

A Scientific and Cultural Project

Summary

GENERAL PRESENTATION AND BACKGROUND

Driven by a national policy of remembrance towards the victims of terrorism, the Museum and Memorial of Terrorism (MMT) will not only be a national site for tribute and commemoration, but also a museum of history and society with all the criteria of an innovative museum of the 21st century.

The victims have called for the construction of a national site to honor all those who have been struck by terrorist attacks. The present project, announced by the President of the Republic in March 2020, after an initial report by the prefiguration mission chaired by the historian Henry Rousso, lays the foundations.

Efforts to preserve the memory of wars, genocides, or colonization should be applied to terrorism, even though the causes, effects, or results are not comparable. This tribute is also necessary because, through the people struck by terrorism, it is the whole Nation that is targeted.



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The MMT is a new locus of knowledge and recognition. While there are many memorials dedicated to the victims of terrorism in the world, there are only half a dozen museums, each focusing on a specific attack or a particular category of attack. The MMT, on the other hand, covers all forms of terrorism: political, nationalist, regionalist, islamist, state, on the national, European and international levels.

It also covers a long historical period. The memorial will be dedicated to the victims targeted by terrorist attacks in France and to French victims abroad since 1974, the date of the first indiscriminate attack since the end of the Algerian War (September 15, 1974, in Paris). The museum's central exhibition presents, after an introduction dating back to 1794, a sequence that spans the late 1960s, when new forms of terrorism appeared, to the present day. The rest of the museum's program is not time-limited.

The MMT emerges from the new policies of memory, and particularly those concerning victims of terrorism, which appeared at the end of the 20th century, and from the emergence of museums of history and society since the 1970s.

A PUBLIC INSTITUTION

The project is carried out by a Groupement d'intérêt public (GIP, "public interest grouping") created on February 1, 2021, composed of 10 founding members, including seven ministries: Justice; Culture; Interior; Europe and Foreign Affairs; National Education, Youth, and Sports; Higher Education, Research, and Innovation; Memory

and Veterans; and three other partners: the National Audiovisual Institute (INA), the National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS), and the Foundation to support Victims of Terrorism (AFVT).

The GIP is managed by a team of ten people, as well as a dozen associated experts from several fields (research, culture, teaching, architecture, art, health).

It incorporates three bodies: a governance board, a scientific and cultural board, and another specific council, an advisory committee that includes all the associations of victims of terrorism and the *Association des Maires de France* (Association of French Mayors).

THE AUDIENCE OF THE FUTURE MMT

The MMT has been designed to welcome the victims, their relatives, and their associations, who have been closely involved in the project since the beginning. Their involvement will be reflected in the construction of a memorial, in the fact that one of the three themes of the central exhibition is focused on the victims, particularly their testimony, and in their ongoing participation in the life of the museum.

MMT also addresses all audiences. The highlights of its media strategy are a knowledge of its potential audiences, a continuing relationship with visitors, mobility and universal accessibility, physical and digital mediation, and finally, the application of the principles of an inclusive and collaborative museum.

Education programs are central to the project. They will help train teachers and lead students to understand complex events from a distance. They are based on an interdisciplinary approach in line with school programs. They aim to transmit knowledge and consolidate the values of citizenship.

A first educational project has already been launched in the form of an exhibition co-developed by students from eight high schools in the *Île-de-France* region and the *École du Louvre* in Paris. Entitled: "Facing terrorism: the exhibition of middle and high school students", it will be digital in 2022, and will then travel as an exhibition installation.

THE COLLECTIONS

The MMT has begun to build an original and ambitious collection, linked to the central exhibition, temporary exhibitions, and cultural programs, and with a memorial dimension of its own. The collections come from different sources: pieces of evidence from closed terrorism cases, donations and loans from victims, institutional donations and loans, archives, press drawings, painted works, sculptures, installations and other creations.

The MMT began the inventory and documentation on a database. Since the spring of 2021, it has set up a collections project. The final status of these collections remains to be decided, hence the decision to list all elements as "study material" for the time being.

THE MAIN EXHIBIT AND THE OTHER PROGRAMMING

The scientific framework of the main exhibit is structured around the characteristics of contemporary terrorism. It is an old, recurrent, and poorly known phenomenon which constitutes for our societies a violence of war in times of peace. Ethically, the exhibit will be guided by certain principles, including respect for the victims and a careful use of representations of violence. It addresses three main themes:

- the history of terrorism in France and in the world since the end of the 1960s;
- Victims' voices;
- Societies facing terrorism.

It opens with a historical retrospective going back to the origins of the term "terrorism", in 1794, and ends with current events.

Along with the main exhibit, the museum plans for temporary exhibits and cultural programming, including at least two projects planned to precede the museum's opening: the online exhibit already mentioned and a "museum box" type traveling exhibit project, designed to be hosted in 2023-2025 by four municipalities, some of which have been affected by terrorist attacks.

RESEARCH

The MMT places great emphasis on research in relation to its themes and collections. It intends to be a meeting point through the creation of a resource center and research support mechanisms (grants, residencies, prizes) concerning a wide range of disciplines: human and social sciences, communication sciences, neurosciences, etc. Two research seminars have already been organized with higher education institutions.

A DIGITAL STRATEGY

The MMT has adopted a digital strategy for its various sectors of activity: administration, documentation, collections, management of works, communication tools, interactivity, etc. Its three main components are a website that opened in December 2021 (musee-memorial-terrorisme.fr), the digitization of its collections, and digital visits and interactive tools: podcasts, image databases, virtual visits, etc.

THE LOCATION

The MMT will be located on the site of the former Suresnes open air school, built in 1935 on Mont-Valérien by the architects Baudouin and Lods. This historical building is to be rehabilitated, which has given a new dimension to the project. It covers more than 4,000 m² in a park of 1.5 hectares. It is located near the *Memorial de la France combattante* (the main French site of memory dedicated to the Resistance during WWII). Originally designed for children in fragile health, the site offers a strong symbolism of resilience and resistance.

This location will be a destination rather than a place of passage, with services and offers adapted to visits of different durations. Although Suresnes is easily accessible by public transport, the museum will ensure that access to the site itself will be accommodated by local transportation.

The Scientific and Cultural Project provides a pre-programming of the needs in terms of usable surface area and a proposal for the distribution of spaces, making it possible to design the memorial, the exhibition spaces, the reception area, back-of-house areas and other public facilities. The Project also sets an initial timetable for the development of the full museum complex, with an opening date of 2027.

THE FUTURE INSTITUTION

The legal structure of the future institution remains, until 2024, that of a public interest grouping. Beyond that, it is planned to create a public administrative institution, the ownership of which will have to be determined in the coming months.

Its economic model must meet the requirements of a public service institution dealing with a sensitive subject. The initial estimate of the investment budget is around 92/95 M€. It must be sufficient to ensure the museum's fundamental mission, including the restoration of a historic building.

Its operating budget is initially estimated at 8 M€ a year, with a staff of 40/50 persons.

Half of these resources, paid by the supervisory ministries, will be dedicated to employment and payroll, and half for acquisitions, public policy, and security.

The communication strategy aims to make the project known, to enable it to be seen as a place of reference for issues related to terrorism, its victims, or its social impact, and to bring it to life before it opens. This strategy must anticipate and respond to the questions raised by such a project and convince people of its cultural and social value.

The development strategy of the future establishment is based on four territorial dimensions: local, national, European, and international, which are already being discussed with its French and foreign partners.