American Foreign Policy Council

France

QUICK FACTS

Population: 65,951,611

Area: 643,801 sq km

Ethnic Groups: Celtic and Latin with Teutonic, Slavic, North African, Indochinese, Basque minorities

Religions: Roman Catholic 83%-88%, Protestant 2%, Jewish 1%, Muslim 5%-10%, unaffiliated 4%

Government Types: Republic

GDP (official exchange rate): $2.58 trillion

Map and Quick Facts courtesy of the CIA World Factbook (Last Updated June 2013)

France houses a large Muslim minority, primarily of North African provenance. While many immigrants are non-observant (in line with a general French tendency toward secularism and a de-emphasis of religious affiliation), Islamist organizations actively promote a resurgence of a politicized and ideological Muslim identity. Target groups include youth, especially in the ethnic ghettos of cities where immigrant populations are concentrated. There is considerable tension within the Muslim leadership between advocates of secular French identity and proponents of the Islamist goal of a communitarian cultural separatism. In addition, the trans-Mediterranean immigration patterns and historical French colonial ties to North Africa contribute to a spill-over of Islamist terrorist activity from Algeria into France. Jihadist activists with links to al-Qaeda move between Algeria and France, as well as other European countries. French Islamism, in

turn, has become part of global jihadist networks.
The response of the French state has evolved from earlier efforts to portray itself as the bridge between the Arab world and Europe to a more recent insistence on the value of French identity and the importance of secularism, exemplified in regulations such as the 2004 prohibition on the wearing of headscarves in public schools. Furthermore, in contrast to the weak French response to terrorism in the 1980s, France more recently has developed an effective and robust set of counter-terrorism practices.

ISLAMIST ACTIVITY

Union des organizations islamiques de France (UOIF)
Founded in 1983 as a small circle of foreign student activists with Islamist leanings, the Union of Islamic Organizations in France has grown into an umbrella organization claiming to represent between one to two hundred Muslim groupings in France.[1] It plays a role in coordinating activities among its member associations, and is the owner of some mosques in the major cities of France. The UOIF is the French member of the London-based Federation of Islamic Organizations in Europe, active in promoting the study of Islam through its European Institute for the Human Sciences, dedicated to Islamic theology and related studies, with two campuses in France.[2] The UOIF has also established several specialized organizations, including the Young Muslims of France (JMF), the Muslim Students of France (EMF), and the French League of the Muslim Woman (LFFM).[3] These organizations contribute to the dissemination of Islamist positions and the construction of separatist communitarian identity politics. While the UOIF presents itself simply as an advocate of Muslim interests, critics point out that it engages in a "double discourse," paying lip service in public to the priority of tolerance for secular French values, while at the same time promoting Islamist content (replete with intolerance, misogyny, homophobia and anti-Semitism) to its target populations.[4]

The UOIF has attained considerable public and political resonance through a disproportionate role within the French Council of the Muslim Religion (CFCM) which was established in 2003 by then-Minister of the Interior Nicolas Sarkozy as the official representation of Muslims in France.[5] The CFCM's responsibilities pertain to interactions between the French state and the Muslim community, e.g., the construction of mosques, oversight of *halal* food, provision of Muslim spiritual services in the military and in prisons, etc. In contrast to the CFCM's administrative and technical functions, the UOIF has wider cultural and political ambitions. "In France, the extremist UOIF has become the predominant organization within the government's Islamic Council" where it can eclipse moderate or secular Muslim voices,"

experts have noted.[6] While the inclusion of the UOIF in the CFCM may have been intended as a strategy of cooptation to move it toward the center, it has allowed the relatively small UOIF to emerge as an influential representative of the much more diverse and generally less ideological Muslim population in France.[7]

While the UOIF's explicit goals include the religious, cultural, educational, social and humanitarian needs of the Muslim population of France, with priority given to facilitating religious practice, critics allege that it is close to the Egyptian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood and pursues a goal of communitarian separatism.[8] This agenda involves two aspects: transforming France into a safe haven for radicals engaged in militant Islamist politics in North Africa or elsewhere, especially in the Arab world, while also exercising political identity pressure on the Muslims in France to conform to increasingly repressive interpretations of Islam: a sort of "reactionary and paternalist populism."[9] "The UOIF tries to rein in the Muslims of France. Some associations affiliated with the movement claim the right to say who is a good Muslim and who is, therefore, an apostate," observes Islam expert Fiametta Venner. "This is all the more alarming since these people are not theologians—almost none of the directors of the UOIF pursued studies in this area—and they have a very narrow vision of Islam. They are satisfied with instrumentalizing the religion to pursue a reactionary political project of separatism."[10]

