

## **HATE CRIMES IN FRANCE THE MURDER OF ILAN HALIMI**

**Bernard-Israel Feldman (M.D.Ph.D.), Gerard Lopez (M.D.Ph.D.),  
Jean-Pierre Benais (M.D., Ph.D.)**

### **Introduction**

Ilan Halimi was a young French Jew who died at the age of 23, having been tortured between January 21 - February 13, 2006 by a gang of young Muslim immigrants, in the Paris area. He was found dying, with severe burns and cuts. He had been kidnapped three weeks earlier, after the gang sent a blond female to seduce him. Halimi had agreed to meet her after talking to her in a chat room on the Internet.

France is nowadays one of the Western countries with the highest incidence of hate crimes against the Jews. Most of the attacks, carried out by Muslim immigrants and their children, are in fact against Jews, in relation with the Middle East conflict.

A memorial evening for Ilan Halimi was held at the Grande Synagogue of Paris, on Rue de la Victoire. President Chirac and his wife Bernadette and Premier Dominique de Villepin attended the ceremony and condemned the horrific torture and execution of this 23 old Jew, declaring that anti-Semitism would be fought without mercy in the "The Country of Human Rights"...Cries of "Vive la France" and "We demand justice" accompanied President Chirac and Premier De Villepin, as they left the memorial evening. The ceremony was seen by many in the French Jewish Community and in Israel.

Before the ceremony's official opening, police cars surrounded the synagogue area. Police at roadblocks inspected the bag of everyone entering the area. Hundreds of thousands of peoples crowded on both sides of the street, waiting to enter the synagogue. At the entrance to the synagogue, police used metal detectors and checked the identity cards and passports of all who pushed in, just like at an airport!

The synagogue, which seats 3000, was full, dozens more mourners stood in the aisles, while many thousands remained outside as they could not get in.

During the chilling ceremony, an eight years old boy read from the Bible: "*I will raise my eyes to the mountains, whence will come my help?*" (Psalm 121, verse 1), as he stood beside a giant picture of Ilan Halimi.

Halimi's family and others in the Jewish community said that if the Authorities had admitted earlier that the young man had been attacked for being a Jew, he could possibly have been saved. Immediately following Halimi's abduction, his mother went to the police and said he had been kidnapped by anti-Semites. Sources in the Community knew that three other Jewish youngsters had managed to escape similar abductions before. The police told Halimi's mother, Ruth, to stop all telephone connection with the kidnapers as a way of forcing them to use e-mail which, according to them, were more easily traceable. The police, however, were unaware of the fact that that during the five days during which the kidnapers tried

in vain to contact Halimi's family, Ilan was undergoing terrible torture. One of the kidnapers said: "*We put our cigarettes out on him because he was a Jew!*"

Anti-Semitic feelings are rampant among the Muslims living in the suburbs of Paris and other French cities. Nidra Poller wrote in the Wall Street Journal: "*One of the most troubling aspects of this affair is the probable involvement of relatives and neighbors, beyond the immediate circle of the gang (of kidnapers) who were told about the Jewish hostage and dropped in to participate in the torture.*"

It appears that Ilan Halimi's murderers had some connection to Hamas. According to French Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy, the police found propaganda material published by an organization called "The Palestinian Charity Committee" at the home of one of the suspects. The State of Israel has alleged that this organization is a front group for Palestinian terrorists and in August 2003, the US Government froze the organization's US bank accounts accusing it of link with Hamas.

Halimi's family claims that throughout the 20 days of Ilan's captivity, the police absolutely refused to take the anti-Semitic motivations of the kidnapers into account. The investigators insisted on viewing his kidnap as a kidnap-for-ransom criminal case which, they said, generally involves no threat to the life of the captive. This was the case in spite of the fact that in their e-mail and telephone communications with Ilan's family, his captors repeatedly referred to Judaism, to "the money of the Jews" and, on at least one occasion, recited verses from the Koran while Ilan was heard screaming in agony in the background.

### **The Press and the Death of Ilan Halimi**

Each account - from the Jewish and Israeli media – of how Ilan Halimi was tortured to death is disturbing. More disturbing, however, is that none of this appeared in the mainstream press. It should be pointed out that "Halimi" is an Arabic-sounding name. That is because Halimi was a Sephardic Jew whose family, like many Jewish families, emigrated from an Arab Muslim country. These Jews were either kicked out of their homes (as the Jews from Algeria), escaping anti-Semitism, or, in some cases, both reasons applied. The Halimi family emigrated from North Africa. Unfortunately, so did the anti-Semitism and intolerance felt by certain North African Muslim immigrants.

