

Statement: Paris marches against Islamophobia

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Statement by initiators of November 10, 2019 March Against Islamophobia.



The initiators of the November 10, 2019 March Against Islamophobia are overjoyed by the mobilization's huge success. Tens of thousands of people, more than 40,000, took to the streets of Paris as well in local marches in other regions. The march's accomplishment was all the greater as it took place against a veritable campaign of defamation and hate during the week leading up to it designed to sabotage the initiative, to delegitimize it, and to dissuade people from attending. The march's organizers suffered vicious attacks, including several of them receiving death threats.

This march was a show of force in the face of those who sow hatred, whether they belong to the far right, are members of the institutional political parties, or sit at the highest summits of the State.

The November 10 march clearly shows a change in the situation: it is nothing less than the largest anti-racist mobilization under the leadership of those most directly affected since the great March for Equality in 1983, and it has the support of a wide spectrum of union, civic, and trade union organizations. Heirs of this rich history, the directly-affected communities have learned much and they will not let these lessons escape them. They are, in fact, agents of their own history alongside all those who have co-organized this march or signed its manifesto. The streets of Paris were filled with tens of thousands of people of all ages, from all nationalities and faiths, rebellious citizens, experienced organizers, elected officials, celebrities, who all together share a clear message: Islamophobia is racism and it must be fought strenuously and be taken up as a "national cause" on par with the fights against other forms of discrimination. Moreover, many of the day's speeches reinforced the need to fight against all forms of racism.

However, we cannot rest because, unfortunately, the success of the march takes place in a particularly worrying context for citizens of the Muslim faith: from the attack on the Imam in the city of Brest to president Manuel Macron's call for a "society of vigilance" and "missed signals" that cast suspicion on practicing and non-practicing Muslims alike to the humiliation of a veiled woman by an elected official of the Rassemblement National party in the Regional Council of Bourgogne-Franche-Comté who demanded she remove her veil (video link) while debating a discriminatory law in the Senate to a knife attack on a young mother in front of her children. And we must not forget the most recent demonstration of anti-muslim hatred: the terrorist attack against the mosque in Bayonne.

For those who insist on criticizing us, we are proud of the November 10 march's success as a genuine demonstration of unity in the face of purveyors of hatred.

Whereas the march was a success that calls for more actions, the initiators (Madjid Messaoudene, the Anti-Islamophobia Collective of France — CCIF, le Plateforme L.e.s. Musulmans, Le Comité Adama, the New Anticapitalist Party — NPA, l'Union communiste libertaire, and anti-racist journalist Taha Bauhaus) will meet this week and contact the organizations who called for the march to consider the next steps following this great day of popular mobilizations.

P.S.

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