



## Support for Hamas in France since the Outbreak of Operation Iron Swords Dr. Hayim Iserovich

February 11, 2024

### Introduction<sup>1</sup>

- ▶The pro-Hamas demonstrations and protest marches in France are organized by collectives of groups representing the local Palestinian community, Muslim movements and far-left organizations (including anti-war and anti-establishment movements) and political parties. The collectives are an example of Red-Green Alliance activity, a strong partnership of far-left and Palestinian organizations, including groups affiliated with Hamas. Organizations and activists participating in the protests expressed support for the October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023 attack and massacre, and the continued Palestinian armed terrorist activity, while accusing Israel of "genocide in the Gaza Strip."
- ▶On October 12, 2023, the French Ministry of the Interior announced a total ban on pro-Palestinian demonstrations throughout the country, following a sharp increase in anti-Semitic incidents following October 7. Several days later, after the police dispersed illegal demonstrations and arrested participants, the French Conseil d'État, the country's administrative court, overturned the directive, claiming it was impossible to impose a blanket ban on demonstrations, but rather each case had to be examined on its own merits (Radio France Internationale (RFI), October 18, 2023).
- ▶France, as a member of the European Union (EU), has designated the entire Hamas movement (its military wing and political bureau) as a terrorist organization and imposes the sanctions established by the EU institutions against the movement, persons on the list of designated terrorists and entities providing Hamas with financial assistance.
- ▶On November 13, 2023, the French government put senior Hamas officials on its sanctions list before the EU, among them Muhammad Deif and Marwan Issa, the commanders of the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military wing [who were put on the EU's list on December 8, 2023]. On December 5, 2023, France put Yahya al-Sinwar, head of the Hamas political bureau in the Gaza Strip, on its list [the EU waited until January 16] (Al Monitor, December 25, 2023).

---

<sup>1</sup> Click <https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en> to subscribe and receive the ITIC's daily updates as well as **its other publications.**

## Further Information

### The umbrella organization

►The umbrella organization leading the pro-Palestinian protests in France is the **National Collective for a Just and Lasting Peace between Palestinians and Israelis** (CNPJDPI). The collective, established in 2000, is a mélange of more than 50 organizations combining specifically Palestinian movements, such as the General Union of Palestinian Students and the France-Palestine Solidarity Association. Muslim movements, such as the Muslim Collective of France; anti-war, climate and social movements, including the peace movement, the Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions and Citizen Action (Attac), labor unions such as the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), which is the largest labor union in the country; and parties from the far-left, including the Left Party (PG) and the Communist Workers' Party (Collectif website, July 10, 2010).

►The members of the Collective are united around a charter which calls for the withdrawal of IDF forces from the territories, sending an international force to protect the Palestinians, suspending the association agreement between the EU and Israel, the preservation of the rights of the Palestinians and the implementation of UN resolutions, a just and sustainable peace between the State of Israel and a Palestinian state and opposition to any racial violence in France, especially against Jews or Arabs (Collectif website, July 16, 2015). The Collective's activity focuses on the Boycott, Divestment and Sanction (BDS) campaigns against Israel and efforts to promote French recognition of a Palestinian state (Collectif website, September 19, 2015).

►On October 19, 2023, the Collective published an official statement condemning the war crimes of " Hamas commando fighters " against Israel and stating that " the Palestinian people have the right to resist, but nothing justifies such acts, " while calling for the release of " all kidnapped citizens. " However, the announcement also accused Israel of committing war crimes and imposing an " inhumane blockade " on the Gaza Strip, and called on French President Emmanuel Macron to stop " unconditional support for Israeli policy " (Attac website, October 19, 2023).

►On January 10, 2024, a statement was issued to mark three months into the war which accused Israel of [allegedly] committing war crimes and genocide in the Gaza Strip, but also called for " the release of all Palestinian political prisoners and all kidnapped Israeli citizens. "

The Collective demanded a "general and permanent" ceasefire, protection of the Palestinians, an end to France and the EU's security cooperation with Israel, and France's joining the lawsuit against Israel in the International Criminal Court (Attac website, January 10, 2024).

