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Religious Discrimination in France

**CAP Submission Regarding the Appointment of
Mr. Georges Fenech as President of MIVILUDES**

Coordination des Associations et des Particuliers pour la Liberté de Conscience – Coordination of Associations and Individuals for Freedom of Conscience (CAP) is an interfaith association created in 2000 to unite minority religions in France. CAP's purpose is to oppose discrimination concerning the right to freedom of conscience and belief in France and to denounce actions which violate human rights and are a threat to fundamental liberties. Members of CAP include adherents to numerous minority faiths targeted for discriminatory measures as "sects" by the government.

On 19 September 2008, Prime Minister Fillon appointed Mr. Georges Fenech, former Magistrate and Member of Parliament, as Chairman of MIVILUDES (the Inter-Ministerial Mission of Vigilance to Fight against Sectarian Drifts). MIVILUDES was formed on 28 November 2002 by the Prime Minister. MIVILUDES is an inter-ministerial government entity tasked to collect data on religious movements and inform the public about the "risks of sectarian deviances". MIVILUDES is composed of a President, a Secretary General with a task force of twelve Officials assigned from government ministries, an Executive Committee composed of 18 government officials from nine ministries, and an Advisory Council composed of eight members of Parliament, eight associations, and 14 experts.

Mr. Fenech assumed his position as President of MIVILUDES on 1 October, 2008. This appointment is of great concern to CAP and many religious organizations in France. As detailed below, Mr. Fenech is unfit for such a high level government appointment due to his controversial background which includes Mr. Fenech currently facing criminal charges. In addition, Mr. Fenech has exhibited a complete lack of objectivity and neutrality on the issue of religious tolerance. His appointment represents a backward step for religious freedom and tolerance in France.

By way of background, Mr. Fenech was appointed as a Magistrate in 1984. He was President of the [Association Professionnelle des Magistrats](#) (APM) from 1996 to 1998, a union of judges. He was elected as a Member of Parliament in [2002](#) and took a leave of absence from his function as a Magistrate during his mandate as an MP.

Controversial Background

Mr. Fenech has a background that makes him an inappropriate official to assume the role of President of MIVILUDES.

- In July 2001, Mr. Fenech was indicted based on charges of “concealment of misuse of company assets” regarding 100,000 FF (15 000€) he received in the name of the Union of Magistrates (APM). The charges indicate that these funds stem directly from illegal sales of arms to Angola. The committal for trial involving nearly 40 accused and consisting of 468 pages was released in April 2007.¹ The criminal trial of this case is due to start on 6 October 2008.
- In 2008, Mr. Fenech was summoned to Court on 16 October 2008 by officials of the political party La France en Action for insults and defamation for stating that the party was linked to “sectarian” organizations and was covertly promoting and financing a number of “sects”.
- In March 2008, Mr. Fenech was sanctioned as a Member of Parliament by the Constitutional Court due to financial irregularities during his election campaign which constituted an “*offence*” to articles 52-8 et LO136-1 of the election Code. His mandate as an MP was cancelled and he was declared ineligible for one year.
- In December 1998, Mr. Fenech’s application to the position of First Judge of Instruction in Paris was rejected by the Ministry of Justice because of “words with anti-Semitic connotations” in the magazine managed by Mr. Fenech as President of APM and “questions generated, from the viewpoint of Magistrates, by his participation to an unofficial mission of observation of the presidential elections in Gabon”.

¹ See AFP wire of 6 April 2007.

A few days after his parliamentary mandate was cancelled, Mr. Fenech was appointed in April 2008 by the Prime Minister to conduct a study and evaluation of the Judiciary to ensure that it is set up to "fight more efficiently" against "sectarian abuses". On 27 August 2008, Mr. Fenech was appointed as First Substitute at the Central Administration of the Minister of Justice. Concerns were formulated by some magistrates following this appointment that Mr. Fenech could use his new position to put pressure on his criminal case before trial. The conflict of interest was pointed out in *Libération* on 23 July 2008 when it stated:

"Controversial come back of Fenech amongst the judges: the appointment of the indicted former Member of Parliament from UMP at the Ministry of Justice is of concern to some magistrates".

Lack of Objectivity in Contravention of the Principles of Non-Discrimination and Objectivity

In addition to his controversial background, Mr. Fenech also has taken positions against the rights of religious organizations derogatorily referred to as "sects" in France that contravene the principles of non-discrimination and equality regarding religious organizations.

The intolerant position of Mr. Fenech towards minority faiths is also evidenced by his statement that he does not believe in dialogue with groups labelled by him as "sectarian movements" in spite of the fact that there is no definition of this phrase. When interviewed on 8 June 2007 on Sud Radio he stated:

"I have never dialogued with whoever would have ties with a sectarian movement."

This extreme position contravenes Article 17 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union² which France is bound by and which provides:

"1. The Union respects and does not prejudice the status under national law of churches and religious associations or communities in the Member States.

2. The Union equally respects the status under national law of philosophical and non-confessional organisations.

*3. Recognising their identity and their specific contribution, **the Union shall maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with these churches and organisations.***"

Mr. Fenech is obviously not the person who will ensure the fulfilment of these provisions; his appointment to head an inter-ministerial mission under the Prime Minister's responsibility is therefore inappropriate.

This intolerant position of Mr. Fenech regarding minority faiths in France is also evidenced in his actions chairing the Parliamentary Commission on Minors in Sects. In June 2006, with only 10 out of 577 members of Parliament present at the French National Assembly, eight of those present appointed themselves members of the third Parliamentary Inquiry Commission in eleven years regarding minority faiths in France, this one focusing on youth.

² Official Journal C 115 of 9 May 2008 (Consolidated Version).

This inquiry regarding youth and minority faiths is ironic as the United Nations Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief published a report in March 2006 regarding her visit to France in which she determined that the methods of the first two Parliamentary inquiries and divisive policies adopted by the government at that time has resulted in " *the public condemnation of some of these groups, as well as the stigmatization of their members, has led to certain forms of discrimination, in particular vis-à-vis their children*".

Rather than attempt to repair these human rights shortcomings identified by the UN Religious Freedom Rapporteur, as the foremost UN expert on international human rights law and religious freedom, the Parliamentary Commission under Mr. Fenech's leadership instead attempted to compound the problem of religious intolerance directed at children of minority faiths by holding biased hearings to attempt to justify draconian laws and "awareness campaigns" designed to:

- take custody away from a parent or parents of children of minority faiths;
- stigmatize and marginalize such children in public educational institutions;
- subject such children to discriminatory examinations and treatment;
- refuse to respect the fundamental human right of parents to raise their children in accordance with their own religious beliefs;
- bias court officials against members of minority faiths through "awareness sessions" on so-called sects;³ and
- expand the highly controversial and internationally criticized About-Picard law through further repressive legislation.

The tactics of Mr. Fenech and the Commission were criticized by the United States State Department in its 2007 Human Rights Report. The State Department noted that:

"Members of Jehovah's Witnesses also alleged that during the reporting period the rapporteur and the secretary of the newly convened commission openly attacked them, describing them as delinquents and criminals and labeling their activities as "mafia like." The Commission's report also elicited criticism from other minority religious and civil rights groups, which labeled the Commission's conclusions an affront to freedom of conscience and religious belief".

During a public hearing of the Commission presided by Mr Fenech, Jean-Pierre Brard, Secretary of the Commission, asked Jean-Yves Dupuis, representative of the Ministry of National Education, who had explained that the children of Jehovah Witnesses were actually considered as model students by the French National Education: *"Am I right that the [Ministry of] National Education has the objective of developing the sense of criticism? Can we consider that the Jehovah's Witnesses are making handicapped children, intellectually speaking?"*

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Such "awareness" programs for court officials have been condemned by the United Nations Human Rights Committee. In its Concluding Observations of the Human Rights Committee: Germany. 18/11/96 (CCPR/C/79/Add.73), the Human Rights Committee recommended, in strikingly similar circumstances, that Germany discontinue the holding of "sensitizing sessions for judges against the practices of certain designated sects". Otherwise, the right to a fair trial is destroyed for religious minorities.

Mr. Fenech raised the *"problem of legitimacy of the intervention of a judge, a prosecutor, a social worker when nothing indicates a danger"*, when dealing with *"a family which looks normal, which needs no external intervention but the children are raised in a family which is caught in a sectarian grip"*. He made the following suggestion: *"Could we envision an ex officio intervention for example from the moment we find out that a child belongs to a family and to a certain group?"*

Mr. Fenech implies that even though a family "looks normal" and needs no "external intervention", the State can intervene because of the purported existence of a danger for the child by reason only of the beliefs of his parents, which are deemed to pertain to a "sectarian" movement.

The entire approach of this Commission headed by Mr. Fenech violated fundamental human rights principles. Article 18 (4) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights requires States to "undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions". Likewise, Protocol 1, Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights requires States to "respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions".

Conclusion

In her report on her visit to France, the UN Special Rapporteur for Religious Freedom included the following recommendations to the UN General Assembly:

"111. The Special Rapporteur hopes that future actions of MIVILUDES will be in line with the right to freedom of religion or belief and avoid past mistakes. She will continue to closely monitor the various efforts that are carried out by MIVILUDES.

112. The Special Rapporteur urges the Government to ensure that its mechanisms for dealing with these religious groups or communities of belief deliver a message based on tolerance, freedom of religion or belief and on the principle that no one can be judged for his actions other than through the appropriate judicial channels".

The appointment of Mr. Fenech undermines the UN Religious Freedom Rapporteur's mandate that MIVILUDES operate "in line with the right to freedom of religion or belief and avoid past mistakes". This appointment represents a step backwards for religious freedom in France.

Under these circumstances :

CAP calls for the Prime Minister to cancel Mr. Fenech's appointment as President of MIVILUDES.

CAP also respectfully requests that the OSCE Chair-in-Office Personal Representative on Combating Racism, Xenophobia, and Discrimination against Christians and Members of Other Religions visit France and closely monitor the activities of MIVILUDES and its new President to ensure that their actions comply with religious freedom and tolerance in accordance with the Helsinki Accords.



France: From the Committee of Public Salvation to the MIVILUDES

With a whiff of Committee of Public Salvation which used to organise State repression in the name of “public salvation” and “general safety” during the troubled times of the French Revolution, the Interministerial Mission of Watch and Fight against Sectarian Deviations, headed by its new President Georges Fenech, organises the repression of groups it considers as “deviating” in the name of public interest.

In its report 2008, the MIVILUDES explains that the characteristic of sectarian deviations is the existence of mental subjection. According to the report, repression should be initiated by the State when one or several persons “*start to adopt ideas which are spread and are different from the ideas usually shared by social consensus*”.

Coordination des
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In this regard, the report entitled "Justice facing sectarian deviations" submitted by Mr Fenech to the Prime Minister during the summer 2008 gives us an outline of the new orientations of MIVILUDES.

Children of members of minority religious groups must, according to Mr Fenech, be protected from the religious beliefs and practices of their parents. The report quotes and endorses the words of a psychologist who regretted that "*children victims of sects remain the all-forgotten of society*" perhaps "*because it is even more difficult to protect a child from his parents' beliefs than from their beatings or incestuous sexuality*".

To this end, Mr Fenech recommends that all family matters involving a member of a minority religious group be dealt with by magistrates specialized in sectarian deviations so that the guardianship of children is withdrawn from "deviating" parents, and that these cases be referred systematically to the Prosecutor.

Mr Fenech goes further: according to him, no member of a new religious movement has any free will, so he recommends that the civil judge puts the "consenting followers" under guardianship.

For Mr Fenech, any "sectarian deviation" is a deviation from recognized classical beliefs which implies a mental destabilization and requires normalization through judicial repression and psychological follow-up for the readaptation of followers.

Consequently, the MIVILUDES established a reference list of groups it characterizes as dangerous. Mr Fenech insisted that this list be available for professionals of justice and health. It operates as a true black list nailing down some 500 to 600 movements

whose sole crime is that their minority beliefs or practices are considered as suspect. Local officials and public authorities are supposed to use it to know if they should grant the renting of conference halls or nursing licences.

Mr Fenech declared to the press that *"500 to 600 sectarian movements are established in France, against less than 200 fifteen years ago"* (La Croix newspaper 19 May 2009). But this increase of the number of referenced movements which would justify according to him stepped-up repression is in reality due to the very escalation in the hunting of practices considered as "deviating" and to the inclusion of a larger and larger amount of minority groups or practices in the reference list established by Mr Fenech.

The MIVILUDES, governmental body, acts as a partisan entity which does not take any account of the opinion of sociologists or international instances like the UN. The UN Rapporteur, Asma Jahangir, condemned this policy in 2005 and expressed in her report the hope that *"future actions of MIVILUDES will be in line with the right to freedom of religion and belief and avoid past mistakes"*.

However, France, with the appointment of Mr Fenech at the head of the MIVILUDES, is in total regression as regards the respect of freedom of conscience. A parishioner of a recognized movement in a neighbouring country becomes in France a "consenting follower" who has to be put under guardianship.

Additionally, Mr Fenech recommends a systematic governmental intervention in the "education" of magistrates in "sectarian issues". These "education" sessions which are implemented by the Office of Criminal Affairs and Pardon of the Ministry of Justice with the participation of anti-sect associations and based on files established

by them on specific minority movements, constitute prejudgements of guilt on the members of the concerned groups.

The Office of Criminal Affairs and Pardon also informed the MIVILUDES of its intention for 2009 to impulse *"the development of work meetings between the magistrates in charge of investigations on sectarian deviations and the advisors of [MIVILUDES] so that the knowledge of this structure, in particular on the notion of mental subjection"* can be shared. No doubt that the black list of deviating movements will be the main "knowledge" communicated to the magistrates.

This intrusion of the executive power in judicial investigations represents an unacceptable infringement of the independence of justice and a failure by the French authorities to comply with their duty of neutrality vis-à-vis the various religious or philosophical communities existing on their territory.

Ever since the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, freedom of thought, conscience, religion, or belief has been one of the core commitments that each of the OSCE's 56 participating States has agreed to respect. The repressive system established by the MIVILUDES constitutes a violation by France of this obligation.



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Working Session 2

Fundamental Freedoms I **France: Religious Minorities stigmatized**

RC.NGO/9/10

1 October 2010

as “mutating viruses” and “pathology of belief”

ENGLISH

Original: ENGLISH

FRENCH

Created over ten years ago to fight against discrimination of religious or belief minorities in France, the Coordination of Associations and Individuals for Freedom of Conscience which I am representing wants to express its strongest disapproval concerning the statement made on 26 November 2009 by the French Secretary of State for Justice, Jean-Marie Bockel, about minorities of religion or belief derogatorily labelled as “sectarian”.

According to him the growing quest of personal fulfilment and the emergence of unusual religious syncretism are significant of the sectarian phenomenon which “*can be analyzed as pathology of belief on a background of individuation and deregulation of belief.*”

This public statement made in 2009 at the first national conference of the Inter-Ministerial Mission of Fight and Vigilance against Sectarian Deviances (MIVILUDES) is still posted on the official site of the Ministry of Justice to this day. For the French authorities, it is necessary to repress minorities of belief they consider as deviant and to attempt to regulate beliefs.

The Secretary of State added that “sectarian deviances” are “comparable to mutating viruses which spread in often insidious ways the poison of manipulation of human behaviours and spirits”. We understand that viruses as such should be eliminated.

In spite of the French government’s assertions to the OSCE and the United Nations that MIVILUDES does not take in consideration the content of beliefs, the fact is that the main criterion retained by MIVILUDES in its 2008 Report to characterize mental manipulation is that “one or more people start to believe in certain ideas which differ from the ideas generally accepted by society”.

But **States have no business in assessing the legitimacy of beliefs.** France committed by ratifying the Helsinki Accords and the European Convention on Human Rights to protect the right to freedom of belief and to remain neutral towards all creeds.

Although France has been pointed out by the UN Special Rapporteur on Religious Freedom in 2005 for keeping a black list of “sects”, MIVILUDES has now compiled a repository of records on around 600 minority movements established from denunciations, accusations and tattling. Targeted faiths have no access to these records although they have been made available to Justice officials and public authorities.

