

## LONDON CALLING

# After the Paris attacks of 2015, growing numbers of French Jews are seeking sanctuary in the British capital

**SABINE ZEITOUNI** remembers when she first realized her family had to leave France. On January 9, 2015, a gunman declaring allegiance to the Islamic State militant group (ISIS) killed four Jewish hostages in a kosher supermarket in Paris. Soon after, the French government deployed armed guards to the entrance of the Jewish school that Zeitouni's children attended in the Paris suburb of Boulogne-Billancourt. The school advised its students to no longer wear yarmulkes outside the classroom.

Zeitouni, 41, told her husband it was time to get out. "We need to go for the future of the children," she recalls saying. On July 1, they packed their bags and moved to a house in Kensal Rise, a quiet neighborhood in North West London. "In France, it's difficult for you to show that you are Jewish," she says. Now her sons, aged 9 and 10, and her 7-year-old daughter, walk home from the North West London Jewish Day School wearing their uniform—which bears the name of the school and a Star of David on the blazer—unafraid that it might provoke an anti-Semitic attack.

Zeitouni and her family are far from being the only French Jews to make the move to London recently. A surge in anti-Semitic incidents in France—which doubled in 2014 and remained at a high level in 2015 (although slightly dropping from the previous year)—has led to a record number of French Jews fleeing the country. In January 2015, gunmen killed 17 people in and

around Paris, including at the offices of satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* and that kosher supermarket; 10 months later, coordinated attacks in the French capital left another 130 people dead.

Many French Jews head for Israel: nearly 8,000 in 2015, up from 1,900 four years earlier. But others seek safety within Europe, and London has become an increasingly popular destination. Although the British government does not record the religion of people who move to the U.K., Jewish community leaders in London say an increase in newcomers from France has driven demand for French services in London's synagogues and Jewish schools. French children now make up 40 to 50 percent of the incoming students at London's Jewish schools, according to Marc Meyer, the French chairman of the Hendon United Synagogue and director of the Conference of European Rabbis.

"It is very noticeable," says Rabbi Sam Taylor of the Western Marble Arch Synagogue, who will begin a French prayer service on March 26 and already runs French classes there. "We're having a lot of French Jews moving into the area every week, every month," he says. "It is much harder in France to be Jewish than it is in England."

Each new attack in France raises doubts among some French Jews about whether they should stay. On January 11, a 15-year-old schoolboy stabbed a Jewish teacher in Marseille and claimed to be acting in the name of ISIS. It was

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