
FRANCE OPENS ANTI-HATE OFFICE AFTER JEWISH GRAVES DESECRATED WITH SWASTIKAS

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France is opening a national office to fight against hate after 107 Jewish graves were desecrated with swastikas in eastern France.

The office will coordinate police and judicial work to hold responsible those who commit anti-semitic, islamophobic, and anti-christian hate crimes, France's interior minister Christophe Castaner said.

"To profane a grave is an expression of pure hatred," Castaner tweeted before he travelled to the cemetery in Westhoffen, Alsace, where the graves were desecrated.

He later added: "we will fight with all of our force so that the antisemitism poison does not contaminate the Republic."

This is not the first antisemitic incident in the region.

The prefect said antisemitic graffiti was found the same day in Schaffhouse-sur-Zorn. Local media reported that writing was found on a synagogue and town hall.

In February, 96 Jewish graves in Quatzenheim, just over 10 kilometres away from Westhoffen, were desecrated.

New definition of antisemitism

The incident in Westhoffen occurred the same day as France adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's definition of antisemitism.

Some experts, writing in an editorial published in Le Monde, have criticised the new definition as equating antisemitism with anti-zionism.

French parliamentarian Sylvain Maillard from French President Emmanuel Macron's political party brought the resolution forward.

"It will be possible to better qualify anti-Zionist attacks motivated by hatred of Jews, without preventing criticism against the State of Israel," Maillard tweeted about the resolution.

<https://www.euronews.com/2019/12/04/france-opens-anti-hate-office-after-jewish-graves-desecrated-with-swastikas>

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