## Participating organizations

► In addition to the joint announcements, some of the groups in the Collective published their own announcements of support for Hamas and the massacres against Israel:

► **The France Palestine Solidarity Association** (AFPS), which was established in 2001 as a union of the French-Palestinian Medical Association and the France-Palestine Association and operates dozens of branches throughout France, works to end the Israeli occupation and establish a Palestinian state with the [so-called] "right of return" and international protection for Palestinians. It participates in the BDS campaigns against Israel (Association website, no date).

► On October 7, 2023, the Association's official announcement showed the photograph of the tractor that destroyed the border security fence with the caption, "Gaza: The failure of the Israeli policy of imprisoning the Palestinian people" and declared that "the attack carried out from the Gaza Strip by armed Palestinian groups, and for which Hamas accepted responsibility, is on an unprecedented scale." It added the claim that it was a "military action of the weak against the strong," while the Association also "warns against the use of the term 'terrorist' which is always used against the 'resistance movements'." The Association also called for international sanctions against Israel and beseeched France and the European authorities to "resolutely clarify to the State of Israel that they will not accept a new military operation against the Palestinian population, especially those in the Gaza Strip" (Association website, October 7, 2023).



**Poster of the France Palestine Solidarity Association with the caption "Israel Palestine, recognize apartheid, fight it, eliminate it" (AFPS Facebook page, December 2, 2023)**

►The French Jewish Union for Peace (UJFP) is a secular-progressive anti-Zionist Jewish movement founded in 1994 that has branches throughout France. According to the movement, it fights racism and works to promote justice and equality, and is active within the BDS movement against Israel and calls for international sanctions on Israel on the grounds of [alleged] war crimes (UJFP website, August 15, 2022).

►**Pierre Stambul**, a member of the Union, published an article in which he blamed "colonialism, apartheid and supremacy" for the October 7 massacre and claimed that all the Gazans supported the attack because "it made them feel that they were no longer just victims of continuous aggression and the destruction of their society." Stambul also rejected the designation of Hamas as a terrorist organization and wrote that it "is seen (correctly) as one of the components of the Palestinian resistance" and added that "the war that is being waged now is not a war against Hamas, it is a war to destroy Palestinian society" (UJFP website, October 15, 2023).

►The **Tzedek!** movement (Justice!), established in June 2023, describes itself as "a collective of decolonial Jews who fight against state racism in France and for the end of apartheid and the occupation in Israel-Palestine." The movement declares itself anti-Zionist and accuses the State of Israel of "implementing European colonialism and owing its existence to dispossessing the Palestinians and denying them their rights." It calls for "a true democratic alternative, which will grant equal rights to all residents of the region, from the Mediterranean [Sea] to Jordan [River]" (Mediapart, November 27, 2023).

►In response to the events of October 7, Tzedek! said in an announcement that "these events are taking place in the context of the escalation of colonial policy and the violence it provoked" and placed quotation marks in reference to "terrorism" and "indiscriminate

violence" on the part of the terrorists, whom it called "Palestinian militiamen [sic]." The message added that "the Palestinian attack did not come out of a clear blue sky," adding that "the barbed wire walls of the prison have been breached" and disingenuously stated it was not their job to judge the strategy of the Palestinian "resistance" (Tzedek! X account, October 7, 2023).



**UJFP and Tzedek! protesters (Tzedek! X account, February 3, 2024)**

## Support for Hamas from other organizations

►Another group which organizes demonstrations in Paris and other cities in France is the **Palestine Emergency Collective**, which was established after October 7 and "brings together civilians, associations, labor unions, organizations and political movements for the self-fulfillment of the Palestinian people." The Collective promotes a boycott of Israel and support for "the resistance of the Palestinian people," and calls on the French government to "stop involvement with the government of Israel and the suppression of solidarity with the Palestinian people's struggle " (Collectif website, undated).

