

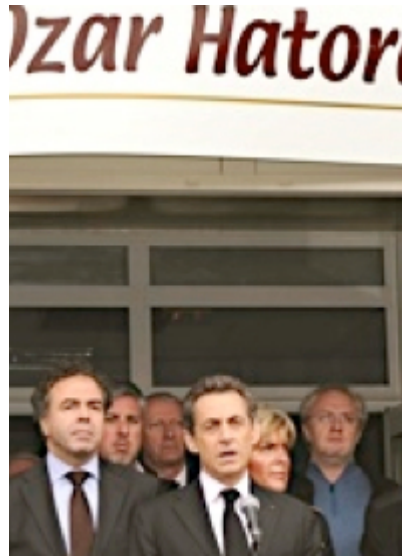


Written by [Alex Newman](#) on March 19, 2012

## Gunman Attacks Jewish School in France, 4 Dead

Following a series of deadly shootings targeting French soldiers last week, a gunman opened fire outside of a Jewish school in Toulouse, France, on Monday morning, killing four and seriously wounding at least two others, according to officials cited news reports. The attacker is believed to have fled on a motorbike.

Most accounts by witnesses and authorities reported that the victims included a teacher at the Ozar Hatorah Jewish school and two of his young children, ages 3 and 6. Another child under 11-years-old was also killed. And one of the injured may have been the daughter of the school principal, according to media reports.



“He shot at everything he could see, children and adults, and some children were chased into the school,” local prosecutor Michel Valet was quoted as saying after the attack. No suspects or motives have been identified yet, Valet added.

Witnesses described the scene of horror. “I saw two people dead in front of the school, an adult and a child. Inside, it was a vision of horror, the bodies of two small children,” a father whose child attends the school was quoted as saying by Reuters. “How can they attack something as sacred as a school, attack children only 60 centimeters (about two feet) tall?”

According to a [statement](#) by prosecutors in Paris, the government has launched a terrorism investigation into the shooting. The team will also be probing the recent attacks on military personnel.

Last week, three French paratroopers in the same region were killed in two separate attacks with similar characteristics. A fourth soldier was seriously injured. Both attacks were carried out by a gunman on a motorcycle, and preliminary investigations indicate that the same gun was used in the two incidents.

At least one French newspaper [reported](#) that the same caliber weapon was used in all of the murders, including the attack on the children. But it remains unclear whether the killing spree at the Jewish school is linked to the attacks on military targets, officials said.

“There are some similarities but it’s much too early to say if there is a real link or not,” French President Nicolas Sarkozy was [quoted](#) as saying. “Only the police and the judiciary will tell us what conclusions to draw.”

Sarkozy and other top officials vowed to pursue the attacker. And security has been increased at Jewish schools throughout France, according to authorities cited in press reports. Soldiers throughout the region have been warned not to wear their uniforms off base.

Jewish groups in France, which has one of the largest populations of Jews in the world at more than 500,000, condemned the attack. Prominent French Jews also suggested the killings were motivated by



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anti-Semitism.

“For someone to locate this school in a place like Toulouse means he knew what he was doing. He went there to kill Jews,” Vice President Gil Taieb of the French Jewish umbrella group CRIF [told](#) the *Jerusalem Post*. “There are occasional anti-Semitic attacks but they are small, nothing like this. We haven’t had something like this in at least ten years.”

The Israeli government spoke out about the tragedy, too. “We are horrified by this attack and we trust the French authorities to shed full light on this tragedy and bring the perpetrators of these murders to justice,” Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Yigal Palmor was [quoted](#) as saying by the AFP news agency.

Sarkozy and his opponent in the upcoming presidential race were both reportedly on their way to the crime scene. At least 50 police officers and multiple top officials are working on the case.

*Photo: French President Nicolas Sarkozy, center, speaks in front of the Ozar Hatorah Jewish school following a shooting incident in Toulouse, southwestern France, March 19, 2012: AP Images*



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