

# Unacceptable police repression in Belgium: The Brussels Police Commissioner must be dismissed

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## The Brussels Police Commissioner must be dismissed



The static vigil against fascism and Islamophobia and for the victims of the terrorist attacks that was planned to be held in front of the Stock Exchange building (the 'Bourse') in Brussels on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> April was severely disrupted by the police. Nearly a hundred people were arrested and taken to the police barracks in Etterbeek, a Southern suburb of Brussels. Customers sitting on the terrace of a neighbouring cafe, and even people inside the café, were also arrested.

"The arrests were systematic, and often brutal," said one of the LCR activists who was arrested. [1] "In the cell where I was there was at least one person who just happened to be at the Bourse for reasons unrelated to the vigil." We should add that the president of the League of Human Rights, Alexis Deswaef, was the first person arrested, when he had just arrived on the scene. He was arrested "to set an example," according to Police Commissioner Vandersmissen [2].



Those arrested at the Bourse were not demonstrating, they were just standing there. There were no banners, no placards, no megaphone, no slogans or anything whatever. Obviously Police Commissioner Vandersmissen took advantage of the police ban on demonstrations to personally direct the arrest of anyone who was there and seemed to possibly be an anti-racist. Therefore what is going on here are arrests based on the based on the (supposed) political opinions of those present, and not arrests of people "breaching the peace."

At the same time in Molenbeek thirty fascist protesters had every opportunity to march with a banner and even get as far as the Atomium! "The anti-Islam protesters assembled in the Westrand Cultural Centre in Dilbeek, a town just outside Brussel in the Province of Brabant. They then went on to Molenbeek, waving a banner and chanting slogans. After a quarter of an hour, the group

headed to the Atomium, according to the RTBF TV channel.



Most of those arrested in Molenbeek were local youth. Barely seven people linked to the extreme right were arrested. On Sunday, 27<sup>th</sup> March, the same Brussels police had left a group of 400 fascists to march to the Bourse making Nazi salutes and violently attacking those present who were commemorating the dead. Barely a dozen of these thugs were arrested. The “political” role played by the Brussels police under the authority of its boss turns out once again, to be more than clear.

Mr. Vandersmissen and his men are actively contributing to breaking up the movement for and the demonstration of multicultural commemoration and reflection that have taking place at the Bourse since the killings of 22<sup>nd</sup> March. By these actions they are favouring the option put forward by the fascist groupuscules, of withdrawal from communication, of communitarianism, of rejection of the other and Islamophobia. Which is also one of the objectives sought by the terrorists of Daesh.



“It is high time to end the ‘Je suis ...’, the candles and the White Marches ...” says a fascist group on the internet. This Saturday, 2<sup>nd</sup> April, it is the Brussels police led by Mr. Vandersmissen who is taking charge of this!

Yvan Mayeur, the PS (Parti Socialiste. French speaking social democratic party) mayor of Brussels, and Rudi Vervoort, the PS Minister President of the Brussels Region, have started to follow the lead of the MR (Mouvement Réformateur, “Reform Movement” French speaking Centre-Right party) mayor of Molenbeek. They have taken heightened and draconian security measures, which are totally useless as a reaction to the call of the extreme right to demonstrate in Molenbeek, on the other side of the Brussels canal. They are politically responsible for abuses of power committed by the “security forces” whose behaviour is worthy of a state of emergency in itself. This is dangerous and unacceptable in for a regime which claims to be democratic. The LCR expects all political and trade union forces to condemn this situation.

The arrest of bystanders and people who came to commemorate peacefully, and who, moreover, showed no indication of their participation in a demonstration, is unacceptable. It contrasts with the shameless complicity of the Brussels police last Sunday against fascist activists. In both cases, Commissioner Vandersmissen is clearly responsible. The LCR demands his removal and that light is fully brought to bear on the events of 27 March and 2 April at the Bourse.

**National leadership of the LCR, 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 2016**

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**P.S.**

\* Translation IVP. <http://www.internationalviewpoint.org/>

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## **Footnotes**

[1] Video of arrest here:

<https://www.facebook.com/agendamanifestations/videos/536809256477910/?pnref=story>

[2] Interview here:

[http://www.rtbf.be/video/detail\\_les-editos-des-decodeurs-du-03-04-2016?id=2097169](http://www.rtbf.be/video/detail_les-editos-des-decodeurs-du-03-04-2016?id=2097169)