le sol français**. "Un chiffre multiplié par quatre par rapport à 2022", dénonçait le rapport. Si la religion juive a tristement fait l'actualité ces derniers mois, **les chrétiens aussi ont été victimes d'actes anti-religieux en 2023**. Invitée de la matinale mardi 26 mars, la porte-parole du ministère de l'Intérieur dévoile les chiffres des actes anti-chrétiens en 2023 en France.

Les églises et cimetières principalement visés

L'Église de France est semble-t-il victime des violences de la société. Selon Camille Chaize, porte-parole du ministère de l'Intérieur, **"un petit peu moins de 1 000 actes antichrétiens" ont été recensés en 2023** par les services statistiques de la place Beauvau. Si les données ne sont pas définitives, elles sont en train d'être "affinées", car "les chiffres sont la base pour construire une réponse", assure Camille Chaize. **"Si l'on n'arrive pas à mesurer un phénomène, c'est toujours compliqué de lutter contre"**, reconnaît-elle.

Parmi les 1 000 actes anti-chrétiens enregistrés en 2023, "90 % sont des atteintes contre les biens, comme des cimetières ou des églises", ajoute la porte-parole du ministère de l'Intérieur. Les 10 % restants enregistrés sont des plaintes et des signalements suite à des atteintes aux personnes. **"Ça peut être une insulte"**, prend comme exemple Camille Chaize qui précise que ce sont **"84 atteintes à la personne qui ont été enregistrées"**, l'année dernière.

10 000 forces de l'ordre mobilisées pour la Semaine sainte

Face à la situation de tension dans laquelle sont plongées les communautés chrétiennes, **c'est une Semaine sainte sous haute sécurité qui débute pour le ministère de l'Intérieur.** La sécurité est garantie "tous les ans", mais "encore plus cette année", notamment "avec le niveau Vigipirate renforcé", admet la porte-parole. **L'alerte maximale et le passage au niveau "urgence attentat"**, ce week-end, permet effectivement davantage de moyens. **"Il y aura 10 000 policiers, gendarmes, pour faire des patrouilles à proximité des moments importants, que ce soit des processions ou des messes"**.

"On demande aussi au chef de la police et de la gendarmerie de prendre contact avec les responsables des différents sites et églises pour connaître les différents horaires, le nombre de personnes attendues". Cela permet de "calibrer les dispositifs en fonction des souhaits des différents responsables", conclut finalement Camille Chaize. **Les dispositifs sentinelles aussi patrouilleront dans la rue tout au long des événements chrétiens, pour protéger la sécurité des fidèles pendant les processions de fin de semaine sainte.**

More reading

[Profanations et vandalisme: 4 millions d'Euros pour sécuriser les lieux de culte](#)

Nearly 1,000 anti-Christian acts in 2023, according to the Ministry of the Interior

Grégoire Gindre

[RCF](#) (26.03.2024) - [L'Invité de la Matinale](#) 'Urgence attempts' : "The government is not worried", affirms Camille Chaize, the spokesperson of the ministry of the Interior.

A few days after the release of figures for racist, xenophobic, or anti-religious attacks in France in 2023, the Ministry of the Interior also claims to have recorded "a little less than 1,000 anti-Christian acts" last year. "90% of these are attacks against property such as

cemeteries or churches," said Camille Chaize, spokesperson for the Ministry of the Interior, guest of the RCF morning show.

A terrifying trend: **religion is still a target in France**. Since October 7 and the events in the Middle East, the Jewish community has been the victim of increasing anti-Semitic acts. In mid-January, CRIF the Representative Council of Jewish Institutions in France, deplored **1,676 acts recorded in 2023 on French soil**. "A figure multiplied by four compared to 2022", denounced the report. If the Jewish religion has sadly made the news in recent months, **Christians have also been victims of anti-religious acts in 2023**. Guest of the morning show on Tuesday March 26, the spokesperson for the Ministry of the Interior revealed the figures of anti-Christian acts in 2023 in France.