As Islamic extremists intend to dominate the Western countries – starting with the European Union – the violence and hatred of the Jews comes with it. For those who say "Jews out of Palestine!", Ilan Halimi is unfortunately the dead example that shows that even after having left countries certain Muslims consider as "theirs", it does not stop them from shouting "Jews out of everywhere!". In fact, what they really mean, is "Death to the Jews!"

Thus, for three weeks, the gang of "Barbarians" (as they called themselves) detained and tortured Ilan Halimi. He was found, as we already mentioned, naked, handcuffed, dumped by some railtracks in a Paris suburb. 80% of his body was covered in burns - cigarette and iron burns - and knife and cissor cuts covered his entire body. He died in the ambulance on the way to the hospital. The police quickly arrested the gang and their leader was arrested in the Ivory Coast where he tried to hide. Ilan was trapped by a "bait", a woman, who was also arrested. However, there must have been many witnesses to this crime, which extended over three weeks! The shrieks and screams due to the torture must have been

heard by some of the residents of the building where the terrible scenes were taking place... Yet no one, not even an anonymous caller, alerted the police of Bagneux, this suburb of Paris, nor the press.

As mentioned above Halimi's killers had ties with Hamas. They had previously tried to do the same thing with other Jews. The items found in the chamber of torture included Islamic literature and leaflets of a pro-Palestinian charity organization blacklisted by the USA and the State of Israel. Their activities are well known to the French police.

It must be emphasized that what happened to Ilan was not the first attempt of this kind. The "Barbarians" tried to pull off similar crimes before six times. Four of the six people were Jews, which amounts to 66,6 % of the population, while Jews only represent one percent of the French population! Similar stories are now surfacing. What happens in the suburbs of Paris happens everywhere in France. Many hate crimes are judged in this country, since many people have been receiving death threats from Muslims for the sole reason that they are Jewish. The French authorities are taking these threats very seriously because it seems that it is only a matter of time before more Halimi-style violence takes place on their soil, particularly now that the war between the Hisballah and Israel is raging in Lebanon. *However, the French media have chosen to ignore these facts.*

### **The migration from the Arab world to Europe**

It is mostly to Western Europe - France and Belgium - that a large-scale and rapid immigration from North Africa and Black Africa took place. In 1970, the French Authorities decided to allow all these immigrants to be reunited with their families. This was the consequence of colonialism and of the need of workers. Within a few years, France saw its suburbs fill with new communities. Racism and hate crimes against these communities soon followed.

Associations and organizations were created to protect these people and to help them to get integrated into the French population. These organizations were often created by Jews because they knew what racism was all about – following the Shoah. However, some Christian denominations, such as the fundamentalist catholic movement of Monseigneur Lefèbvre, which is to be reintegrated by BENOIT XVI (!), as well as the "Front National" (an extreme right political party) began to persecute Moslems in France.

As for the Jews, thanks to the Jewish immigration from North Africa, Judaism was revitalized and many private Jewish schools were opened. One could see many young Jews with "kippas" in the streets of Paris, Marseille, Lyon, Lille, etc.

In the meantime fundamentalist Islam was spreading all over Europe, above all in France. During that time, many mosques were erected thanks to funds from Saudi Arabia, and the Wahabite trend was introduced in the French Islam.

*All this led to an exacerbated mix of cultures and religions, dangerous for the Jews.*

While the Muslim immigrants who were born in Africa used to work hard in factories or on building sites, their children were growing up in closed suburbs characterized by a high level of delinquency. Some were able to integrate but most of them remained on the margins of French society.

In the past Jews, Poles, Italians and Spaniards had integrated successfully, but this Muslim immigration failed to do so. In these Muslim families, the fathers tried to keep the patriarchal tradition and girls could not really enjoy the same freedom as their peers in the general population did. Boys could emancipate from patriarchal

authority but were not accepted by the rest of French people. Consequently many of them adopted delinquent behavior patterns.

However, some men did marry French Catholic girls - although this would have been unthinkable for their sisters! The children who were born out of these unions are, for the most part, Muslims and the fathers give Muslim first names to their offspring. These young people are nowadays 20 - 25 years old and they all are Muslims.