During the 2012 election campaign, Nicolas Sarkozy criticized the UOIF for ties to extremist preachers. Ahmed Jaballah, the President of the UOIF since 2011, insisted on the apolitical character of the organization, while attributing Sarkozy's criticisms to electoral politics. In addition, he articulated a vision of a moderate Islam within the context of French secularism as an alternative to radical tendencies, implicitly carving out a space hospitable to the Muslim Brotherhood but less welcoming of Salafist positions.[11] Meanwhile, like many religious organizations in France, the UOIF has expressed its opposition to the campaign for gay marriage which emerged as a key political question. While it claimed to identify a slippery slope toward other unconventional living arrangements, the UOIF carefully avoided discussions of polygamy.[12]

Front islamique francais armé (FIFA)
The Armed French Islamic Front is a violent organization that claimed responsibility for the October 2004 bombing of the Indonesian embassy in Paris. In that incident, it demanded the release of two members of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), a terrorist organization considered close to al-Qaeda which has as its goal an Islamist transformation of Algeria.[13] The FIFA also called for French support for the admission of Turkey into the European

Union and a rollback of France's stance on secularization.[14] In addition, it demanded the censorship of all anti-Muslim publications, singling out in particular the novel *Platform* by the French author Michel Houllebecq, which addresses questions of immigration and global terrorism.[15] (In 2002 Houllebecq was brought to court for statements critical of Islam, but he was acquitted of the hate speech charge.) There is no up-to-date information readily available on FIFA, however, and the organization appears to be dormant and/or inactive.

Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)
Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb is a terrorist group based primarily in Algeria, although it operates more widely in North Africa and with links to Europe. Over time, it has transformed from an organization committed to a local Islamist insurgency into a wider network pursuing a program of global *jihad*. As a result, AQIM has begun to be recognized as a threat in Europe, especially (but not exclusively) in France. As the State Department's 2008 *Country Reports on Terrorism* noted, "France remained a target for al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), which posed a considerable threat to French interests, underscored in statements made by al-Qa'ida (AQ) senior leadership or AQIM itself."[16] Similarly, Europol's *EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report* for that year asserts that "France, Italy, Spain and Portugal consider that the increasing activities of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) aiming at international targets have an impact on the threat level in their member states." [17] AQIM played a leading role in the 2012 Islamist insurgency in Mali.

Given the long history of French colonialism in Algeria, the large North African population in France, and trans-Mediterranean cultural contacts, politics in Algeria have often spilled over into France. Yet the recent emergence of AQIM as a threat in Europe derives from important shifts in the character of Islamist radicalism in Algeria itself. In 1992, the Algerian military government cancelled elections in which an Islamist coalition, the Islamic Salvation Front, was likely to come to power. A violent civil war erupted, during which the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) became notorious for its brutality against civilians in Algeria. However, the GIA also carried out attacks in France, most notoriously a 1995 bombing in Paris at the Saint-Michel underground station, causing eight deaths and wounding more than 100.[18]

Fearing that the GIA strategy was undermining the Islamist cause, a splinter group known as the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) was formed. The GSPC was similarly dedicated to Islamist militancy, but embraced alternative tactics that would not endanger civilians. While this tactical moderation led initially to a surge in popular support and a growth

in the GSPC's membership (peaking at around 28,000 in the late 1990s), a successful counter-terrorism campaign by Algerian forces eroded the group's numbers significantly.[19] However, in 2004, GSPC leader Abdelmalek Droukdal reached out to Abu Musaf al-Zarqawi, the leader of al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia (also known as al-Qaeda in Iraq, or AQI) and the GSPC, with its Algeria focus, was reinvented as AQIM. Just as AQI was compelled to relocate into marginal territories (in their case, the mountainous tribal areas between Pakistan and Afghanistan), so too did AQIM develop operational skills in desert regions, especially Chad, as well as the Algerian hills outside of Algiers. Its aspirations grew from local insurgency to a pan-Maghreb transformation and finally to global *jihadism*, leading to a series of attacks, kidnappings and murder, targeting Europeans in North Africa and international organizations, including a UN site in Algiers.

