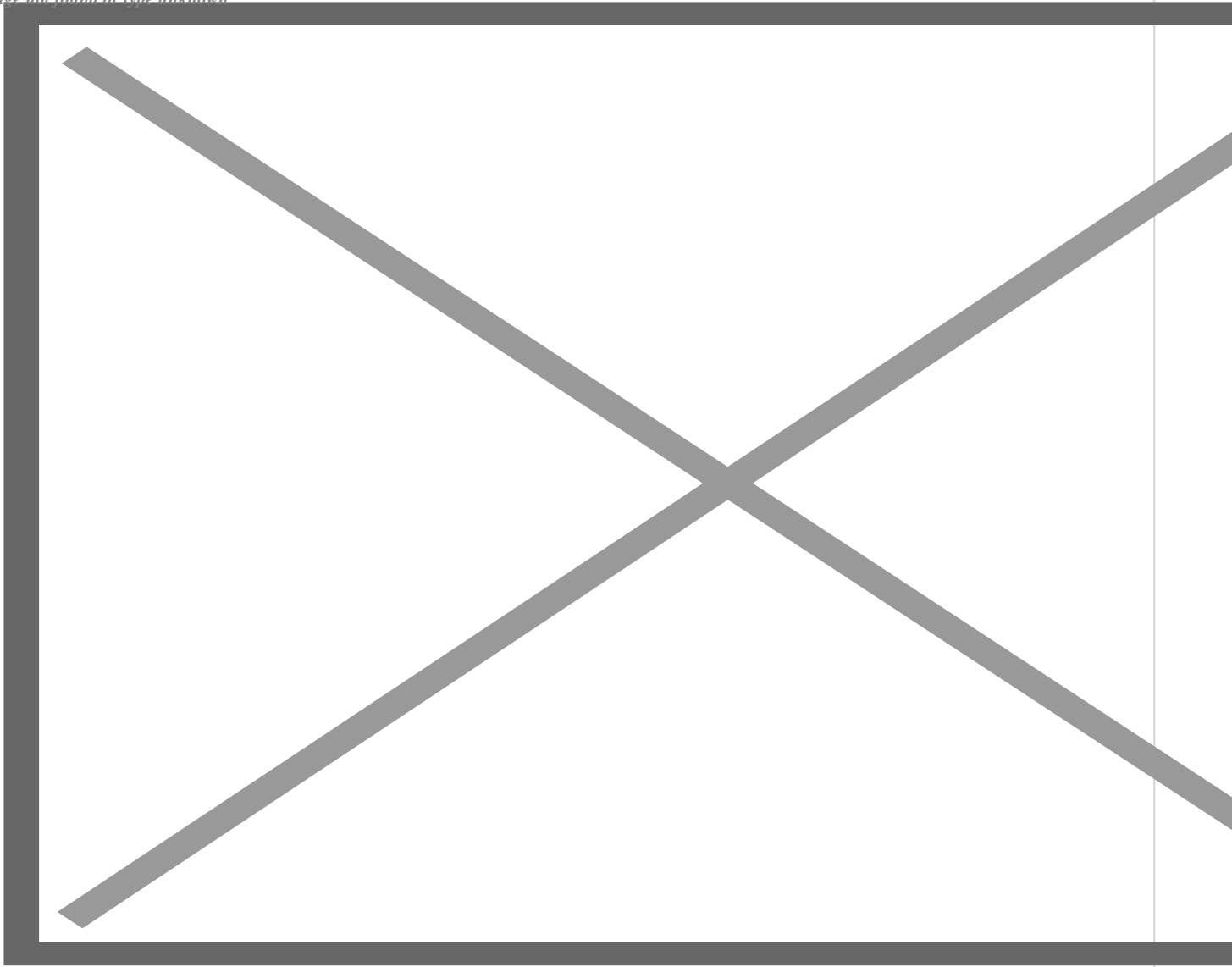


France shuts down far-right group Generation Identity

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Generation Identity supporters protest against the planned closure of the organization on February 20. [Photo: AFP]

Paris, March 4 (RHC)-- France has shut down Generation Identity (GI) some eight years after the far-right, anti-migrant group rose to prominence in the country by occupying a mosque in Poitiers – the first of many stunts.

In a tweet on Wednesday containing images of the government decree, French Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin said the group has incited “discrimination, hatred and violence.” The push to close the group followed an undercover operation by Al Jazeera’s Investigative Unit in 2018, which exposed the group’s racism, violence, and connections with Marine Le Pen’s National Rally party.

Génération Identitaire, the French name of the group which had his headquarters in Lyon, advocated for “defending the identity and culture of white Europeans” and decries what it calls the “great replacement” by immigration and “Islamisation”.

In 2017, GI was behind the “Defend Europe” stunt that saw far-right activists set sail on the Mediterranean Sea in an attempt to block refugee rescue operations.

GI was founded in France and has branches in Italy, Austria and Germany, although its membership is said to have declined in recent years.

A letter dated February 11 from the French interior ministry to GI’s president detailed the reasons for dissolving the group. According to the letter, the Al Jazeera investigation, called Generation Hate, “revealed the reality of this organisation” where members “rejoiced at the assault of a woman of North African origin”.

The letter accused GI of “openly hateful rhetoric” which “contributes to heightening tensions within the national community” and “provokes violent attacks”.

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