A rapid radicalization of Islam took place in France and many young French girls who married Muslims converted to Islam. The contrary was seldom seen: only a very few men converted to a Christian denomination, as it is strictly forbidden by Islam and considered very dangerous.

Consequently, this young population is very implicated in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and many of them do not hide their sympathy toward Al-Qaida, Hamas, the Islamic Jihad, Hisbollah, etc...

There is another explanation for this radicalization of Islam in France:

### **Concepts of *Republic* and *Laïcité* (Secularity or separation between State and religion)**

*These words represent France's credo!*

However, there is a withdrawal of these values nowadays. The Ministry of National Education, which is the essential crucible of the republican values, abdicated on several occasions: In the case of port of Islamic veil by girls in secular schools for example, where symbolically any exception should have been tolerated. It was only in 2004 that a law was voted at the "Assemblée Nationale" (French House of Parliament) to protect the concept of "Laïcité" following the publication of a book by teachers, entitled "*Les territoires perdus de la République*" - "The Lost Territories of the Republic". Very quickly, French Muslims became enthusiastic Moslems, while many converted to Islam.

Needless to say, this population is generally quiet, law-abiding citizens, but there are a significant percentage of activists (10 % according to French police) who try to manipulate the silent majority. Moreover, the sociological background is worrying because of the economical decline of France.

After the Yom Kippur war, initiated by Egypt and Syria to eradicate Israel, there was a decline in all Western economies. The price of oil was multiplied by four – it was much higher some years ago! - and the European countries were forced to isolate the State of Israel because of Arab "dictates". Thirty years later, some countries did emerge from this crisis: the USA, China, India, and Japan. But the "Old Europe" - except for the UK - and above all France, are still dealing with this decline, in spite of Sarkozy's effort. France suffers from a rigid economy, as a result of its ambiguous way of dealing with economic problems. The liberal vision was condemned by De Gaulle, Mitterrand and Chirac, for many years. There is also strong opposition to progress on the part of trade unions. The result is a dramatic rise in unemployment and impoverishment. Integration through work, which allowed the previous waves of immigrants to succeed in France and to become proud French citizens, is now almost impossible for the Muslim immigrants. They continue to live in "ghettoes" and are manipulated by Islamic preachers who denounce the past French colonization and ...the Jews, *traditional scapegoats all*

*around the globe.* Inevitably, new leaders emerge with fascist ideas against the Jews. Dieudonné, a French Black comic is one example.

In other words, poverty, cultural indigence, the abdication on the part of the public and educational authorities, politically and ideologically violent Islam linked to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to the war in the Middle East, political parties of left - and of the right in a lesser way - are ingredients of a true social bomb! In October-November 2005 and in February 2006, this bomb exploded in the suburbs of all the big French cities, and with the assassination of Ilan Halimi.

It seems, however, that the "big bang" is yet to come and this time, Jews will not be able to remain in France, because this country cannot deal with the question of "communautarism".

This is a real dilemma for the French Authorities since, according to French Republican tradition, there is no possibility for ethnic or religious communities to live apart from the rest of the population since the Revolution of 1789, following the separation between State and religion. Religion is officially allowed but does not play any part at the national level.

The French Ministry of Interior, headed by Nicolas Sarkozy, is currently dealing with this type of hate crimes because of the magnitude of the phenomenon, and is trying to adapt France to this new problem.

There follows an extract of the letter sent by Mr. Sarkozy on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March, 2006 to the French Simon Wiesenthal Center (translated by myself):

*"I understand your interrogations concerning the horrific death of Ilan Halimi above all after the aggressions against young Jewish citizens in Sarcelles [another suburb of Paris].*

*The barbarian act against the young Ilan Halimi has terrified my country.*

*I have four priorities:*

- *To allow three millions Euros to secure all the buildings of the Jewish community.*
- *To maintain a physical presence of the police near these buildings.*
- *To install video supervision to protect these buildings.*
- *To fight anti-Semitism.*

*Anti-Semitic violence is not a fatality. It horrifies me. I will fight against it with firmness."*

It seems that this will be a very difficult task, since the problem is related to the Middle East conflict, and since France wishes to be separate from (or turn against) the American influence and is supporting the Arab countries in this region. Thus, how can they protect French Jews, and at the same time condemn Israeli Jews in a "mixed way"?

In 1791, Clermont Tonnerre said to the "Assemblée Constituante" (The Parliament of the Revolution): *"We must refuse anything to the Jews as a Nation and grant everything to the Jews as individuals!"* Israel is *the* Jewish state and thus France cannot be in favor of this country.