Our association regularly receives testimonies on the 1995 black list of sects which is still in use to justify discriminatory measures against the targeted groups. This practice is now aggravated with the repository of records of MIVILUDES resulting for minority movements in denials to open bank accounts or to use conference halls, and discrimination of their members in their professional and family life.

Under the impulse of Mr Fenech, judges, prosecutors, police officers and social workers receive sessions of “education” on the minority groups he put on files. A special anti-sect task force has been created to intervene during police operations targeting minority movements to make sure that prosecutions are initiated.

Independence of Justice is not guaranteed in France as long as minorities of religion or conviction are concerned.

Additionally, Mr Fenech has launched a new way of intervention: he organizes unannounced visits by MIVILUDES in the communities, using his official title to force his way into their premises and impose the presence of the media to stigmatize them through an avalanche of slanderous accusations in the media.

A letter of protest sent by members of the Ecumenical Monastery Le Moulin des Vallées in Brittany summarizes the problem: “Mr Prefect, we solicit your help to understand how Mr.

Fenech can legally introduce himself in a monastery, under the cover of a Ministerial investigation, in order to actually help journalists make an unauthorized report?”

We solicit the help of OSCE representatives to intervene with the French authorities and put an end to this policy of intolerance and harassment of minorities of religion or conviction.

Thank you.

Speech at the OSCE 27 September 2011

Created ten years ago to fight against discrimination of religious or belief minorities, the European Coordination for Freedom of Conscience CAP LC which I am representing here wishes to protest against the policy of MIVILUDES, the French Inter-ministerial Mission of Vigilance and Fight Against Sectarian Drifts, designed at "exporting" in various European countries its "model" of fight against minorities of belief it labels as "sectarian movements".

At an anti-sect conference held in London on 17 April 2010, Mr. Fenech, MIVILUDES' President, declared he had been heard by the Belgian Parliament and promoted a draft bill equivalent to the French About-Picard law.

But this « About-Picard » law, named after its authors, contravenes the Council of Europe's Recommendation 1412 in which it considered that major legislation on sects was undesirable on the grounds that such legislation might well interfere with the freedom of conscience and religion guaranteed by Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights as well as harm traditional religions.

Indeed, during the vote of the About-Picard law in 2001 the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights as well as the leaders of the major French traditional religions condemned this special law derogating from common law. It was adopted to repress minorities of religion or belief by criminalizing the "abuse of a state of ignorance or a situation of weakness of a person under psychological subjection". This new penal offence with its vague and undefined terms allows prosecution of any proselytism or conversion to religious beliefs or practices considered as deviant by advocating an alleged "psychological subjection".

The European Court of Human Rights reminded in its Jehovah's Witnesses decision of 10 June 2010 that there is no generally accepted and scientific definition of what constitutes "mind control" and that as long as the members of this religious community had made a voluntary and conscious choice of their religion and followed its doctrines of their own free will, their right to freedom of religion should be respected.

In her report following her visit to France in September 2005, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief reminded that "following the adoption of the About-Picard Law, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, in its resolution 1309 (2002) (...) invite[d] the French Government to reconsider this law".

She expressed hopes that future actions of MIVILUDES would be in line with the right to freedom of religion or belief and avoid past mistakes.

Far from following these European or International recommendations, MIVILUDES continues its policy of export of the "French model" of discrimination by advising countries like Belgium to enact legislation similar to the About-Picard law.

CAP LC has noticed that meetings of MIVILUDES with the representatives of various European countries have resulted in restrictions of freedom of religion and conscience in these countries. This is the case with Belgium and Kazakhstan.

This contradicts the values of the French Republic of secularism which guarantee freedom of cult and conscience. We wish that France ceases to be the country where human rights have been written down and becomes the country where they are actually applied.



CAP FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE

2012 HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING OSCE Warsaw

“Sects” and children: the official figures

Under the cover of fighting “sects” minority faiths are widely discredited in the media and often their right to answer is simply scoffed.

The word “sect” has already proved discriminatory in History; it has no legal definition and is charged with a strong emotional connotation. It enabled, in other times, to discredit Jews, Protestants, Freemasons, and even the Salvation Army.

In the on going campaigns stigmatizing members of minority movements, the most alarmist figures are spread by the protagonists of “sect” hunting. However, these figures are false.

In order to illustrate this point, we have gathered here below the statements of the highest authorities in the French Government who have lead investigations in the field on this subject.

Statement of the Prime Minister, Dominique de Villepin, at the National Assembly, on the 6th of September 2005¹⁸:

Answering a question from Philippe Vuilque, President of the 2005 Study Group on sects at the National Assembly, the Prime Minister said:

“The cases of physical or psychological ill-treatments of minors in connection with the belonging of one or both of their parents to a movement said to have a sectarian aspect, are exceptional.”

The other following statements were made during the hearings of the 2006 Parliamentary Inquiry Commission on “the influence of movements of sectarian character and the consequences of their practices on the physical and mental health of minors”: Extracts from Report # 3507 registered at the Presidency of the National Assembly on December 12, 2006. Summary of the hearings¹⁹.

**Mr. Joël BOUCHITÉ,
General Director of “Renseignements Généraux” (Intelligence Services) at the Ministry of Interior and Development of the Territory.
(Minutes of the Hearing of 12th October 2006)**

“As a matter of fact, 60,000 children on the whole national territory, this seems a lot to me. During our relationship in the field, in de-centralized government offices (“préfectures”), with the National Education, the DDASS (social services), the holiday centres and all structures dealing with youth, we never had to deal with 60,000 reporting, nor even 30,000, but a few dozen at most...”

¹⁸ <http://questions.assemblee-nationale.fr/q12/12-64579QE.htm>

¹⁹ <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/12/pdf/rap-enq/r3507.pdf>

Source: Report n° 3507 registered at the Presidency of the National Assembly on 12th December 2006. Summary of the hearings – page 556²⁰

**Mr. Michel GAUDIN,
General Director of National Police.
(Minutes of the Hearing of 12th October 2006)**

“I have the feeling that the phenomenon, while still preoccupying in some individual cases where children are concerned, is not a type of delinquency of such an extent that we should so much worry about it.”

Source : Report n° 3507 registered at the Presidency of the National Assembly on 12th December 2006. Summary of the hearings – page 615²¹

**Hearing of General Guy PARAYRE,
General Director of National “Gendarmerie” (Police),
(Minutes of the Hearing of 4th October 2006)**

“Organizations that fight “sects” sometimes set forth that 20,000 minors could be under the influence of sectarian movements. The lack of standards to delimit with precision the situation from which it is reasonable to talk about implication of these minors in movements still compels to be very cautious about this figure. In any case, even if they only constitute the emerged part of the phenomenon, the number of cases handled by the police is much lower than these estimations: since 2004, only 37 complaints have been registered by the police units. »

Source: Report n° 3507 registered at the Presidency of the National Assembly on 12th December 2006. Summary of the hearings – page 545²²

**Mrs. Carola ARRIGHI de CASANOVA, Assistant Manager at the Direction of Civil Affairs and the
Seals (DACS) at the Ministry of Justice.
(Minutes of the Hearing of 12th October 2006)**

“First I would like to say that two departments are in charge of illegal moving of children: the office of civil and international commercial mutual aid which takes care of about all international conventions, like about the procurement of evidences and transmission of judiciary acts, and the mission of help to international mediation for families – the MAMIF- created in 2001 within my sub-direction to help alleviate conflicts within families, either in cases when we do not succeed in having international conventions running, or in cases where we have the feeling that an agreement between the parents is possible. I would like to immediately state that we are almost never confronted to situations connected to sects.”

Source: Report n° 3507 registered at the Presidency of the National Assembly on 12th December 2006. Summary of the hearings – page 620²³

**Mr. Thierry-Xavier GIRARDOT, Director of Legal Affairs at the Ministry of National Education,
Higher Education and Research
(Minutes of the Hearing of 10th October 2006)**

²⁰ <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/12/pdf/rap-enq/r3507.pdf>

²¹ <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/12/pdf/rap-enq/r3507.pdf>

²² <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/12/pdf/rap-enq/r3507.pdf>

²³ <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/12/pdf/rap-enq/r3507.pdf>

Mr. Thierry-Xavier GIRARDOT : “The Prevention Unit for the Sectarian Phenomena has prepared a quantitative assessment covering the most recent period: number of controls done, number of formal notices to send children to school, etc. I do not know if we have data on the whole of the period since the promulgation of the law, but during last year, we listed a bit less than 3.000 children educated within their families, we have made 1,119 checks, out of which 23 ended by a formal notice to educate the child in a school, generally not for reasons connected to sects, but simply because the education within the family did not match the requirements of the 1999 decree, included in the statutory part of the Code of Education. 7

Mr. President : Out of these 23 children, how many exactly related to the sect phenomenon ?

Mr. Thierry-Xavier GIRARDOT : I am not sure there had been even one...

Source: Report n° 3507 registered at the Presidency of the National Assembly on 12th December 2006. Summary of the hearings – page 559²⁴

Mr. Michel RISPE, Chief of the Office of Civil and Commercial International Mutual Aid at the Ministry of Justice.
(Minutes of the Hearing of 12th October 2006)

“To date, no case has been opened, amongst some 500 existing files in stock in which there had been allegations of sectarian belonging.”

Source: Report n° 3507 registered at the Presidency of the National Assembly on 12th December 2006. Summary of the hearings – page 621²⁵

Hearing of Mr. Didier LESCHI
Chief of the Central Office of Worships
Ministry of the Interior
(Minutes of the Hearing of Tuesday 17th October 2006)

“I have therefore asked, during a Pilot Committee of the MIVILUDES, that an investigation be launched with regional agencies of hospitalization and hospitals in order to take a census of, eventually, facts constitutive of trouble to law and order connected to the refusal of blood transfusion.

The representative of the Ministry of Health within the MIVILUDES told us, at the time, that this census was impossible, because of fear of procedures, the hospitals’ officials would hesitate to denounce troubles to law and order. I consider this explanation to be slight, mainly if the life of thousand children is at stake. The figure of 45,000 children of Witnesses of Jehovah has sometimes been set forth. Hospitals civil servants are protected by their statute and they have the obligation to report punishable facts to the Prosecutor.

In view of this hearing, I have asked the “prefectures” to take a census, on the last three years, of incidents connected to transfusion. A small number of incidents came up, often settled by discussion. No incident implicating children or a vital prognostic has been noted.”

²⁴ <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/12/pdf/rap-enq/r3507.pdf>

²⁵ <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/12/pdf/rap-enq/r3507.pdf>

Source: Report n° 3507 registered at the Presidency of the National Assembly on 12th December 2006. Summary of the hearings – page 686²⁶

Hearing of Jean-Yves DUPUIS
General Inspector
Ministry of National Education
(Minutes of the Hearing of Tuesday 10th October 2006)

“In view of our hearing by this Inquiry Commission, we have had an investigation very rapidly made by all inspectors of academy. During the past school year, inspectors of academy or rectors have made 19,000 reports to Prosecutors, concerning children considered to be in danger for various reasons.

When we have asked the inspectors of academy who were, amongst these children in danger, the ones who were in danger due to sectarian movements, they answered us there were 8 of them.”

Source: Report n° 3507 registered at the Presidency of National Assembly on 12th December 2006. Summary of hearings – page 574²⁷

Hearing of Mrs. SANSY
Office of Judicial Matters on Legislation,
Director of the Judicial Protection of Youth,
Ministry of Justice
(Minutes of the Hearing of Tuesday 3rd October 2006)

“Three years ago, we have had an investigation done by the judges for children in order to be able, likewise, to define a bit statistically what the sectarian problem could represent in the work of magistrates and educators and we noticed that it was very marginal in relation to the whole of other problems our Direction is lead to manage for the same minors, i.e. problems of violence, non schooling, professional insertion, family difficulties.”

Source: Report n° 3507 registered at the Presidency of the National Assembly on 12th December 2006. Summary of hearings – page 514²⁸

Hearing of Mr. Etienne MADRANGES
Director of Youth and Popular Education
Ministry of Youth, Sports and Associative Life
(Minutes of the Hearing of Tuesday 18th October 2006)

“The Ministry has set up, at the national level, a unit coordinated by a General Inspector. He regularly gathers representatives of Directions of Youth, Sports and Associative Life. He listens to experts, calls in departmental Directors, and makes sure that the politics of prevention of the Ministry is well set up.

At the local level, we have set up a correspondent in each department. These correspondents send up their information. But this is not enough. We regularly gather the regional Directors of Youth and Sports. [...]

²⁶ <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/12/pdf/rap-enq/r3507.pdf>

²⁷ <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/12/pdf/rap-enq/r3507.pdf>

²⁸ <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/12/pdf/rap-enq/r3507.pdf>

The sending up of information goes through the correspondents, but also through our inspectors, who inspect sports structures, holiday's centres and leisure outlets. Statistically, in the youth field, we have very little sending up of information... [...]

But we shall inspect. Statistically, since the last three years, we have had no case where we could demonstrate a deliberated imperilling of minors."

Source: Report n° 3507 registered at the Presidency of the National Assembly on 12th December 2006. Summary of hearings – page 694²⁹

Hearing of Mrs. Françoise LE BIHAN

Assistant-Manager at the Service of French People Abroad and Foreigners in France (DFAE)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

(Minutes of the Hearing of Tuesday 17th October 2006)

Mrs. Françoise LE BIHAN: "Our service is in charge of all which concerns consular protection of French people abroad, therefore of children. So, it is in the whole of the perimeter of our actions that I have searched the ones which could interest your mission. For this, I have distinguished the illicit moving of children, forced weddings which can concern minors, the help we may have to give to French children in distress residing abroad.

In this wide set, I have found trace of only two cases presenting a connection with sectarian behavior : the first one, in Canada, has been in the news ; it concerns Mrs. Getliffe and her children ; the second one, which name I do not wish to give, concerns the father of a child taken to Switzerland by his mother. [...]"

Mr. President : "Have you not received reports on children transferred in ashrams in India ?"

Mrs. Françoise LE BIHAN : « No. For the whole of the two services composing our Direction, out of which one is in charge of the implementation of conventions of judicial cooperation and the other one of the strict consular protection, there has been no other case than the two I have just mentioned."

Source : Report n° 3507 registered at the Presidency of the National Assembly on 12th December 2006. Summary of hearings – page 666³⁰

²⁹ <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/12/pdf/rap-enq/r3507.pdf>

³⁰ <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/12/pdf/rap-enq/r3507.pdf>



« Sects » and children : Miviludes 2009 report

In the Miviludes 2009 report, Georges Fenech, as President of the Miviludes, did a full review of the problems that could have occurred in EU countries regarding children and so called “sects”.

Results of the review made clear that no real problem existed in Europe regarding this issue. For example, the review of the UK is reported in the report in the following way³¹: *“The sect phenomenon has little impact on youth in the United Kingdom. Only a few cases have been reported”*³². As concerns Germany: *“According to the Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, which coordinates interdepartmental work on issues related to sectarianism in Germany, the report of the "Bundes Kriminal Amt" ("BKA") on the disappearances of individuals contains no reference to the sect phenomena that are the cause of wrongful removal of children.”*³³

Regarding the Czech Republic, five reports are identified by Miviludes over the past 20 years³⁴.

Regarding Portugal: *“This country does not identify any criminal activity involving a sectarian movement.”*³⁵

Regarding the Netherlands: *“Activities of movements and practices with risk of sectarian deviances is not considered a threat in itself in the Netherlands and does not constitute the subject of any specific public policy. (...)”*According to the “Council of Child Welfare” and the Department of Justice, the phenomenon of sectarianism is not subject to any registration or reporting especially in the area of child protection³⁶.

