

French politics

France summons US ambassador over antisemitism claims

Charles Kushner wrote to Emmanuel Macron accusing the president of 'a lack of sufficient action' in confronting the issue



Charles Kushner, US ambassador to France, urged President Emmanuel Macron to 'act decisively' © Ludovic Marin/ AFP/Getty Images

Ian Johnston and **Leila Abboud** in Paris

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France has summoned US ambassador Charles Kushner after he said French President Emmanuel Macron had failed to tackle antisemitic violence effectively, the French foreign ministry said on Sunday.

In a letter sent to the French president, Kushner, who is the father of President Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, said he had "deep concern over the dramatic rise of antisemitism in [France](#) and the lack of sufficient action by your government to confront it".

Without naming Macron, the US ambassador also slammed the French president's pledge to recognise Palestine statehood, saying that "gestures towards recognition of a Palestinian state embolden extremists, fuel violence and endanger Jewish life in France. In today's world, anti-Zionism is [antisemitism](#) — plain and simple."

The salvo from Kushner — his first major action since [his appointment to the role in](#)

[May](#) — represents a break with usual diplomatic tactics and stands out both because of his family ties with Trump, and because of its timing.

International pressure is rising on Israel over the war and humanitarian crisis in Gaza, and as France has led a push for more countries to recognise Palestine as a state ahead of the UN General Assembly in September.

In July, Macron became the first leader of a G7 country to make such a [promise](#), sparking fury both Israel and its longtime backer the US. Many others have since followed, including Canada and the UK.

Laurent Saint-Martin, the French junior minister for trade, hit back in an interview on TV channel TF1 on Monday, saying that neither France nor the French president “had any lessons to learn on the fight against antisemitism” and calling for Kushner to withdraw his “wrong and unacceptable” remarks.

The spat also underlines the diplomatic differences between France and the US over Israel’s ongoing offensive, and is a striking intervention in French domestic affairs. France is the home to the largest Jewish community in Europe and also home to a large Muslim community that is sensitive to the plight of Palestinians.

Kushner’s letter said the rise in antisemitism had “exploded” in France since Hamas’s October 7 attack on Israel in 2023, and also criticised Macron’s approach to Israel’s offensive on Gaza.

“In France, not a day passes without Jews assaulted in the street, synagogues or schools defaced, or Jewish-owned businesses vandalised,” he wrote.

“President Trump and I have Jewish children and share Jewish grandchildren,” added Kushner, referring to the family of Jared and Jared’s wife, Ivanka. Jared Kushner was a top adviser to Trump on the Middle East during his first term during which he sought to broker a deal between Israel and Saudi Arabia.

Kushner added: “Mr President, I urge you to act decisively: enforce hate-crime laws without exception; ensure the safety of Jewish schools, synagogues and businesses,

prosecute offenders to the fullest extent; and abandon steps that give legitimacy to Hamas and its allies”.

In a statement on Sunday, the French foreign ministry said Kushner would be summoned to the Quai d’Orsay on Monday. Allegations that France was not doing enough to fight antisemitism were unfounded and Kushner should not interfere in French domestic affairs, it added.

Public and political opinion in France and elsewhere in Europe has increasingly hardened against Israel, as the country has continued its attack on Gaza and restricted the free flow of humanitarian aid.

On Friday, a UN-backed panel [declared](#) a famine in Gaza for the first time, which it said was “entirely man-made”.

Data based on French interior ministry sources and published by Crif, an umbrella organisation of Jewish associations, shows a sharp rise in antisemitic incidents since October 7. They reached 1,676 in 2023 and 1,570 in 2024, far above the 436 recorded in 2022.

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