

# France Deals with Terrorism

On June 8, 2015, the trial began in a Paris court of 15 members of the banned terrorist group Forsane Alizza (Knights of Pride), who are accused of preparing and planning terrorist attacks on French Jews and businesses, and other targets.

French police who arrested the individuals found incriminating documents, and also three AK-47 assault rifles, grenades, and pistols in the possession of the group.

Forsane Alizza has an extreme Salafist ideology and is skilled in sophisticated, provocative propaganda videos and social networks. Its original aim when founded in August 2010 was said to be to protest "Islamophobia." But an attack, with anti-Semitic outbursts, on a McDonald's (not usually considered a Jewish name) restaurant in Limoges showed its immediate turn to violence.

Mohamed Achamlane, the self-proclaimed emir of Morocco, who was born in Nantes, France in 1977 and was the head of Forsane Alizza, had been arrested in 2012 and received a four-month suspended sentence for racial discrimination. He had burned a copy of the French Civil Code in Limoges, had demonstrated against the arrest of a woman for wearing the hijab, and supported the Muslim individual in Nantes suspected of polygamy and family benefit fraud.

The objective of Achamlane is clear: he was preparing for attacks on people and places because of what he saw as the increasing "Islamophobia" in France. The end would be a Caliphate to be established in France and the implementation of sharia law.

Forsane Alizza had been planning to attack the newspaper *Libération*, which had housed the editorial team of *Charlie Hebdo*, whose offices had been bombed. As a result, in February 2012, Claude Guéant, the French minister of the

interior, banned the group.

By coincidence, the June 2015 trial of the terrorists coincided with the statements and consequent apologies concerning Israel made by Stéphane Richard, the CEO of the giant French multinational telecom corporation Orange S.A., in which the French State has a 32% stake. The corporation has an affiliate arrangement with the Israeli firm Partner Communications, which has 27% of Israel's mobile market and which operates under the Orange brand name. Partner has some operations in the West Bank, where 600,000 Israelis now live, but most of its activity is within the State of Israel.

In poorly chosen words, Richard had said, while in Cairo, that he would gladly cut ties with Israel "tomorrow" if it were not so financially prohibitive. He wanted to distance himself and his company from facilitating Israel's role over "Palestinian territories." After his controversial remarks, Richard at first explained that his statements had been misunderstood and distorted. On June 11-12, 2015, on a visit to Israel, which he called a "land of innovation and dynamism," he said that he and his company did not support any form of boycott in Israel.

Sincerely or not, Richard expressed regret resulting from the context of his remarks. Unfortunately for him, he was unaware of a different context regarding his own company. One of his own employees, a shadowy individual currently dubbed "Dawoud," who has less friendly views of Israel, had on June 9, 2015 revealed some startling information to the French police.

This individual Dawoud had been an acquaintance of Achamlane and, as a result of his position in Orange S.A., had given the terrorist a list of names, addresses, and cell phone numbers of well-known political and media personalities. The list of potential targets, with personal details, included former presidents and prime ministers of France.

Not surprisingly, the list also contained other targets: three

Jewish shops, a café in the Paris Jewish Quarter, five shops in the Hyper Cacher kosher chain, and various businesses, as well as two judges in Lyon whose names appeared Jewish.

The terrorist plans are troubling in themselves, but perhaps even more so are the international links of Forsane Alizza with other terrorist groups. One link is with the notorious al-Muhajiroun in U.K., an organization that was officially outlawed in 2010 but remains active. This group, formerly led by the extremist Anjem Choudary, celebrated the 9/11 attacks in the United States and has been responsible for half of the terrorist attacks and plots in Britain, as well as attacks in Tel Aviv and India. Choudary acknowledges Bakr al-Baghdadi, head of the Islamic State, as the Caliph of all Muslims and the “prince of the believers.”

Another is a link, organized by a man named Omar Diaby or Omar Omsen, a person with a criminal record who was born in Senegal and came to Nice at the age of 7. He has been a recruiter of jihadists for the branch of al-Qaeda in Syria and Lebanon and is said to be a mentor of the French citizen of Algerian origin responsible in March 2012 for the murders in Montauban and Toulouse of seven people, including three Jewish children.

Of course, Stéphane Richard knows nothing of the terrorist links of some of his employees. Nevertheless, he might become a real “Knight of Pride” if he did two things. One is to ensure that the data collected by Orange S.A. is guarded from Islamists working in his organization. The more important act would be to discuss while in Israel the ways in which his worldwide mobile phone network Orange S.A. can be helpful in the international response against Islamist terrorism.

First published in the