### **Ramallah = Aushwicz?**

Within two generations, Israeli Jews have turned, in the eyes of the French population, into true monsters! Intellectuals and journalists make use of the instrumentalisation of the Shoah when dealing with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict - they use it to describe the suffering of the Palestinian people. They also spoke of "Jeningrad" about the battle of Jenin where only 53 Palestinian militants - "only",

when compared to those that died in the battle of Stalingrad! - and 23 Israeli soldiers were killed.

All these points have contributed to turning the State of Israel into diabolic State in the eyes of many French citizens and, above all, of many young French Moslems. In April 2002, Mohamad Bakri made the film called *Jenin-Jenin*. In January 2005, he admitted that many scenes of the film were false but he argued that he wanted to use artistic means to show the cruelty of *Tsahal* [the IDF]!

"Route 181" is a movie made by Eyal Sivan and Michaël Khleifi about the delimitation of the border between Israel and the Arab states in 1948. The movie insinuates that the Jews wanted to eliminate all the Arabs in the region, just like the Nazis had done with them.

This movie was shown on the 24th of November 2004 on "Arte" (a Franco-German channel). The fact that one of the co-directors was Israeli allowed many people to express their hatred against the Jews. It did not occur to anyone that this behavior could be interpreted as auto-victimization...The movie plagiarizes a scene from Claude Lanzmann's film "Shoah". Jewish suffering is thus used against the Israelis. Another film was shown on "Arte" on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2004, in which Israeli soldiers wear uniforms of the Waffen SS. And so on...

All this has led to many anti-Semitic attacks in France, which were described by the French press only as "actes d'incivilité", i.e. "uncivil acts". A "Taylor Nelson Sofres/EOS Gallup Europe" survey from 2003 indicated that 59% of Europeans estimated that Israel was the most serious threat for peace in the world. Following Arafat's death, the revelations about Palestinian corruption, the attacks in Madrid, London, Beslan have led to a fragile change in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. *However, many people do not see the link between Islamic terror and Palestinian terror, which is seen as a liberation movement.*

At this point in time, Hamas has acceded to power in the Palestinian Authority, and only a few people know that this organization is linked to Hisbollah and Iran, who is set to destroy the State of Israel and...to Europe, including France in spite of Sarkozy's and Chirac's words. In other words, ignorance and disinformation have brought about anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic feelings. For example, on September 30, 2000 the young Mohammed Al-Durra was killed in Netzarim during fire exchanges between Israeli soldiers and Palestinians. French TV Channel 2 (*Antenne 2*) immediately declared that the boy was killed by Israeli soldiers, without waiting for a fair investigation. This led to violent anti-Semitic demonstrations in the streets of Paris. Place de la République, one could hear people shouting "Mort aux Juifs", i.e. "Death to the Jews" and "Bush=Sharon=Hitler". Synagogues were burnt, Jews with yarmulkes were beaten up, and rabbis were physically attacked. This reminds us of the pogroms in Russia...

It seems that 60 years after the Shoah, some French people no longer feel guilty and are joining anti-Semitic Moslems in all impunity. Today, Ilan Halimi's family is mourning; many French Jews do not see their future as citizens of this country and are emigrating to Israel and America.

The French Authorities cannot stigmatize the Moslem Community, because it is very dangerous and because of their opposition to "Communautarism" which is seen as being as going against the ideals of the Republic. Doing so, they forget to help the real victims i.e. the Jews. Little by little, France is turning **The** very anti-Semitic country because hate crimes against the Jews are too numerous. In the end, the Moslem community is also in danger, because many people do not

differentiate between Islamist manipulators and the majority of European Moslems, who want to be integrated and live in peace in this country.

**There follow our proposals to the French President Mr. Nicolas Sarkozy:**

### **“ASSUMING RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE VICTIMS OF ANTI-SEMITIC AGGRESSIONS**

Anti-Semitism is an evil affecting the entire world, throughout which the same prejudices prevail, whereas racism varies from place to place. In fact, anti-Semitic acts are of a religious nature, although they have also been nurtured by racial ideologies of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Preventive work must be carried out in order to fight anti-Semitism which, as history has shown, can lead to far greater catastrophes – the Hebrew word “*Shoah*” means “catastrophe” – as well as massive migrations of Jews, which could very well happen in the case of French Jews.

