

France Quietly Reintroducing the Crime of Blasphemy

by **Giulio Meotti**

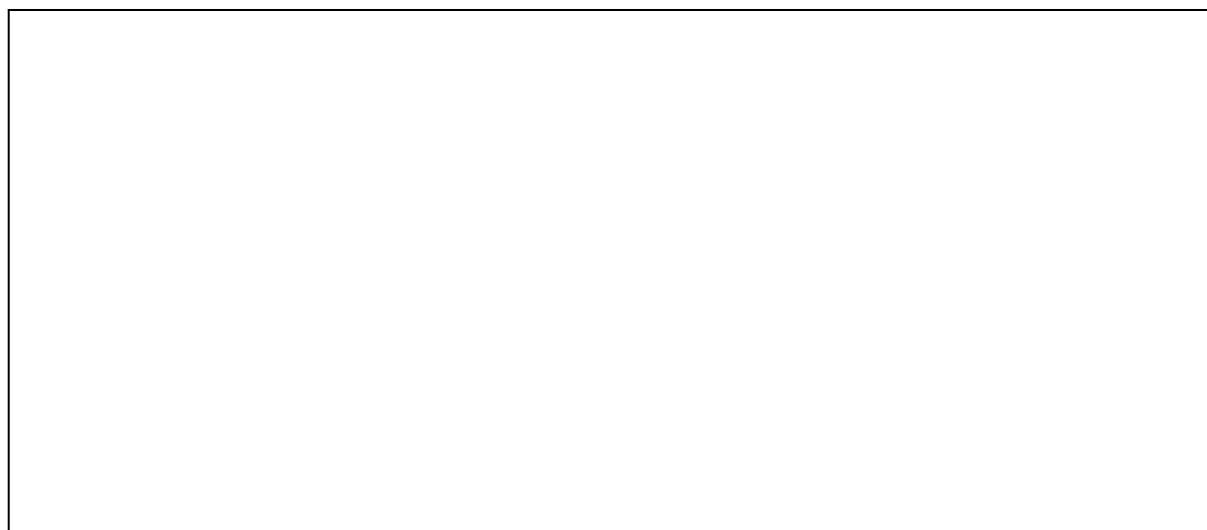
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Translations of this item:

- Danish ▪ Portuguese
- German ▪ Spanish
- Italian ▪ Swedish
- Polish

- Today, in France, using freedom of expression to criticize Islam is clearly an extremely dangerous act, even if you, like Mila, are a child.
- France is rapidly going from *laïcité* (secularism) to *lâcheté* (cowardice); from freedom of expression to unconditional surrender. France keeps trying to procrastinate while Islamism thrives on the elites' rapidly abandoning their Judeo-Christian values.
- Feminist organizations, so quick to denounce "toxic masculinity" and "patriarchal structures of domination", were also silent.
- Today, in France, the country of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, which always sanctified freedom of expression and the right to criticize religion and ideologies, some within the justice system.... are quietly and *de facto* reintroducing the crime of blasphemy.





Today, in France, the country that always sanctified freedom of expression and the right to criticize religion and ideologies, some within the justice system are quietly and *de facto* reintroducing the crime of blasphemy. (Images source: iStock. Image is illustrative and does not represent any person named in the article.)

France had just come out of the fifth anniversary of the massacre at its satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* than it was plunged into a similar case. On January 18, **Mila O.**, a 16-year-old French girl, made **insulting comments** about Islam during an Instagram livestream.

"During her livestream, a Muslim boy asked her out in the comments, but she turned him down because she is gay. He responded by accusing her of racism and calling her a 'dirty lesbian'. In an angry **follow-up video**, streamed immediately after she was insulted, Mila responded by saying that she 'hates religion'".