Regarding Greece: *“There are also no recent incidents in the matter of children in Greece.”*³⁷

Ireland: *“The Irish competent services in the field of sectarian affecting youth are the Central Authority in relation to child abduction under the Ministry of Justice, and the office of Minister for Children and youth. These two services could not cite any recent case of wrongful removal of children linked to sectarian movements or case of sectarianism on children.”*³⁸ Romania: *“Similarly, the specialized services of these departments have not been confronted with sectarian drift related to children.”*³⁹

³¹ Miviludes Report 2009: http://www.miviludes.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/publications/francais/rapport2009_mise_en_ligne.pdf

³² Page 136: http://www.miviludes.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/publications/francais/rapport2009_mise_en_ligne.pdf

³³ Page 139: http://www.miviludes.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/publications/francais/rapport2009_mise_en_ligne.pdf

³⁴ Page 140: http://www.miviludes.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/publications/francais/rapport2009_mise_en_ligne.pdf

³⁵ Page 149: http://www.miviludes.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/publications/francais/rapport2009_mise_en_ligne.pdf

³⁶ Page 149-150: http://www.miviludes.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/publications/francais/rapport2009_mise_en_ligne.pdf

³⁷ Page 150: http://www.miviludes.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/publications/francais/rapport2009_mise_en_ligne.pdf

³⁸ Page 150-151: http://www.miviludes.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/publications/francais/rapport2009_mise_en_ligne.pdf

³⁹ Page 152: http://www.miviludes.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/publications/francais/rapport2009_mise_en_ligne.pdf

As concerns Poland: *"The relevant departments in Poland, including the Prosecutor's Office, reported no recent case of sectarianism on children."*⁴⁰

In Lithuania, no reports regarding sectarian cases: *"In addition, the French notion of "sectarian deviance" is foreign to the Lithuanian approach regarding movements or religious groups which are all listed in the Department of Justice."*⁴¹

Regarding Italy: *"No specific information regarding sectarian affecting minors can be reported during the past year, whether from the interior ministry, or from the Ministry of Social Affairs."*⁴²

Regarding Finland: *"The different movements also considered as risk present in Finland, do not seem to be reported as abuses involving children or youth."*⁴³

Regarding Latvia, Albania and Malta: *"The embassies had no knowledge of missing children, parental conflict regarding the placement of children in sectarian organizations or sectarian deviances on children."*⁴⁴

In Luxemburg: *"The Department of Justice indicates that the Prosecutor General's Office reported no domestic case of wrongful removal of children in connection with sectarian movements and no special consideration was currently underway at the Department of Justice on the issue of sectarian aberrations affecting minors."*⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Page 153: http://www.miviludes.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/publications/francais/rapport2009_mise_en_ligne.pdf

⁴¹ Page 153: http://www.miviludes.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/publications/francais/rapport2009_mise_en_ligne.pdf

⁴² Page 154 : http://www.miviludes.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/publications/francais/rapport2009_mise_en_ligne.pdf

⁴³ Page 154 : http://www.miviludes.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/publications/francais/rapport2009_mise_en_ligne.pdf

⁴⁴ Page 154 : http://www.miviludes.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/publications/francais/rapport2009_mise_en_ligne.pdf

⁴⁵ Page 154 : http://www.miviludes.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/publications/francais/rapport2009_mise_en_ligne.pdf



Religious Discrimination in France: report 2011

Introduction

International human rights organizations have warned that the French government has retreated from its mandate toward respecting religious pluralism. In spite of the principles of non-discrimination and equal treatment, the French government has determined to arbitrarily classify religious groups into two separate categories: 1) religions viewed as law-abiding and beneficial to society; and 2) "sects" or "sectarian movements" viewed as dangerous to society, which are the targets of oppressive and discriminatory measures, and which the government declares must be "fought" against.

No Western democracy would admit to being intolerant of minority faiths or being opposed to religious liberty. The tactic used to discriminate against targeted minority faiths in France is to redefine the notion of "religion" to exclude disfavored minority groups. Although the United Nations Human Rights Committee, the United Nations Special Rapporteur for Religious Freedom, the Human Rights Directorate of the Council of Europe, the European Court of Human Rights, human rights groups, scholars and experts in the field have all called for a broad, inclusive definition of religion which is consistent with notions of pluralism, minority rights, freedom of conscience and religious liberty consistent with standards mandated by human rights instruments, the French government has adopted a restrictive classification system designed to marginalise, ostracize, and stigmatize targeted minority faiths.

This type of classification has resulted in the stigmatizing and blacklisting of hundreds of minority religious groups as "sects" in France. There is no rational justification for such classification. Indeed, classifying religious groups into "religions" and "sects" or "sectarian movements" is itself a violation of religious human rights standards. It is impermissible and arbitrary for the government to confer benefits on groups it classifies as "religions" while denying benefits and enacting oppressive measures against groups it classifies as "sects" or "sectarian movements".

This false perception of the danger of "sects" underlies the current climate of discrimination currently waged against religious minorities in France. This is the climate in which repressive laws and administrative measures regarding minority religious freedom are being proposed and implemented.

As detailed below, the current oppressive measures and actions by the French government to abuse the judicial process to target the Church of Scientology and other minority religious groups and their followers and to bias judges against such groups and their members interferes with the independence of the judiciary, contravenes the right to a fair hearing, violates the principles of non-discrimination and equality at the heart of justice, and represents an attempt to improperly single out and repress minority religious organizations through bad faith prosecutions and trials steeped in prejudice.

Scientology

Malton Criminal Proceedings and Appeal

By way of background, this case arises out of the five-month participation in 1998 by the main civil party in Scientology religious practices. These included the study of Scientology scriptures and the participation in spiritual counseling.

In 2006, the original prosecutor dismissed this investigation because it was so weak that eight years of inquiry failed to disclose any evidence of wrongdoing. The case was only resurrected by a new prosecutor in 2008 due to intense political pressure from anti-religious extremists in the French government. That pressure continued unabated through the trial and the appeal by the presence in court of UNADFI, an anti-religious hate group that was ultimately ruled to be inadmissible as a civil party, yet whose bigoted rhetoric was permitted to poison the proceedings, turning the case into a witch hunt and heresy trial that could not withstand scrutiny under international human rights law or the First Amendment.

In October 2009, the Paris Trial Court issued convictions against a Scientology Church in Paris, the Church's bookstore, five Church staff members on charges of fraud and illegal practice of pharmacy. The sentences consisted of fines for the entities and suspended sentences for the individuals found guilty of fraud and a fine to the individual found guilty of illegal practice of pharmacy.

In September 2011, only one month before the trial at the Paris Appeals Court, the French Ministry of Justice, advised by MIVILUDES, issued a Circular enjoining Magistrates to collaborate with UNADFI, the main government-sponsored anti-sect association which filed as a civil party in the case, and instructing them to consider religious practices such as purification and initiation courses as "behavioral practices" susceptible to constitute "psychological subjection". As the accusation against the Church of Scientology which was going to be examined by the Court of Appeal concerned allegations of fraud through the alleged psychological subjection of its followers, this instruction constituted a direct undermining of the independence of the judiciary and the defendants' right to a fair trial. The Church filed a complaint with the UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers on 10 October 2011 which is pending.

Before the Appeals Court, the defense lawyers attempted to address the glaring defects and unjust treatment found in the first instance trial and in the whole procedure. From the outset, the appellate proceedings were characterized by arbitrary and discriminatory rulings completely unsupported by the law and the facts and in violation of Scientologists' fundamental constitutional freedoms and human rights.

The Court also refused to dismiss UNADFI as a civil party in the case at the outset of the appellate proceedings even though there was no legal basis for the association to be included in the proceedings. UNADFI had participated in the trial below and was permitted to participate in the appeal even though the Trial Court and the Court of Appeal, in their final decisions, determined it had no legal basis to intervene in the

proceedings. This was a major issue in the case as UNADFI is an extremist group dedicated to fighting against religious groups derogatorily labeled as “sects” and engaged in hostile and bigoted rhetoric designed to poison the proceedings.

The environment in the Court was so prejudicial that, in November 2011, defense attorneys walked out of the proceedings in protest, refusing as a matter of conscience to participate in appellate proceedings that had degenerated into a charade. This is a rare and serious situation in France

The Court, instead of postponing the hearing to ensure that the defendants had new lawyers to ensure their defense, suspended the hearing for 20 minutes and then resumed without bothering about providing the defendants with legal counsel. . One defendant who lives abroad and was represented, asked for her attorney to be replaced but the Court did not answer her request, and continued the trial without any defense attorney or defendants in the Court room.

The decision rendered on 2 February 2012 confirms the one from the lower Court, sentencing the two legal entities and the members of the Church for fraud, levying fines for all and suspended sentences for four of the individuals. This constitutes an impermissible attack on the religion in violation of the fundamental right to freedom of religion.

The Church will appeal to the Cassation Court to raise the critical legal and constitutional challenges ignored by the Court of Appeals in contravention of the Rule of Law. The Church is hopeful that these serious defects in the proceedings will be addressed and remedied in this appeal. If necessary, the Church will go to the European Court of Human Rights where Scientology Churches have already won two unanimous decisions upholding the rights of its members. (*Church of Scientology of Moscow v Russia* in 2007 and *Kimlya v. Russia* in 2009)

Discrimination and Harassment of Scientologists

Several companies saw their bank accounts closed the moment it was known that their directors or board members were Scientologists. Michel Raoust, a Scientologist who has a very successful engineering company, had both his personal and his company accounts closed by the HSBC bank.

The Celebrity Centre in Paris has been recurrently subjected to harassment and assaults from masked and hooded anti-Scientology demonstrators of “Anonymous”, a group of criminal extremists, which members have been convicted in the US for illegally hacking and blocking Scientology web sites. They recently attacked the web sites of the White House and the Elysées Palace after the US and French governments adopted some internet regulation against illegal downloading. Some of their members were arrested and detained for these actions in France. The leader of the French Anonymous group attacking Scientologists at Churches of Scientology in Paris has been criminally convicted twice, once for public insults and once for threats.

For example, on 22 January 2011, an illegal Anonymous demonstration took place at a Church of Scientology in Paris with no permit or other legal authorization. The demonstrators were masked and hooded (which is illegal under French law) and violently attacked Scientology parishioners. Two demonstrators tried to enter the Church premises by force and a member of the Church was assaulted, both verbally and

physically, by an individual who held scissors as a weapon in his hand and made death threats against him.

The police were called and came but they only spoke to the demonstrators who stated that the individuals involved in the assault were not with them. The police left without speaking with the members of the Church who had called them and who had evidence (photos, bailiff certified report) that the aggressors were stirred by the demonstrators to do what they did.

A few weeks before, the Church had contacted the Mayor of the 17th District of Paris (where one Paris Church of Scientology has its premises) to let her know about vandalism and hate crimes following these demonstrations (e.g., throwing stones and breaking the front window; vandalizing the reception area; and placing offensive graffiti on Church walls, etc.). However, nothing had been done to protect the Church or its parishioners. Only after the third “demonstration” in 2011 did the Prefect of Paris who had been asked for help by the Church send policemen to ensure protection.

These violent “demonstrations” by Anonymous regularly occurred in 2011, altogether a dozen of times during that year. On 2 February, 2012, the Mayor of the 17th District, who did nothing to protect the Church from harassment and assaults in 2011, publicly called for the Minister of Interior to shut down the Scientology Church in the 17th District.

Sessions of Indoctrination Against Religious Minorities

Training of Magistrates by Miviludes

As detailed in the September 2011 MIVILUDES Newsletter, the training of Magistrates on the subject of “sectarian deviances” continued at the National School of Magistrates. Hundreds of Magistrates have been trained since 1998 by MIVILUDES, which uses uniformly biased and derogatory information for this training provided by anti-sect associations it works with.

Based on documents released under the Freedom of Information law, the “training” provided so far to the judges, police and other officials, could be better labeled as indoctrination of Magistrates since, far from being general briefings on sectarian drifts, it has included specific briefings on Scientology, Jehovah's Witnesses and other targeted groups, with information provided by speakers of government-sponsored anti-sect associations and without any possibility of contradiction, debate or rebuttal by the concerned groups. As part of the documents distributed to the attendees, hostile press articles and only negative court decisions were provided, omitting decisions from higher judicial authorities directly contradicting those decisions. Positive jurisprudence has been completely ignored.

From 23 to 25 May 2010, the training was delivered to approximately one hundred Magistrates, some from other countries in the European Union, as well as to other civil servants such as police, justice officers for the protection of youth and prison personnel.¹

New “anti-sect” Curriculum at French University Paris-Descartes

¹ See the newsletter at : <http://www.miviludes.gouv.fr/no10-mai-septembre-2011?iddiv=5>

This year, MIVILUDES organized a new curriculum on “sectarian subjection” at the Paris-Descartes University where social workers, justice professionals, psychiatrists and medical workers are “trained” to take questionable actions such as identifying so-called “sect victims”, even if these persons adhere to religious minorities on their own will and have never asked for assistance or complained. The curriculum also covers how to make an “exfiltration” from a sect, a very questionable practice of forced de-conversion like “deprogramming”.

This curriculum includes 144 hours of lectures and analysis of practical cases in each course by having apostates give their stories about the minority religion they have left. It is organized by the Secretary General of Miviludes, Hervé Machi, a psychologist, Sonya Jouglà, who was quoted in Mr. Fenech’s 2008 program² saying that *“it is even more difficult to protect a child from his parents’ beliefs than from their beatings or their incestuous sexuality”* and Jean-Pierre Jouglà, administrator of UNADFI, a state funded anti-sect association.

As in the earlier trainings, the stress will be put on specific movements which will be stigmatized by apostates and considered *de facto* as dangerous cults without any possibility for them to refute the accusations against them.

Stigmatization of Religious Minorities by Government-Sponsored Anti-Sect Associations

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief Asma Jahangir, in her report of 8 March 2006 (E/CN.4/2006/5/Add.4) after her visit to France in September 2005, found: “However, she [the Rapporteur] is of the opinion that the policy and measures that have been adopted by the French authorities have provoked situations where the right to freedom of religion or belief of members of these groups [religious groups or communities of belief] has been unduly limited. Moreover, the public condemnation of some of these groups, as well as the stigmatization of their members, has led to certain forms of discrimination, in particular vis-à-vis their children”. (§108)

She recommended that “the Government monitor more closely preventive actions and campaigns that are conducted throughout the country by private initiatives or Government-sponsored organizations” (§113) and urged the Government “to ensure that its mechanisms for dealing with these religious groups or communities of belief deliver a message based on tolerance, freedom of religion or belief”. (§112)

Far from complying with this recommendation, the government has let government-sponsored organizations such as UNADFI and local ADFIs continue their stigmatization of religious minorities, and has even fuelled prejudice into the public directly through its government agency MIVILUDES.

The Church of Latter Day Saints

The Church of Latter Day Saints (LDS) community in France has applied for a building permit to build a Temple to the Mayor of Le Chesnay (not far from Versailles) on 5 August 2011. The permit was granted on 27 October 2011.

² See his report « La justice face aux dérives sectaires » (Justice Facing Sectarian Drifts), La Documentation française, 2008.

The inhabitants, whose fears have been stirred up by ADFI since the Mormons' project was known,³ circulated a petition to have the Mayor repeal his decision. The leaflet distributed with the petition refers to detailed files held by UNADFI on the LDS, which is accused of engaging in a certain number of sectarian practices, such as: proselytizing, absolute devotion to their leaders, allegiance to a living prophet and mandatory payment of a tithe. These characteristics could actually apply many religions and are used discriminatorily to stigmatize "sectarian movements".

In the media reproduced on UNADFI's web site,⁴ the President of ADFI Yvelines expressed her concern in November and December 2011 about "the aspects of mental subjection" of the Mormon Church "which has huge financial demands". She noted that one has to pay the tithe of 10% of one's income in order to go to the Temple, adding that this Church is incredibly rich.

Tabitha's Place

This religious community established in the South of France in Sus, expressed last year its intention of acquiring new lands and expand the community. This created immediate reaction of the government and a meeting of the local representatives of all the State services was organized on 12 July 2011 to discuss the group's "various projects of acquisition and expansion" according to the head of the Prefect of Pyrénées-Atlantiques' office.⁵

Their concern was based on the annual report 2010 of MIVILUDES dedicated to the alleged "unprecedented resurgence" of the activities of apocalyptic movements in France. A chapter of the report concerned Tabitha's Place and described it as "a Christian religious movement of fundamentalist and apocalyptic type of north-American origin which justifies all life by a strictly literal reading of the Bible which has to be studied everyday and known perfectly in all circumstances".⁶

At the occasion of the projects of acquisition of new lands of the community, the local media reproduced the accusations of MIVILUDES labelling the community as a fundamentalist and "closed" sect, but paradoxically "suspected of proselytizing" in particular by distributing leaflets to Catholic pilgrims on their way to Saint-Jacques de Compostèle.