Jewish organizations are very active, both in France and internationally (Bnei Brit, OSE, Simon Wiesenthal Center, Consistoire, CRIF, and more). These organizations are working along various tracks: debriefing, and providing medical and psychological services, as well as legal assistance. It is vital that the Ministry of Interior be genuinely determined to help French Jews.

The following model can be applied to other racist attacks, while incorporating other approaches (PHRASE PAS CLAIRE)

### **CLINICAL APPROACH**

The attack or death of a family member or intimate friend places the mourner at a high risk of suffering from various types of psychological complications, such as a major depression, anxiety attacks, and post-traumatic stress. In addition to these potential and well-known psychological complications, there is also a state of pathological mourning, which can be either “complex” or “traumatic”. These types of mourning stem from separation anxiety and psycho-traumatic troubles. They become deeper and chronic, while the suffering is both psychological and somatic.

For the French Jewish community, these attacks revive the trauma of the Shoah and the traumatic exodus from Algeria, whose effects are transmitted “radioactively” to all Jews, many of whom are now leaving France for Israel or North America.

A clinical reading of the traumatic mourning has been described as combining the symptoms of the traumatic neurosis and of mourning, and the symptoms of its various types have recently been codified and included in the psychiatry and victimology nomenclatures.

<p><b>CRITERIA FOR DIAGNOSIS</b></p> <p><b>A. Experiencing the death of another person</b></p> <p><b>B. Three of the following four symptoms (occurring once or at times):</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Intrusive thoughts about the deceased</li> <li>2. Feeling nostalgic about the deceased</li> <li>3. Behavior involving a search for the deceased</li> <li>4. Feelings of loneliness as a result of the death</li> </ol> <p><b>Four of the following eight symptoms:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Not making any plans, a sense of futility with regards to the future</li> <li>6. Hebetude, detachment, absence of reaction</li> <li>7. Difficulty in admitting the occurrence of the death (incredulity)</li> <li>8. Sense of emptiness, that life has no meaning</li> <li>9. Feeling that one is partly empty</li> <li>10. Dislocated world – loss of sense of security, of trust or of control</li> <li>11. Exhibiting symptoms or behaviors of the deceased</li> <li>12. Irritability, bitterness or excessive anger in relation to the deceased</li> </ol> <p><b>C. Length of the disorder: two months, at least.</b></p> <p><b>D. Handicap and dysfunctional behavior</b></p>
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According to our research, 20% of pathological mournings become more complex and chronic, while suffering is expressed both psychologically and somatically.

A medico-psychological treatment would therefore be recommended.

**METHODOLOGY**

Clinical experience in assuming responsibility for the victims of accidents or attacks speaks in favor assuming responsibility along similar methods to those used in crisis management. The informative aspects is all the more crucial since the preventive interest of debriefings on the subject of potential psychological disorders is the object of growing objection and is currently undergoing an evaluation process financed by the French Ministry of Health. In any case, prior to carrying out a “psychological debriefing”, a technical debriefing is indispensable – and, at times, sufficient. It must include all the parties and Authorities involved and is sometimes sufficient in order to take the sting out of a crisis. Technical debriefing is connected to methods of crisis management: it implies communicating as fast as possible, in real time, whenever possible, and in a transparent and coherent way, while

adapting one's discourse and attitudes to the developments occurring in the course of the crisis.

In the area of the management of crises involving victims, recognition and transparency alone are useful and enable the unraveling of the imaginary wrappings – the rumors – which make the crisis much worse. The other methods, which may be useful in managing “mediatic” crises, are inoperative in this case.

In the absence of pre-determined procedures, this crisis intervention must be meticulously prepared by the actors invited to participate. The authorities present must be in possession of clear information in relation to the racist attack, since the meeting must fulfill the victims' “demand for truth”, by providing them with the maximum detail on the causes and on the way the crisis will be handled by the authorities. Such a meeting must end with a prospective prevention thinking, as defined in the preamble.

The authorities present at the meeting must be foretold about the fact that the mechanisms for designating scapegoats are the usual crisis-solving method, which will have to be dismantled through dialogue and by bringing forward convincing arguments, which are the only way to extinguish spontaneous rumors which are sometimes caused or conveyed by the media. It is also important to emphasize the disturbing nature of certain unpredicted reactions, which call for serious adaptation skills on the part of the authorities present. There should also be an attempt to clarify the fact that human traits are more determinant than the status of the participant. In this spirit, the accepted language of official meetings should be avoided.

