

## France briefing: September 2022

Reporting period: September 12th 2022 - October 14th 2022

### Systematic Obstruction updates

#### Latest “Systematic Obstruction” data released

- The Ministry of the Interior [unveiled the latest data](#) on the “Systematic Obstruction.”

Since February 2018 there have been:

- 26614 investigations
- 836 closures
- €55,9 million seized
- This represents a further 164 closures and over €10 million seized [since October 2021](#).

#### Macron delivers key speech to the prefects, announcing campaign to target Islamic private schools

- [Macron announced](#) that a control campaign targeting Islamic private schools was about to commence.
- He also stated that *“the fight against terrorism is absolutely key, this prevention policy and what has been done by our national and territorial intelligence services must continue.”*
- He asked the prefects (local representative of the state) to *“never give in”* regarding the implementation of these policies.

### French Political Developments

#### Report on UAE lobbying illustrates deep infiltration of French politics

- [A piece published by Orient XXI](#) highlighted the UAE’s extensive lobbying strategy in France, including its areas of influence, and outcomes.
- The UAE has exercised lobbying efforts through communication offices (French

branch of the British Project associates), media outlets (through a share in *Euronews*), think tanks (the *Bussola Institute*), some MPs and an ex-general in order to :

- Promote a positive image of the UAE
- Promote the fight against “political Islam”, Qatar and the Muslim Brotherhood
- Key wins as part of this lobbying strategy include:
  - Having Emirati Minister of the Interior, Ahmed Al-Raisi, elected as Interpol President in November 2021
  - French Senator publishing a book on terrorism financing where Qatar and the MB “connections” are identified.
  - 3 French MPs travelling to the UAE and Saudi Arabia to stress the importance of French-Emirati cooperation in the fight against terrorism and political Islam.
  - UAE President Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan speaking to the French Minister of the Economy, who later stated that

*“I had with one of our most reliable allies in the Gulf, crown prince Prince Mohamed Bin Zayed of the United Arab Emirates. He told me it was time that we opened our eyes to what was happening in France. **For political Islam, the Great Satan was no longer the United States, it is Europe and France.**”* (emphasis added)

- The article identifies UAE lobbying as a key influence in France’s moves to bolster its fight against “islamism” during Macron’s term - which includes the deeply Islamophobic *Anti-Separatism Law* passed in 2021.
- Also significant is that the French ambassador to the UAE has been promoted to Emmanuel Macron’s personal diplomatic cell.

## Islamophobia

Hassan Iquioussen caught in Belgium while evading French expulsion order

- Following an international manhunt, French imam Hassan Iquioussen was arrested on the 30th of September in Belgium.

He is being held in a detention centre. A court will decide if he must be sent back to France on the 21st of October.

- Iquioussen is subject to an expulsion order issued by the French government, after being accused of politicised charges for pronouncements he made - including pro-Palestine stances, and opposition to Islamophobia.



## Muslim school denied property sale following smears by magazine and French government unit

- Valence's city council [was about to adopt the sale of land to a Muslim school](#).  
The sale would allow the private school to open new classes.
- On October 3rd, the sale was cancelled after the local prefect opposed the project and pressured the city council.
- The prefect had initially given its approval but backtracked once :
  - The magazine *Charlie Hebdo* published an article on the school, labelling the institution as being "*close to the Muslim Brotherhood*"
  - The mayor contacted the CIPDR, which seems to have shared its concerns and opposition to the prefect