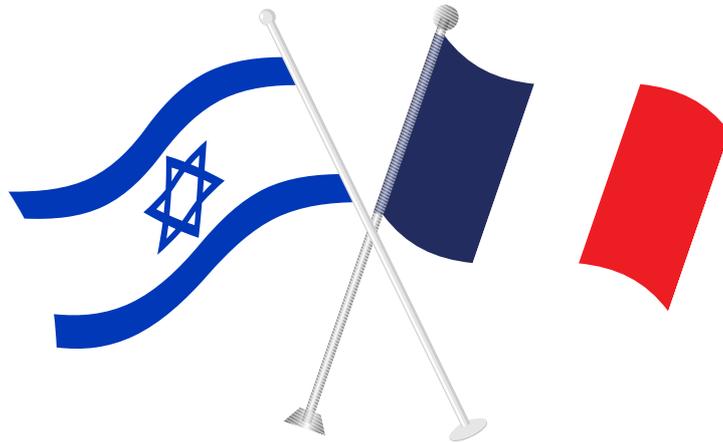


OCT
15TH/18TH
2023

DIARY OF MEMBER OF FRENCH PARLIAMENT CAROLINE YADAN

Parliamentary delegation to Israel



I **traveled to Israel** with a delegation of ten Renaissance and Les Républicains parliamentarians, along with former Prime Minister Manuel Valls, to **express our support following the terrorist attacks the country suffered.**

This trip was **a necessity**. A necessity to **express our pain to the world**, but above all **to convey to our Israeli friends** and to the Jewish People, that **we have chosen civilization over barbarity, democracy over terrorism, humanity over bestiality, light over darkness.**

This **solidarity trip** lasted two days during which we met with the families of the victims, the French Ambassador, the Mayor of Sderot, the President of the State of Israel, and other figures from political, intellectual, and civil life. **We expressed our unwavering support** in the face of hatred and violence that nothing, ever, could justify.

To show the reality of these atrocities I wanted to draw up **a diary** of this journey, which I present to you here.

Caroline Yadan



Monday October 16th,
8:15 am

Choura military base south of Tel Aviv, **responsible of identifying the bodies**, stored in huge, refrigerated containers, in the presence of Colonel Olivier Rafowicz.

327 bodies of women, men, children, the elderly, babies, have **not yet been identified** because they were **burned, cut into pieces, smashed with axes, guillotined**.



Children found burned alive, embraced, pregnant women gutted, elderly women raped and then **decapitated**. A pogrom. **Sheer savagery signed by Hamas and Daesh**.



This multi-stage identification process, which sometimes involves mere pieces of flesh, **enables so many desperate families to find their loved ones**.

The terrorists' stated aim was to kill as many civilians as possible and rape as many women as possible, regardless of their age.

Unbearable.

“The terrorists' stated aim was to kill as many civilians as possible”





Monday October 16th,
12:15 pm

Arrived at Kfar Aza.

The massacred kibbutz.

We hear **gunfire in the distance**.
Gaza is two kilometers away.

We have our bulletproof vests and helmets.

69 bodies found, which is about **10% of the kibbutz's population**, which had **700 residents**.

This kibbutz **advocated peace and economic cooperation with its Gazan neighbors**.

Entire families burned alive, locked inside **houses that the terrorists set on fire**.

Mass graves of adolescents aged 12, 13, 14 were **found, brutally murdered by the Islamist barbarians of Hamas** who were 18, 19 years old, **barely older than their victims**.



A colonel tells us that he held a decapitated baby in his arms. An old woman was found shot through the head on her electric wheelchair.

Personal effects and clothes litter the ground. Houses are charred. The smell of death still reigns.

Desolation.



