

Testimony to the House of Representatives

By Roger Cukierman Chairman of CRIF

Jews have lived in France for the last 2.000 years. One thousand years ago, at the time of the crusades, the famous Talmudist Rachi was living in the city of Troyes. He was producing wine, a typical French job, and he was also famous for his expertise in old French language.

In 1791, at the time of the French revolution, French Jews were given the full French citizenship.

And today, in 2015, our synagogues and our Jewish schools have to be protected by the police and even the army with machine guns.

Why ?

Because there is a World War started by middle age barbarian fanatics who are cutting heads, are stoning women, are killing kids, and want to impose to the rest of the world the Sharia, their concept of what Islam should be in their views.

The first victims are the moderate Muslims. This is a war against western modern civilization. And the Jews are seen by these Jihadists as a privileged target. We Jews are the sentinels at the forefront of this war. But we are not the only victims. Military forces, policemen and women, journalists were also targeted and killed.

These Jihadists are acting under different names: Daesh, Al Qaida, Boko Haram, Aqmi, Hamas. It started in the Middle East: Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Gaza... It reached Africa: Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Cameroun, Chad, Tunisia... And now Europe: France, Belgium, Denmark.

In France small children were killed in March 2012 in Toulouse, at blank point at the entrance of a school of Otzar hatorah by Mohamed Merah. In 2014, 4 people were killed in the Jewish museum by Mehdi Nemouche. And then in January 2015, 4 people were killed in the Paris kosher grocery store. And then in front of the Copenhagen synagogue. All victims were targeted because they were Jews. All these killers were Jihadists.

In front of that situation the French government shows a perfect understanding of our situation. Prime Minister Manuel Valls said that anti-Zionism is anti-Semitism. And President Hollande said that "it is not the Jews who should leave the country, it is the anti-Semites".

And immediately after the grocery attack the Government added 7.500 military to the Police forces to protect the Jewish places.

From where are these Jihadists coming ?

They come from the Muslim community which is estimated to five or six million people in France. The number of French Jihadists is estimated at 1.300 people who are combatting in Syria and Iraq. Among them many French ethnics recently converted to Islam.

It seems that they are generally not influenced by the French Imams, or by the press which they don't read, or by the TV that they don't watch.

They were educated to the Jihad in the French jails and by internet.

This is why our organization bought a full page ad in the New York Times on the 2nd of march 2015 which was an appeal to our American friends asking them to put pressure on the Internet providers to set a limit to the swarm of hate which can be found on Internet, to remove anti-Semitic contents as soon as it is flagged. On the internet ways were found to ban child pornography. Likewise anti-Semitism must be banned. The providers of Internet must understand that they bear a responsibility when murders are committed by youngsters who became Jihadists through Internet.

Is there a future for Jews in France ?

An increasing number of French Jews are considering leaving France. The French Jewish population is estimated at half a million people, third Jewish Community in the world after Israel and the US.

In the last 3 years 12.000 left to Israel. Other chose the US, Canada, Australia. Many people refuse to see the future of their kids if they have to study in schools or to go to synagogues which appear as fortresses protected by military and heavy gun machines. The atmosphere is tense. One cannot travel in the subway with a yarmulke. Anti-Semitism is active in many suburbs and in public schools.

Nevertheless I believe that a big proportion of the French Jews will remain in France were their roots, their culture incite them to confront adversity as their parents or ancestors did at difficult periods like the Dreyfus Affair or the Vichy period.

March 2015