Jewish man ‘brutally assaulted,’ called ‘Dirty Jew’ in France

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<https://www.jns.org/jewish-man-brutally-assaulted-called-dirty-jew-in-france/>

A man shouting, “Dirty Jew, I’m going to kill you,” attacked a 67-year-old man clad in Orthodox Jewish attire on Saturday in Yerres (Essonne), a suburb south of Paris, *AFP* reported.

The assault took place around 7:45 a.m. in the north of Essonne, bordering Val-de-Marne, while the victim was walking back home from the mikveh, or Jewish ritual bath.

The victim, identified as Gilles Cohen, has since been released from the hospital and “has been given a 15-day total work incapacity order,” Grégoire Dulin, public prosecutor of Évry, said on Sunday evening, according to *AFP*.

Cohen filed a complaint on Saturday at 11:30 p.m., the prosecutor added.

“An investigation is underway on charges of attempted violent robbery resulting in total incapacity to work of more than eight days, committed on religious grounds, and for death threats on religious grounds,” Dulin told *AFP*.

The investigation has been entrusted to the Essonne territorial crime division, the report continued. No arrests have been made.

Cohen was repeatedly struck and his pockets were searched for money and synagogue keys, according to local media.

Mendel Gourevitch, a close friend of the victim and director of the Brunoy yeshiva, a neighboring town of Yerres, said on Sunday that Cohen’s “eye is very, very swollen. He had the courage to come to services this morning. He didn’t want to give in to panic and fear,” per *AFP*.

“This is the first time” such an assault has taken place in a relatively “quiet” area, the director continued. “Everyone is worried,” he added, especially the parents of his school’s students.

Israel’s Foreign Ministry on Sunday night condemned the “shocking antisemitic attack.”

Cohen was “brutally assaulted, struck in the face several times, and called a ‘dirty Jew.’ This is an extremely serious act that reflects the alarming rise of antisemitism in France,” the ministry noted.

It wished the victim a “swift and full recovery,” adding that it expects French authorities to promptly bring the attacker to justice and to ensure the safety of the Jewish community.

Yonathan Arfi, President of the Representative Council of French Jewish Institutions (CRIF), said that the incident in Yerres was the latest of a series of antisemitic attacks against rabbis in Orléans, Deauville, Neuilly, Levallois in recent months.

“How long will this repeated hatred be tolerated?” he tweeted in French.

“No one will uproot the Jews from France. But it is high time to uproot the antisemitism that is festering in society, using a conflict [1,800 miles] away as a pretext,” Arfi wrote, referring to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Ever since Hamas invaded Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, murdering some 1,200 people and kidnapping 251 more into Gaza, antisemitic incidents have risen sharply in France, according to *AFP*.

More than 640 antisemitic incidents were recorded in the first six months of 2025, according to France’s Interior Ministry. This number represented a decrease of 27.5% compared with the first half of 2024, but an increase of 112.5% over the same period in 2023.