“Houses are charred. The smell of death still reigns”



Monday October 16th,
3:23 pm

Arrival in **Sderot, Ghost town.**

Waste ground on the road: **the police station where 20 policemen were killed has disappeared.**

Sound of bombing as the head of the **International Resilience Center** recounts her story. She **tells** us: **October 7, 6:30 a.m. Sirens.** Then, **a few moments later, several dozen terrorists enter on this Shabbat morning** in a Jeep and **spread out across the city.** They **fire at point-blank range at anyone in their path.**



13 people in a minibus were shot dead in cold blood. **Hamas Islamist terrorists dutifully enter homes to murder the inhabitants indiscriminately.**

“**Hamas Islamist terrorists dutifully enter homes to murder the inhabitants indiscriminately.**”

An elderly woman jumped from the 2nd floor of her apartment building **to escape the cold, savage slaughter.**

Families are holed up in the shelters of their homes, waiting in dreadful anticipation.



Sderot ghost town. The 40,000 inhabitants have almost all been evacuated. Only 4,000 remain.

They'll come back and rise again.



Monday October 16th,
6:30 pm

When you think you've touched the **unspeakable**, you meet the families of the hostages and **realize that there are worse things out there.**

The pain is unspeakable. The pain of a mother, a wife, a sister, a brother, a father. **Pain that we feel in our guts, that pierces our hearts.**

The families of the French hostages tell us their stories and what they're going through.

Mia 21, Eithan 12, Ohad, Celine 32, Karin 24, Carmela 80, Ofer 52, Sahar 16, Erez 12, Noya 12. The hostages held by Hamas, comparable to Daesh, range in age from 6 months to 87 years.

The families tell their stories. **The kidnapping of a son on a motorcycle before his mother's eyes, a young girl who goes dancing even with a broken foot because she loves it, dancing. The fire that burns everything.**

“This battle is not Israel's battle. It's ours. It is universal. It's called the fight for life”



A mother running through the fields for several hours with **her baby in her arms.**

A woman whose entire family has disappeared, and who held the handle of her home's vault for 8 hours ; **a young girl with anorexia who was on her way to hospital** just before she was abducted ; **children who we still don't know if they will be identified or if they are being held.** The mother who **consoles herself by saying that her 12-year-old son may be at his father's side,** but she has no news of him.

And then **that WhatsApp support group into which the terrorists infiltrate,** posting **"we're raping your daughters".** The hostage families we've hugged and shared their tears. **These men and women whose pain we would so much like to alleviate.** And then **we learn of the death of Céline, mother of a 6-month-old baby** she was breastfeeding. **This battle is not Israel's battle. It's ours. It is universal. It's called the fight for life.**



Tuesday October 17th,
8:30 am

Knesset

Meeting with 11 members of the Israel-France Friendship Group and Knesset Speaker Amir Ohana.

They reminded us, if proof were needed, that Israel's current battle is a political battle against Islamist terrorism, a media battle against the spread of the ideology of death and the overturning of values, and a diplomatic battle against those who finance terrorism, notably Iran.

One of the MPs attending is a resident of Sderot who hid for several hours in the shelter of her home, hearing the gunfire and learning, in real time, of the point-blank assassination of her neighbor. She cries during her nightmarish account, and we cry with her.

Amir Ohana then takes the floor and tells us that some of the terrorists who massacred the civilians were employed and worked in the decimated kibbutzes. These kibbutzes campaigned for peace and coexistence between peoples.

“The barbarians arbitrarily chose to kill or kidnap”

He tells us how terrorists forced a 14-year-old teenager to go from house to house, asking for help, to trap the inhabitants in the vaults of their homes, who naturally opened the door before being coldly shot.

Amir continues his descriptions of the horrors. During the attack on the music festival, the Hamas barbarians burned cars so that the bodies hidden underneath could catch fire too. Charred bodies were discovered mixed with melted metal.

The hostages testified that the terrorists were sometimes teenagers or even young children of around ten years of age.





Tuesday October 17th,
8:30 am



On the kibbutz, but also in Sderot or at the music festival, **the barbarians arbitrarily chose to kill or kidnap.**

A choice. A selection. THE SELECTION that makes you shudder when you know the history of the Shoah.

