

## Statement of Solidarity with François Burgat

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We the undersigned express our solidarity with our colleague François Burgat, emeritus senior researcher at the French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS), who was detained by the French police on July 9, 2024. He was accused of “apology for terrorism” and taken into custody.

François Burgat is the author of *The Islamic Movement in North Africa* (University of Texas Press, 1993), *Face to Face with Political Islam* (I.B. Tauris, 2003), and *Islamism in the Shadow of al-Qaeda* (University of Texas Press, 2008), among other internationally recognized scientific publications. He has dutifully served the French Republic during a career that spanned five decades and three continents. He is the former director of the French Center for Archaeology and Social Science in Sanaa (CEFAS) and of the French Institute for the Near East (IFPO), two prestigious research centers funded by the CNRS and the French foreign office.

Like dozens of colleagues, Burgat dedicated his career to analyzing Islamism and political violence in the Middle East. His lawyer, Rafik Chekkat, declared on June 28, 2024 that “this umpteenth procedure aimed once again to silence individuals and organizations that condemn the ongoing Gaza massacre, demand an end to Israeli impunity, and call for the respect of international law in the region. This procedure is a new attack on the freedom of expression.”

Since October 7, 2023, dozens of individuals have been targeted by the French police for “apology for terrorism,” including Mathilde Panot, the House Leader for left wing party “France Unbowed,” and Rima Hassan, a Palestinian-French Member of the European Parliament. This wave of detentions was made possible by recent revisions of French law. The November 13, 2014 law granted extended powers to all public prosecutors to detain and question those individuals who are suspected of presenting or commenting in a positive way on a terrorist attack.

On October 10, 2023, three days after Hamas’s attacks, French Minister of Justice Eric Dupont-Moretti asked public prosecutors to bring charges against individuals publicly praising the attacks or presenting them as legitimate resistance. François Burgat is the latest target in a political campaign that aims at silencing pro-Palestinian voices in France and at equating explanation with justification, and analysis with incitement. We express our solidarity with him and with others whom the French state has tried to silence by enforcing the November 13, 2014 [terrorism laws](#).

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