SALAM Nord/Pas-de-Calais **Resistance spirit- unbuilding hate speech**

The terrorist and racist attack that killed Pengo Bossio Wangi, 26 years old, an amateur hope of French MMA that he practiced in a club in Aubervilliers, wounded a 21-year-old man and a 40-year-old woman, riddled with bullets a 12-year-old child, and injured two others, all of African origin, in Trappes and La Verrière (Yvelines, France), on Friday, October 23, 2026, sparked national emotion in France. A series of tributes were paid to the memory of Pengo Bossio Wangi, of Congolese origins, especially by the mayor of Trappes, Ali Rabeh, mayor of Trappes. He invited all political leaders to a tribute ceremony on Friday, October 30, 2026, an invitation that should have been honored by all parties, all concerned with the fight against discrimination and hate speech.

“Words are killing” wrote a French daily newspaper (2). The perpetrator of the attack, a desocialized and fanaticized man declared that he wanted to attack "Blacks and Arabs". For the French researcher in Politics Rachid Benzine, the attack is not a "turning point"; the city of Trappes is regularly presented in some media and political speeches as "lost for the Republic" (3). He speaks of the "sorrow of the Republic" for children from the suburbs and working-class neighborhoods who often feel abandoned or loved "under condition." For the French historian Anne Lafont, a specialist in racial stereotypes (4), this racist attack is not the first. She cites other attacks that reflect a "racist breeding ground" in public debate. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 in New York were a tipping point; since then, "events and developments in society are often interpreted through this prism of the racial and religious question." In 2015, France was hit by a series of attacks inspired by the same jihadist and anti-Western ideology – as early as January with the attacks on Charlie Hebdo and the Hyper Cacher, with a climax in November against the Bataclan and the cafés in the neighborhood.

The two most stigmatized populations in France are the Roma and Muslim Arabs, with the resurgence of virulent anti-Semitism since the Hamas attacks on Israel on October 7, 2023. For researcher in Sociology and professor at the Université Libre de Bruxelles Adellali Haja specializing in racism (5), "Each form of racism has its own history that needs to be elucidated," even if there are "common dynamics." There are different types of racism, "anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, anti-Black, anti-Arabic, anti-Asiatic, anti-Tzigane racism,". The fifteenth century, in the Iberian Peninsula, saw the emergence of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia "through the fate reserved for Jews and Muslims converted to Christianity, Marranos and Moriscos". Racism developed "because their conversion was not enough to change their status, to leave the Jewish or Muslim condition". A theory of "purity of race" developed, that paved the way for the racial and racist theories of the following centuries - transatlantic slavery, colonization of African and Asian worlds... Several "layers" of racialization, a concept developed by French psychiatrist Frantz Fanon (6), have built "European modernity". It is defined as an "ideological phenomenon of European origin which consists in imposing racial categories of thought, to interpret the world and guide the action of both white groups and non-white groups". For Adellali Haja, racism "produces race through the process of racialization," which concerns ethno-racial minorities (Jews, Gypsies, Blacks, etc.). Dehumanizing and degrading clichés and stereotypes abound. The same themes are taken up to emphasize their "dangerousness", with the theme of conspiracy (Jewish or Judeo-Masonic plot, Muslim plot) which has exploded with social networks. Adellali Hajat suggests tackling “algorithmic racism.”

In a tense social, political and economic climate, the annual report of the Economic, Social and Environmental Council (CESE) on the state of France (8), encourages optimism. Faced with the demographic challenge, marked by a decline in the birth rate, the CESE recalls that "levers to respond to this slowdown are often mentioned in public debate" such as the employment of seniors or the integration of young people, particularly in ultra-marine areas. The CESE also identifies other means such as "the development of apprenticeships and work-study programs"; the "mobilization of lifelong learning"; professional equality between women and men, particularly their contribution to tackling environmental challenges; and finally the beneficial contribution of immigration. The CESE draws attention to a number of economic studies which show its positive contribution to the demographic balance, growth and dynamism of the working population, and thus to public finances. In the questions asked of the French on demography, the main sources of concern are: the decline in the working population (70% of respondents), the decrease in birth rate (59%), and the aging of the population (54%) and only 52% are worried about immigration to France, mainly those over 60 (59%). The "migration policies" are presented as "one of the levers" to meet unsatisfied labor needs in many sectors under tension. Since the issue is sensitive and often instrumentalized, recourse to immigration must be combined with actions targeted at employment for categories already present in the country (under 25 years of age, over 60 years of age, people distant from the world of work). The CESE , while being cautious and mindful of all the concerns expressed; remains positive.