Opus Dei

An association linked to Opus Dei was tried at the Paris Criminal Court (Tribunal Correctionnel) on 22 and 23 September 2011 under the accusation of illegal work.

The woman who initiated the proceedings, Catherine T., started working at the hotel school Dosnon, an apprenticing centre established in a castle in Couvrelles near Soissons (North East of France), in 1985 when she was 14. She later on made vows and joined the Opus Dei when she was 16 and became a house worker. She decided to file a complaint after she met with members of ADFI North who reported on their web site: "she worked for over fifteen years for a very controversial organization, the Opus Dei. She was

³ See article of Le Parisien of 21 June 2010 : <http://www.leparisien.fr/yvelines-78/les-mormons-veulent-construire-leur-temple-21-06-2010-972106.php>

⁴ See <http://www.unadfi.org/installation-contestee-d-un-temple.html>

⁵ See <http://www.larepubliquedespyrenees.fr/2011/07/12/la-secte-de-sus-reste-sous-surveillance,203176.php>

⁶ See p. 88 : http://www.miviludes.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/ra2010_mise_en_ligne.pdf

subjected to undue influence, mental manipulation together with detrimental facts which, bit by bit, affected her health, her liberty and her dignity” and “ADFI North brings its unconditional support to those who are the only victims of this painful case: Catherine T. and her family”.⁷

In the complaint filed in 2001, her lawyer put forward allegations regarding “mental manipulation”, “mind-numbing conditions of work” and “economical dependency”. After a nine year investigation, two members and a legal entity, “l’Association de culture universitaire et technique (ACUT)”, were tried in September 2011 for “remuneration contrary to dignity” and “undeclared work”.

Although the charges were based on the Labor Code and not on the “About Picard” law on abuse of weakness, the plaintiff complained that she was “made to practice” religion for years. She tried before the Court “to put forward mental manipulation which is characteristic to sects, described as the natural functioning of Opus Dei”. She was represented by a lawyer who represents the anti-sect association UNADFI in other cases, who declared that she had been subjected to “modern slavery”.⁸

On 24 November 2011, the Court rendered its decision and acquitted the two members and legal entity of Opus Dei. The Court ruled that the accusations of undeclared work were not established and that if “some salaried persons assume various unpaid functions”, “this choice of volunteering has been done without constraint”.⁹ The State Prosecutor and the plaintiff appealed the decision.

On 21 September 2011, the former representative of the OSCE for the fight against discrimination against Christians and followers of other religions, Massimo Introvigne, denounced the misinformation in certain media resulting in discrimination against Opus Dei in France. In the Roman media Zenith¹⁰, he explained that a complaint concerning labor law had been used to launch a campaign of discrimination against Opus Dei and the Catholic Church in general.¹¹

Transcendental Meditation

In February 2011, members of the Town Council of Sidiailles, a small village in the centre of France, discovered that the members of an estate company which had signed a sales promise to acquire some land in the village were followers of Transcendental Meditation (TM). They searched for information on the movement and found out that it was listed in the Parliamentary report on sects of 1995 and that anti-sect associations did not like it.¹²

According to the media, fear spread amongst inhabitants concerning this movement and public opinion became hostile to their project of acquisition, although what was envisaged was to build a residence for retired persons dedicated to ecology, renewable energies and the consumption of organic products.

⁷ See <http://www.adfi59.net/spip.php?article369>

⁸ See UNADFI’s magazine Bulles, n° 112 p. 36

⁹ See <http://www.francesoir.fr/actualite/justice/opus-dei-apres-une-relaxe-parquet-fait-appel-160529.html>

¹⁰ See <http://www.zenit.org/article-28998?l=french>

¹¹ See for example the article titling « obvious sectarian dimension » : <http://www.20minutes.fr/paris/792888-derives-opus-dei-mises-lumiere-barre>

¹² See <http://www.francesoir.fr/actualite/societe/sidiailles-c-est-secte-au-village-104715.html>

On 24 May 2011, alternatives to purchase of the land by TM through acquisition of the property by the city was to be debated by the city council but the Mayor – who had agreed with the acquisition by TM - did not show up. She alerted the media that she had been the victim of “violent attacks” from the City Council, which suspected her to advocate on behalf of the sect.

Virgin Mary Prayer Group in Corsica

On 16 December 2011, Agnès M., the head of the association Ave Maria of Jesus (“Ave Maria de l’enfant Jésus”) was charged with abuse of trust, abuse of weakness and fraud on vulnerable persons; she was then incarcerated pending trial. This former auxiliary nurse was accused of defrauding thousands of euros to followers by asserting to receive for nearly twenty five years messages from the Virgin Mary.

The Messenger was always wearing a prayer suit and a white veil, and a neon cross three or four meters high was erected in the garden of a village inhabitant, where Agnès and followers would sing and dance in nuns’ habits.

The Public Prosecutor of Bastia, who is also a member of MIVILUDES, stated to the media “They are very clearly sectarian drifts. We have interrogated members of the association and all of them continue to support her when some of them have given a lot of money. The investigation is still ongoing but we speak of very important amounts”.

The association consisted of only around twenty members, but the remittal of funds had happened over several years. The investigators are searching for former victims who had voluntarily left the group, as they had no complaining victims.¹³

Kidnapping Nice

In August 2011, in Nice , a couple forced their 24-year old daughter into their car, handcuffed and drugged her, to take her in a wheelchair to Corsica. The parents claimed that her boyfriend belonged to the Antoinist movement, which is classified as a sect in a Parliamentary report. They added that “anti-sect associations advised us to make her do a break of at least one month and a half by withdrawing her from this harmful environment”. Both parents were subsequently charged in September 2011 for kidnapping and sequestration.¹⁴

Exporting the French “Anti-Sect” Policy Abroad

MIVILUDES tries by any means to export its French “anti-sect” policy to other countries, especially in Europe and at European institutions level. In 2011, meetings of MIVILUDES with the representatives of various European countries have occurred while laws have been introduced and passed resulting in restrictions of freedom of religion and conscience in these countries. This is the case with Belgium and Kazakhstan.

¹³ See <http://www.leparisien.fr/faits-divers/la-messagere-de-la-vierge-ecrouee-pour-escroquerie-17-12-2011-1773093.php>

¹⁴ See article in Nice Matin, 26 September 2011, “Les parents ont enlevé leur fille pour la sortir d’une secte” (Parents kidnapped their daughter to take her out of a sect).

In 2010, at an anti-sect conference held by FECRIS¹⁵ in London, Mr. Fenech, MIVILUDES' President, declared he had been heard by the Belgian Parliament and promoted a draft bill equivalent to the French About-Picard law on the repression of abuse of weakness, designed at targeting proselytizing of religious minorities. On 7 May 2011, Mr. Fenech did the introductory speech of a conference of FECRIS in Warsaw on cults, and André Frédéric, Belgian Member of Parliament, presented the new Belgian bill on abuse of weakness he drafted. On 26 October 2011, Mr. Frédéric participated in the celebration of the ten years anniversary of the About Picard law at the French National Assembly and gave a speech where he underlined the collaboration of Mr. Fenech, UNADFI's President Mrs. Picard, and MIVILUDES and UNADFI concerning the Belgian bill on abuse of weakness being debated at the Belgian Parliament.

But this "About-Picard" law, named after its authors, contravenes the Council of Europe's Recommendation 1412 in which it considered that major legislation on sects was undesirable on the grounds that such legislation might well interfere with the freedom of conscience and religion guaranteed by Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights as well as harm traditional religions.

Indeed, during the vote of the About-Picard law in 2001 the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights as well as the leaders of the major French traditional religions condemned this special law derogating from common law. It was adopted to repress minorities of religion or belief by criminalizing the "abuse of a state of ignorance or a situation of weakness of a person under psychological subjection". This new penal offence with its vague and undefined terms allows prosecution of any proselytism or conversion to religious beliefs or practices considered as deviant by advocating an alleged "psychological subjection".

On 6 October 2000, 14 Members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe signed a proposal expressing their concern with this law and the fact that it classifies 173 religious groups as "sects", a negative term rejected by the Council of Europe in a Committee of Legal Affairs Report in 1999 (Doc. No. 8373). On 26 April 2001, 50 members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe signed Declaration 321, whereby they expressed their concern against this law and recommended that it be withdrawn (Doc. No. 9064). And on 18 November 2002, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted Resolution 1309 (2002) on the About-Picard law, calling on the French government to "reconsider the law".

The European Court of Human Rights noted in its *Jehovah's Witnesses v. Russia* decision of 10 June 2010 that there is no generally accepted and scientific definition of what constitutes "mind control" and that as long as the members of this religious community had made a voluntary and conscious choice of their religion and followed its doctrines of their own free will, their right to freedom of religion should be respected.

Far from following these European human rights standards, MIVILUDES continues its policy of exporting the "French model" of discrimination by advising countries like Belgium to enact legislation similar to the About-Picard law. The Belgian law has now been adopted by the Belgian Parliament.

According to the last bi-quarterly letter of MIVILUDES of September 2011, MIVILUDES President met on 6 April 2011 with Lord Konstantin Bendas, Vice President of the Union

¹⁵ "European Federation of Centres of Research and Information on Sectarianism" is nearly entirely financed by the French State.

of Evangelist Christians of Russia, to brief him about the French model of vigilance and fight against sectarian drifts. Lord Bendas expressed his wish to invite the President of MIVILUDES in Russia, in particular to explain to the Duma the organization, the functioning and the missions of MIVILUDES, as well as the French law on abuse of weakness. Mr. Fenech answered that he would be pleased to accept such an invitation to go to Moscow.



CAP FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE

2012 HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING OSCE Warsaw

Stigmatization of Minorities of Religion or Belief within the School System

4. The Inter-ministerial Mission of Vigilance and Fight against Sectarian Drifts (MIVILUDES), placed directly under the Prime Minister in France, has set in place a policy that directly contradicts Article 18.4 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (the “Covenant”) which provides:

4. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.

5. For years, France has had a policy of stigmatization and negative stereotyping of minorities of religion or belief it first labeled as “sects” or, since a Prime Minister Decree of 2005 prohibiting such practice, it now labels as “sectarian movements”. This derogatory classification corresponds to the improper assessment of religion or beliefs and the consideration that some of them are “deviant”.

6. In his 2008 Report “Justice and Sectarian Deviances”, the President of MIVILUDES explained the need to protect children from their parents’ beliefs, approvingly quoting a psychologist who stated regarding children “victim of sects” that “it is even more difficult to protect a child from his parents’ belief than from their beatings or their incestuous sexuality”.

7. In MIVILUDES Annual Report 2009, under the heading “Assimilation of the sole beliefs of the movement”, the President of MIVILUDES, Mr. Fenech, explained that children brought up in a context of “sectarian subjection” are ideologically isolated because they are subjected to a unique and exclusive discourse, for example by the daily repetition of a credo of allegiance to a superior entity or the substitution of a mythical discourse to rational explanations. According to him, such education - which could correspond to the raising of children in any religion - enslaves and diminishes the possibilities of the child.¹

8. He concluded by this question: “If such a [psychological] risk is established, isn’t the solution, as very often, to protect the young, and mostly the teenager, from a univocal vision of the world by arranging for him, giving the largest place possible to the non-follower parent, some windows on other realities, and this even if he, in the exclusive sphere of his follower parent, has blossomed, works well at school and does not complain about anything?”²

9. Thereby, in cases of family conflicts and whatever general affirmations to the contrary, MIVILUDES recommends to not give equal rights to parents who are members of targeted religious minorities

¹ http://www.miviludes.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/rapport2009_mise_en_ligne.pdf, p. 128-129

² http://www.miviludes.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/rapport2009_mise_en_ligne.pdf, p. 214

and suggests an encroachment of the parent's rights presenting it as a "solution" to protect children from their parents' beliefs, in violation of Article 18 of the Covenant and Article 14.2 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

10. But what MIVILUDES' President derogatorily refers to as "mythical discourse" as opposed to rational explanations is precisely belief in the sense of the religious freedom principles articulated in the International Human Rights Instruments signed and ratified by France. He considers that some beliefs are acceptable while others are not and assesses their legitimacy, in total violation of his duty of neutrality as a State agent.

11. For parents who belong to religious minorities he labels as "sectarian movements", MIVILUDES' President recommended unusual procedures in domestic family law. In his 2008 Justice and Sectarian Deviances Report, the President of MIVILUDES recommended that family conflicts with "a sectarian background", although civil cases, be referred to the General Prosecutors who would check for penal offences, that they be assigned to specialized family judges, who would themselves be assisted by professionals (social investigators, psychologists) specially trained in "sect" matters.

12. Indeed, due to the vagueness of the concepts used, MIVILUDES' President explained in the 2009 Report that repression of sectarian movements will not be efficient if the Judges and social workers dealing with the Protection of the Youth are not specially informed on what movements and practices should be targeted with these measures:

However, as regards specific knowledge of the sectarian context, the actors of the protection of children are still lacking detailed and updated information. Due to the extremely fast evolution of the movements and practices, the personnel in charge of children matters must be kept informed of the variety of situations in a regular and precise manner.

13. Mr. Fenech recommended further information and training of these personnel as part of their continuing education on the various movements and practices which should be considered as "sectarian" by the Judges and social workers adding that "Only on the condition of this preliminary step can prevention and repression of the sectarian phenomenon be really efficient".

14. The "training" on sects has already been given by MIVILUDES in the form of seminars on "sectarian deviances" proposed to the Judges, Prosecutors, Police and Youth workers as part of their continuing education. It has revealed to be entirely based on one-sided derogatory information on religious or belief minorities without any possibility for the concerned communities to contradict the accusations it contained.

15. The seminars delivered to Justice Agents have included briefings on specific minorities of religion or belief, with information provided by the two anti-sect associations UNADFI and CCMM, and without any possibility of debate or rebuttal by the concerned groups. As part of the documents distributed to the attending Justice personnel, press articles hostile to these groups were provided.

16. The above policy and recommendations of MIVILUDES have been implemented and they inevitably result in an infringement of the rights of believers to educate their children in their own faith and in discrimination.

17. Back in 2006, Mr. Fenech, who was a Member of the French National Assembly at the time, chaired a Parliamentary Enquiry Commission on "children and cults". The Commission interrogated dozens of members of the Government and of Government agencies, and the answers were

uniformly that there were only very few or none cases related to “sectarian movements” reported by each branch of the Ministries of the French government.³

18. However, in furtherance of the French ideological policy of repression, a new Circular has been enacted on 22 March 2012 (Circular N° 2012-051) by the Ministry of National Education addressed to education authorities of primary and high schools entitled “Prevention and Fight against Sectarian Risks”.

19. Contrary to the preceding Circulars of 14 May 1999 and 26 December 2011 which provided merely and legitimately for control of the acquisition of knowledge and level of education of children receiving education at home, this Circular provides for the identification of “sectarian risks” by the National Education personnel. This has led to visits by national education agents to parents belonging to minorities of religion or belief whose children were doing “at-home” correspondence courses delivered by a State recognized organism. The national education agents were checking for any ideological or religious motivation behind the choice of the parents to take their children out of the regular school system.

20. The Circular provides the following explanation of what constitutes a “sectarian risk”:

“A situation of sectarian risk, for a child, is therefore the one in which some views and practices are imposed on him with the exception of any other views or practice. This situation is likely to harm his intellectual development, his social integration and finally his attainment of autonomy. The risk concerns not only the content of the knowledge passed on, the possibility of access to the values and pluralism of democratic societies, but also the possibility for the child to develop and exert a critical mind, an independent judgment. The context can be family, or even community: the child is then likely to be under the undue influence of views and practices threatening his education; or extra-family: the child is then likely to be subjected to views and practices which can be harmful to him either: - at school (through the teacher, his friends, an association delivering services at school or distributed literature), or at tutoring associations or during a stay with a family abroad”.

21. This constitutes discrimination and a direct violation of the right of parents to raise their children according to their own beliefs protected by the European Convention on Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

22. Per the Circular, National Education personnel (teachers, Principals, etc.) have the duty to denounce any child and family suspected of “sectarian drifts” to the special units created for “the collection, processing and assessment of worrying situations” (CRIP) in each of the French Departments, or to the Public Prosecutor.

