

French Prime Minister Fillon Attends Mosque Opening

French Prime Minister Francois Fillon is expected on Monday to open a huge new mosque in the Paris suburb of Argenteuil, home to some 28,000 Muslims.

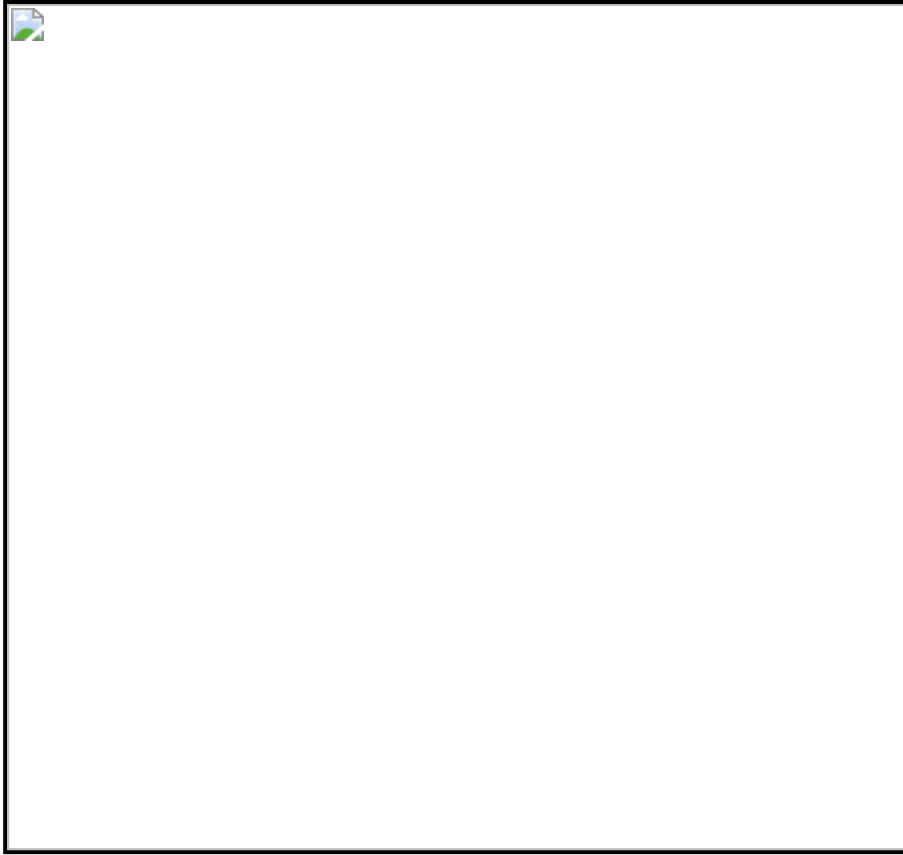
It is the first time in the history of the French 5th Republic (since 1958) that a prime minister of this rigidly secular state has attended such an inauguration. Minister of Internal Affairs Brice Hortefeux has also participated in the opening.

The Al-Ihsan mosque, built on the site of a disused Renault factory, was bought by an Algerian businessman 20 years ago. Its imams will be appointed by Algiers.

The building can hold up to more than 2,500 worshippers and includes a Quran school.

Some 800 dignitaries have been invited to attend the opening, **in which Prime Minister Fillon will talk about the importance of Islam as the country's "second religion"**.





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