AQIM has also turned its sights on Europe. In September 2005, Droukdal designated France as "our No. 1 enemy, the enemy of our religion and of our community."[20] While the threat has not yet resulted in major attacks in France on the scale of Madrid (2004) or London (2005), this may be due to the success of French counterterrorism efforts; over the years since, a number of Algerians and French-Algerians plotting terrorist attacks have been arrested in France.[21] AQIM, meanwhile, remains active outside of Europe. While the preponderance of AQIM activity remains in North Africa, its victims increasingly include Europeans, as well as North Africans, and there are strong indications that it is trying to develop the capacity to carry out attacks in France and possibly other European countries as well.

Precise numbers of the AQIM membership remain elusive. Yet even if its numbers are small, it has acquired considerable resources thanks to profitable kidnappings and participation in drug trafficking. General Carter Hamm, the head of U.S. Africa Command, has called AQIM "al-Qaeda's best funded, wealthiest affiliate" and ascribes to it the dominant role in the Malian insurgency.[22] The uprising began in early 2012 and involved AQIM and other Islamist groups, building an alliance with Tuareg separatists. The alliance remained unstable and largely collapsed due to the sharia stringency of the Islamist participants.[23] Yet initially the insurgency appeared poised to penetrate the southern part of the country and threaten the national government in Bamako. Newly-elected French President Francois Hollande authorized a military expedition to prevent an Islamist take-over—an effort which has met with success.

Yet the French presence in Mali, a former colony, has potentially set the stage for new forms of Islamist terrorism in France itself. While France's intervention met with considerable support from the Malian community in France,

the leading French counter-terrorist judge, Marc Trévidic, has expressed concern that it will contribute to the recruitment of new terrorists among Islamist sympathizers in France, especially among the young and marginalized members of immigrant communities.[24]

ISLAMISM AND SOCIETY

The French tradition of secularism derives from the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, the revolution of 1789, and the firm establishment of the separation of religion and state through the conflicts between the French state and the Catholic Church in the late nineteenth century. A core value of the French republic is *laicité*, meaning a commitment to the non-confessional character of public life. Historically, the French population was, in terms of religious affiliation, extensively Catholic, with small Protestant and Jewish minorities. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the processes of secularization took root in earnest, contributing to a widespread decline in the importance of religious affiliation as a feature of cultural modernity.

According to one recent poll, 64 percent of French citizens described themselves as Catholic in 2009 (in contrast to 81 percent in 1965). However, only 4.5 percent of those same respondents reported attending Mass on a weekly basis.[25] In contrast, the *CIA World Factbook* counts 83-88 percent of the French as Catholic, 2 percent as Protestant, and 1 percent as Jewish, and 5-10 percent as Muslim.

Islam, barely present in France before 1945, arrived along with a wave of immigrant labor, primarily from North Africa, and has become the second largest religious affiliation in France. Muslims make up between five to ten percent of the total population, and Islam is the religion of two-thirds of all immigrants. Since 1872, French law has prohibited any identification of citizens by religion, even for census purposes, so precise numbers are hard to come by. Estimates of the number of Muslims in France range between four and six million. An Interior Ministry report published in 2000 claimed four million Muslims in France also specifying that 1,550,000 have an Algerian background and 1,000,000 are Moroccan. That report likewise estimates that 40,000 French citizens have become converts to Islam.[26] However a Pew Research Center report from 2010 reports 4.7 million Muslims, and French polls, also from 2010, find the number of converts between 70,000 and 110,000. [27] Of the sixteen million Muslims living in the European Union, about a third live in France, concentrated in the Ile-de-France region around Paris, in the south of France and the industrial north.[28]

Islam is, after Catholicism, the second most common religion in France. Of

the French Muslim population, about a third describes itself as "observant." An extensive secularization of the Muslim population is consistent with the decline of observant practices in other religious traditions. However there are indications that Muslim youth practice their religion at rates higher than the Catholic majority, pointing toward a potential emerge of Islam as the primary religion in France: 65% of practicing Catholics are older than 50, while 73% of practicing Muslims are younger than 54.[29] As of 2012, there were between 2000 and 2200 mosques in France. [30] (Some of these are small, store-front style prayer rooms, while others are large architectural works. In some instances, the construction of new mosques has led to protests, similar to those in Switzerland; yet Muslim advocates complain that the floor space available for Muslim prayer services remains insufficient.)

