

Epinal, October 1 2008 (AFB) - 600 to 1,000 Jehovah's Witnesses in Vosges (Vaw-zhay) protest accusations of pedophilia

Some 600 Jehovah's Witnesses, according to the police force, a thousand according to organizers, protested Wednesday afternoon before the Vosges (French state or province) prefecture (government offices) at Epinal against charges of pedophilia that have been brought against them. The participants denounced the "serious charges of disinformation for harming Jehovah's Witnesses and preventing construction of a house of worship at Deyvillers (Vosges)," explained Guy Canonici, president of the Christian federation of Jehovah's Witnesses upon leaving a meeting at the prefecture at 18:00 hours.

"It is the drop of water which makes the vase overflow. We've heard criticisms for many years. But this, this is too much!" Said Mr. Canonici who was indignant. The Jehovah's Witnesses are caught up in many difficulties with Deyvillers, a village of 1,400 close to Epinal where they bought ground to build a "Kingdom Hall" of 1,500 seating units with a parking lot of 500 units. A Defense Association of The Environment of Deyvillers (Aded), has brought together 400 members, fighting since 2004 to prevent the construction of this place of worship, the building permit of which is currently blocked by the town hall of the commune.

L' Aded on Wednesday evening invited in Bill Bowen, a former official in this religious movement in the United States who became president of the association "Silent Lambs" which denounces the silence imposed on victims of sexual abuses within Jehovah's Witnesses. Mr. Bowen was received yesterday, among others, by Georges Fenech, the president of Miviludes (the interdepartmental mission of vigilance and fighting against cults), as has been learned in connection with this mission.