



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on January 11, 2015

## On Free Speech, UN and French Rulers Side With Jihadists

After the gruesome *Charlie Hebdo* terrorist attack in Paris last week, free-speech and defending freedom of expression suddenly became all the rage in France and across much of the world. Overlooked amid the global outpouring of support for the right to speak freely — #JeSuisCharlie was trending on Twitter for days — is the fact that the Socialist Party-run French government and [the United Nations represent a far greater threat to free expression](#) than murderous terrorists ever could.



In fact, the UN, widely ridiculed as the “dictators club,” has for years been waging a war on free speech worldwide and any criticism of Islam under the guise of advancing what it calls “human rights.” French authorities, meanwhile, have imposed some of the strictest criminal sanctions on controversial speech anywhere in the Western world. The difference between the UN and French government view on free speech and the position of jihadists, then, stems largely from what punishment is appropriate for the “crime,” legal experts [observed](#).

The satirical French newspaper that came under attack last week, reportedly by a group of now-deceased Islamic jihadists outraged about the publication’s lampooning of Islam and its prophet, was notorious for its deeply offensive insults directed at the world’s major religions and faith in general. The murdered editor of the weekly newspaper, Stéphane Charbonnier, a longtime supporter of the French Communist Party with a passionate hatred for all religion, seemed to relish the outrage his “comedy” produced.

Many of the grotesque cartoons he and his staff created and published were widely condemned by figures from across the political spectrum and by Jewish, Christian, and Muslim leaders. The editor considered it a badge of honor. Indeed, more than a few of the cartoons and alleged attempts at “humor” were well beyond disgusting. In a free society, though, individuals and groups have the right to spew even the most vile and hateful absurdities, at least in this world.

Of course, along with free will, man also has a God-given responsibility to search for and speak the Truth. For Christians and Jews, in particular, however, scripture explains that vengeance belongs to the Lord. And that applies even when newspapers such as *Charlie Hebdo* blaspheme the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the most grotesque and deranged fashion imaginable.

In a free society in this world, appropriate responses to such outrages against God in the marketplace of ideas might include condemnation, shunning, organized boycotts, public ridicule and scorn, and more. Violence, killing, or national government reprisals against the authors — at least in a free, Western-minded society underpinned by Judeo-Christian values — would not be on the agenda. In the United States, for example, while local communities have historically enforced standards such as bans on pornography, the U.S. Constitution specifically prohibits federal restrictions on speech, the press, religion, and more.



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But modern-day France, at least in the commonly understood American and Western sense, hardly qualifies as a genuinely free society any longer. Of course, employees of *Charlie Hebdo* received regular threats from Islamic fundamentalists outraged by the attacks — and [French authorities still infringed on their right to keep and bear arms for self-defense](#).

Less known, though, is that in France, government has literally criminalized speech that “insults, defames or incites hatred, discrimination or violence on the basis of religion, race, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sex or sexual orientation.” In fact, *Charlie Hebdo* staff had been threatened and harassed by French authorities for years over many of the same cartoons that reportedly inspired fanatical jihadists to murder them, according to media reports.

In 2006, for example, following the publication of Muhammad cartoons by the satirical paper, then French President Jacques Chirac singled out *Charlie Hebdo* for special condemnation over its “overt provocations” that could fuel “dangerous” passions. “Anything that can hurt the convictions of someone else, in particular religious convictions, should be avoided,” the French president was quoted as saying. “Freedom of expression should be exercised in a spirit of responsibility.”

Since then, French authorities have gone still further, prosecuting and censoring speakers and speech that may “hurt the convictions of someone else.” In fact, the year before that, politician and presidential candidate Jean Marie Le Pen was actually convicted of “inciting racial hatred.” His alleged “crime”: Trying to warn his countrymen in comments published by a major French newspaper about what he viewed as the dangers of unrestricted Islamic immigration into France. Even racist or anti-religious comments made on social-media services such as Twitter have been declared “illegal” in France.