More importantly, progressive think tanks and think tanks are reacting. Terra Nova published a note on October 21, 2026 (8) the purpose of which is to refute the work of the Observatoire de l'immigration et de la démographie (OID). Financed by the Périclès fund, which belongs to the reactionary billionaire Pierre-Edouard Stérin (French person exiled in Belgium for fiscal reasons), the OID has regularly published since 2020 surveys that have been extensively covered by the media of the Bolloré group (CNews, Europe 1, JDD...). The titles of the surveys are telling – "The cost of immigration for public finances," "The Turks in France: an 'isolate'?" , "Asylum, an out-of-control immigration route." The director of Terra Nova, Thierry Puech, pointed out "manipulations, omissions and misleading conclusions" and denied the name of Think Tank to entities in the service of an ideological project. In its report "Immigration and employment in France: decoding a manipulated radiography", Terra Nova emphasizes the recent contribution of non-European foreigners (4% of total employment in 2021) to job creation. Between 2021 and 2023, they accounted for 35.5% of the increase in employment in metropolitan France. African nationals contributed for 28% to this growth. There are also many methodological criticisms of the use of results and the hasty conclusions made by the OID. The ability of numbers to be treasonous is not new; manipulations always serve vested interests.

In the face of hate speech, words and figures must be analyzed, and deconstructed, carefully and scientifically. Faced with the instrumentalization of sad passions, signals from abroad encourage optimism. In Brazil, the victory of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva over his opponent, the Bolsonaro clan, is also that of the autonomous peoples of the Amazon, already decimated by the arrival of the Europeans in 1500, whom Jaïr Bolsanaro had condemned to certain death by encouraging illegal gold panners, the *garimpeiros*, to surge in the forest polluting the rivers and causing deadly epidemics. (10). The spirit of resistance is not just French or European, but international. All united in diversity.

dr Bénédicte Halba, president of iriv (www.iriv.net) - weblog on migration- 2 November 2026

(1) Sandrine Cassini et Jean-Philippe Rémy « A Trappes, l'espoir d'un réveil des Français », Le Monde dimanche 1er et lundi 2 novembre 2026

(2) Editorial du « Monde », mercredi 28 octobre 2026

(3) Rachid Benzine , politiste et chercheur associé au Fonds Ricoeur, auteur de plusieurs romans et essais « L'attentat de Trappes n'est pas un tournant », Le Monde, mardi 27 octobre 2026

(4) Anne Lafont, directrice d'études à l'Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales, coordinatrice d'un numéro de la Revue Esprit « Face à la relance raciste », octobre 2026 cité par Manon Duboc, propos recueillis dans Le Monde, mercredi 28 octobre 2026

(5) Adellali Hajjat, professeur de sociologie à l'Université libre de Bruxelles, membre du Groupe de recherche sur les relations éthiques, les migrations et l'égalité (Germe), cofondateur de la revue Marronages « Les médias ont une lourde responsabilité dans la production d'un régime de vérité racial », propos recueillis par Yasmine Khiat, Le Monde, jeudi 29 octobre 2026

(6) Frantz Fanon, psychiatre antillais, dans son ouvrage « Peau noire, masques blancs » , Paris, 1925

(7) CESE, « Rapport sur l'état de la France » , publié le 28 octobre 2026-

(8) Véronique Chocron « L'emploi des étrangers divise les think tanks », Le Monde, 27 octobre 2026

(9) Note de Terra Nova, « Immigration et emploi en France : décodage d'une radiographie manipulée », 21 octobre 2026

(10) Article de Bruno Meyerfeld, prix Albert Londres de la presse écrite 2026, correspondant du Monde au Brésil.