

Anti-Muslim Violence Rises in France Following Paris Attacks



Paris, November 21 (RHC)-- The number of anti-Muslim incidents, including attacks on women and hateful graffiti, has risen sharply across France since the recent deadly attacks in Paris, two monitoring groups say.

Abdallah Zekri, the head of France's National Observatory of Islamophobia, said on Friday that while the group usually records four or five weekly attacks on Muslims, 32 such incidents had occurred in a single week since November 13.

Another rights group, the Collective against Islamophobia in France (CCIF), reported 29 incidents during the same time. Zekri also said he expected more assaults on Muslims in coming days because the November 13 attacks in Paris, claimed by the Daesh terrorist group, provided an excuse for "ultra-nationalist groups, the extreme right and racists" to target Muslims.

CCIF spokesman Yasser Louati said his office had been flooded with reports and complaints of attacks on Muslims as well as requests for advice on whether it was safe to send children to school.

France's five-million-strong Muslim community, which is Europe's largest, accounts for about eight percent of the country's total population. Following the Paris raids, anti-Muslim graffiti has appeared in many places. In the northern French town of Evreux, the town hall and other buildings were covered with

hateful graffiti against Muslims.

Last week's coordinated attacks in the French capital killed at least 130 people and left some 350 others injured. On Friday, the French Senate voted to extend a state of emergency, announced after the deadly attacks, for a further three months.

The state of emergency allows police officers in France to carry weapons when they are off-duty. It also enables officials to prevent the movement of persons and vehicles at specific times and places, and expands police powers to carry out arrests and searches.

According to the CCIF spokesman, the state of emergency has led to rising complaints of police violence as officers raid homes to inspect them and put people under house arrest.

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