23. In parallel, MIVILUDES and the French Ministry of Education launched during the last years a campaign against “sects” in schools. Posters are put in schools and the subject is addressed with the students during civic education courses.

24. This has led to situations where children of members of religious or belief minorities attending these courses have been put under pressure by the teachers and even principals to criticize or recant their parents’ faith.

³ <http://www.freedomofconscience.eu/2011/08/the-handling-of-the-new-spiritual-mov/>

25. In her report following her official visit to France on 18-29 September 2005, Asma Jahangir, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, noted as regards “new religious movements or communities of belief”:

108. However, she is of the opinion that the policy and measures that have been adopted by the French authorities have provoked situations where the right to freedom of religion or belief of members of these groups has been unduly limited. Moreover, the public condemnation of some of these groups, as well as the stigmatization of their members, has led to certain forms of discrimination, in particular vis-à-vis their children.

26. The UN Rapporteur made the following recommendations:

112. The Special Rapporteur urges the Government to ensure that its mechanisms for dealing with these religious groups or communities of belief deliver a message based on tolerance, freedom of religion or belief and on the principle that no one can be judged for his actions other than through the appropriate judicial channels.

113. Moreover, she recommends that the Government monitor more closely preventive actions and campaigns that are conducted throughout the country by private initiatives or Government-sponsored organizations, in particular within the school system in order to avoid children of members of these groups being negatively affected.

27. Instead of complying with these recommendations from the United Nations, MIVILUDES continues to implement a policy of stigmatization and discrimination which violates the rights of believers under Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Human Rights Committee General Comment N° 22 and the UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief.

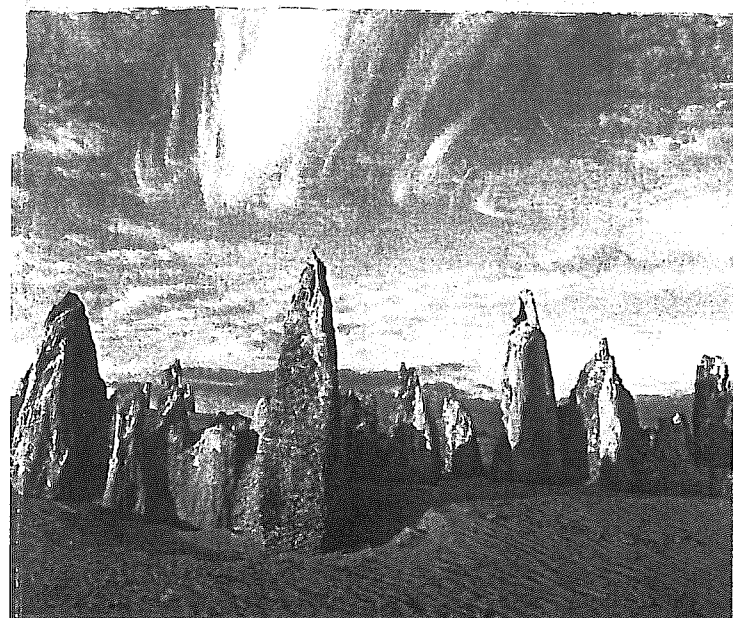
CONCLUSION

28. The Recommendations made to France have not been implemented. To the contrary, the rights of individuals belonging to religious minorities are continuously and increasingly jeopardized by its policy of repression of beliefs it deems “deviant”.

29. It is time for France to comply with its international commitments as regards freedom of religion or belief and freedom from discrimination.

Contact : contact@coordiap.com

Enc. Lesson on “sects” in a school manual featuring Rael and Moon



[PREMIÈRE SÉRIES TECHNOLOGIQUES]



IMPACT

Anglais



HACHETTE
Éducation

Mind Control

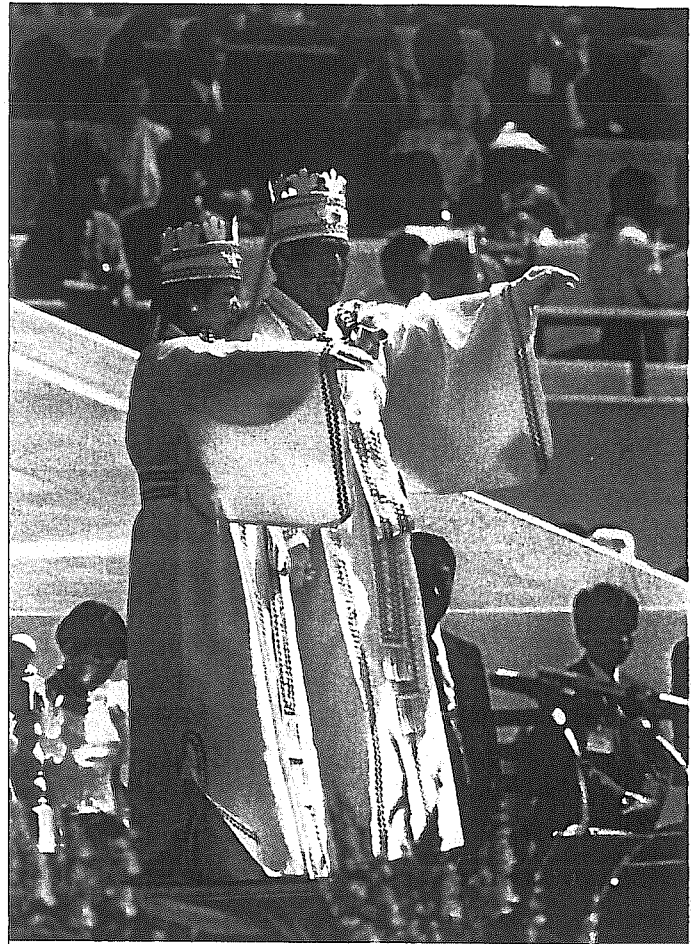
1 What Is a Cult?

A cult is a group or movement that uses mind control and devious recruiting techniques to manipulate its followers. Through calculated methods of persuasion, cults brainwash the people they have recruited into doing what the cult leader tells them to do. The goal of these manipulators is the acquisition of power or money, or both. Their victims risk mental slavery.

Everybody should be aware of a few misconceptions about cults:

- "Cults are easy to spot; members wear strange clothes and live in communes." Some do, but most recruiters dress, talk and act normally: cult leaders don't want people to know that they are being recruited into a cult.
- "Cults are full of weak, emotionally unstable people." Not true. Many cult members are very intelligent, attractive and skilled. All sorts of people are involved in cults.
- "Cults are just religious fanatics." Not necessarily true. A religious system is often used, but it is the manipulating techniques that make a cult.

1. Pick out the words with negative connotations in paragraph 1.
2. Find equivalents for these words in the rest of the text:
repérer – communautés – s'habillent – faibles – qualifiés – impliqués.
3. Why is it important to know about the common misconceptions about cults?



Gamma/K. Kurita

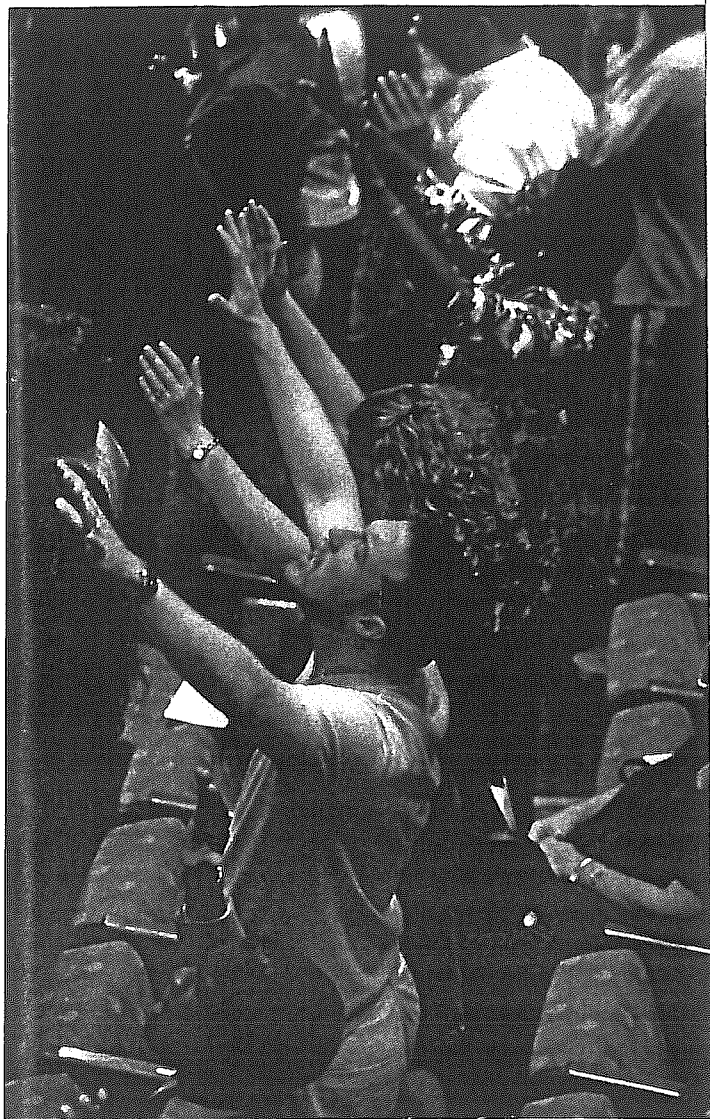
POD LECTURE



Fanatics Are Nothing New

Read the statements below. Then listen to the recording and say whether they are true or false. Justify or correct when necessary.

1. The Puritans came to America in the 17th century.
2. The Puritans were persecuted.
3. They were coming from Holland.
4. The Pilgrim Fathers were Puritans.
5. Their rules were very strict.
6. Card playing was banned.
7. They enjoyed theatre plays.
8. They accused many women of being witches.
9. Salem is in New England.
10. Women who were considered witches were hanged.



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2 Mind Control Techniques

In Britain alone, it is estimated that there are 500 active cult movements today, and the number may be 3,000 for the US. Cults brainwash people. Their techniques include:

- using hypnosis, disguised as relaxation or meditation;
- giving love and using peer pressure to suppress resistance;
- communicating subliminal messages in long, complicated lectures;
- removing clocks and watches to suppress a sense of time;
- encouraging child-like obedience;
- depriving people of sleep to lower resistance;
- using abusive language to increase vulnerability;
- making people go without eating or follow special diets, to deprive them of necessary nutrients;
- enforcing dress codes to remove individuality;
- singing repetitive chants for persuasion;
- using confession to destroy ego and reinforce the need for "salvation;"
- making members donate money to increase dependence,
- promoting acceptance of cult authority;
- isolating people from families, friends and society;
- arranging cult marriages and "families."

1. Find synonyms for the following in the document:
friends or colleagues – present but invisible or inaudible –
bad words – nourishing ingredients in a food – make stronger
2. Use information from the document and these adjectives to complete the sentences below:
vulnerable – independent – curious – confused – obedient –
dependent – individualistic – self-assured – free – resistant –
physically weak – financially independent
 - In order to make their members..., cults...
 - In order to prevent their members from being..., cults...



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Action



Make a one-minute speech.

Today is *Beware of Cults Day* at school.

Prepare a speech to warn students against the dangers of cults. Start like this:

"If you have just met some incredibly friendly people who want to introduce you to a fantastic leader, beware!"

TEXT FILE 1

COMPREHENSION •

Before you read

1. Judging from the pictures and the headline of the text, guess what the story is about.

Read lines 1 to 11

2. Check your guesses.

Read the whole text

3. Find the names of the cult and its founders, and the number of members.
4. Give as much information as possible about the two cult leaders and their faith.
5. In 1974, they were imprisoned. Why? What happened on their release?
6. Pick out all the elements from the text referring to the cult members' activities and beliefs.
7. Find as much information as possible about the suicides. Did the members all die at the same time?
8. Quote elements describing their feelings and beliefs before dying.
9. Who and how do preachers and cult leaders recruit? Find reasons why people join cults.
10. Cult leaders are described as "charismatic messiahs." Explain and give your opinion.

WORDS •

1. Complete these sentences.

Lines 1 to 11

- a. To add or to mix is to l...
- b. Religious men living in monasteries are called m...
- c. A recompense for a service is a r...

Lines 12 to 27

- d. Your f... is what you believe in.
- e. When you go back to work after a pause you r... your work.
- f. A person who believes anything is g...

2. Choose the right meaning.

- a. hasten (line 8):
cause to happen faster – detest
- b. exclusive (line 16):
not willing to make friends – reserved for rich people
- c. devise (line 24):
invent – share
- d. fail (line 28):
come down – not produce the desired result
- e. hazard (line 32):
chance – risk

COMPO DICTO •



1. Listen to our recorded summary.

2. Use the words below to summarize the text.

- 39 – cult – found dead – mansion – San Diego
- committed – suicide – leader
- believing – angels – thought – picked – UFO – heaven
- men – victims – messiah – claimed – group suicide – leads – heaven
- naïve people – victims – preachers – cult leaders – Internet

3. Listen again and complete.

Action



Record a radio news item.

Prepare a short presentation about the mass suicide for the local radio station and record it.



© Getty/Photographer's Choice/A. M. Rosario

A Spaceship to Heaven

- 1 First, they packed their suitcases neatly and dressed themselves
in black – shirts, pants and tennis shoes. Then, one by one
over a period of several days, they ate applesauce or pudding
laced with a barbiturate and chased it with vodka. Finally,
5 again one by one, they lay down on cots or bunk beds and,
joyously believing they were destined to rendezvous with a
*heaven-bound UFO, put plastic bags over their heads to
hasten death. Two members of the Heaven's Gate cyber-cult
remained alive to remove the plastic bags, drape the 37 bodies
10 in purple *shrouds and tidy up. Then, they killed themselves
the same way.

The 21 women and 18 men of Heaven's Gate, many of them
computer programmers who called themselves monks, are the most recent victims
of charismatic messiahs who claim that group suicide leads to spiritual rewards.

- 15 The Heaven's Gate commune, led by former *choirmaster Marshall Applewhite,
rented the huge mansion in the exclusive *Rancho Santa Fe area in October for
\$10,000 a month. Milton Silverman, the owner's lawyer, told reporters that the
celibate, *teetotalling, non-smoking tenants belonged to a religious computer group
and believed they were angels.
20 Applewhite, their 66-year-old leader who died with them, was the son of a
Presbyterian minister who worked as a choral director at the University of Alabama
in the 1960s. After a near-fatal heart attack, he left his wife and two children to
embark on a nomadic life with Bonnie Nettles, a nurse he met during his
convalescence. This is when they devised their own faith, called "The Process," in
25 which they presented themselves as heavenly messengers from outer space.

- In 1974, they persuaded a group of Oregon townspeople to give away all their
possessions, and their children, and travel with them to Colorado to be picked up by
a spaceship. When the spacecraft failed to appear the following year, the pilgrims
became fed up. "Bo" and "Peep," as Applewhite and Nettles then called themselves,
30 were jailed briefly for possessing stolen credit cards. Afterwards, they resumed
preaching.

Experts suggest that now preachers are not the only hazard for naïve people; they say
cult recruiters use the Internet to impression gullible people.

Rae Corelli and Anne Gregor, *Maclean's*, April 1997



© REX/Reporters N. Van Cappellen

- * heaven-bound UFO: an unidentified flying object flying to heaven
- * shroud: cloth for covering a dead body
- * choirmaster: a man in charge of a group of people singing together
- * Rancho Santa Fe is located outside San Diego
- * teetotalling: non-drinking (no alcohol)

GRAMMAR FILE

Les articles

- They believed they were destined to rendezvous with **a** heaven-bound UFO.
- They put plastic **Ø** bags over their heads to hasten **Ø** death.
- Two members of the Heaven's Gate cyber-cult remained alive to remove **the** plastic bags.
- The** death of the Heaven's Gate cyber-cult members shocked a lot of Americans.
- Ø** Experts suggest that now **Ø** preachers are not the only hazard for naïve people; they say **Ø** cult recruiters use the Internet to impression gullible people.