Mila continued, saying among other things:

"Are you familiar with freedom of expression? I didn't hesitate to say what I thought. I hate religion. The Koran is a religion of hatred; there is only hatred in it. That's what I think. I say what I think... Islam is sh*t... I'm not a racist at all. One cannot simply be racist against a religion... I say what I want, I say what I think. Your religion is sh*t. I'd stick a finger up your god's a**h*le..."

What she said might be considered a bit raw, but does she have the right to say it? After all, Jews are called the descendants of pigs and apes without the speech police having a stroke.

Following her statements, Mila was **targeted** on social networks, where the **video** was widely shared; she received numerous death threats, and her name, address and the name of her school were made public. Mila was forced to leave school for her own safety.

Now under police protection, Mila is in such danger that no French school can, for the time being, **accommodate her**. "I can't set foot in my high school anymore and I can't even change schools because the whole of France is out to get me", she **said**. For not having understood what is clear to everyone -- that Islam is a "religion of peace" -- she is threatened with death, rape and having her throat cut.

"Are we in France or Pakistan?", asked French intellectual Jacques Julliard. Welcome to the France of 2020, where magazines run **headlines** such as: "Mila, 16 years old, threatened with death for criticizing Islam". Islamism is becoming pervasive among French Muslims. Since France has not fought it, its hold over France can only increase.

"Let's get to the point: the progressive intelligentsia wants to believe in multicultural living together, even when reality denies it and reveals a society where diversity is translated into social and identity fragmentation", **wrote** the Canadian philosopher, Mathieu Bock-Côté. When multiculturalism turns into threats to free speech, multiculturalists dangerously take the side of the Islamists. The case of Mila represents all the cracks in the disintegration of French society. **According** to the French journalist, Dominique Nora:

"A few weeks after the commemoration of the massacre at Charlie [Hebdo], the 'Mila affair' shows the disturbing asymmetry that reigns in France regarding freedom of expression, or more precisely, blasphemy."

Mila's story could have ended with the death threats -- as the death threats against Salman Rushdie could have ended 31 years ago -- if all the state authorities had immediately rushed to support Mila, and if the France as a society had condemned with one voice the barbaric aggression against the schoolgirl. The opposite happened. Avoiding "the stigmatization of Muslims" has become the official excuse used by the politicians to justify abandoning the victims of violent Islamist threats, such as Mila.

Not one, but two investigations were opened, one for the death threats received by Mila and the other against Mila for "**provoking religious hatred**" (later **dismissed**). The controversy redoubled when the general delegate of the French Council for Muslim Worship, Abdallah Zekri, **said** that the girl had "looked for" trouble: "She must bear the consequences of what she said. Who sows the wind reaps the whirlwind". Islamists are daily testing the resilience of our democratic societies.

Mila's controversy took on a new dimension when Minister of Justice Nicole Belloubet, after having first condemned the death threats received by Mila, **declared**: "Insulting religion is obviously an attack on freedom of conscience; it is serious." Unfortunately for Belloubet but fortunately for France, that is not (yet) a crime. Belloubet later admitted her "**mistake**". Nonetheless, the damage was immense. Ségolène Royal, a former minister and presidential candidate, piled on, saying that Mila had lacked "**respect**".

"No, you're not Mila; you, Mrs. Ségolène Royal, have no courage", **tweeted** the philosopher Raphaël Enthoven in response. Martine Aubry, the socialist mayor of Lille, **asked** Mila to "exercise restraint and avoid this kind of talk, even if the threats are unacceptable". France is rapidly going from *laïcité* (secularism) to *lâcheté* (cowardice); from freedom of expression to unconditional surrender. France keeps trying to procrastinate while Islamism thrives on the elites' rapidly abandoning their Judeo-Christian values.

There were even those, such as the historian of religion, Oden Vallet, **claiming** that Mila is "responsible" for future terror attacks.

A former cartoonist at *Charlie Hebdo*, Delfeil de Ton, after the 2015 massacre of his colleagues, shamefully accused *Charlie Hebdo's* late editor Stéphane Charbonnier of "**dragging**" the staff into the slaughter by satirizing Mohammed.

