Controversial French anti-terror bill clears hurdle

July 19, 2017

By [AFP](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/afp/)

The Times of Israel

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/controversial-french-anti-terror-bill-clears-hurdle/>

A controversial bill to toughen France’s security laws cleared its first hurdle late Tuesday when the conservative-dominated Senate approved the legislation by a majority.

Senators backed a first reading of the bill by 229 votes to 106, meaning the text will now be handed to the lower house, the National Assembly, for debate in October.

The new laws — a campaign pledge of President Emmanuel Macron — will replace a state of emergency imposed after the November 2015 terror attacks in Paris that left 130 people dead.

Under the state of emergency, authorities have the power to place people under house arrest, order house searches and ban public gatherings without the prior approval of a judge.

The measures were extended for a sixth time on July 6.

Some of them will become permanent under the proposed law, a move rights groups including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch say is draconian.

Interior Minister Gerard Collomb defended the bill, saying it was necessary to combat the “ever present” terror threat.

“We want to come out from the state of emergency, but we can’t do so without counter-terrorism controls in place.”