The churches and cemeteries mainly targeted

The Church of France appears to be a victim of societal violence. According to Camille Chaize, spokesperson for the Ministry of the Interior, "**a little less than 1,000 anti-Christian acts**" were recorded in 2023 by the statistical services of Place Beauvau. If the data is not definitive, it is being "refined", because "the figures are the basis for constructing an answer", assures Camille Chaize. "**If we cannot measure a phenomenon, it is always complicated to fight against it,**" she admits.

Among the 1,000 anti-Christian acts recorded in 2023, "90% are attacks against property, such as cemeteries or churches," adds the spokesperson for the Ministry of the Interior. The remaining 10% recorded are complaints and reports following attacks on people. "*It can be an insult*", takes as an example Camille Chaize who specifies that "**84 personal attacks were recorded**" last year.

10,000 law enforcement officers mobilized for Holy Week

Faced with the situation of tension in which Christian communities are plunged, **a Holy Week under high security is beginning for the Ministry of the Interior**. Security is guaranteed "every year", but "*even more this year*", in particular "*with the reinforced Vigipirate level*", admits the spokesperson. **The maximum alert and the move to the "emergency attack" level**, this weekend, actually allows more resources. "*There will be 10,000 police officers, gendarmes, to carry out patrols near important moments, whether processions or masses*".

"*We are also asking the head of the police and gendarmerie to contact the managers of the different sites and churches to find out the different times and the number of people expected.*" This makes it possible to "*calibrate the systems according to the wishes of the different managers*", finally concludes Camille Chaize. **Sentry devices will also patrol the street throughout Christian events**, to protect **the safety of the faithful during Holy Week processions**.

More reading

[Profanations et vandalisme: 4 millions d'Euros pour sécuriser les lieux de culte](#)

FECRIS, atheism, and support for the Russian war against Ukraine

The leader of an association "created" by a French FECRIS affiliate to deal with radical Islam and subtly propagate atheism continues to root for Putin. (The titles in the text are from HRWF)

[Version en français](#)

by Massimo Introvigne



Turquoise Freedom's president Khaled Slougui in Brussels on June 11, 2022, for a FECRIS conference. From X.

[Bitter Winter](#) (11.03.2024)- FECRIS is the European Federation of Centers of Research and Information on Cults and Sects, an international anti-cult umbrella organization largely supported by French taxpayers. It has been criticized [by scholars](#) and even by the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom ([USCIRF](#)) for spreading discriminatory attitudes against groups it stigmatizes as "cults." "Bitter Winter" has documented its dangerous connections and support for the bloody repression of minority religions [in Russia and China](#).

FECRIS' support to Russia's war on Ukraine

One of the largest and most active FECRIS affiliate operated in Russia. Since 2014 (and in fact even earlier), it systematically supported [the aggression against Ukraine](#) by Putin's regime. When Putin invaded Ukraine in February 2022, this support became a source of embarrassment for FECRIS. Yet, FECRIS [waited until March 2023](#) to sever its connection with its Russian branch. This means that for more than one year the Russian FECRIS leaders supported Putin's crimes against the Ukrainian people while remaining members of FECRIS in good standing, which caused [strong reactions in Ukraine](#).

FECRIS was compelled by international pressures to put an end to this in March 2023. However, FECRIS has now another problem with the war of aggression against Ukraine, this time not in Russia but in France.

GEMPPPI is a French FECRIS affiliate whose acronym stands for "Groupe d'étude des mouvements de pensée en vue de la protection des individus" (Group for the Study of Thought Movements for the Protection of the Individual). GEMPPPI representative Didier Pachoud is (or was, since the FECRIS is sometimes slow in updating its official records) FECRIS's treasurer. As late as July 15, 2022, almost five months after the war of aggression against Ukraine had started, GEMPPPI organized an anti-cult symposium in [Paris featuring among the speakers Roman Silantjev](#), one of the most fanatically anti-Ukrainian Russian anti-cultists.

Turquoise Freedom: pro-Eric Zemmour (extreme right), anti-NATO, anti-Macron

So far, we are still talking of Russians. However, a French (not Russian) association "created" by GEMPPPI, and which had a direct relation with FECRIS before being dissolved on March 21, 2023, called Turquoise Freedom had a president that continues to support Putin's aggression against Ukraine to this very day. In the 2022 yearly report, of GEMPPPI, the FECRIS affiliate admitted that "we [GEMPPPI] have worked to create an association specialized in this field [radical Islam], Turquoise Freedom."