►The Collective's announcements expressed support for Hamas and armed "resistance" against Israel, while ignoring the terrorist attacks and massacres on October 7 and the kidnapping of hostages. According to an announcement from November 18, 2023 "Describing Hamas as a terrorist organization is political bias that does not take into account the situation that has developed in Palestine: it is a war of liberation against a colonial state and an occupation that constitutes aggression in itself" (Collectif website, November 18, 2023). According to an announcement from December 12, 2023, "Palestine resists, stands upright and with dignity despite the terrorism of colonial violence and genocidal war on the part of the fascist and imperialist coalition that claims to rule the world. Our struggle is a

struggle for the liberation of the land of Palestine and its people, against Zionism, against colonialism and apartheid" (Collectif website, December 12, 2023).

►One of the main speakers of the collective is **Omar Alsoumi**, a Palestinian from Jenin who lives in France and whose Facebook page includes calls for violent "resistance" against Israel (Alsoumi's Facebook page, various dates in November and December 2023). Interviewed in December 2023, he said freedom was not achieved by being nice, it was achieved by fighting, by organizing, to realize their rights and that was the message and the "reality" they were trying to import to France. Alsoumi accused Israel of being a "colonial project" and that theirs was a struggle "to liberate all of Palestine from colonial control and for the 'return' of all Palestinian refugees" and "it is a struggle by all necessary means." He added that "the Gaza Strip today is a school of dignity, a school for resistance, a school of liberation, and we should all be students of this school" (La Luciole média YouTube channel, December 11, 2023).



**An Emergency Collective poster calling for a demonstration for "an immediate ceasefire and lifting the blockade, an end to the genocide, the liberation of Palestine, support for the resistance" (Collectif Urgence Palestine Facebook account, December 10, 2023)**



**Omar Alsoumi at the conference: "Resistance – Anti-Zionism, Anti-Colonialism!" (Collectif Urgence Palestine Facebook page, January 28, 2024)**

►The **Gaza-Palestine Collective in Marseille** is an umbrella organization that organizes pro-Palestinian events in and around Marseille and its members are the local branches of national organizations such as the France-Palestine Solidarity Association, the French Jewish Association for Peace, the BDS Movement and the France Unsubdued Party (see below). In June 2023, the Collective organized demonstrations and meetings with the participation of Salah Hamouri, a Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine terrorist operative who was convicted of planning the assassination of Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, released in the Gilad Shalit exchange deal (2011) and deported to France at the end of 2022 after nine months of administrative detention (Gaza-Palestine Collective Facebook page, various dates in June 2023).

►On October 9, 2023, the Collective published its support for the Hamas attack and massacre entitled, "Resisting the occupation is a legitimate right." It said, "The Palestinians are revolting; they are not ready to be wiped off the map, to be crushed, locked up, deported," and added that the Palestinians "have an absolute right to live in freedom and dignity, and therefore to resist." The announcement also claimed that the international community "continues to compare the Palestinian resistance to terrorism" (Gaza-Palestine Collective Facebook account, October 9, 2023).

►The **Palestine Emergency** branch in Marseille, which belongs to the Gaza-Palestine Collective, holds protest measures entitled "Palestine, Marseille, Resistance." A poster published ahead of a demonstration on December 9 read "From Gaza to Marseille, Intifada" and showed a masked man holding a slingshot [for rocks]. An administrative court allowed the demonstration to take place even though the police warned that it was "legitimizing the terrorist acts of Hamas on October 7" (FranceInfo, December 9, 2023). A poster for the December 17 demonstration included calls for immediate ceasefire and lifting of the blockade, stopping the genocide, the liberation of Palestine and support for "resistance" (Palestine Emergency Facebook page, December 16, 2023).