The rise of a minority Islamism within the Muslim community can be viewed in part as a reaction against the modernization of lifestyles within immigrant communities. The mobilization of Islamist identity frequently involves younger generations rebelling against the aspirations for integration harbored by older generations of immigrants.[31]

Islamist recruitment in France has multiple dimensions. One key venue is the mosque, although of the total number of mosques very few (less than 80) are considered to be sources of potential threats.[32] In some cases, the mosque imam provides the radical ideology, but in others *jihadist* recruiters may be active without the knowledge of the imam. Significant recruitment, including proselytization, likewise takes place in prisons; French prison populations are often more than 50 percent Muslim, at times reaching 80 percent in certain areas.[33] Activists reach out both to non-observant Muslim inmates, as well as to non-Muslims who are prospects for conversion. A third avenue of recruitment involves contact with French *jihadis*, i.e., veterans of the conflicts in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Chechnya and Iraq, who have returned to France and who may form ad hoc groups to support or carry out terrorist attacks.[34]

The conflict between modernizing pressure and Muslim identity underlies the controversy regarding the headscarf, or *hijab*. Islamist pressure to establish separatist communitarian identity focuses on symbols and practices to separate Muslims from secular French society. In 2004, facing a growing Muslim population in public schools with increasing numbers of women wearing the headscarf, the French government promulgated a law banning ostentatious religious symbols in the schools, in the spirit of *laicité*.[35] While the law also pertains to Christian and Jewish symbols, the key issue was the Muslim headscarf or veil. The controversy underscored the gap between French norms of secular modernity and the neo-traditionalism of Islamist

behavior. (It should be noted, as a point of comparison, that until comparatively recently headscarves were similarly banned in Turkish universities, a legacy of the secularist foundations of the modern Turkish state.[36]) A primary goal of Islamism involves the assertion of patriarchal norms and the resistance to the spread of equal rights to Muslim women.[37]

Muslim immigrant populations are frequently concentrated in the ethnic ghettos of the *banlieues*, the working-class suburbs surrounding French urban centers, where they remain marginalized, facing discrimination and weathering high unemployment rates. This concentration of social problems has led repeatedly to outbreaks of mass violence. In 2005, in response to the deaths of two teenagers in Clichy-sous-Bois, near Paris, local rioting erupted, spreading rapidly across the country. A state of emergency was declared, resulting in three thousand arrests. Damage to property totaled 200 million Euros.[38] Another series of riots broke out in 2009.[39] Such unrest has contributed to a profound social anxiety about *sécurité*, a term which has implications stretching from crime-in-the-streets to terrorism.

Youth in the ghettos are viewed as susceptible to the radical ideologies purveyed by Islamist organizations. Particular violence has erupted toward Jewish communities—the French Jewish community is the largest in Europe, and includes significant numbers of immigrants from North Africa. However, some Muslim leaders (among them the imam of the Mosque of Drancy) have been vocal critics of anti-Semitic words and deeds, in turn facing attacks themselves.[40] An especially grisly crime involved the kidnapping of Ilan Halimi, the son of Moroccan Jewish immigrants, in Bagneux, a suburb south of Paris, by a group of Muslim delinquents that dubbed itself the "gang of barbarians." The group held Halimi for ransom because he was Jewish, subjecting him to torture before abandoning him outdoors in the winter; he succumbed to his wounds.[41] The ensuing 2009 trial attracted widespread attention. While the perpetrators were not directly involved in political Islamist ideological movements, they operated in a milieu in which Islamist predispositions, including a cult of violence and anti-Semitism, were commonplace. Within the larger Muslim population in France—including the two-thirds which is not observant—such radicalism is rare. There are vocal criticisms of Islamism articulated by Muslims who advocate the ideal of the modern, tolerant republic.[42]

However, the alienated fringe of the ghettoes provides fertile ground for the spread of Islamist beliefs and organizations, just as it remains a source of radical violence. In March 2012, 23 year-old Mohammed Merah, an unemployed French citizen from the Algerian immigrant community of Toulouse, went on a shooting spree, killing a French paratrooper in Toulouse and two

soldiers in nearby Montauban. Merah specifically targeted French-Algerians in the military in response to French participation in the Afghanistan war. On March 19th, he attacked the Jewish day school Ozar Hatorah in Toulouse, where he killed a teacher and three children. A manhunt ensued, France activated its *Vigipirate* counter-terrorism force, and Merah was killed during a siege of his apartment building. Grotesquely, he had filmed all the shootings with a camera strapped to his border. Before his death, he sent the recording, against the backdrop of Koran verses and music, to *Al Jazeera*. Merah had previously travelled throughout the Middle East and had associations with radical groups. Reports indicate ideological motivations for the killings.[43] Yet some commentators attempted to minimize the political content by pointing to his psychological and personal difficulties.[44] Nonetheless, investigations continue to explore the extent to which Merah relied on support from others.[45]

