

The Conseil d'État's urgent applications judge rejected the request for suspension of the closure of the Grande Mosquée de Pantin

The Conseil d'État's urgent applications judge ruled that the remarks made by the leaders of the Grande Mosquée de Pantin and the ideas or theories disseminated within it constitute a provocation, in connection with the risk of terrorist acts, violence, hatred and discrimination and could warrant the closure of the place of worship.

On 19 October 2020, the Prefect of Seine-Saint-Denis declared, on the basis of Article L. 227-1 of the Internal Security Code, the administrative closure, for a period of six months, of the "Grande Mosquée de Pantin".

The Fédération Musulmane de Pantin, which manages the place of worship, requested the Montreuil Administrative Tribunal's urgent applications judge to suspend this decision. The tribunal's urgent applications judge rejected this request. The Fédération Musulmane de Pantin has appealed to the Conseil d'État's urgent applications judge.

The Conseil d'État's urgent applications judge today rejected this appeal.

He argued first of all that the dissemination, on 9 October 2020, on the Grande Mosquée de Pantin's "Facebook" account, of a video calling for the removal of a history teacher because he had given a lesson a few days previously on freedom of expression, in particular through the use of caricatures, as well as a commentary mentioning the identity of that teacher, Mr. Samuel Paty, constitutes remarks provoking violence and hatred in connection with the risk of committing acts of terrorism, such as to justify the administrative closure of a place of worship pursuant to Article L. 227-1 of the Internal Security Code.

He then noted in particular that the main imam of the mosque was trained in a fundamentalist institute in Yemen, that his sermons are broadcast, with the mention of his affiliation to the "Grande Mosquée de Pantin", on an Internet site that broadcasts Salafist fatwas by Saudi sheikhs and that he is involved in the radical Islamist movement in the Ile-de-France region. He also found that the Grande Mosquée de Pantin has become a gathering place for individuals belonging to the radical Islamic movement, some of whom do not live in the Seine-Saint-Denis *département* and have been involved in the plotting of terrorist acts. It therefore considers that this evidence proves the dissemination, within the Grande Mosquée de Pantin, of ideas and theories inciting violence, hatred and discrimination in relation to the risk of committing acts of terrorism, which also justifies the administrative closure of the place of worship pursuant to Article L. 227-1 of the Internal Security Code.

Lastly, the Conseil d'État's urgent applications judge stated that the federation may request the reopening of the place of worship when it considers that it has taken measures to prevent the reoccurrence of the problems identified, in particular by choosing imams authorised to officiate, adopting measures to effectively control attendance at the mosque and the social networks under its responsibility.