**Palestine Emergency announcement headlined "Gaza to Marseille, Intifada"  
(Gaza-Palestine Collective in Marseille Facebook page, December 9, 2023)**

- ▶ A movement calling itself the Palestine Action Committee declared overt support for all aspects of the Palestinian "resistance" even before October 7. The movement defines itself as "an association working for the realization of the national rights of the Palestinian people, especially the right to self-realization and the [so-called] right of return of the refugees, that is, the liberation of the Arab land of Palestine." The movement's official charter calls Zionism a "colonial and racist political movement" and declares "unconditional support for the resistance of the Palestinian people," stating that the movement "does not speak in favor of one type of struggle or another, the Palestine Action Committee supports the resistance of the Palestinian people, whatever it may be." (Action Committee website, no date).
- ▶ According to the movement's invitation to a demonstration in support for the "Palestinian resistance" after the terrorist attack, "on October 7, the Palestinians responded with force to a colonial power. The unconditional support of the Western powers for the Zionists shows once again that the Palestinians can only rely on themselves and the support of the people" (Palestine Action Committee website, October 9, 2023).
- ▶ The Committee's Facebook page also promotes support for terrorism against Israel in general and for Hamas in particular. A post from December 3, 2023 declared, "The Palestinian resistance: the soul of an entire people" and "as long as the entire Palestinian people and the resistance become one, the Zionists are will not succeed in achieving their goals. It is our duty as free men and women to support them in every way." On January 10, 2024, a post was published stating that "the Zionist violence of self-destruction has created an extensive front of resistance, bringing together Palestinian, Syrian, Iranian, Iraqi and Yemeni forces to Lebanon." A post from January 15, with a meme of a Palestinian terrorist flying a hang glider to the Temple Mount, compared the exiled Hamas leaders with Charles



de Gaulle, who headed the French government in exile during the German occupation of France in World War Two, and claimed that "leaders like Yahya al-Sinwar Abu Obeida and Muhammad Deif are very present in the Gaza Strip" (Committee Facebook page, various dates in December 2023 and January 2024).



**An Action Committee demonstration in Bordeaux. The sign reads, "Support for the resistance of the Palestinian people" (Committee Facebook page, February 1, 2024)**



**An Action Committee poster with the question, "Where was de Gaulle during the occupation?" and a meme of a Hamas terrorist flying a hang glider to al-Aqsa Mosque, inspired by October 7 (Committee Facebook page, January 15, 2024)**

►The **Palestine Will Win Collective** (CPV), established in Toulouse in 2019, expresses support for "the struggle of the Palestinian people against Zionism, imperialism and the Arab reactionary regimes for the liberation of all of Palestine, from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River." The movement also states that it "supports the Palestinian resistance, which is the only way in which the Palestinian people will regain their historical and legitimate rights," and supports "all forms of resistance, including armed struggle" (Collectif website, March 2019).

► **G rard Darmanin, the French Minister of the Interior**, ordered the closure of the Collective in March 2022 due to "discrimination against and hatred for Israel and Israelis by means of calls for a boycott." However, in April 2022 the Conseil d' tat, which advises the government and serves as a supreme court for matters of administrative law, determined that there was no basis for the order since calls for boycott fell within the framework of freedom of expression (Le Figaro, October 27, 2023).

► In accordance with its charter, the Collective expressed unequivocal support for the October 7 attack, accompanied by a picture of Gazans celebrating and cheering on an Israeli military vehicle being taken to the Strip. The official announcement stated that "the Palestinian resistance launched Operation Al-Aqsa Flood in response to the escalation of attacks and murders in the occupied West Bank, and the repression against the movement of Palestinian prisoners and attacks on al-Aqsa Mosque" and "the operation is a demonstration of the resistance's capabilities and reveals the ability to mislead the Zionist project " (Collective website, October 7, 2023).



**The Collective's announcement in support of the Hamas attack. "Palestine is alive and resisting!" (Collectif website, October 7, 2023)**

► Another organization participating in country-wide protests is the **United Front for Immigration and Working-Class Neighborhoods** (FUIQP). It was established at the end of 2011 with the aim of "fighting class, racial and gender control" and it supports "people's struggles for their national and social liberation" (FUIQP website, undated).

► The FUIQP expressed unequivocal support for the Hamas attack and massacre on October 7. The organization's official announcement, with the slogan "Resistance to colonialism is a right," declared that "the Palestinian resistance launched an operation of unprecedented scale, never seen before, against the Zionist colonial state". "Operation al-Aqsa Flood shows

that in the face of the colonial desire for extinction, the flame of resistance remained intact within the Palestinian population." The announcement also stated that FUIQP "adds its voice to the anti-colonial and anti-imperial forces with support for the Palestinian resistance and its vision for national liberation." The message ended with the cry "Long live Palestine! Long live the Palestinian resistance!" (FUIQP website, October 9, 2023).



