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## **Anti-Semitism in France. Hoffner (La Croix): “The thread uniting the social fabric is strained, but fortunately it is holding strong and has not snapped”**

“The thread that unites the social fabric is sorely strained. But in spite of everything, in spite of the conflict between Israel and Gaza, in spite of the instability of the French suburbs, this little thread is holding and has not broken for the moment. It seems like a miracle. The priority now is to ensure that this thread does not snap”, said **Anne-Bénédicte Hoffner**, La Croix's deputy editor-in-chief, in response to a request from SIR to comment on data released by Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin on acts of anti-Semitism in France. In an interview with France 2 on Sunday evening, November 5, the Minister of the Interior, Gerald Darmanin, said that since October 7, the day of Hamas's abominable and murderous attack on Israel, there have been 1,040 incidents against its Jewish citizens, adding that of the 486 people arrested for these offences, 102 were non-French nationals. The most critical situation was reported in Paris. Paris police chief Laurent Nunez said that there had been 257 antisemitic acts in the Paris region alone, and 90 arrests. He added that there was no typical profile for those arrested. They ranged from “young kids who say very serious things”, to people involved in the pro-Palestinian cause. Paris prosecutors are already investigating the daubing of dozens of Stars of David on buildings around the city and its suburbs, considered an active threat to Jews. **“The number of antisemitic acts has exploded,” the French minister told France 2 television.** Anne-Bénédicte Hoffner pointed out to SIR: “Darmanin's entire political career has been built on the intensification and deepening of divisions in order to present himself as the only bastion of security in France.” In reality, the situation is far more complex. “France has the largest Jewish community and the largest Muslim Arab community in Europe,” says the La Croix journalist, “and so whenever the situation escalates in Israel and Palestine, the effects are systematically felt in France. When cruelty reaches its peak in the region, there is a fear that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will eventually spill over into France. It may sound somewhat paradoxical, but for the moment the situation is no worse than it has been in terms of the contagion from other tense phases of the conflict.” Our thoughts immediately turn to the “case” of Mohammed Merah, the terrorist behind the 2012 attacks in Toulouse and Montauban that left seven people dead, including three children and a teacher at a Jewish school. “However terrible and serious the acts of anti-Semitism we have seen in recent days, thankfully not a single Jewish citizen has been attacked or stabbed.” The journalist also refers to the ongoing tensions in the banlieues of France's major cities, and in particular the riots in French suburbs this summer sparked by the killing of 17-year-old Nahel during a police check. “I was afraid that tensions would escalate after October 7. But so far there have been no clashes or riots.” **“Three things must be said and demanded in order not to tear the very thin thread of the social fabric,” says the journalist.** “They are: condemnation of Hamas's actions, the release of the hostages and a ceasefire in Gaza. In order to avoid fanning the flames or sidelining the issue, these three points must always be mentioned together. But if only one is mentioned, if you talk about Gaza and say nothing about the actions of Hamas and the hostages, the balance can be broken. This has not happened yet”. In this context, the words of the President of the French Bishops' Conference, Monsignor **Éric de Moulins-Beaufort**, at the opening of the ongoing plenary assembly of the French Bishops' Conference in Lourdes, were much appreciated. “We share the deep anxiety of our Jewish brothers and sisters, our fathers in faith and covenant, who are so often, so often, the object of hatred throughout the world. Together with them, we call for the release of the hostages,” said the Archbishop on behalf of all the French Bishops, adding: “With no less force, I also wish to express our communion with the people of Gaza, who are subjected to terrible bombardments and civilian deaths, and who find themselves prisoners of Hamas' will to harm and of Israel's retaliatory action.”

