

STATE WITHIN A STATE: THE FRENCH CONSULATE IN JERUSALEM

FRANCE IS ONE OF THE ONLY COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD THAT HAS IMPERIALISTIC DESIGNS ON JERUSALEM. TURKEY, TOO – BUT WHILE THE TURKS HAVE, AS OF NOW, REFRAINED FROM WORKING TOWARDS THEIR ULTIMATE GOAL VIA OFFICIAL ACTIONS, THE FRENCH DO NOT HESITATE TO DO SO.

We well remember the yells of then-President Jacques Chirac when he visited Israel in 1996. Chirac became angry at Israeli security forces who, he felt, were over-zealously guarding him during his visit to the Church of Saint Anne in the Old City. "What do you want? For me to go back to my plane and back to France?" yelled Chirac. Most tellingly, he refused to enter the church until Israeli soldiers who were accompanying him had left.

More recently, in 2020, French President Emmanuel Macron lost his temper and shouted at Israeli police during a visit to the same site, located on Via Dolorosa. Macron repeated twice that "the rules" were well-known to everyone – presumably referring to French ownership of the area.

In and around Jerusalem are four sites that France relates to as if they were not only French property, but as French territory for all intents and purposes – what the French refer to as Domaines Nationaux. One of these sites is the Tombs of the Kings in Sheikh Jarrah near the Shimon HaTzaddik neighborhood. It was bequeathed to the French Government by a Jewish benefactress in the 18th century, with the condition that the French would develop and maintain it for the benefit of the Jewish community. This happened during the times of the Ottoman Empire, when Jewish interests in Jerusalem were in sore need of protection. Since then, the area has changed hands three times: to the British, the Jordanians, and finally to Israeli control – but the French still retain the Jewish site and act there as if it were truly theirs. The site has been closed for a long while – "for repairs," the sign there says – and no one is permitted to visit. Israel has in fact granted a form of French autonomy over



Terrorist Leila Khaled speaking at the book launch in the French Institute

the four sites, but not ownership.

The French Consulate in Jerusalem is unique in that it is located within the pre-1967 Green Line, i.e., not in the area that was under Jordanian control between 1949 and 1967. By way of contrast, Belgium has two missions in the Jerusalem, one on each side of that line; France doesn't bother to do that, because from its standpoint, both parts of Jerusalem are equally not under Israeli sovereignty.

On the French Foreign Ministry website, on the page having to do with French relations with "the Palestinian territories," the consulate is defined as being France's mission to the Palestinian Authority. The man heading it is even termed the "Ambassador." This, even though the website includes a declaration that France does not recognize any sovereignty in Jerusalem.



The French Foreign Ministry website defines the French consulate as responsible for "Palestine" and the Consul-General is listed under "Ambassadors."

The French Consulate is continuously involved in political subversion against Israeli rule and sovereignty in Jerusalem. Under its auspices, events are held and projects are run by elements that not only do not recognize any Israeli status whatsoever in Jerusalem, but actually promote an anti-Israel agenda, including boycotts and the like. Some of them even have connections with terrorist organizations, such as the PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine).

For instance:

- A photographic exhibition is currently being held in the French Institute on Salah a-Din St. The French Institute is a part of the French



The announcement for the Leila Khaled book launch at the French Institute in Jerusalem

Consulate, and the exhibition is a joint project of the consulate and Al-Bustan in Kfar HaShilo'ach (Silwan); Al-Bustan supports sanctions against Israel, together with BDS elements, according to NGO Monitor.

- This past week, two bookstores near the French Institute were closed by Israeli authorities, on suspicion that they had been disseminating materials of incitement, including support for terrorism and the negation of Israel's right to exist. In a nearly unprecedented and certainly undiplomatic move, diplomats from the French consulate appeared at the court hearing for the extension of the store-owners' custody.
- At least one of the closed stores was selling a book about Leila Khaled of the PFLP, the first female ever to hijack an airplane – a TWA flight to Tel Aviv; she later was involved in an attempted hijacking of an El Al flight. The book presents her in a heroic light. The consulate co-sponsored an evening book launch for the work, and Khaled even spoke at the event, via a video broadcast.
- The consulate, with a special Israeli permit, employed the French wife of an eastern Jerusalem terrorist named Salah Hamouri. A PFLP member, he was serving time in an Israeli prison for planning to assassinate the late Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef, when he was abruptly released in the Gilad Shalit deal. He also had ties with other terrorist organizations that receive support and grants from the consulate, such as Al-Damir. He now lives in France and holds French citizenship.
- The consulate supports several organizations that are connected mainly to the PFLP, the terrorist gang founded by arch-murderer George Habash. Among them are the Shafaq "cultural" organization, the Ramallah-based Union of Agricultural Work Committees, which is the "agricultural arm" of the PFLP, and the Health Work Committees, which was designated by Israel as a terrorist organization in 2020.