Les demandes liées aux dérives sectaires supposées de groupes religieux se maintiennent, hormis l'islam radical au sujet duquel la demande augmente sensiblement malgré que nous ayons œuvré à la création d'une association spécialisée dans ce domaine (Turquoise Freedom).

And GEMPPPI created Turquoise Freedom: from GEMPPPI 2022 yearly report.

In fact, Turquoise Freedom had its own direct connection with FECRIS as well. At FECRIS' General Meeting of May 20, 2016, Turquoise Freedom, following a proposal by Didier Pachoud, was unanimously welcomed to the FECRIS Scientific Council for one year.

The former President of Turquoise Freedom, Khaled Slougui, is a [regular participant](#) in FECRIS activities and conferences. In 2018, Slougui became [a member of the GEMPPPI Board of Directors](#).

PROCÈS-VERBAL
de l'ASSEMBLÉE GÉNÉRALE de la FECRIS
du vendredi 20 mai 2016 à SOFIA
www.fecris.org
Le vendredi 20 mai 2016, de 16h10 à 18h30
Au State University for Library Studies and Information Technologies (SULSIT)
119, Tzarigradsko Shose SOFIA BULGARIA

1045
W 150
Drais

8. CANDIDATURES

8.1 Candidatures pour le statut de CORRESPONDANT FECRIS

8-1-1 Candidature de TURQUOISE FREEDOM (France) 35, rue Saint-Sébastien 13006 Marseille-France, présentée par Didier PACHOUD (GEMPPPI)

Créée le 10/06/2015 TURQUOISE FREEDOM, Association des victimes de l'islam radical et de pratiques anachroniques, a pour but de faire de la prévention, de la formation, de l'information, d'accueillir, assister en toute confidentialité et promouvoir la cause des personnes morales et physiques confrontées ou victimes des dérives sectaires ou autres liées au radicalisme islamique ou à des pratiques coutumières anachroniques et dommageables.

Son Président : Khaled SLOUGUI.

L'association est laïque, humaniste et politiquement neutre et s'interdit de faire la promotion directe ou indirecte d'un parti politique et de toute religion ou croyance qu'elle aborde de manière rationnelle. Les membres de cette association sont tenus à cette même neutralité dans le cadre de l'association.

Cette association a une vocation internationale.

La structure d'accueil est composée essentiellement de personnes sensibilisées par le problème et de personnes ayant des compétences diverses.

Après échanges sur la spécificité de l'association, proposition: accueillir pour un an Turquoise Freedom dans le Comité Scientifique FECRIS.

Vote

à main levée : approuvé à l'unanimité, moins une abstention

May 20, 2016: Turquoise Freedom presided by Khaled Slougui establishes an official connection with FECRIS.

Before coming back to why GEMPPPI needed to create Turquoise Freedom, let's have a look at Slougui's position on the Ukrainian conflict. February 2022: Putin starts his criminal aggression against Ukraine. Slougui loses no time in tweeting his support—for Putin. "[I just listened to Éric Zemmour](#) on the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and he was imperial in going back to the root of the problem. American provocations are unbearable, and NATO no longer has any reason to exist. France should therefore leave the integrated command." "[Macron seems furious](#), and with good reason: Putin has laughed at him, and his internal plan for the presidential election is collapsing. The man who refused to enter the arena to defend his record. At Rothschild, 'you don't think, you count.' The KGB prefers action." "[A unipolar world](#) is the greatest danger to humanity. As a shrewd strategist, Putin is doing something about it, and the great Russia is back for a multipolar world. The rest is just sterile agitation, and the game is up. It would be better if NATO disappeared."



SLOUGUI Khaled
@KhaledSlougui

...

Un monde unipolaire c'est le plus grand danger pour l'humanité. En stratège avisé, Poutine est en train d'y remédier, et la grande Russie est de retour pour un monde multipolaire. Le reste n'est qu'agitation stérile, et les jeux sont faits. L'OTAN doit disparaître, ce serait mieux

[Translate post](#)

9:23 AM · Feb 22, 2022

One of Slougui's tweets hailing "the great Russia" and "Putin the shrewd strategist" after the invasion of Ukraine.

