

Macron Sticks Up For Free Speech, Jaffa Muslims Riot In Response

by Hugh Fitzgerald



After the murder of Samuel Paty, the French middle-school teacher murdered by a Muslim Chechen for including cartoons of Muhammad in a lesson on free speech, President Macron refused to condemn those cartoons, angering many Muslims around the world, for whom the Prophet is “the most sacred thing in Islam.” At a ceremony in Paty’s honor, Macron continued to underline the importance of free speech, and the need to defend it against its enemies. This did not go over well with many Muslims, including those in Israel and Gaza. Their fury against the French is reported on here: “Protests in Jaffa to denounce Macron’s comment on Prophet Muhammad,” by Sarah Chemla, [Jerusalem Post](#), October 25, 2020:

Hundreds of Jaffa [Israel] residents gathered Saturday [Oct. 24] night to protest in front of the residence of French Ambassador to Israel Eric Danon, setting trash cans on fire, Ynet reported, adding that a stone was also thrown at a bus.

The fires reportedly occurred following dispersal of the protesters, though no one was hurt, according to Ynet.

Nothing says “reasoned debate” for Muslims more than setting fire to trash cans.

The protests were sparked by French President Emmanuel Macron’s recent comments where he refused to condemn cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad after the beheading of a French school teacher.

Protesters, holding up banners written in Arabic, called for the defense of the Prophet Muhammad at the rally which began after evening prayers in Jaffa.

The prophet “is the most sacred thing in Islam, and he who attains his honor, reaches a whole people,” said Amin Bukhari, a protester accusing the French president of playing the “far-right wing” game, reported the French newspaper Le Figaro.’

To defend free speech is now, apparently, to be “playing the far-right wing game.” Neither Voltaire nor Jefferson would agree.

“Moses must be respected among the Jews, Jesus Christ must be respected as well – he is also our prophet – and we must respect the prophet Muhammad, may peace be upon him,” added Bukhari.

The Islamist movement Hamas, the governing authority of the Gaza Strip, also denounced Macron’s words, as did Islamic Jihad.

“Insulting religions and prophets is not a matter of freedom of speech but rather promotes a culture of hatred,” Hamas said in a statement, adding that it wants “to prevent consequences” that these statements could have.

But Macron did not insult “religions and prophets.” He did not criticize Muhammad. He only spoke in defense of freedom of speech, which is a different thing. Nor did Samuel Paty, who was not endorsing the caricatures of Muhammad in his class, but using them as a point of departure for a discussion of the right of free speech. This difference has been lost on Muslims.

For its part, the Islamic Jihad – Gaza’s second largest armed group, after Hamas – argued that “offending” Islam, and its Prophet Muhammad, was a “redline” that “could not be tolerated.”

“A redline...that could not be tolerated.” This sounds like a threat: is it directed at President Macron, at France, at all those Infidels, wherever they may be in the world, who Muslims insist do not treat Muhammad with the respect he deserves? It is indeed an open-ended threat directed at all of the above who, if they are deemed guilty of the “crime” of “offending” Islam and the Prophet – a category that includes not just those who mock Muhammad, but also those who refuse to punish any mockery of Muhammad by others – deserve the same punishment as Samuel Paty.

In Khan Yunnis in the Gaza Strip, demonstrators burned photos of Macron and called for the defense of both the prophet and Islam, according to Le Figaro...

Samuel Paty, a history teacher, giving a single class on free speech in a middle school in France, chose as a subject for that discussion several cartoons of Muhammad published by *Charlie Hebdo*, for which nine cartoonists were murdered by Muslim fanatics in 2015. The teacher, not wishing to offend his Muslim students, suggested they might want to leave the classroom during the discussion. All but one did; that one remained, she claimed, “by accident,” and then, apparently outraged by what she heard, reported on the class to her

father. He demanded that the teacher be fired; he also helped produce a video with an imam long known to the security services, one Abdelhakim Sefrioui, denouncing Paty; the video went viral. The result was that a Chechen Muslim sixty miles away learned of the event – it's unclear if he ever saw the cartoons – and went to Paty's school to see Muslim justice done. He decapitated the "blasphemer," then proudly offered the world a view, uploaded from his smartphone, of Paty's severed head.

That atrocity was apparently not enough for many Muslims. They are angry that the French have paid tribute to that martyr for free speech, Samuel Paty, and especially inflamed that President Macron has refused to "renounce" the cartoons of Muhammad that Paty showed his class. For that, Muslims far outside France, in Gaza and Jaffa, Israel, have been expressing their anger in the only way they know how – articulate and reasoned discourse being beyond them – by violence and threats. In this case that meant, in Jaffa, setting fire to garbage cans and calling for a Muslim boycott of French goods, all because of a single sentence from President Macron. To the civilized world, these Muslim protesters appear both ridiculous and fanatical; that is because they *are* both ridiculous and fanatical.

Hamas in Gaza hastened to insist that "Insulting religions and prophets is not a matter of freedom of speech but rather promotes a culture of hatred." But where does the real threat of a "culture of hatred" arise? Is it not in the Qur'an, where there are many verses deprecating and insulting Christians and Jews? Are there not dozens of Qur'anic verses that command Muslims to "fight," to "kill," to "smite at the necks of," and to "strike terror in the hearts of" Infidels? Take a look at just a few of those Qur'anic verses:

2:191-193: "And slay them wherever you come upon them, and expel them from where they expelled you; persecution is more grievous than slaying. But fight them not by the Holy Mosque

until they should fight you there; then, if they fight you, slay them – such is the recompense of unbelievers, but if they give over, surely Allah is All-forgiving, All-compassionate. Fight them, till there is no persecution and the religion is Allah's; then if they give over, there shall be no enmity save for evildoers.”