The army that intervened to liberate the farming villages **found heaps of young girls burnt alive.**

The President of the Knesset reminds us, if proof were needed, **that Israel** not only **has the right to defend itself**, but in doing so **is doing all the world's democracies a great service.**

The Abraham Accords can lead to lasting peace in the region, and **talks were well advanced** on this point **with Saudi Arabia**, which **Hamas and Iran could not accept.**



All the countries in the region, and Egypt in particular, **have an interest in eradicating Islamism**, which is corrupting the people and their leaders.

Israeli MPs are obviously **very concerned about the fate of the 199 hostages**, and **the country will do everything it can to preserve them.**

The real question the world must ask itself is this: **am I for or against terror ?**

“The real question the world must ask itself is this : am I for or against terror ?”





Tuesday October 17th,
10 am

National Security Council in Jerusalem

Our presence as parliamentarians **is essential for Israel**, which has not finished burying its dead. **This support is more important than we could ever imagine.** That's what the Colonel who is receiving us tells us.

The Islamist attack that the country has suffered is beyond comprehension, and no one could have imagined it for a single second.

It was **an attack that had been prepared for a very long time, with the sole aim of spreading terror and causing as many civilian casualties as possible.**

This is not a case of a regular army invading a sovereign country because of territorial claims, but of a highly organized terrorist group with an ideology that runs counter to our most basic fundamental values, such as the love of life.

For Hamas, which uses the same methods as Daesh, human life has no value whatsoever. That's why we need the support of all countries that share these values.

“For Hamas, which uses the same methods as Daesh, human life has no value whatsoever.”

All Western countries are affected by Islamist terrorism, including France just a few days ago...

It's an **explosion that calls into question the fundamentals, but which will strengthen Israel, particularly in its determination to protect its citizens from hatred and mass murder.**

There is **no choice but to eliminate Hamas once and for all.**

The **resilience of the people of Israel** has always been an **important factor,** as has the **solidarity that has been shown ever since.**

War is necessary, not just for Israel but for the world.



Prime Minister's Office

ISRAEL NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL





Tuesday October 17th,
12:20 pm

Jérusalem

Visit from the parents of a young French Israeli soldier who died in the attacks.

Valentin's parents live in France. Their **22-year-old** son loved life and Israel. He had decided to make Aliyah just under two years ago and **would be completing his army service in two weeks' time.**

His parents had seen him during Rosh Hashana, the Jewish New Year, and he had surprised them by coming to France.

We are now on the **last day of the shiva**, the mourning period that lasts for a week after the funeral, and which **allows loved ones to be surrounded and to keep alive the memory of the deceased.**

Valentin's mother is a small woman with a **beautiful smile**. She exudes fragility, but also **incredible strength**. She and her husband **weren't worried** because Valentin (Eli) was due to finish the army very soon.



She **fainted on learning of his death** on October 7. **Valentin's father attracts sympathy.** He **screamed for long minutes** without being able to stop.

The pain of parents who have just lost their child is inexpressible. Valentin was a hero : he **saved several civilians** by shooting terrorists until his gun ran out of cartridges. **They feel pain, but they are so proud of their son.** They were afraid there wouldn't be many people at the funeral, but **more than 1,500 were there** to pay tribute to this child of Israel. His parents, his sister who had to leave again, his Israeli "parents" who welcomed him with open arms when he settled here, but also the friends and family who welcomed us, were very happy to see us and above all very impressed to meet Manuel Valls who had come all the way here!

Valentin, who loved honors, must be gloating from up here.