The war continues as do the tweets of the the president of Turquoise Freedom. On May 19, 2022, he posts: "[Instead of using French taxpayers' money](#) to arm the clown

[Zelensky] and please the senile U.S. [Biden]... the French government must realize that this is not its war, and preserve its relations with Russia."

Slougui keeps working with the French-supported FECRIS but at the same time slanders the "Macronie" (the country and government of Macron) as being "cultic" itself. On June 11, 2022, he tweets "[I'm taking part in the FECRIS](#) (Fédération Européenne des Centres de Recherche et d'Information sur les Sectes) congress in Brussels. In the past, I had put forward the idea that in Macronie, the cult spirit is dominant. So the cult spirit is also present in 'secular' environments."

In short, for the former president of the FECRIS-connected Turquoise Freedom Zelensky is "[a corrupt comic dictator](#) used to wage war by proxy." And while he publicly expresses his support for Putin, he continues to attend the FECRIS events and there is no evidence that either FECRIS or GEMPPI have disassociated themselves from him or Turquoise Freedom.

Turquoise Freedom, the fight against radical Islam and religion in general

In fact, why GEMPPI needed to create Turquoise Freedom is not connected with Russia but is a fascinating story in itself. One can start understanding it by reading [an article published in "La Provence" on May 16, 2015](#), explaining that Pachoud announced to a FECRIS conference that the emergence of radical Islam "necessitated the creation of Turquoise Freedom," since in this field, the "job" of GEMPPI under its name was "not, for example, to bring [Muslims] back to a moderate Islam. We are secularists!"

But the cat comes out of the bag in two "confidential" pages of FECRIS' own website. They are there but are not easy to spot and access. A friendly suggestion to FECRIS: don't waste your time in removing them from your website, [as you did with other embarrassing texts before](#). Of course we at "Bitter Winter" have preserved them for the posterity.

Although on FECRIS' website there is also a small text in both [French](#) and [English](#), the clearest explanation is offered by a PowerPoint presentation offered in PDF, again both in [English](#) and [French](#).

Pachoud explains that GEMPPI has a "method" targeting relatives of followers of radical Islam (and other religions), who are at risk of being "radicalized" themselves. This method attacks directly and brutally the Holy Qu'ran and the Bible. While paying a lip service to the fact that these holy scriptures also include positive elements, Pachoud states that "No religion is innocuous and harmless, it always contains radicality in its sacred texts, extreme thought." The Bible and the Holy Qu'ran are deconstructed in two hours as "contrary to science," "anachronistic," "violent" and "undemocratic."

What is the purpose of this "procedure" created by GEMPPI? The cat comes out of the bag in slide #18: "This process highlights the idea that it is not God who creates man in his image, but the reverse. (We observed on the groups that took part in the procedure that the results are at the rendezvous: relativization of texts and truths)."

This is an important slide because it shows that when FECRIS tells us that it is not against religion it is simply lying. "The idea that it is not God that creates man in his image, but the reverse" is a classic, if outmoded, statement of atheism. The "procedure"

aims at transforming in two hours religious believers, persuaded that God creates humans, in atheists who claim that it is the other way around and God is just a human creation. And "the results are at the rendezvous," the FECRIS executive assured its audience.

But what about Turquoise Freedom? Its role is explained in a separate slide in English and in the second sentence of slide #18 in French. Obviously the procedure has "rational and desacralizing contents" (read, it promotes atheism). It is possible that some Muslims and others "are not interested, especially because of their religious sensibilities." If the GEMPPI method, practiced under the name of GEMPPI, is rejected by some who, after all, do not want to become atheists, then an ostensibly separate organization, "Turquoise Freedom, supports them directly without using the ideological protection process proposed by GEMPPI."