4:89: “They wish that you should disbelieve as they disbelieve, and then you would be equal; therefore take not to yourselves friends of them, until they emigrate in the way of Allah; then, if they turn their backs, take them, and slay them wherever you find them; take not to yourselves any one of them as friend or helper.”

5:33: “This is the recompense of those who fight against Allah and His Messenger, and hasten about the earth, to do corruption there: they shall be slaughtered, or crucified, or their hands and feet shall alternately be struck off; or they shall be banished from the land. That is a degradation for them in this world; and in the world to come awaits them a mighty chastisement.”

8:12: “When thy Lord was revealing to the angels, ‘I am with you; so confirm the believers. I shall cast into the unbelievers’ hearts terror; so smite above the necks, and smite every finger of them!’”

8:39: “Fight them, till there is no persecution and the religion is Allah's entirely; then if they give over, surely Allah sees the things they do.”

8:60: “Make ready for them whatever force and strings of horses you can, to terrify thereby the enemy of Allah and your enemy, and others besides them that you know not; Allah knows them. And whatsoever you expend in the way of Allah shall be repaid you in full; you will not be wronged.”

9:5: “Then, when the sacred months are drawn away, slay the idolaters wherever you find them, and take them, and confine

them, and lie in wait for them at every place of ambush. But if they repent, and perform the prayer, and pay the alms, then let them go their way; Allah is All-forgiving, All-compassionate.”

9:29: “Fight those who believe not in Allah and the Last Day and do not forbid what Allah and His Messenger have forbidden – such men as practise not the religion of truth, being of those who have been given the Book – until they pay the tribute out of hand and have been humbled.”

9:111: “Allah has bought from the believers their selves and their possessions against the gift of Paradise; they fight in the way of Allah; they kill, and are killed; that is a promise binding upon Allah in the Torah, and the Gospel, and the Koran; and who fulfils his covenant truer than Allah? So rejoice in the bargain you have made with Him; that is the mighty triumph.”

9:123: “O believers, fight the unbelievers who are near to you; and let them find in you a harshness; and know that Allah is with the godfearing.”

47:4: “When you meet the unbelievers, smite their necks, then, when you have made wide slaughter among them, tie fast the bonds; then set them free, either by grace or ransom, till the war lays down its loads. So it shall be; and if Allah had willed, He would have avenged Himself upon them; but that He may try some of you by means of others. And those who are slain in the way of Allah, He will not send their works astray.”

There are also dozens of Qu’ranic verses expressing particular hatred of Jews, who are described – in Robert Spencer’s helpful compilation – thus: “The Qur’an depicts the Jews as inveterately evil and bent on destroying the wellbeing of the Muslims. They are the strongest of all people in enmity toward the Muslims (5:82); as fabricating things and falsely

ascribing them to Allah (2:79; 3:75, 3:181); claiming that Allah's power is limited (5:64); loving to listen to lies (5:41); disobeying Allah and never observing his commands (5:13); disputing and quarreling (2:247); hiding the truth and misleading people (3:78); staging rebellion against the prophets and rejecting their guidance (2:55); being hypocritical (2:14, 2:44); giving preference to their own interests over the teachings of Muhammad (2:87); wishing evil for people and trying to mislead them (2:109); feeling pain when others are happy or fortunate (3:120); being arrogant about their being Allah's beloved people (5:18); devouring people's wealth by subterfuge (4:161); slandering the true religion and being cursed by Allah (4:46); killing the prophets (2:61); being merciless and heartless (2:74); never keeping their promises or fulfilling their words (2:100); being unrestrained in committing sins (5:79); being cowardly (59:13-14); being miserly (4:53); being transformed into apes and pigs for breaking the Sabbath (2:63-65; 5:59-60; 7:166); and more."

Someone in the French press or government should take the time to remind Hamas, since it has dared to suggest that "insulting religions and prophets is not a matter of freedom of speech but rather promotes a culture of hatred," that the real "culture of hatred" in the world today is that to be found promoted in the Qur'an and Hadith, where Christianity and Judaism, and their adherents, are scorned and denounced, and Believers (in Islam) are commanded to wage violent Jihad against the Unbelievers (non-Muslims), and especially against the Jews. Does Hamas think that the "insulting [other] religions and prophets" as is found in Islam should or should not receive freedom of speech protection? I have a feeling they would prove to be sudden stalwarts of such protection – of course, for Muslims only.

Finally, one last narrow question. What does Hamas, what do all those Muslims who have been celebrating the decapitation

of Samuel Paty, and deploring President Macron's refusal to denounce the cartoons of Muhammad, think about two Qur'anic passages: the first tells Muslims that they are "the best of peoples" (3:110) while the second tells them that non-Muslims are "the worst of created beings" (98:6)? Do they think those verses should receive free speech protection, or do they regard them as contributing to a "culture of hatred" and therefore do not deserve such protection?

That should make them squirm. We'll be waiting right here for the answer.

First published in