

Original article

The French government has condemned the actions of a Paris police officer who was suspended after he was allegedly recorded saying a Parisian teacher who made a sexual assault complaint was a "whore". Lawyers and rights groups reacted with outrage after a recording was released on the investigative website Mediapart of the police officer repeatedly insulting the woman and questioning her case.

The police officer has not been named.

The 34-year-old teacher, named in the media as Elodie, had called the police in the early hours of Saturday 5 February to report being sexually assaulted by a stranger who grabbed her on a street in central Paris. She was interviewed by officers and the suspect was arrested and questioned.

Later that day, another officer called the woman's phone from the police station. He left a message saying he needed to talk to the woman about the case.

But he did not hang up his phone correctly. The woman's answerphone recorded him for over three minutes joking with colleagues in the office suggesting that the woman was likely to be sleeping off a hangover and that the case didn't make sense. He was recorded several times as saying that she was a "pute" - a "great big whore" - who was just trying to make life difficult for the man.

The interior minister G rard Darmanin, said it was right the officer had been suspended and his actions had sullied the whole force.

The Paris police department said they have asked for an independent inquiry. "No offensive or abusive behaviour will be tolerated by a police officer against a victim," it said in a statement, adding that it had been working to improve its policy towards victims of sexual and domestic violence.

The feminist group Osez le Feminisme questioned the police officer's work environment. It said: "How is it that a police officer feels he has the right to talk like that about a victim in front of his colleagues? What work atmosphere could allow him to think he could do that with total impunity?"

The group added: "How many other times has a woman been called a great big whore by the police officer in charge of her case without it being recorded? How can one hope for impartial treatment of a complaint when you're called a whore by the police?"