Sens et finalité de la procédure

Ce procédé met en exergue l'idée que ce n'est pas Dieu qui crée l'homme à son image, mais l'inverse. (Nous avons observé sur les groupes ayant participé à la procédure que les résultats sont au rendez-vous: relativisation des textes et des vérités)

D'où la nécessité d'informer précisément les familles ou proches du contenu rationnel et désacralisant de la démarche. S'ils ne sont pas intéressés, notamment en raison de leurs sensibilités religieuses, l'association des victimes de l'islam radical, *Turquoise Freedom* les prend directement en charge sans utiliser ce procédé de protection idéologique proposé par le GEMPPI

Meaning and purpose of the procedure

This process highlights the idea that it is not God who creates man in his image, but the reverse. (We observed on the groups that took part in the procedure that the results are at the rendez-vous: relativisation of texts and truths)

Meaning and purpose (continued)

Hence the need to specifically inform families or close friends on the rational and desacralising contents of the approach. If they are not interested, especially because of their religious Sensibilities, the association of the victims of radical Islam, *Turquoise Freedom* supports them directly without using the ideological protection process proposed by GEMPPI

Atheism and dissimulation: a clear explanation of why GEMPPI needed to create Turquoise Freedom (French original and English version).

Make no mistake, Turquoise Freedom and Slougui have no sympathy for God either. When Macron mentioned God, Slougui [tweeted](#): "It's a heresy in our secular Republic!" Simply, they hide the atheism and the name of GEMPPI that is too obviously connected with the secular humanist anti-religious propaganda to enroll some naïve believers in their anti-cult and anti-"separatism" crusade. The "rendezvous" with atheism is just postponed.

Slougui and Turquoise Freedom were also utilized to keep the Putin aficionados within the French anti-cult circuit. There is no way out: the more one looks at FECRIS, the more its "liaisons dangereuses" with Putin and anti-Ukrainian propaganda keep popping out from all sides.

Sarkozy urges Macron to recognize the genocide of the Assyro-Chaldeans

While France officially recognized the Armenian genocide in 2001, the former president calls on the state not to forget the massacre of 250,000 Christians between 1915 and 1918 by the Ottoman Empire.

By Marion Mourgue

[Le Parisien](#) (27.02.2024) - This Tuesday, the former President of the Republic Nicolas Sarkozy delivered a major speech in support of this community of some 40,000 members present on the national territory.

On the occasion of the Grand annual dinner of the Assyro-Chaldeans of France, organized this Tuesday, February 27 in Paris, the former President of the Republic Nicolas Sarkozy delivered a major speech in support of this community of some 40,000 members present on the National territory. The Assyro-Chaldeans continue to demand official recognition by France of the genocide of over 250,000 of their ancestors perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire between 1915 and 1918. And this, as other European countries have already done.

"Today the Armenian genocide is recognized. Justice has been served to the dead. The genocide of your ancestors is still not recognized by our laws," declared Nicolas Sarkozy from the podium in front of more than 150 guests, including parliamentarians from all sides. "You demand this official recognition of the misfortunes of your people. My presence among you is the mark of my complete support for this recognition," continued the ex-president who had already taken a stand in 2011, then at the Élysée, against "religious purges". And to insist again, this Tuesday evening: "Half of a population disappearing in a few months is not a massacre, as History is punctuated by it, it is a genocide, planned and orchestrated. »

"The government must decide and the President of the Republic must do so"

Precisely a year ago, senators LR Bruno Retailleau, present in the room, and Valérie Boyer, tabled a proposed resolution for France to recognize this genocide. A text then largely voted on by the upper house. Today, Nicolas Sarkozy, who calls himself a "Christian by training, culture and heart," is urging the French state to go further.

"This resolution which directly challenges the government therefore awaits a response," the former president firmly pointed out. "The Armenian genocide was recognized in 2001, it has been twenty-three years and this long wait has lasted too long. It is time that the equality in death and misfortune of the Armenian and Assyro-Chaldean peoples is finally recognized. The government must pronounce itself and the President of the Republic must do so," said Nicolas Sarkozy, adding that the Assyro-Chaldeans could "count on his support to tell him so".

An "essential" recognition for all Eastern Christians who aspire to regain their lands. "Our duty is to tirelessly defend the right of Christians to live at home," concluded Nicolas Sarkozy, much applauded, calling for "awakening consciences." Before heading to the Élysée where the state dinner was held in honor of the Emir of Qatar.

[Version en français](#)

Note: In charge of this HRWF project: Nail Beth Kinne, member of the board