Mila's case resembles that of a French philosopher, Robert Redeker, who in 2006 published an **opinion** extremely critical of Islam in *Le Figaro*. Following this, Redeker, who was a teacher in a public high school in Toulouse, began receiving death threats by phone, email and through Al Hesbah, a password-protected forum with ties to Al Qaeda. "I can't work, I can't come and go and am obliged to hide", Redeker **said** from an undisclosed location. "So in some way, the Islamists have succeeded in punishing me on the territory of the republic as if I were guilty of a crime of opinion". That was the "**fatwa in the country of Voltaire**".

Fifteen years later, Mila's case shows how greatly the Islamists have indeed succeeded.

There are a few brave writers who have defended Mila. In an article for the *Journal du Dimanche*, the former *Charlie Hebdo* lawyer Richard Malka wrote about "Mila's case or the triumph of fear."

"There is no reaction from ministers and major feminists or LGBT associations, artists and 'progressives'. Turn your head, whistle, look at your shoes before choosing fashionable indignations that you will embrace with all the more ardor as long as they don't expose you to any risk".

Malka also wrote that "no human rights organizations has protested or expressed solidarity with the girl whose life has suddenly been plunged into hiding". Feminist organizations, so quick to denounce "toxic masculinity" and "patriarchal structures of domination", were also silent.

Today there are many countries where people are killed because they dare to criticize Islam. In the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, a country that punishes blasphemy with death, judges sentenced to death but later absolved Asia Bibi for that "crime". Today, in France, the country of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, which always sanctified freedom of expression and the right to criticize religion and ideologies, some within the justice system -- in the name of a misguided, militant anti-racism -- are quietly and *de facto* reintroducing the crime of blasphemy. "The Mila Affair: Are we pretending to create a crime of blasphemy in French law?" asked an appeal published by *Le Figaro*.

Today, in France, using freedom of expression to criticize Islam is clearly an extremely dangerous act, even if you, like Mila, are a child. Those who disassociate themselves from Mila wear masks of submission.

Franz-Olivier Giesbert, an influential commentator and former editor of *Le Figaro*, accused Justice Minister Belloubet of appeasing Islamists, and compared her actions to those of the Vichy regime that collaborated with Hitler. "Is France still France?", Giesbert asked in an editorial for the news magazine *Le Point*.

"Some days you wonder. In Islamic republics such as Pakistan or Iran [Belloubet's comments] would be normal. But they are not normal in

France, the country of the Enlightenment where there is a right to blasphemy".

If you count all the French journalists, cartoonists and writers currently under police protection for criticizing Islam, then, yes, France *is* turning into the new Pakistan. **Éric Zemmour**, the author of *Le Suicide Français*, is followed by two police guards wherever he goes; *Charlie Hebdo*'s director, "Riss", and the remaining cartoonists **live under police protection** as does **Philippe Val**, the former director of *Charlie Hebdo*, who decided to publish the Mohammed cartoons in 2006. The journalist **Zineb Rhazaoui** is surrounded by six policemen. Already in 2002, two noted authors were forced to stand trial in France for their ideas on Islam, **Oriana Fallaci** and **Michel Houellebecq**.

Five major French intellectuals -- Elisabeth Badinter, Elisabeth de Fontenay, Marcel Gauchet, Jacques Julliard and Jean-Pierre Le Goff -- published a pro-Mila appeal in *L'Express*, **calling out** "the cowardice of justice and politics now obsessed with the acrobatics on the subjects of freedom of expression when it comes to Islam. We will pay dearly for this cowardice".

After the massacre at *Charlie Hebdo*, Pope Francis **said**, "Curse my mother, expect a punch", and blamed the cartoonists for their own murder. Islamists are winning the ideological battle and we are behaving like cowards. Will 16-year-old Mila have to be murdered to unify people enough so that the cowards can say "Je suis Mila" for 24 hours?

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