OBSERVE •

- Dans la phrase *a*, pourquoi a-t-on utilisé l'article *a* ?
- Dans la phrase *b*, justifiez l'emploi de l'article **Ø** devant *bags* et devant *death* (nom dénombrable ou indénombrable ? qui renvoie à une non-détermination, à une généralité, à une notion ?).
- Dans la phrase *c*, justifiez l'emploi de *the* devant *plastic bags*.
- Dans la phrase *d*, justifiez l'emploi de *the* devant le mot *death* (renvoie-t-il à quelque chose d'unique, est-il déterminé par *of* + groupe nominal ?).
- Dans la phrase *e*, justifiez l'emploi de l'article **Ø** devant *experts*, *preachers*, *naïve people*, *cult recruiters* et *gullible people*. Expliquez pourquoi on a l'article *the* devant *Internet*.

PRACTISE •

- Justifiez l'emploi des articles en gras dans les phrases suivantes.
 - Ø** Cults brainwash **Ø** people.
 - Many of **the** Heaven's Gate cyber-cult called themselves **Ø** monks.
 - A cult is **a** group or movement that uses **Ø** mind control and **Ø** devious recruiting techniques to manipulate their followers.
 - The** French government has listed **the** cults they find the most dangerous.
- Corrigez l'erreur dans chaque phrase.
 - The cult leaders want power and money.
 - Cults resort to the mind manipulation to recruit their members.
 - The Moonies are quite popular in USA.
 - Gurus resort to the peer pressure to suppress resistance among their new members.
 - Cult members give money they earn to their gurus.
- Traduisez.
 - L'Église de scientologie est présente dans le monde entier.
 - Les sectes utilisent des méthodes de persuasion bien calculées.
 - Les méthodes de persuasion utilisées par les sectes sont variées et efficaces.
 - L'hypnose, dissimulée sous forme de relaxation ou de méditation, est une des techniques utilisées pour manipuler les adeptes des sectes.
 - Les gourous attendent une obéissance aveugle de leurs adeptes.
 - Les leaders privent les membres de leur secte de nourriture pour les rendre plus vulnérables.

➔ Précis grammatical 16 17 et 18

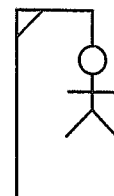
Action



Play the hangman game.

Work in pairs. You have 2 minutes to make up one sentence using at least 6 of the words below.

In turn, each group represents each word of their sentence with one dash ("_____") on the blackboard. The rest of the class tries to guess the sentence. Whenever the class is wrong, the hangman builds up.



Nouns & pronouns: I – girlfriend(s) – café – spider(s) – hotdog – plate – week – hair – soup – bread – me – her – customer(s) – salad – waiter – worm(s)

Verbs: invite – order – get – find – shout(ing) – look (at) – swallow – feel – be – have – go – run away – leave – wait (for) – drop – smile

Adjectives: nice – little – long – last – fat – huge – hot – cold – mad

EXPRESSION FILE



Action

Talk: Choose your survival kit

The situation

To prove to Guru Nahasi that you are worthy of entering the sect of the survivors, you must spend 2 weeks with three other applicants on a desert island and survive by your own means. You are only allowed to take five objects with you.

The procedure

1. Individually choose and rank five items you want to take with you. (3 minutes)
2. Work in pairs to agree on a common list. (6 minutes)
3. Discuss in groups of four to choose a common list giving reasons for your choice. Be careful, you only have 10 minutes, if no agreement has been reached before time is up, Guru Nahasi will not take you in his sect!
4. One student from each group then presents their group's choices to the teacher who decides who to take.

Action

Speak up: Manipulate your friends

As you need financial contributions from the class, you have decided to start your own phoney sect. Prepare a speech to convince the class to join in and give you money!

The procedure

1. Choose the name of your sect, your new nickname and what the aim of your sect will be.
2. Prepare the arguments you are going to use to convince your friends (notes only).
3. Practise your speech.
4. Make the speech in front of the class. You have to talk for at least 2 minutes.
5. Everybody votes to decide who will be the new class guru.

Action

Write rules

You have been elected "new class guru."

Write the rules of your new sect.

➡ Refer to your Workbook for guidelines.



**Coordination des Associations
et des Particuliers
pour la Liberté de Conscience**

**OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
(Warsaw, 24 September – 5 October 2012)**

Discrimination of Minority Belief Groups in France

CAP (Coordination des Associations et des Particuliers pour la Liberté de Conscience – Coordination of Associations and Individuals for Freedom of Conscience) is an association created in 2000 to unite minority religions or belief groups in France in order to counter discrimination concerning the right to freedom of conscience and belief and to alert the public to acts and speech violating human rights or which are a threat to fundamental liberties. Members of CAP include adherents to numerous minority faiths targeted through discriminatory measures as so-called “sects” or “sectarian movements” by the government.

Concerned by recurrent infringements of the right to religious freedom enshrined in various international human rights instruments, CAP provides the following Report regarding the French policy on minorities of religion or belief and in particular on the children of their followers.

Stigmatization of Followers of Religious Minorities and their Children within the School System

The Inter-ministerial Mission of Vigilance and Fight against Sectarian Drifts (MIVILUDES), placed directly under the Prime Minister in France, has set in place a policy that directly contradicts Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights on religious freedom and Article 2 of Protocol No. 1 of the Convention which requires the State to respect the rights of parents to ensure education and teaching in conformity with their own religious convictions.

For years, France has had a policy of stigmatization and negative stereotyping of minorities of religion or belief it first labeled as “sects” or, since a Prime Minister Decree of 2005 prohibiting such practice, now labels as “sectarian movements”. This derogatory classification corresponds to the improper assessment of religion or beliefs and the consideration that some of them are “deviant”.

In MIVILUDES Annual Report 2009, under the heading “Assimilation of the sole beliefs of the movement”, the then President of MIVILUDES, Mr. Fenech, explained that children brought up in a context of “sectarian subjection” are ideologically isolated because they are subjected to a unique and exclusive discourse, for example by the daily repetition of a credo of allegiance to a superior entity or the substitution of a mythical discourse to rational explanations. According to him, such education - which could correspond to the raising of children in any religion - enslaves and diminishes the possibilities of the child.¹

He concluded by this question: “If such a [psychological] risk is established, isn’t the solution, as very often, to protect the young, and mostly the teenager, from a univocal vision of the world by arranging for him, giving the largest place possible to the non-follower parent, some windows on other realities, and this even if he, in the exclusive sphere of his follower parent, has blossomed, works well at school and does not complain about anything?”²

Therefore, in cases of family conflicts, MIVILUDES does not give equal rights to parents who are members of targeted religious minorities and recommends an encroachment of the parent’s rights presenting it as a “solution” to protect the child from parents’ beliefs, in violation of Article 5 of Protocol No. 7 to the Convention which establishes that spouses enjoy equality of rights in their relations with their children.

¹ http://www.miviludes.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/rapport2009_mise_en_ligne.pdf, p. 128-129

² http://www.miviludes.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/rapport2009_mise_en_ligne.pdf, p. 214

The European Court of Human Rights ruled in a landmark decision of 10 June 2010 (*Jehovah's Witnesses of Moscow v. Russia*) that in cases of conflict both parents have equally the right to raise their children in accordance with their convictions:

Both parents, even in a situation where they adhere to differing doctrines or beliefs, have the same right to raise their children in accordance with their religious or non-religious convictions and any disagreements between them in relation to the necessity and extent of the children's participation in religious practices and education are private disputes that are to be resolved according to the procedure established in domestic family law.

What MIVILUDES' President derogatorily referred to as "mythical discourse" as opposed to rational explanations is precisely belief in the sense of the religious freedom principles articulated in the International Human Rights Instruments signed and ratified by France. He considers that some beliefs are acceptable while others are not and assesses their legitimacy, in total violation of his duty of neutrality as a State agent.

For parents who belong to religious minorities he labels as "sectarian movements", MIVILUDES' President has set unusual procedures in domestic family law. In his 2008 Justice Facing Sectarian Drifts Report, the President of MIVILUDES recommended, as concerns family conflicts with "a sectarian background", that these cases, although civil cases, be communicated to the General Prosecutors who would check for penal offences and be assigned to specialized family judges, who would be assisted by specially trained professionals (social investigators, psychologists).

Additionally, due to the vagueness of the concepts used, MIVILUDES' President noted in the 2009 Report that repression of sectarian movements will not be efficient if the Judges and social workers dealing with the Protection of the Youth are not specially informed on what movements and practices should be targeted with these measures:

However, as regards specific knowledge of the sectarian context, the actors of the protection of children are still lacking detailed and updated information. Due to the extremely fast evolution of the movements and practices, the personnel in charge of children matters must be kept informed of the variety of situations in a regular and precise manner.

Mr. Fenech recommended further information and training of these personnel as part of their continuing education on the various movements and practices which should be considered as “sectarian” by the Judges and social workers adding that “Only on the condition of this preliminary step can prevention and repression of the sectarian phenomenon be really efficient”.

This kind of one-sided, biased information on religious or belief minorities, which has already been given by MIVILUDES in the form of “awareness” seminars proposed to the Judges, Prosecutors, Police and Youth workers as part of their continuing education, has shown to be entirely based on uniformly derogatory documentation provided by anti-sect associations without any possibility for the concerned communities to contradict the accusations it contained.

Based on documents released under the Freedom of Information law, the presentations on the targeted religions have been biased. The seminars delivered to Justice Agents have included briefings on targeted religious groups, with information provided by the two anti-sect associations UNADFI and CCMM, and without any possibility of contradiction, debate or rebuttal by the concerned groups. As part of the documents distributed to the attending Justice personnel, press articles hostile to these groups were provided, as evidenced by the list of documents attached to the programs of the seminars.

The mountain of positive jurisprudence and official recognitions regarding these groups has been completely ignored. Only a few negative court decisions were provided, and decisions from higher judicial authorities directly contradicting those decisions were also not discussed. Objective and scientific information regarding these groups was not included – neither objective scholars nor experts in the field of religion were included in the program, exposing the program as an attempt to prejudice the judiciary against minority religious organizations.

Such “awareness” programs for court officials have been condemned by the United Nations Human Rights Committee. In its *Concluding Observations of the Human Rights Committee: Germany. 18/11/96 (CCPR/C/79/Add.73)*, the Human Rights Committee recommended, in strikingly similar circumstances, that Germany discontinue the holding of “sensitizing sessions for judges against the practices of certain designated sects”.

The above policy and recommendations of MIVILUDES have been implemented and they inevitably result in an infringement of the rights of believers to educate their children in their own faith and in discrimination.

In furtherance of this policy, a new Circular has been enacted on 22 March 2012 (Circular N° 2012-051) by the French Ministry of National Education addressed to education authorities of primary and high schools entitled “Prevention and Fight against Sectarian Risks”.

Contrary to the preceding Circulars of 14 May 1999 and 26 December 2011 which provided merely and legitimately for control of the acquisition of knowledge and level of education of children receiving education at home, this Circular provides for the identification of “sectarian risks” by the National Education personnel. This has led to visits by National Education agents to parents belonging to minorities of religion or belief whose children were doing “at-home” correspondence courses delivered by a State recognized organism. The National Education agents were checking for any ideological or religious motivation behind the choice of the parents to take their children out of the public school system.

The Circular provides the following explanation of what constitutes a “sectarian risk”:

“A situation of sectarian risk, for a child, is therefore the one in which some views and practices are imposed on him with the exception of any other views or practice. This situation is likely to harm his intellectual development, his social integration and finally his attainment of autonomy. The risk concerns not only the content of the knowledge passed on, the possibility of access to the values and pluralism of democratic societies, but also the possibility for the child to develop and exert a critical mind, an independent judgment. The context can be family, or even community: the child is then likely to be under the undue influence of views and practices threatening his education; or extra-family: the child is then likely to be subjected to views and practices which can be harmful to him either: - at school (through the teacher, his friends, an association delivering services at school or distributed literature), or at tutoring associations or during a stay with a family abroad”.

This constitutes discrimination and a direct violation of the right of parents to raise their children according to their own beliefs protected by the Helsinki Accords, other OSCE pronouncements on religious freedom, the European Convention on Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Per the Circular, National Education personnel (teachers, Principals, etc.) have the duty to denounce any child and family suspected of “sectarian drifts” to the special units created for “the collection, processing and assessment of worrying situations” (CRIP) in each of the French Departments, or to the Public Prosecutor.

In parallel, MIVILUDES and the French Ministry of Education launched during the last years a campaign against “sects” in schools. Posters are put in schools and the subject is addressed with the students during civic education courses.

This has led to situations where children of members of religious or belief minorities have been under pressure to criticize or recant their parents’ faith.

In her Report following her official visit to France on 18-29 September 2005, Asma Jahangir, then United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, noted as regards “new religious movements or communities of belief”:

108. However, she is of the opinion that the policy and measures that have been adopted by the French authorities have provoked situations where the right to freedom of religion or belief of members of these groups has been unduly limited. Moreover, the public condemnation of some of these groups, as well as the stigmatization of their members, has led to certain forms of discrimination, in particular vis-à-vis their children.

The UN Rapporteur made the following recommendations:

112. The Special Rapporteur urges the Government to ensure that its mechanisms for dealing with these religious groups or communities of belief deliver a message based on tolerance, freedom of religion or belief and on the principle that no one can be judged for his actions other than through the appropriate judicial channels.

113. Moreover, she recommends that the Government monitor more closely preventive actions and campaigns that are conducted throughout the country by private initiatives or Government-sponsored organizations, in particular within the school system in order to avoid children of members of these groups being negatively affected.

Instead of complying with these recommendations from the United Nations, the French authorities continue to implement a policy of stigmatization and discrimination which violates the rights of believers under the European Convention on Human Rights, the Helsinki Accords and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

CONCLUSION

Rather than attempt to repair the human rights shortcomings identified in the UN Rapporteur's Report, the French authorities have chosen to increase their intolerant and discriminatory policy through the stigmatization of the children of followers of religious or belief minorities.

This worsening situation and the current oppressive measures and actions taken by the government to target the believers and their children contravene basic human rights of the members of these groups.

Such repressive measures cannot be countenanced under OSCE and UN standards, including the European Convention on Human Rights, the Helsinki Accords, the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion or Belief and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

International and legal standards mandate that new religions or religious minorities be treated fairly and in the same way as other religions. These standards also mandate a spirit of tolerance towards the followers of minority movements and their children.

It is time for France to comply with its international commitments as regards freedom of religion or belief and freedom from discrimination.



**Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping,
stigmatization and discrimination
based on religion or belief**

Report on France

Warsaw OSCE 2013

Submission by CAP Liberté de Conscience

(Coordination des Associations et des Particuliers pour la Liberté de Conscience –
Coordination of Associations and Individuals for Freedom of Conscience)

As part of the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2013, CAP provides the following report regarding the French policy on minorities of religion or belief in France that needs to be changed to effectively implement the rights of these minorities.

For years, France has had a policy of stigmatization and negative stereotyping of minorities of religion or belief it has labeled as “sects” or, more recently as “sectarian movements”. This derogatory classification corresponds to the improper assessment of religion or beliefs and the consideration that some of them, new or minority ones not belonging to traditional Churches or Institutions, are “deviant” and constitute “sectarian drifts”.

In furtherance of this policy, the Inter-ministerial Mission of Vigilance and Fight against Sectarian Drifts (MIVILUDES), placed directly under the Prime Minister in France, has pushed through a whole series of measures, in particular in the area of education and children which seriously jeopardize the right of parents to educate their children in conformity with their own religious beliefs, a right protected under Article 2 of the Protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights which provides:

No person shall be denied the right to education. In the exercise of any functions which it assumes in relation to education and to teaching, the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions.