The circulation of Islamist ideas in parts of the Muslim community in France results from multiple sources: the connection to foreign organs of global *jihadism* (such as AQIM), the domestic advocacy of proponents of Islamist identity (like UOIF) as well as certain aspects of the larger context of French politics. In the wake of the U.S. response to the 9/11 attacks, including the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, then-President of France Jacques Chirac became a vocal opponent of U.S. foreign policy. The resulting trans-Atlantic tension between France and the United States amplified some long-standing differences, and contributed to a wave of anti-Americanism. Suspicion toward American culture and foreign policy became widespread in the French public, and that milieu in turn contributed to the incubation of anti-modern and anti-American Islamist sentiments in the Muslim subculture. For example, Thierry Meyssan's 2002 book 9/11-*The Big Lie*—with its fringe allegation that the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington were the result of a U.S. government conspiracy—became quite popular. Meyssan himself is hardly mainstream, and his positions have been denounced in the country's centrist press, yet his volume won wide distribution—a telling indicator of the anti-American currents in French culture. Islamist radicalization in France, therefore, can represent simultaneously a rejection of French secular modernism and an imitation of some widely-held French animosities toward the U.S. French anti-Americanism spiked during the Chirac presidency as an expression of hostility toward U.S. policies under George W. Bush. During the Sarkozy presidency, anti-Americanism began to decline, and that tendency has continued with the election of Barack Obama in the U.S. in 2008 and Francois Hollande in France in 2011.[46] Nonetheless, according to research by the Pew Research Center, significant values differences remain, and these could turn into anti-American sentiment in certain political contexts.[47]

ISLAMISM AND THE STATE

A modern liberal democracy with a tradition of secularism dating back to the eighteenth century, France is also a key ally of the United States, despite occasional foreign policy differences. French troops have played an important role in the war in Afghanistan, while the French state is actively engaged in resisting Islamism, both domestically and internationally.

Nonetheless, some policies of the French state have contributed to the growth of Islamism in France—most notably the official encouragement of Muslim immigration, especially from North Africa, into France. As noted earlier, Islamists represent only a small minority within the French Muslim population. Yet it is also the case that Islamism in France is inseparable from the history of immigration and the associated policies that have failed to integrate the immigrant communities into French society. Pro-immigration policies to attract low-wage labor without effective integration have created the social problems of the *banlieues*, where Islamism has been able to fester.

Building on its history of colonialism, France, especially under Charles de Gaulle, aspired to become the European gateway to the Arab world through a systematic courting of the post-colonial regimes of North Africa. Public discourse in France, therefore, tended to be more pro-Arab than elsewhere in the West. However the rise of an emphatically religious Islamism ran counter to French commitments to *laicité*, generating policy shifts under Sarkozy, in particular an open promotion of French national identity. In October 2009, then-Minister of Immigration Eric Besson called for public debate over "the theme of what it is to be French, what are the values we share, what are the relations that make us French and of which we should be proud."[48] He insisted on a particular valorization of Frenchness: "We must reaffirm the values of French national identity and the pride in being French." This effort by the state to mobilize a focus on nationality was intended as an effort to overcome immigrant (and especially Islamist) separatism, and in the years since, this discussion has shifted increasingly toward secularism. To question the role of religion in the public sphere in France is, above all, a vehicle to inquire about the status of politicized Islam.

Yet the conflict between the republican secularism of the state and the politicization of religion inherent in Islamism continues. In 2009, a debate began over prospective legislation to ban full-length cloaks, the *burqa* and the *niqab* (the latter leaves the eyes uncovered) from public venues. Initially proposed by a Communist mayor of a town with a high Muslim population, its intention was to protect women and to defend French values of secularism. It was adopted with support of conservative President Sarkozy and his party,

but the Socialist Party did not oppose it; current Socialist President Hollande has indicated that he does not plan to pursue a retraction of the ban, which has strong popular support.[49] Taking the longer view, however, it is clear that there has been a profound shift in France from the era of emphatic trans-Mediterranean cooperation to the current state promotion of French national identity and integration over multicultural separatism. The traditional French value of secularism serves as the basis for public criticism and legislative action against symbols of Islamist allegiance.

