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For Charlie Hebdo: Rage and Solidarity

Friday 9 January 2015, by [NAMAZIE Maryam](#) (Date first published: 7 January 2015).

My message to Charlie Hebdo's editor in chief, Gerard Biard:

Dear Gerard

I spoke on a panel with you in November last year at the International Feminist and Secular Network in Paris.

I am writing to express my outrage at the cold-blooded murder of freethinkers at Charlie Hebdo today and to give my unequivocal support.

Freedom of expression and the criticism of religion and Islam are basic rights. Clearly, free expression without the right to criticise religion is meaningless. Throughout history, criticism of religion (that which is deemed sacred or taboo) has been intrinsic to human progress.

In the era of ISIS and the religious-Right, this criticism is a historical necessity and needed more than ever.

The Islamists who killed today said they were "avenging" Islam's prophet but Mohammed cartoons are merely an excuse. The aim of such acts of terrorism - whether in Paris or Afghanistan - are to defend their theocratic and inhuman values. They must know that we too will defend our human values - secularism, equality, citizenship, the right to religion and to be free from religion, the right to criticise and mock religion... which are not "western" values but universal ones.

Today's killers are part of the same movement that massacres schoolchildren in Peshawar, throws acid in the faces of "improperly veiled" women in Iran and crucifies secularists in Kobane. They need no excuses to commit murder and mayhem.

The battle to commemorate the lives lost today is an ongoing one. It's a battle between secularists versus theocrats everywhere. And it is a fight that we have to win. No ifs or buts.

In solidarity

Maryam Namazie