One of these measures has been the new Circular enacted on 22 March 2012 (Circular N° 2012-051) by the French Ministry of National Education addressed to education authorities of primary and high schools entitled “Prevention and Fight against Sectarian Risks”.¹

¹ See: http://www.education.gouv.fr/pid25535/bulletin_officiel.html?cid_bo=59725

Contrary to the preceding Circulars² which provided merely and legitimately for control of the acquisition of knowledge and level of education of children receiving education at home, this Circular provides for the identification of “sectarian risks” by the National Education personnel. And a “sectarian risk” is so defined by the Circular:

“A situation of sectarian risk, for a child, is therefore the one in which some views and practices are imposed on him with the exception of any other views or practice. This situation is likely to harm his intellectual development, his social integration and finally his attainment of autonomy. The risk concerns not only the content of the knowledge passed on, the possibility of access to the values and pluralism of democratic societies, but also the possibility for the child to develop and exert a critical mind, an independent judgment. The context can be family, or even community: the child is then likely to be under the undue influence of views and practices threatening his education; or extra-family: the child is then likely to be subjected to views and practices which can be harmful to him either: - at school (through the teacher, his friends, an association delivering services at school or distributed literature), or at tutoring associations or during a stay with a family abroad”.

But any family brings up its children according to its own beliefs, be them religious, philosophical, moral, etc. And following the Circular definition any views could be said to be imposed on a child by his parents, and could be said to be undue because they are exclusive of any other beliefs. This is precisely what the right to educate a child in conformity with one’s own beliefs is all about.

However, per the Circular, National Education personnel (teachers, Principals, etc.) have the duty to spot any child and family suspected of “sectarian drifts” due to the parents’ adherence to certain religious beliefs or worldviews, and denounce them to the special units created for “the collection, processing and assessment of worrying situations” (CRIP) in each of the French Departments, or to the Public Prosecutor.

In parallel, MIVILUDES and the French Ministry of Education launched during the last years a campaign against “sects” in schools. Posters have been hung to alarm parents about the possibility that their children would be put under undue influence and the subject has been included in the curriculum of civic education courses during which the teachers have been giving very derogatory information about minority movements targeted as “sects”.

This has led to systematic stigmatization and painful situations where children of members of religious or belief minorities have been under pressure to criticize or recant their parents’ faith.

With the start of the new school year in September 2013, another step has been taken with the introduction of a new subject entitled “secular morals” in the curriculums, and on 9 September 2013, the release of the Charter of Secularism to be posted in all primary and high public schools in France.

² Circulars of 14 May 1999 and 26 December 2011.

On 2 September, in an interview to the “Journal du Dimanche”, the Minister of Education announced that the mission of the subject on “secular morals” is the emancipation of pupils. He explained that in order to give them freedom of choice, the State has to be able to “snatch them out of any and all determinism”, including family influence.

The Charter of Secularism provides that:

6. Secularism gives the pupils the conditions to forge their personality, exert their free will and learn about citizenship. **It protects them from any proselytizing and pressure** which would prevent them from making their own choices.

And:

12. The teachings are secular. In order to ensure to pupils the most objective openness to the diversity of worldviews as well as to the scope and precision of knowledge, **no subject is a priori excluded from scientific and educational questioning**. No pupil can give a religious or political conviction as a reason for challenging a teacher’s right to deal with a subject in the curriculum. (underlining as in the original text)

This infers that teachers can speak about any religion and submit it to scientific questioning, and pupils who belong to the concerned faith are not allowed to counter the teacher’s views and express their beliefs.

This constitutes an outright violation of the pupils’ and their parents’ rights to freedom of religion or belief.

It is also an extremist interpretation of French secularism. Secularism is supposed to mean separation of State and religion and respect for all religious communities and beliefs per the French Constitution. It implies neutrality of the State and its public agents towards religions, in that the State should not favour or disfavour any religious movement.

However, the new interpretation of secularism by the French authorities extends it to the private sphere and imposes obligations to private persons, users of public services, unduly restricting their right to express their religious beliefs. This interference by the State cannot be justified and is not allowed under international human rights law.

Indeed the Charter also provides:

14. In public schools, the living rules in the various spaces, as detailed in the internal rules, respect secularism. The wearing of signs or clothes by which pupils conspicuously manifest a religious affiliation is prohibited.

The wearing of a cross around one's neck is therefore prohibited if the cross is not hidden by clothes. Also the Muslim veil or Sikh keski (small turban) are also prohibited as part of the interpretation of secularism extended to private individuals.

As concerns the obligation of neutrality of the State agents, the Charter on Secularism does not even provide for an obligation of the Education personnel to respect the religious beliefs of the pupils. The only obligation binding on the personnel is a "duty of strict neutrality" defined as "[the national education agents] must not manifest their political or religious opinions in the exercise of their functions". But the problem is not about their personal beliefs, but their respect of the pupils' and their parents' beliefs.

All religious beliefs are actually targeted by this extreme and intolerant conception of Secularism. Back in 2008, at the time of the publication of his book "The French Revolution is not completed", the Minister of Education, Vincent Peillon, stated: "We will never be able to build a country of freedom with the Catholic religion. As we cannot either adapt Protestantism to France like in other democracies, we have to invent a Republican religion. This Republican religion, which must accompany the material revolution, but which is a spiritual revolution, is Secularism."

Consequently, the French Minister of Education has launched a campaign to indoctrinate children against religions to, in his words, "snatch" them away from their parents' beliefs.

This constitutes a direct violation of the right of parents to raise their children according to their own beliefs protected by the European Convention on Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

In MIVILUDES Annual Report 2009 already, under the heading "Assimilation of the sole beliefs of the movement", the President of MIVILUDES explained that children brought up in a context of "sectarian subjection" are ideologically isolated because they are subjected to a unique and exclusive discourse, for example by the daily repetition of a credo of allegiance to a superior entity or the substitution of a mythical discourse to rational explanations. According to him, such education - which could correspond to the raising of children in any religion - enslaves and diminishes the possibilities of the child.³

He concluded by this question: "If such a [psychological] risk is established, isn't the solution, as very often, to protect the young, and mostly the teenager, from a univocal vision of the world by arranging for him, giving the largest place possible to the non-follower parent, some windows on other realities, and this even if he, in the exclusive sphere of his follower parent, has blossomed, works well at school and does not complain about anything?"⁴

Therefore, in cases of family conflicts, MIVILUDES does not give equal rights to parents who are believers and recommends an encroachment of the parent's rights presenting it as a "solution" to protect the child from parents' beliefs, in violation of all the international human rights instruments France has committed to.

³ http://www.miviludes.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/rapport2009_mise_en_ligne.pdf, p. 128-129

⁴ http://www.miviludes.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/rapport2009_mise_en_ligne.pdf, p. 214

What the French authorities refer to as “sectarian subjection” or “determinism” which allegedly undermines the “freedom of choice” of children is actually the right of parents to educate their children in conformity with their own beliefs.

A new law enacted on 8 July 2013 on the “orientation and programming for the re-foundation of the School of the Republic” introduced a new Article L312-15 in the Code of Education providing that “the moral and civic curriculum courses aim in particular at bringing the pupils to become responsible and free citizens, to build their sense of critic and to adopt a thoughtful behavior. These courses include, at all stages of the curriculum, a training in the values of the Republic, in the knowledge and respect of the rights of the child protected by the law or an international instrument and in the comprehension of concrete situations which violate them.”

Religious education will no doubt be included in these violations since the Minister considers that it undermines the child’s freedom of choice.

This biased misinterpretation of the international Convention on the Rights of the Child (hereafter the Convention) by the French authorities is designed at indoctrinating children against religions, including their parents’ one, under the cover of Secularism.

As a matter of fact, the Convention says exactly the opposite to the French interpretation. Article 14 which protects freedom of religion or belief provides:

1. States Parties shall respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
2. **States Parties shall respect the rights and duties of the parents and, when applicable, legal guardians, to provide direction to the child in the exercise of his or her right in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child.** [emphasis added]
3. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health or morals, or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child, which enforces the provisions of the Convention, in its Concluding Observations on France in 2009, pinpointed the 2004 law prohibiting the wearing of religious symbols at school and endorsed the findings of the Human Rights Committee noting that respect for a public culture of secularism would not seem to require forbidding wearing such common religious symbols (CCPR/C/FRA/CO/4, para. 23). And the Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that “the guarantees of article 14 of the Convention concerning the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including the right to manifest one’s religion in public as well as private, be upheld and that particular attention be paid to avoid discrimination on the grounds of thought, conscience or religion.” (§46)

It also reiterated its recommendation that France reviews its position with respect to children belonging to minority groups and in particular its reservation made to Article 30 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This article provides that a child belonging to an ethnic, religious or linguistic minority “shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess or practice his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language”.

France has declined in a Declaration to the Convention to apply Article 30 arguing that Article 2 of the French Constitution prohibited its application as it provides that “France is a republic, indivisible, secular, democratic and social. It shall ensure the equality of all citizens before the law without distinction of origin, race or religion.”⁵ It concluded that the Constitution therefore excluded recognition of groups with their specificities and has kept refusing to recognize religious minorities.

On 1st November 2012, at its 106th session, the UN Human Rights Committee ruled that France’s ban on the wearing of “conspicuous” religious symbols in schools – introduced by the 2004 law – violated a Sikh student’s right to manifest his religion. The Committee found that France had “not furnished compelling evidence that by wearing his keski [Bikramjit] would have posed a threat to the rights and freedoms of other pupils or to order at the school”. In the Committee’s view, France had not shown “how the sacrifice of those persons’ rights is either necessary or proportionate to the benefits achieved”. It concluded that the expulsion of the Sikh student from the French education system constituted a violation of Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Far from complying with its international human rights commitments and the recommendations of the various international human rights bodies, France has now escalated its policy of extreme and intolerant “secularism” by launching a campaign to “snatch” the pupils away from their family religious beliefs.

CAP respectfully requires that the OSCE intervenes with the French government so that such policy and measures cease and freedom of religion or belief is restored in France.

⁵ The old Article 2 which has now been included in Article 1 of the Constitution.



Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization and discrimination based on religion or belief

Report on France OSCE 2014

Submission by CAP

(Coordination des Associations et des Particuliers pour la Liberté de Conscience –
Coordination of Associations and Individuals for Freedom of Conscience)

As part of the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2014, CAP provides the following report regarding the French policy on minorities of religion or belief in France that needs to be changed to effectively implement the rights of these minorities.

For years, France has had a policy of stigmatization and negative stereotyping of minorities of religion or belief it has labeled as “sects” or, more recently as “sectarian movements”. This derogatory classification corresponds to the improper assessment of religion or beliefs and the consideration that some of them, new or minority ones not belonging to traditional Churches or Institutions are “deviant”, can only stem from a “psychological hold” on the followers and constitute “sectarian abuses”.

In furtherance of this policy, the Inter-ministerial Mission of Vigilance and Fight against Sectarian Drifts (MIVILUDES), placed directly under the Prime Minister in France, has pushed through a whole series of measures, in particular it has compiled “sect” files, a repository of records (“référentiel”) established entirely on one-sided accusations and allegations against so-called “sectarian” movements (denunciations, “signalements”, on these groups sent to MIVILUDES). When he announced the creation of these files in May 2009, the President of MIVILUDES explained that they concerned approximately 600 movements characterized as “sectarian” and that they were established, according to his statements to the media, on the sole basis of denouncements or informal complaints against minority belief movements.

To date, targeted faiths have not had access to these records and have been provided no opportunity to respond or correct any misinformation. These files have not been made public but they have been made available by MIVILUDES to professionals, such as Judges, Prosecutors and lawyers for use in cases against such groups.¹ To provide one-sided accusatory information to judges and law enforcement authorities on minority belief movements outside any procedure for access to and correction of any inaccurate, misleading or incomplete information in these records by concerned groups not only

¹ See Article in national newspaper Libération of 3 August 2009 “La France est en pointe dans la lutte contre les sectes” : <http://www.liberation.fr/societe/0101583433-la-france-est-en-pointe-dans-la-lutte-contre-les-sectes>

raises religious freedom issues, it also fatally undermines fundamental due process and jeopardizes the right to presumption of innocence and the independence of the judiciary.

Moreover, the creation of such a secret record repository on “sectarian movements” directly contravenes the recommendation made to the French authorities by Asma Jahangir, UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, following her official visit to France on 18-29 September 2005, to no longer, in judicial mechanisms, refer to or use a list of “sects”. In her Report submitted on 8 March 2006, she urged the French Government “to ensure that its mechanisms for dealing with these religious groups or communities of belief deliver a message based on tolerance, freedom of religion or belief and on the principle that no one can be judged for his actions other than through the appropriate judicial channels”.²

As we have previously noted, special seminars entitled “awareness sessions” on so-called sects have been held each year for Magistrates and Judges in France since 1998. These seminars continue. Documents obtained through the Freedom of Information law have shown that these seminars organized by MIVILUDES were entirely based on documentation provided by anti-sect associations without any possibility for the concerned communities to rebut this information. This documentation comprised hostile press articles and negative court decisions rendered against the concerned groups or their members omitting decisions from higher judicial authorities directly contradicting those decisions. No positive jurisprudence, official recognitions, or objective information from scholars regarding these groups were provided or even considered.

Such “awareness” programs for court officials have been condemned by the United Nations Human Rights Committee. In its 1996 Concluding Observations, the UN Human Rights Committee recommended, in strikingly similar circumstances, that Germany discontinue the holding of “*sensitizing sessions for judges against the practices of certain designated sects*”. Otherwise, the right to a fair trial is destroyed for religious minorities.³

The French system of indoctrination represents undue incitement of Magistrates and Judges to prosecute and convict individuals and organizations due to their minority religious beliefs in contravention of fundamental human rights. MIVILUDES reported in its 2011-2012 Report⁴ that the magistrate in charge of “sectarian abuses” at the Directorate for Criminal Affairs and Pardon of the Ministry of Justice dealt with eighteen new criminal cases in 2011 on top of the already ongoing ones in 2010, most of them initiated from reports sent by MIVILUDES for which criminal investigations were systematically started.

In 2011, one hundred criminal proceedings were identified by the anti-sect magistrate as relating to “sectarian abuses”. A third of these proceedings have been dismissed as they were based on facts reported in denunciations from individuals or administrations which did not appear to be illegal conduct after verification.

MIVILUDES has put in place a system of informing and denunciation of minority belief movements which is deeply discriminatory and reminds of very dark times in France.

² See, E/CN.4/2006/5/Add.4, 8 March 2006, *Mission to France Report*.

³ Human Rights Committee Concluding Observations, Germany: 18/11/96 CCPR/C/79/Add.73.

⁴ See the Report page 144 : http://www.derives-sectes.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/publications/francais/rapport_annuel_2011_miviludes.pdf

The National School of Magistrates ("Ecole Nationale de la Magistrature", ENM) published in its September 2013 magazine⁵ an interview of MIVILUDES' President where he explained that MIVILUDES advisors are experts in their area and are there to advise Judges when they deal with a case of sectarian abuses. In practice, Judges can make an official request of information, by mail or e-mail, concerning such or such movement. However most frequently the requests to MIVILUDES, which come generally from Investigating Judges and Prosecutors are informal. This collaboration, according to MIVILUDES' President allows those magistrates to know when they are dealing with a "sectarian movement".

However, in the same interview, he expressed that MIVILUDES had difficulties with some Judges, and even Prosecutors, who refuse such "collaboration" because of the secrecy of judicial investigations and because there should be no interference from the executive power, MIVILUDES being right under the Prime Minister. MIVILUDES' President states that this is a misunderstanding as MIVILUDES does not intend to be part of the cases, but only to give a special "perspective" and understanding of the movements involved, and that sometimes the "misunderstanding" can be solved in an "informal dialog" between MIVILUDES and the Judges or Prosecutors.

All these "informal" information, talks, dialog providing briefings on which movements should be considered as "sectarian" and considered to exert a "psychological hold" on their followers are aside from any official judicial procedure and not filed in the criminal cases to allow the defence to rebut these accusations.

These oppressive measures and actions by MIVILUDES to abuse the judicial process to target minority religious groups and their followers and to bias Judges against such groups and their members interfere with the independence of the judiciary, contravene the right to a fair hearing, violate the principles of non-discrimination and equality at the heart of justice, and represent an attempt to improperly single out and repress minority religious organizations through bad faith prosecutions and trials steeped in prejudice.

CAP respectfully requires that the OSCE intervenes with the French government so that such policy and measures cease and freedom of religion or belief is restored in France.

⁵ See *Revue Justice Actualités* n°8/2013, page 50.