Rules for the right to speak must be predetermined and handled by an experienced designated “meeting leader” who will manage the debates. His/her neutrality is an important factor. The confidentiality of the data exchanged in the course of the information session is announced and guaranteed by the public authorities. The recognition of the abominable nature of the anti-Semitic attack, as well as the reading of the steps that will be taken in favor of the victims, are the two key elements. It would be useful to invite representatives from a specialized organization – such as the Bnei Brit, OSE, The Simon Wiesenthal Center, the Consistoire, CRIF, etc. – to attend the meeting, in order to clarify for the victims any social and legal measures that could be offered to them, as well as to provide them with some emotional support. In general, this informative meeting helps release the emotional tension which was at its highest point at the start of the meeting. It is imperative that the victims leave the meeting feeling calm. A psychotherapeutically oriented meeting could compromise such a process; in fact, they could leave it feeling even more distressed.

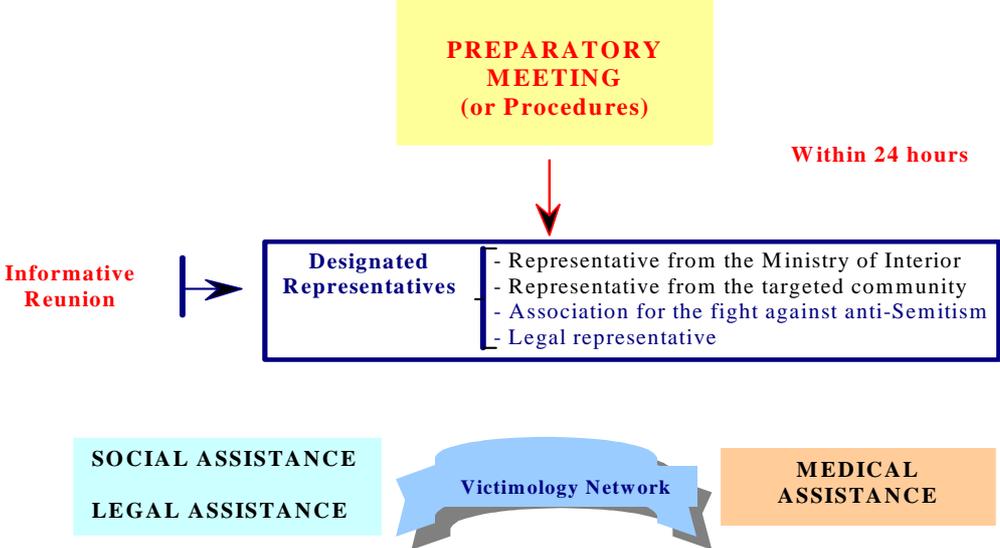
If this solution is adopted, it will be possible to formulate a protocol for assuming responsibility in the course of a few work sessions, in the presence of all the parties involved. This type of procedures is built along the crisis management methods, including the following questions: What if? What will happen? What will the response be? Who is entitled to do it?

A document summarizing the principles of this assuming of responsibilities – social, legal and medico-psychological aspects – including the addresses of the

parties involved will complete the formulation of these intervention procedures, as it will help prevent useless research and wandering, which would only add to the trauma already undergone.

We would like to point out that our Franco-Israeli Victimology Association is a privileged party, which cooperates with the victims and, among others, with the associations for the fight against anti-Semitism.

**General Plan for Assuming Responsibility for the Victims of anti-Semitic Attacks  
the Victims of anti-Semitic Attacks**



**CONCLUSION**

Approximately 30% of racist attacks, in general, and anti-Semitic attacks, in particular, lead to psychological complications: major depression, anxiety disorders, and states of post-traumatic stress. In addition to these well-known potential psychological complications, there are forms of pathological mourning, 20% of which become worse and chronic, while the suffering is expressed not only in the psychological realm, but also somatically.

Assuming responsibility in psycho-medical terms, based on communication, with a small team comprising a psychologist, a representative from the Ministry of Interior and of a specialized organization, will allow for a powerful recognition of the facts and for the provision of medical, social and legal assistance, if the case requires.

However, what seems to us to be the most urgent is to envisage a change in France's external policy, in relation to the conflict in the Middle-East. Nicolas Sarkozy's words on this issue do seem encouraging to us, but will they be heard by the majority of the French people?

One thing is certain – Israel is preparing for a massive immigration of French Jews.

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P.S. "Le canari dans la mine" means: "The canary in the coal-pit".