



French President Emmanuel Macron received the Rabbi Lord Jakobovits Prize of European Jewry

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7 December 2023. The Conference of European Rabbis (CER) bestowed its highest award, the Rabbi Lord Jakobovits Prize of European Jewry, upon French President Emmanuel Macron on Dec. 7.

This award recognizes Macron's commitment to battling antisemitism in France since he took office in 2017; his support for religious freedom and tolerance; and his action to secure the release of French Hamas hostages, four of whom are still being held captive in the Gaza Strip.

It also honors the president's call for unity following the Oct. 7 Hamas terrorist attacks on Israel, as well as his support for the joint call of the presidents of the National Assembly of France and the Senate—the two houses of the French Parliament—to march against antisemitism on Nov. 12, to which 180,000 people in France answered in support of their fellow Jewish citizens.

Macron, however, did not attend that march. He also criticized Israel in mid-November, claiming that Israel was killing women and children in Gaza. He called that back shortly afterwards, saying he did not intend to insinuate that the Israel Defense Forces were intentionally harming civilians, as he met with Israeli President Isaac Herzog.

The CER told JNS that the award was given for Macron's steadfast support of the French Jewish community throughout his presidency.

The Rabbi Lord Jakobovits Prize of European Jewry was awarded to Macron by the CER president, Chief Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, at a ceremony in the Élysée Palace in Paris, with the participation of the CER first vice president, Chief Rabbi of France Haïm Korsia, and in the presence of several religious leaders.

Other French representatives attending the event included Catherine Colonna, the minister of Europe and foreign affairs; Gabriel Attal, the minister of education; and Bérangère Couillard, the minister for the fight against discrimination.

“From fighting hatred online to keeping the memory of the Shoah alive and imposing harsher sanctions on antisemitic crimes, President Macron has stood firmly by the side of French and European Jews,” Goldschmidt said during the ceremony. “We call on him to continue to commit to a thriving future for Jewish life in France and Europe.”

“This starts by ensuring the safety of the 440,000 French Jews, who have been faced with shocking levels of antisemitism since the tragic events of Oct. 7,” the rabbi added. “It is paramount that the French Republic, where so many Jews have found a home, leads by example and lives up to its principles of emancipation and freedom.”

Macron restated his determination to fight antisemitism and maintain the unity of the French nation. He confirmed that a tribute ceremony would be held for the French victims of Hamas as soon as the situation of the hostages and their families allowed.

After stressing the importance of guaranteeing religious freedom in France, particularly in schools and universities, Korsia called for the fight against antisemitism to be made the “great national cause” of 2024. Candles were also lit on a menorah on the first night of Chanukah.

Source: [Conference of European Rabbis](#).