Coordination of Associations and Individuals for Freedom of Conscience (CAP)

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2015: Freedom of Religion or Belief, Fostering Mutual Respect and Understanding September 2015

CAP (Coordination des Associations et des Particuliers pour la Liberté de Conscience – Coordination of Associations and Individuals for Freedom of Conscience) is an association created in 2000 to unite minority religions in Europe to counter discrimination concerning the right to freedom of conscience and belief and to alert the public to acts and speech violating human rights or which are threats to fundamental liberties.

The OSCE Conference on Freedom of Religion and Belief, Fostering Mutual Respect and Understanding is welcomed and timely. There has been a rise in incidents of discrimination, and intolerance toward members of religious minorities in the OSCE region that merit attention.

Belgium is one country that interferes with the right to freedom of belief. The Belgian state has accomplished this by allowing the suppression of the right to freedom of belief by its intelligence service, Belgian State Security, which conducts activities fueling hatred and intolerance towards members of minority groups derogatorily designated as “sects”.

The government’s campaign of intolerance targeting “sects” has resulted in the illegal monitoring of members of minority religions, simply due to their religious association and beliefs. State intelligence services in most other countries do not engage in investigation of peaceful religious organizations. Belgian State Security is one of the few intelligence agencies in the world that continues to monitor, investigate and target “sects” – something countries engaged in the suppression of religious freedom like China specialize in.

Recently, a new book entitled *State Security Secrets*, by Lars Bove', exposed Belgian State Security intelligence activities targeting so-called "sects" from the 1970s to the present, including the monitoring of a group that does nothing more than offer yoga courses throughout the country.

While researching his book, Mr. Bove' was provided secret reports, apparently by State Security officials, on the Scientology religion. These reports revealed that although Belgian State Security had been intensively monitoring Scientology organizations and parishioners in Belgium since 1970, *it had utterly failed to find any evidence whatsoever of improper activity that could be characterized as a threat to the security of Belgium.*

Yet, Belgian Security services instigated cancellation of Government contracts with at least one private communications company because the company was thought to include people who were also members of the Church of Scientology.

The book also details the contents of Security Services reports which were leaked to the press as part of ongoing official attempts to discredit the Church, which included details of private meetings members of the Church had had with Belgian politicians, even though there was nothing remotely illegal about these meetings.

The 2014 Report of the I Committee, the government body that oversees Belgian State Security, notes that the intelligence community investigation of Scientology going back to 1970 has uncovered no wrongdoing. As the Committee also notes, *"the role of the Belgian State Security is an exception in the world of information services. The most democratic countries even refuse to implicate their information services in the surveillance of religious movements because this would harm religious freedom."*

Over four decades of monitoring and surveillance and nothing to show for it except intrusion into the right to religious freedom and the fostering of intolerance and suspicion against peaceful and lawful religions. In this day, when serious acts of terrorism threaten countries throughout the world, Belgian State Security and the Ministry of Justice should cease and desist from initiating worthless investigations intruding on the rights of peaceful religious minorities.



Coordination des Associations et des Particuliers pour la Liberté de Conscience

FECRIS, a NGO financed by the French government

The *Coordination des Associations et des Particuliers Pour la Liberté de Conscience* (Coordination of Associations and Individuals for Freedom of Conscience) was created in 2000 to defend religious minorities against discrimination in France and in Europe.

The Coordination is a NGO that is recognized by the UN.

Mr. Valls, the current Prime Minister of France, recalled some weeks ago at the National Assembly that in France there is no legal definition of the word « sect/cult ».

However, the department of French PM fully finances (100%) an association called FECRIS (European Federation of Research and Information Centers on Sectarianism), which is recognized by the Council of Europe and the UN as a NGO and the objective of which is, according to its bylaws, to identify « as a sect/cult or a guru the organization or the individual which misuses beliefs and behavioral techniques for his own benefit ».

How can a Prime Minister declare that there is no legal definition of a sect/ cult in France and at the same time finance at the level of 100% a NON-GOVERNMENTAL association whose objective is to point at “sects/cults”?

Moreover, FECRISⁱ says in its bylaws that « the action of the Federation is neither religious nor political ».

If the action of FECRIS is not religious and claims to be neutral in this regard, how can it explain that an organization registered in a secular state – France – is massively financed with the money of all French tax-payers, while its vice-president, Alexander Dvorkin, a Russian citizen is blessed and financed by the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church for its anti-sect activities. This same Russian Orthodox Church which, along with Putin, has been persecuting religious minorities for years in Russia.

Moreover, some time ago, Alexander Dvorkin fiercely criticized Falun Gongⁱⁱ.

How can Alexander Dvorkin, vice-president of FECRIS, attack Falun Gong while the persecution of its members has been extensively denounced in UN reports since the years 2000ⁱⁱⁱ ?

How can France go on financing an association like FECRIS which attacks a group like Falun Gong whose persecutions are recognized by the UN ?

Even the current Prime Minister of France, Mr Valls, had expressed his deep concerns about the situation of Falun Gong practitioners in China when he was a member of the National Assembly. At that time, he had raised the issue of the fate of the Falun Gong practitioners in China with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France^{iv}.

A few years ago, FECRIS and its member associations have attacked an Italian sociologist because her report about a specific religious minority was not in line with the expectations of FECRIS and Italian anti-sect/cult associations^v.

Now, FECRIS attacks a minority group in Ukraine, as Human Rights Without Frontiers has recently reported^{vi}.

We therefore ask Mr Valls, France's Prime Minister, to put an end to the financial support of FECRIS, sending it back to its status of NON GOVERNMENTAL organisation.

ⁱ <http://chasseauxsorcières.fr/la-fecris/>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.hrwf.net/publications/reports/year-2012/473-freedom-of-religion-or-belief-anti-sect-movements-and-state-neutrality-a-case-study-fecris>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.falunhr.org/index.php?option=content&task=category&id=111>

^{iv} <http://questions.assemblee-nationale.fr/q12/12-121026QE.htm>

^v <http://www.dimarzio.info/it/articoli/recensioni/102-recensioni-di-rdm/libri-e-riviste/239-un-caso-di-studio-la-fecris.html>

^{vi} <http://hrwf.eu/ukraine-followers-of-jewish-psychiatrist-leopold-szondi-accused-by-fecris-vice-president-alexander-dvorkin-of-belonging-to-a-cult/>



Coordination of Associations and Individuals for Freedom of Conscience (CAP)

OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2016: Freedom of Religion or Belief September 2016

CAP is an association created in 2000 to unite minority religions in Europe to counter discrimination concerning the right to freedom of conscience and belief. It has consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

For years France has put in place a discriminatory apparatus of fight against minorities of religion or belief stigmatized as "sects".

Since 2009, the Inter-ministerial Mission of Vigilance and Fight against Sectarian Deviances (MIVILUDES) holds a repository of records on hundreds of movements it characterized as "sectarian" on the sole basis of denouncements or complaints against minority belief movements. These records are provided by MIVILUDES to Judges, Prosecutors, personnel dealing with Youth and Family matters, Ministries and other officials.

In parallel, training sessions on "sects" are regularly delivered to these officials, in particular Judges and Police forces. A special anti-sect Task Force has been created, CAIMADES (Assistance and Intervention Unit for Sectarian Drifts), within the Central Direction of the Judiciary Police which undertakes investigations as soon as an individual is suspected to belong to a "sect".

Since its creation in 2009, this Task Force has proceeded to biased investigations upon the denouncements received by MIVILUDES, where the members of minorities were systematically presumed guilty.

CAP received a number of testimonies over the years which evidence their prejudice, such people suspected of shamanistic practices whose homes were raided and were put in custody, groups of persons denounced to MIVILUDES as "dangerous sects" who were interrogated and put under pressure to denounce their "guru", others denounced as being "gurus" who were put in preventive detention for up to 18 months, etc.

The last testimony and request of assistance received by CAP was from a man of Indian origin residing in Canada. His girlfriend in France was organizing meditation seminars and was denounced to MIVILUDES as such. During his last visit to her, they were part of group of 6-7 people in meditation when a whole police force raided and arrested them. They were all armed and behaved as if they were dealing with terrorists.

He was explained that the charges against him were that he "had used fraudulent techniques to manipulate weak minds to defraud them of their money" and "had used Indian techniques and created mysterious Indian atmosphere to influence these people" and that he "belonged to the sect of sex guru OSHO".

This man could not understand the accusations since "guru" in India simply means religious leader and a sect is simply a religious denomination. He was put in preventive detention for six months with prohibition to leave France and has been waiting for trial for now two years.

The apparatus set by France to fight against minorities of religion or belief is unduly repressive and discriminatory, and should be disbanded.

We respectfully ask OSCE to remind the French authorities of their obligations concerning freedom of religion or belief and the rights of minorities in France.



Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting (SHDM) I: Freedom of Religion or Belief: Issues, Opportunities, and the Specific Challenges of Combatting Anti-Semitism and Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians, Muslims, and Members of Other Religions.

VIENNA 22 June - 23 June 2017

CAP is an association created in 2000 to unite minority religions in Europe to counter discrimination in France and in Europe. It has NGO consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

During the last OSCE session on freedom of religion or belief in September 2016¹, CAP exposed the harmful activities of FECRIS (European Federation of Centres of Research and Information on Sectarianism) in Russia and its integral financing by the French Government.

Members of FECRIS and of its Russian branch, the Saint Irenaeus of Lyons Centre for Religious Studies, have been waging for years a campaign against non-Orthodox minorities in order to eradicate them from the Russian territory.

Alexander Dvorkin, Vice-President of FECRIS and Director of the Saint Irenaeus of Lyons Centre is the major spokesperson and activist in this campaign against religious minorities in Russia.

The situation of religious minorities has now worsened during the last months: the banning of Jehovah's Witnesses' practice of their faith on the Russian territory; and the sentencing of five Scientologists to two months pretrial detention and a raid of their Church in St Petersburg.

1

This phenomenon of religious exclusion could spread now to hurt all the non-Orthodox religions, Catholic newspaper *La Croix* stated in an article of 9 June 2017²:

"Any missionary or evangelization activity such as predication or religious teaching is from now on forbidden outside sites officially religious such as Churches and other places of worship. The introduction of a strict control to avoid any proselytism harms particularly non-Orthodox Christian Churches and other religious minorities, when the sharing of one's faith is at the heart of any religious life."

FECRIS claims in its by-laws that its activities do not enter « the religious field » and declares to be neutral in this matter. Why is it then that the Vice-President of FECRIS, an organization registered in secular France and massively financed by the French State, is Alexander Dvorkin, a Russian citizen blessed, financed and missioned by the Russian Orthodox Church Patriarch to combat religious minorities perceived as competitors?

We therefore ask the French Government to cease its support to FECRIS and its harmful activities in Russia.



Coordination des Associations et des Particuliers pour la Liberté de Conscience

RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION IN HUNGARY

CAP Liberté de Conscience, a French NGO created in 2000 dedicated to the respect of the Right of Freedom of Religion and Belief. CAP LC is expert since now 20 years, in religious minorities' discriminations in France and Europe. CAP Liberté de Conscience organizes events, conferences, meetings to unite minority religions to counter discrimination mainly in France but also in Europe and worldwide.

In 2011, the new Religion Law de-registered all but 14 of the more than 350 previously-registered religious groups. Apart from the recognized Churches listed in the Appendix to the 2011 Church Act, all other religious communities previously registered as Churches lost their status as Churches but could continue their activities as associations. If intending to continue as Churches, religious communities were required to apply to Parliament for individual recognition as such.

To “re-register” and gain legal status as “Churches” again, these de-registered groups had to win a two-thirds majority vote of the Hungarian Parliament, which politicized the process, violated the duty of the state to be neutral in religious matters, and engaged in discrimination against minority denominations.

By February 2012, the Parliament had denied the re-registration applications of 66 of the 84 previously-registered Churches that applied, without providing a substantive explanation for their denials. Among those lawfully registered Churches that were denied re-registration were Christian Churches, Evangelical Churches, Pentecostal Churches, the Church of Scientology and Buddhist, Hindu and Jewish groups. Many of these Churches were found to fulfill all of the conditions of the Religion Law, but they were rejected anyway.

Denial of registration as Churches also deprived these religious groups of their financial means of existence since it deprived them of their right to the one per cent of income tax which taxpayers may donate to Churches.

In spite of a ruling by the Constitutional Court in 2013 finding the law unconstitutional and a decision of the European Court of Human Rights in 2014 finding the law in breach of the European Convention on Human Rights, the Religion Law remains in force to this day. It continues to be used by the government to discriminate against minority religious groups and individuals it targets.

Further, the situation is worsening. The government is now creatively and aggressively using other laws to target and criminally investigate at least one Church that was lawfully registered under the 1990 Religion Law, then unconstitutionally de-registered under the 2011 Religion Law and thus forced to register and operate as an association. This is the Church of Scientology, against which Hungarian government officials made public statements to declare their intention “to restrict the activities of Scientologists.”

In practice, the religious discrimination taking place regarding the Church of Scientology and its parishioners in Hungary has primarily manifested itself in the following ways:

- Bad faith denial of a Certificate of Occupancy that would allow the Church of Scientology of Budapest to lawfully occupy its Place of Worship constitutes a violation of the right of the Church and its parishioners to religious freedom.
- Bad faith application and discriminatory enforcement of the Data Protection Law has resulted in the arbitrary seizure of all the parishioner files, including priest-penitent files, and an undue interference with the exercise of core religious rights of Scientologists in Hungary.

As a conclusion, the deteriorating situation of religious minorities in Hungary and in particular the continuous harassment of the Church of Scientology and its parishioners constitute a blatant violation of the right to freedom of religion or belief protected by UN instruments that Hungary has signed and ratified and which it is bound to respect.



Coordination des Associations et des Particuliers pour la Liberté de Conscience

Registration on EU Transparency Register 628479527756-78
Civil society platform of Fundamental Rights created by the EU FRA
French non-benefit association register : W751082307

Member : European Federation for Freedom Of Belief - FOB
Member : European Network Of Religion and Belief - ENORB

HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING

Warsaw, 16 to 27 September 2019

Working session 13: Tolerance and non-discrimination II

including:–Combating racism, xenophobia, and discrimination–Combating anti-Semitism and intolerance and discrimination against Christians, Muslims and members of other religions

Is Religious Freedom ever possible in the Russian Federation ?

CAP Freedom of Conscience was created in 2000 to defend religious minorities against discrimination in France and in Europe. CAP LC is granted of the ECOSOC consultative status of the United Nations.

During the last OSCE sessions on Freedom of Religion or Belief, we exposed the harmful activities of FECRIS (the European Federation of Centres of Research and Information on Cults and Sects) in Russia and its integral financing by the French Government.

Members of FECRIS and of its Russian branch, the Saint Ireneus of Lyons Centre for Religious Studies which is affiliated to the Orthodox Church, have been waging for years a campaign against non-Orthodox minorities in order to eradicate them from the Russian territory.

Alexander Dvorkin, Vice-President of FECRIS and Director of the Saint Ireneus of Lyons Centre is the major spokesperson and activist in this campaign against religious minorities in Russia. The situation of religious minorities has worsened during the last years as the persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses, the harassment of the Hindu community and others.

FECRIS claims in its by-laws that its activities do not enter « the religious field » and declares to be neutral in this matter. How is it then, that the Vice-President of FECRIS, an organization registered in secular France and massively financed by the French State, is Alexander Dvorkin, a Russian citizen blessed, financed and missioned by the Russian Orthodox Church Patriarch to combat religious minorities perceived as competitors?

We therefore ask the French Government to cease its support to FECRIS and its harmful activities in Russia.

2000 - 2020 two decades dedicated to freedom of conscience

What is CAP Freedom of Conscience ?

The Coordination of the Associations and the People for Freedom of Conscience is an European NGO with United Nations Consultative Status, created two decades ago and dedicated to protect the Right of Freedom of Religion and Belief.

Developing their expertise for 20 years, defending religious minorities against discrimination, they produce reports on religious freedom issues and organize events, conferences, meetings to unite minority religions to counter discrimination in Europe and worldwide.

More informations :

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NGO with ECOSOC consultative status

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Member : Faith and Freedom Summit

Member : FoRB Roundtable Brussels - EU