**FUIQP demonstration. The banner reads, "Occupation is a crime – resistance is a right" (Facebook account of the Gaza-Palestine Collective in Marseille, January 14, 2024)**

## Support for Hamas from political parties

- ▶ Various French political parties either openly declared support of the October 7 attack or weakly condemned Hamas.
- ▶ **La France insoumise** (LFI), a populist far-left party with 74 members in the National Assembly and five members in the European Parliament, called October 7 an "armed attack by Palestinian forces led by Hamas" and added that it was carried out "in the context of the Israeli occupation policy in Gaza, the West Bank and east Jerusalem" (Mathilde Panot's X account, October 7, 2023).
- ▶ LFI leader **Jean-Luc Mélenchon**, former French minister of education who contested the presidential race three times and came in third place in the 2022 elections, avoided referring to Hamas in his October 7, 2023 tweet in which he vaguely wrote, "All violence used against Israel and the Gaza Strip proves only one thing: violence only reproduces itself" (Mélenchon's X account, October 7, 2023). After Yaël Braun-Pivet, the president of the National Assembly, paid a visit of sympathy to Israel, he wrote that she was "vacationing in Tel Aviv to encourage the massacre" (Le Monde, October 23, 2023).
- ▶ The statements made by LFI and Mélenchon caused a rift on the left side of France's political map, when LFI's partners in The New Ecologic and Social People's Union (NUPES)

came out against the lack of condemnation of Hamas, even though the members are known to be critical of Israel. The Socialist Party suspended its participation in NUPES and the leader of the party, Olivier Faure, expressed "absolute condemnation of the attack by Hamas" and emphasized that "terrorism is not justice" (Le Monde, October 9, 2023).

►The Communist Party, also a member of NUPES, which previously referred to Israel as an "apartheid" state, condemned the October 7 attack and called it a "criminal attack by Hamas" and "unacceptable and unjustified." However, it later accused Israel of committing war crimes and declared that "the Palestinians are protesting in their own way with courage and dignity" (Communist Party website, January 24, 2024).



**Jean-Luc Mélenchon at a demonstration near the International Court of Justice in The Hague (Mélenchon's X account, January 11, 2024)**

►The **New Anti-Capitalist Party** (NPA), which belongs to the National Collective for a Just and Lasting Peace between Palestinians and Israeli, is a far-left party that works to promote "a new democratic and egalitarian, feminist and ecological society" and "opposes the government and employers, and fights against the right and the extreme right" (NPA website, August 20, 2020). On October 7, 2023, the NPA published its support for the Hamas attack, stating that "an extensive attack was carried out from Gaza by Hamas into 'Israeli' territory" and that "the resistance took over certain settlements around Gaza." "This time, the attack is on the side of the resistance," declared the announcement, adding that "NPA does not join the pleas for the alleged 'prevention of escalation'" but "repeats its support for the Palestinians and the means of struggle they for resisting." The party made no mention of the hostages in the Gaza Strip and called for the imposition of sanctions on Israel, ending with the cry "We are all Palestinians. Intifada!" (NPA website, October 7, 2023). Following the

announcement, a criminal investigation was initiated against the party on suspicion of "provocation to terrorist acts" (Europe 1, October 10, 2023).



**NPA party weekly with the title "Solidarity with the legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people" (NPA Instagram account, October 11, 2023)**