“The pain of parents who have just lost their child is inexpressible”



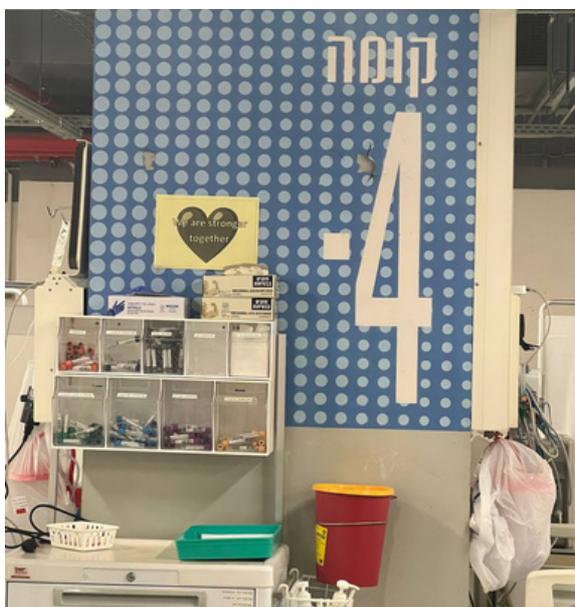
Tuesday October 17th,
2:52 pm

Tel Aviv, Ichilov Hospital

We are greeted by a young French Israeli orthopedist, who tells us again and again how much our visit helps him and gives him strength.

The Ichilov hospital was designed 12 years ago to protect its patients in the event of danger, rockets, or bombardments. To this end, the parking lot has been converted into a hospital, and the cars have been replaced by medical beds.

It takes a week to transform the basement into a hospital, with all the necessary equipment, if required.



“These are not war wounds, but those of civilians who were tried to be killed.”

The hospital was hit by rockets which, fortunately, caused no casualties. After the attacks, the hospital treated around 300 wounded, all of whom are still alive. Most of them are civilians with head, chest, and limb injuries. These are not war wounds, but those of civilians who were tried to be killed.

The entire staff is hard at work, with more than 300 doctors on the job since that hellish day.

The hospital also provides psychological and emotional care for patients who have suffered unprecedented trauma.

The physical wounds heal, but the bruises on the soul are much harder to heal. For some, they will never fade.



Tuesday October 17th,
2:52 pm



The Israeli people are incredibly strong and supportive : over 2,000 blood donations have been collected since October 7. The queues could last for many hours, stretching for miles, but everyone knew they had to be there at that moment. Civilians spontaneously come to the hospitals to thank the doctors, bring cakes, and support the sick.

The hospital currently treats Gazan children with illnesses that cannot be treated locally, as well as many Palestinian civilians, thanks in no small part to the Oslo Accords.

Under these agreements, which are still in force, Israel provides the necessary medical aid through coordinators who report the needs of the Palestinian population.

“We're strong
and we'll be up
to the task”



Before saying goodbye, the young doctor hugs us to thank us and says with a big smile: "We're strong and we'll be up to the task".



Meeting with two wounded hospitalized survivors of the attacks

Tomer was driving on the road to Tel Aviv to attend the music festival, to celebrate love and peace, but also to dance. He smiles. He's 20 years old. He's on the road. And he passes other speeding cars yelling at him to turn around.

Then gunfire comes out of nowhere. He's hit in the arm but keeps on driving, turns around and drives on with his good arm. He arrives at a medical tent, set up in advance of the rave party, and calls his mother to reassure her. He is unaware of the extent of the attack at the time. He thinks it's a lone terrorist.



Tuesday October 17th,
3:30 pm



But he soon realized that the situation was much more serious. The shouts, the screams and the gunfire convinced him to leave the tent, which was destroyed a few minutes later.

He then ran for several hours, despite the pain and the bloodshed, until he came across some soldiers who took him in.

He tells us his story and adds: "I want you to understand. I'm an Israeli. Killing babies has nothing to do with a territorial dispute. Our love and strength will lead us to victory and then to peace".

The other wounded man is a commando in the army. He wants to remain anonymous. We'll call him Erez.



“Killing babies has nothing to do with a territorial dispute”

Erez is about **25 years old**. He's very muscular. His smile and eyes are devastating. Erez has a **huge scar around his neck**, and we imagine that his throat has been cut. We find out that **he wasn't**.

On October 7, Erez **was hiking** with his brother when his cell phone started vibrating constantly. When he and his brother learned of the tragedy in progress, **he was immediately called back**.