Just two years ago, meanwhile, following global protests and government condemnation over a crude Youtube film ridiculing Islam and its prophet, *Charlie Hebdo* was again in the crosshairs of the French government. In response to the uproar over the video, the satirical paper decided to publish more cartoons depicting Islam’s prophet, Mohammed, while attacking and satirizing the Muslim faith. Socialist Party bigwig and then French Prime Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault lashed out, and reiterated Paris’ hostile views toward freedom of speech and a free press. Speech, Ayrault declared, “is expressed within the confines of the law and under the control of the courts.”

In other words, in France, as in much of Western Europe and the Islamic world today, the government recognizes no inherent, unalienable right to free speech. Unsurprisingly, attacks on Christianity, a key element of French heritage, remain fair game. But across virtually the entire continent, criticism of Islam is considered a crime — regardless of whether the criticism is made by top political leaders seeking to warn their countrymen about what they see as the dangers of Islam, or by essentially unknown commentators expressing their opinions using social-media services.

“The greatest threat to liberty in France has come not from the terrorists who committed such horrific acts this past week but from the French themselves, who have been leading the Western world in a crackdown on free speech,” explained George Washington University professor Jonathan Turley, who teaches public interest law, in an [opinion piece](#) published by the *Washington Post*. He also pointed out that while a single gunman can kill a journalist, “it takes a nation to kill a right.”

“While France long ago got rid of its blasphemy laws, there is precious little difference for speakers and authors in prosecutions for defamation or hate speech,” Turley continued. “There may also be little difference perceived by extremists, like those in Paris, who mete out their own justice for speech the government defines as a crime. To them, this is only a matter of degree in responding to what the



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government has called unlawful provocations.”

Beyond Paris, various self-styled regional and global “authorities” are similarly seeking to impose transnational speech codes to criminalize the right to free speech on all of humanity. In fact, if the UN had its way, *Charlie Hebdo* workers would have already faced criminal sanctions for what the planetary outfit refers to as “hate speech” and “defamation of religion.”

As *The New American* [reported last week](#), the UN and its legions of “human rights” bureaucrats are currently trying to bludgeon the people of Japan, among others, into criminalizing “hate speech” as part of a global anti-speech campaign originally led by the Soviet Union. In Germany last year, the UN even lashed out at authorities for failing to prosecute a politician who criticized immigrants and immigration. At the global level, the UN and many of its unsavory member regimes — especially Islamic dictatorships — are currently working to criminalize criticism of Islam through the Istanbul process and Organization of Islamic Cooperation-backed UN schemes.

Years ago, meanwhile, the EU ordered its formerly sovereign member states to criminalize free speech by imposing hate-speech laws. Apparently not satisfied with that, the emerging super-state recently sought to ban criticism of feminism, too. As *The New American* reported early last year, [citing EU decrees, the Italian government even threatened journalists with prosecution](#) for failing to actively promote and normalize homosexuality. If left unchecked, even the final vestiges of free speech in the West and around the world will ultimately be crushed by a combination of the UN, Islamic extremists, and Big Government.

Of course, in France and the broader European Union, the increasingly hostile attacks on freedom of speech and even thought cut both ways. While serious criticism and “defamation” of Islam is fast becoming a major crime, Muslims themselves are also under attack by accelerating attacks on free speech. With homosexuals becoming a “protected” class under expanding prohibited-speech regimes, for instance, Muslims and other people of faith are [increasingly being targeted](#) merely for suggesting that homosexual activity is sinful, or that governments should not use coercion to redefine (or even destroy) the institution of marriage.

Already, the globalist establishment is [exploiting the attack in Paris as a pretext for further attacks on liberty](#) — free speech, gun rights, privacy, and more. As *The New American* reported yesterday, [draconian EU and French government infringements on the right to keep and bear arms left the people of Paris defenseless](#) in the face of murdering marauders — despite the fact that even law-enforcement authorities acknowledge that France is awash in illegal weapons.

The proper response to the latest terror attacks is not further restrictions on freedom, which the terrorists, the Socialist French government, and the UN all continue to demand. Instead, more respect for liberty is what is needed — not just in France, but worldwide.

*Photo: AP Images*

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