

November 13: A letter to my friends and comrades in France on the terrorist attacks of Paris

Thursday 26 November 2015, by [MAHMOUD Houzan](#) (Date first published: 18 November 2015).

Greetings dear friends

On the 31st of October 2015 I took part in a huge peace conference in the city of Ypres in Belgium on the occasion of centenary of the first World War 1 (1914-1918). I addressed the participants on the danger of ISIS in particular, but the Islamist ideology in general. My point was 'no one is safe anymore, even us in this conference hall'. I felt that the audience might have thought I was exaggerating. I must say that what me and other activists from the Middle East have been saying for over a decade is more visible than ever before.

What happened on November 13th in the heart of Paris is inhumane and I condemn it. I offer deep heartedly condolences and solidarity to you and all French people for having to witness such barbaric attacks and losing loved ones. Yesterday, and days before Lebanon, Afghanistan, Baghdad, Syria and many other countless places were turned into such seen by Islamists.

Activists like myself from the Middle East, who have endured religious bigotry, misogyny and dictate have been warning the West for its endless support to the Islamists groups both in Europe but also in the Middle East. It is only ordinary civilians who are turned into 'soft targets' by Islamists everywhere.

While I am in full solidarity with civilians and victims of Islamic terrorist attacks in Paris but I can not join the slogan of saying "we are all French or Parisian". Being Kurdish from Iraq, being a woman who opposes tyranny, nationalism, Islamism, sexism and all forms of capitalist segregation of human beings prevents me from saying that I am 'French' even if its symbolic or momentary.

Thousands of people get killed, raped, sold into slavery, beheaded, executed and oppressed for decades and we hardly see western governments mourn dead Iraqis, Syrians, Lebanese, Afghans or Kurds. It is only when the horror is brought home then the scope of brutality committed by these terrorist groups is suddenly real and the game of us the 'civilized' and them the 'savages' begin.

There is no 'civilised' or 'savage' division between us as humans, these kinds of agendas only suits both sides of this disgusting game. It is therefore not wise to join these nationalistic, exclusionist, divisive slogans such as we are all 'French' or we the civilised and them the reactionaries or 'savages'. As I feel that this will only contribute to the existing divisions and racisms and is not conducive to our struggle which is opposed to all forms of racisms. This will further divides the society between two camps which is not realistic. Societies should not be divided on the basis we are civilized and the rest are savages. We should not loose ground to these reactionary and racist divisions.

We need to remember that millions of ordinary Muslims across the region are victims of Islamic terrorism. Thanks to the west for backing dictators in Libya, Syria, Iran, Iraq, Egypt, and other

places, also for nurturing Islamist ideology under the excuse of 'this is Authentic' and belongs to the savages.

Thousands of people in our region refuses to bow for these authentic Islamist terror groups and states. Look at the resistance of women and men, old and young Kurdistan, who are up in arms against these Islamist groups.

What we need to do as progressives is to stand firm against these horrific attacks everywhere, but at the same time beware and oppose capitalist division of our societies further on the basis of 'civilised' and 'savage', 'us' and 'them', 'our values' and 'their values'. This will only provide a breeding ground for terror groups like ISIS, Boko Haram, Al-Qaida, and many others to flourish. We need unity on our own terms, on the basis of equality between all people.

Love and solidarity

Houzan Mahmoud

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