This was no ordinary mission. **They were 6 highly trained soldiers**. They were ambushed and Erez realized he was going to be killed. He thinks of his loved ones. He kills two terrorists at point-blank range. Then **a grenade explodes in his face, cutting his throat**.

Erez has **lost three of his best friends**. But he is alive. He saved many people, men, women, and children, in the kibbutz under attack. **He protected his people. He is proud of it. He can.**



Tuesday October 17th,
4:15 pm

Tel-Aviv - Army headquarters

We are **received by a reserve colonel**. He **can't understand what happened** ; his mind **can't accept the horror of the atrocities, the massacres**, everything is still incomprehensible. **He tells us that our presence gives him strength**, and thanks us warmly.

Our French parliamentary delegation is the first in the world to come to Israel after the nightmare. This **makes us happy and proud too**. The colonel tells us straight away that he is **proud of his nation and its resilience**.

This pride and determination to move forward is echoed by everyone we spoke to.

Israelis live from day to day, enjoying the present because they **don't know what the future will bring**.

He tells us in English: "**With Gaza we're used to periods of calm and agitation, but this is different**. The government was quick to declare **the situation a war, not just a confrontation**.

The two border crossings, essential to the economy of Gazans, were destroyed by Hamas.

The attack occurred just as **unprecedented development projects were underway** between Israelis and Gazans.

Prior to October 7, 18,000 daily work permits were issued to Israel from Gaza alone.

But the numerous investments have been used for death, not life. **We must destroy Hamas's operational and state capacity**".

Our French parliamentary delegation is the first in the world to come to Israel after the nightmare



Tuesday October 17th,
4:15 pm



The civilians of Gaza will obviously suffer because this is a war. But **we Israelis respect and will respect international law. We warn civilians before every attack.** Revenge is not part of our vocabulary.

Israeli soldiers don't rape, they don't kill civilians at point-blank range, they don't behead anyone, they don't attack babies or pregnant women. They don't kidnap hostages. Our targets are military, but Hamas operates in strategic civilian locations such as schools, hospitals, and mosques.

We want to **put an end to terror** by **undermining the operational capabilities of this terrorist group, which seeks our destruction** and whose modus operandi is similar to that of Daesh.

October 7 will be engraved in our memory, in the memory of our fathers and our fathers' fathers : **never since the Holocaust have so many Jews been killed in a single day.**

We **found the Hamas plans,** which were **very detailed.** I was shocked. These plans **were all about murdering and capturing as many civilians as possible. The aim** was to **create shock and devastation.** If Hezbollah or Iran goes to war, we'll know what to do".

And when we ask him about the mistakes that have been made by the army and intelligence forces, the colonel takes a very firm stand. **"We will learn from our mistakes.** Once the war is over, there will undoubtedly be the biggest investigation the State of Israel has ever seen. ●●●

“Never since the Holocaust have so many Jews been killed in a single day”



Tuesday October 17th,
4:15 pm



We will determine who is responsible, and **we will ensure that this monstrosity never happens again.** Israel has great military capabilities and **is ready to fight to eliminate Hamas.** This is the only way for our citizens to live in peace.

And **regarding the water cuts in Gaza,** he tells us that **Israel supplies only 8% of the water** and that **the rest is supplied by Egypt.**

He adds that **the United Nations** recently **sent petrol for a desalination plant,** and that **Hamas seized the truck.**

Water **pipes have also been diverted to create rocket launching pads.**

“We will ensure that this monstrosity never happens again.”

After his presentation, **the colonel answered all our questions frankly and straightforwardly.** He's a very **high-ranking soldier.** But **he is also a man and a father** who has been confronted with horror. A man of great stature.

A man of stature.





Tuesday October 17th,
5:15 pm

Tel-Aviv - French embassy

Interview with **Frederic Journes, French Ambassador to Israel**, who took up his post three months ago.