- ▶The **Union of French Muslim Democrats (UDMF)** is a political party which was established in 2012 and contested in elections from the local level to the elections for the National Assembly, the Presidency and the European Parliament. The founder of the party and its leader, Nagib Azergui, accused that the political system in France of exploiting Muslims while ignoring the essential problems of the country, and therefore a "political response" was needed. Azergui emphasized that the party "is not communal" and did not work to promote Sharia [Islamic] law, but was a "secular party that respects the laws of the Republic" and works for all of French society (Franceinfo, May 18, 2019).
- ▶The party refrained from condemning Hamas for the October 7 terrorist attack and massacre. The official announcement called for the condemnation of "apartheid, colonialism and the [alleged Israeli] occupation," adding that "an attack by Hamas on Israeli territory was necessary for the conflict to return to the front." The party also emphasized its "uncompromising support for the Palestinian people and their right to resist the ongoing occupation and colonialism of their historic land" and stated that "building an independent, sustainable Palestinian state on its historic lands will enable a permanent just peace" (UDMF website, October 8, 2023).
- ▶The UDMF announced that it would participate in the European Parliament elections in June 2024 and its platform would demand for a ban on the sale of arms to Israel and a total commercial boycott, in addition to the closing of air and sea space and the removal of Israel from all European and international competitions. The party's announcement read,

"As history has shown us, Zionism is a criminal ideology and only the end of occupation and colonialism is the solution to a just and lasting peace. Without a radical change in European diplomacy, which must demand strong sanctions against Israel, the abuses of the Israeli army will continue, as will the suffering of the Palestinians" (UDMF website, 27 December 2023).



**Najib Azergui (UDMF Instagram account, December 2, 2023)**

- The **Permanent Revolution** (PR) is a far-left movement with on a Trotskyite worldview which has been active since 2015. It emphasizes the issues of workers, young people, women, the gay community and "all those who are exploited and oppressed" (PR website, May 1, 2023).
- On October 7, 2023 PR published an announcement entitled, "Surprise attack against the colonialist state of Israel. Support the Palestinian resistance!" according to by a picture of the tractor that broke through the border security fence. The announcement described "spectacular scenes of Palestinian fighters crossing the border with paragliders or on top of vans" and added that "among the most impressive scenes we could see was the mass escape of Israeli settlers, the seizure of military vehicles and especially the destruction of fences that separate the Gaza Strip from the territories occupied by Israel." The announcement ended with, "What is happening in Palestine is historic and can bring the security [needed] by the peoples and workers in the region to fight against the oppression of Israeli colonialism, but also against all the Arab regimes that support the normalization of relations with the oppressor of the Palestinian people" (PR website, October 7, 2023).



**Permanent Revolution activists demonstrate in Paris (PR Instagram account, October 12, 2023)**

## Support for Hamas from schools and institutions of higher education

►Students in French educational institutions also express support for Hamas. The **Federation of Student Unions** (FSE) describes itself as part of "workers' struggles against capitalism and imperialism, sexism, racism, homophobia and transphobia" (FSE website, undated). The **National Coordination Body of Student Unions, High School Students and Apprentices** (CN-SÉLA) is a union supporting young workers (Initiative Communiste website, June 20, 2023).

►In a joint statement issued by the two bodies following the events of October 7, it was stated that "the first victims of violence in the Palestinian territory are the Palestinians," without referring to the murdered Israelis and kidnapped hostages. The statement also condemned the "distortion and exploitation by which Israel and its supporters condemn the Palestinian resistance fighters, as well as any person or organization that demonstrates support for them" (FSE website, October 10, 2023).

►On October 23, 2023, a joint statement was issued on behalf of six nationwide student organizations from the far-left. The FSE, CN-SELA, the NPA Student Association, the Permanent Revolution Student Association ("Le Poing Levé" – The Upraised Fist), the Pirate Movement Student Association, the Student Solidarity Federation (Solidaires étudiant-e-s) and the Anti-Fascist Action of the Paris Suburbs" (AFAPB) movement all condemned the "witch hunt in universities against those who dare to express support for the Palestinians in the face of violent oppression" (Solidaires étudiant-e-s website, October 23, 2023).

►On November 15, 2023, the youth wing of Palestine Emergency Collective organized a meeting to coordinate the protest with the participation of hundreds of members of various

student associations in universities around the country and students from high schools. As part of the students' protests, demonstrations, school shutdowns and pro-Palestinian displays were held (PR website, November 16, 2023).



**Pro-Palestinian students demonstration at the Sorbonne in Paris  
(Palestine Committee in Paris Instagram account, November 23, 2023)**