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France adds thousands of police, troops to guard possible targets

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu welcomes any French Jew who feels insecure in France, to move to Israel

By: [Tanya Talaga](#) Staff Reporter, Published on Mon Jan 12 2015

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is inviting French Jews to return to Israel in wake of the anti-Semitic murders during a Paris hostage siege, while French President François Hollande on Monday moved to reassure Jews of their safety in France.

The French government announced Monday 4,700 police officers have been dispatched to protect 717 Jewish schools and religious sites while another 10,000 soldiers will patrol all sensitive areas including train stations, museums and airports.

Last week, [three days of terror in Paris left 17 people dead](#), along with the three Islamic militants who carried out the attacks. French authorities are now urgently searching for as many as six other accomplices whom they believe were part of a terrorist cell that was involved in the planning of the massacre at the magazine Charlie Hebdo, and the murder of four during a hostage-taking at a Jewish supermarket.

Two French-born brothers, [Saïd Kouachi, 34, and Chérif Kouachi, 32](#), died in a hail of gunfire on Friday. They were responsible for the meticulously planned assault on Charlie Hebdo that left 12 dead — including some of France's best-known cartoonists, last Wednesday. The Kouachi brothers, before being shot dead by police, had told a French news agency they were linked to Al Qaeda in Yemen.

Amedy Coulibaly, the gunman who held up the Jewish supermarket in Porte de Vincennes on Friday, declared in a video posted Sunday that he was affiliated with the Islamic State group. Parts of the video he left behind appear to have been edited after his death, leading police to believe Coulibaly did not act alone.

Coulibaly's common-law partner, [Hayat Boumeddiene, 25](#), is wanted by French authorities and police are searching for the whereabouts of her Mini Cooper and for the unknown man who was recently seen driving it.



FRANCOIS MORI / AP

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visits the kosher supermarket in Paris where four hostages were killed last week.

According to phone and travel records, Boumeddiene reportedly arrived in Turkey from Spain on Jan. 2, before disappearing into Syria last Thursday, said Mevluet Cavusoglu, the Turkish foreign minister. That was the same day it is suspected that Coulibaly shot dead rookie French police officer Clarissa Jean-Philippe, 25, in Paris.

There is video footage purporting to be of Boumeddiene at the Istanbul airport. The Guardian reports she was accompanied by Mehdi Sabri Belhouichine, 23, a French national, who did not appear to be on any terror watch list.

French Prime Minister Manuel Valls said Monday that the threat against France “is still present.”

“The work on these attacks, on these terrorist and barbaric acts continues . . . because we consider that there are most probably some possible accomplices,” Valls told BFM television.

While the attacks have been met with anti-terror rallies across France, Europe and even North America, it has opened the wound of previous hate crimes against Jews in France. On Monday in Paris, Netanyahu visited the kosher supermarket, Hyper Cacher, to pay tribute to the [four victims of the attack](#) — Joav Hattab, 21, Johan Cohen, 22, Philippe Braham, 45, and François-Michel Saada, 60.

Netanyahu was in Paris, along with dozens of other world leaders including German Chancellor Angela Merkel, and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, to join Hollande and millions of French citizens for Sunday’s massive rally in support of freedom of speech and against terror.

Israeli media reported sources said Hollande asked Netanyahu not to attend the Sunday rally so that attention wouldn’t be focused on the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. When Netanyahu said he’d go anyway, the French asked Abbas to join the rally.

At the Great Synagogue of Paris on Sunday evening, Netanyahu told Jews they have the right to live in safety as citizens with equal rights “wherever you wish, including here in France.”

“But Jews of our time have been blessed with another right, a right that did not exist for previous generations of Jews: The right to join their Jewish brothers and sisters in our historic homeland Any Jew who wishes to immigrate to Israel will be welcomed with open arms and warm and accepting hearts,” he said.

Nearly 7,000 French Jews left France to immigrate to Israel last year and Avi Benlolo, president and CEO of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre in Toronto, said he expects more will leave this year.

The horrific attacks last week has drawn attention to extremism but for a number of years, the Jewish community in France has been under attack, said Benlolo, pointing to Toulouse, where three children and a rabbi were killed in a Jewish school in 2012.

“You must look at this in context. This isn’t just about what happened on Friday. This has been going on for some time,” he said.

Benlolo said he met with Hollande in June and they discussed racist attacks.

“We talked about this very thing. He agreed with it and promised the state has to beef up security for the Jewish community and that didn’t happen. Do we really have a future here (in France?) Are we really protected? Those are legitimate questions,” he said.

In the aftermath of a terror attack, public fear mounts, said Janice Stein, a professor at the Munk School of Global Affairs at the University of Toronto.

“Usually a period of intense fear based on traumatic events and uncertainty of what is coming next. Really the responsibility of leaders is to deal with that fear. You need to reassure the public. No one can promise there will not be another attack. When you look back at the history of these sorts of attacks, it has happened others follow quickly but it is not common,” she said.

The mobilization of soldiers isn’t necessarily designed to ward off threat but to reassure people, she said.

“What you are seeing in Europe is what you could only hope for — political leaders are talking about unity. Muslim leaders are coming out in unprecedented numbers to condemn attacks and separate themselves and the religion they practice from violence,” she said.

With files from Star wire services