Frédéric Journes **has witnessed the country's astonishment at the abomination suffered** by a people who have already endured so much suffering in the past. The trauma is immeasurable.

The dead continue to be buried by the dozens every day. **The people of Israel have been living with the terror of rockets for years**, but **had become almost accustomed to this daily terror**, thanks to the Iron Dome, without which Israeli casualties would have numbered in the tens of thousands since Hamas took over the Gaza Strip in 2007.

The situation is very complicated, as **the country did not expect such a breakdown in its security**. The terrorist operation of October 7 had undoubtedly been prepared for a very long time, even though economic projects with the Gazans were already underway.

This is why the government has no choice if it is to fulfill the social contract it has with its population: **the threat posed by Hamas must be fully eliminated**.

But the war is going to be difficult: Gaza is full of corridors, tunnels and

galleries that have been **built over the years by the Islamists**, who have also often **set up their weapons** close to civilian sites such as schools and hospitals.

Street fighting will be **more painful as hostages are being held** and **Hamas usually undermines the bodies of victims**. **Joe Biden's visit** will undoubtedly **dissuade Iran and Hezbollah in Lebanon from intervening**.

The survival of the Hebrew state is not at stake, but **it is more necessary than ever to re-establish its security**. Israel obviously has **no choice but to strike back hard**, while **respecting international humanitarian law** as it has always done.

Mr. Journes reminds us that **"Victory will be all the stronger if it is just"**. Finally, he reminds us that **war is also a war of communication** : Hamas has an interest in famine and will make use of the civilian victims it has prevented from fleeing by laying concrete blocks on the road between north and south.

He **knows nothing about the hostages**, but even if he did, he wouldn't tell us. In this case, we're talking about "missing persons". **To date, 3,000 French and Franco-Israeli hostages have left Israel for France**.



Wednesday October 18th,
12:30 pm

Tel Aviv airport - Departure for Paris

We are leaving the land of Israel.

Thank you for taking the time to read me. Thank you also for your messages, so many and so touching. I've been through a lot. **One doesn't emerge unscathed from such a trip**, but I am fine and determined.

This logbook was not premeditated. It seemed to me an urgent need to remember. An urgent need to tell, to recount the stories of people like you and me, but who are no longer quite the same because they have lived through absolute horror.

My colleagues and I are delighted to have come to Israel so soon after the bloodiest massacres the Jews have experienced since the Holocaust. Well, just the opposite happened. **We had to be there at that very moment.**

We were **the first world delegation to visit Israel since October 7**. The first to hug the Israelis, to hear their heartbreaking stories with incredible emotion. And they thanked us because **our presence was essential to them.**

It's hard to imagine the scale of the shock that the massacres of October 7 represent for the Israeli people, but also for the Jewish people.

The collective **memory of the Jewish people** is made up of **creations, inventions, Nobel prizes, pride, and victories.**

But **it also includes** one of the darkest parts of history : the **humiliations**, the **banishments**, the **denunciations**, the **bonfires**, the **hates**, the **massacres**, the **conversions**, the **pogroms**, the **Shoah**. **The stupefaction is equal to the abomination.**

But **we have also witnessed the extraordinary strength and resilience** that defines the Jewish people. **That's why our friendship must be unfailing.** It's a question of simple humanity. Of **the choice between the most extreme savagery** carried by an Islamist ideology that idolizes death and spits on our values, **and freedom.**

The freedom **to live, to laugh, to write, to protest, to speak, to dance and to love.** That's why our determination will never waver. For this fight will be difficult, fraught with pitfalls and ominous birds. It will be strewn with forces of evil who have chosen to say to the victims, we are not interested in your torment, because we hate you.

These forces of evil have chosen to dilute the horror because it doesn't belong to the right camp.

That's why, despite our anger and despair, despite our desire to give up, **we must all be active players in this fight.** We all have a role to play. All of us, whatever our situation, whatever our connections, whatever our skills, **must communicate to become watchmen.** Watchmen of **truth, of hope in humanity.**

Caroline Yadan