This cultural-ideological resistance to Islamism on the part of the state accompanies a muscular set of policing and counterterrorism practices that distinguish the current French response to Islamist violence. French counterterrorism has matured over the past three decades. During the 1980s, Middle Eastern terrorist organizations carried out repeated attacks in France, exposing the inadequacy of French intelligence services. France gained the unenviable reputation as a terrorist haven, in part as a corollary to its pro-Arab foreign policy. Nonetheless, counterterrorist capacities grew during the 1990s, and French forces successfully interrupted plots to carry out attacks at the World Cup (1998), the Strasbourg Cathedral (2000) and the American Embassy (2001).[50]

In 1986, legislation centralized the French counterterrorism strategy by locating all judicial proceedings in the Trial Court of Paris. This organizational strategy has allowed the development of specialized expertise relevant to terrorism cases. Rather than leaving the sophisticated and security-sensitive cases in the hands of potentially inexperienced provincial magistrates, the 1986 law mandates the priority of the Parisian venue to maximize the utilization of specialist expertise. These judges, the *juges d'instruction*, combine judicial and police functions, insofar as they are charged with conducting inquiries, authorizing searches and overseeing wiretaps and other related matters—all of which in the U.S. would be dependent on independent judicial control. The *juges d'instruction* regularly collaborate with the *Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire* (DST), the domestic security service that is part of the Ministry of the Interior. This sort of cooperation between judicial and executive powers is less controversial within French political culture than it would be in the U.S.

Nevertheless, French counterterrorism practices have faced criticism on civil rights and human rights grounds. The promulgation of laws criminalizing terrorist conspiracies (rather than simply terrorist attacks themselves) has elicited denunciations on the grounds that it represents an ominous expansion of state power. However, this pursuit of conspiracies has been defended as the only way to prevent catastrophic attacks, such as the successful dis-

ruption of the plans for terrorist violence at the World Cup at the *Stade de France*.[51] Still, Amnesty International and other watchdogs continue to criticize France for its prosecution of conspiracy charges as a "criminal association in relation to a terrorist undertaking."[52]

For civil rights activists, the situation was exacerbated by 2008 legislation that authorized preventive detention in certain cases. After the completion of a sentence, an individual whom a judge deems to be dangerous may face an extended sentence for renewable periods of one year. In addition, the police were granted the authority to develop intelligence files on all individuals over the age of thirteen who are deemed to represent a threat to public order. While criticisms of this counterterrorism regime continue, to date France was successful in thwarting large-scale domestic attacks for several years, up until the 2012 Toulouse shootings. Until then, there had been no return to the violence of the 1980s, when terrorists seemed able to act in France with impunity and little fear of sanctions. Marc Trévidic, the counter-terrorism magistrate, has however expressed the fear that the Toulouse attack could result in the weakening, rather than the strengthening, of surveillance of potential terrorists. Mohammed Merah had been under surveillance but was nonetheless able to carry out the killings, which lead to public criticism of the counterintelligence community. Trévidic has argued that the agency may respond by pulling back its operations precisely in order to avoid this criticism in the future: "After Merah, our policemen are afraid […] They don't want to monitor people for a long time after they come back [from foreign travel to Islamist territories], because if they monitor someone and this guy commits a bomb attack it will be terrible a second time for [the counterintelligence agency]."[53] The alternative, an early arrest of a potential terrorist, would likely not be sustainable due to insufficient evidence. It therefore remains an open question as to how France will respond if local Islamist radicals travel to North Africa to cooperate with terrorist groups and then return to France as potential domestic threats.

ENDNOTES

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[3] Venner, *OPA sur l'Islam de France*, 133-153; Michèle Vianès, *Silence, on Manipule: les Islamistes en Manoeuvre* [Exploiting the Silence: Islamists in Action] (Paris: Editions Hors Commerce, 2004), 58.
[4] Venner, *OPA sur l'Islam de France,* 158.
[5] Representation in the CFCM depends on the size of mosque space controlled by an organization. See Vianès, *Silence, on Manipule*, 18-19.
[6] Lorenzo Vidino, "The Muslim Brotherhood's Conquest of Europe," *Middle East Quarterly 12*, no. 1 (Winter 2005), 25-34.
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