

If I #PrayforParis, Who Will Pray for the Victims of French Colonial Aggression?

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What has happened in Paris last weekend is surely tragic indeed. At least 129 civilians were murdered in blatant terrorist attacks on civilian areas. The mainstream media and social media response is understandable given the surprise nature of the attacks and the geographical location in which they took place: Paris, the city of love.

However, if the public truly cares about the deaths of innocent lives perhaps they should direct their anger, frustration, fear and political grievances at the French government. The sympathy, fear and unity that the public feel is not only a powerful distraction from truly awful atrocities that happen daily in other parts of the world, but distract us from France's acts of aggression in the last decade.

In 2011, France spent over [450 million euros](#) flying at least [4500 sorties](#) over Libya bombing the North African nation [back into the Middle Ages](#). The UN Security Council Resolution authorizing this military activity authorized a no-fly zone to protect civilians but in actuality [killed scores of civilians](#), [desecrated Gaddafi's armed forces](#) whilst backing, funding, supporting and providing air cover for [al-Qaeda affiliated rebels](#). Although we had been told that this military aggression was necessary to prevent Gaddafi from committing genocide on his own people, [it transpired that the public had once again been lied to](#) through an Iraq-WMD style propaganda campaign. The French-backed rebels at the time fighting to overthrow Gaddafi were [not only the same fighters that France was claiming to fight in Mali](#), but included fighters from al-Qaeda in Iraq, which today are known as ISIS.

According to the UN Human Development Index (2010), [Libya had the highest standard of living out of any country in Africa](#). Although the United States, the United Kingdom and Italy also played their part; it was a [French Rafale jet](#) that first struck Muammar Gaddafi's motorcade as he attempted to escape Sirte, before these same al-Qaeda affiliated rebels were brought in to the area by NATO commandos to execute the Libyan leader without trial. [Before this blatant war of aggression](#) disguised as a humanitarian intervention occurred, Libya was debt free, had high literacy rates and had free healthcare. The country is now in a perpetual state of civil war as two rival governments [backed by separate regional and foreign powers](#) fight for control of the country. It should be no surprise that ISIS has a major stranglehold there given that the NATO countries, [France being one of the main contributors](#), backed ISIS affiliated rebels to topple Gaddafi in the first place. According to UNICEF, [Libya now has 2 million children out of school](#). As bad as Gaddafi was, this did not happen under his leadership.

To make this matter more corrupt, the French leader at the time, Nicolas Sarkozy, was under investigation for having [received 50 million euros](#) from Gaddafi himself for Sarkozy's

election campaign. So, essentially, Gaddafi sent Sarkozy 50 million euros and Sarkozy pays him back by having him assassinated? That has to be the worst recorded friendship in history.

In 2014, France made over [8 billion euros selling arms](#). The beneficiaries of these arms include the beacon of human rights itself, Saudi Arabia, a country who not only openly executes political dissidents within its own jurisdiction and [supports violent jihadist activity](#), but is currently contravening international law by launching [a war of aggression](#) in neighbouring Yemen, the poorest country in the Arab world. [The most recent French-Saudi deal is worth \\$12 billion](#). Saudi Arabia has used their current weaponry to bomb Yemeni wedding parties and refugee camps. Together with a brutal blockade, Yemen has become Syria within half a year of bombing and faces a humanitarian catastrophe.

France is also actively bombing [Mali](#), [Somalia](#), and in December 2012 [emerged as one of the biggest contributors](#) to the rebel groups trying to topple Bashar al-Assad in Syria. Although we have heard time and time again that the US and NATO are only backing moderate rebels, this distinction between rebel groups on the ground has transpired to be false. Take for example the Western-backed Free Syrian Army (FSA), which France has actively and openly supported. The FSA's ranks have become [dominated by extremists](#) and their leaders have admitted not only that they [regularly conduct joint operations with al-Qaeda](#), but that they wish to impose sharia law on Syria. Furthermore, since 2012, Western countries have known that the majority of the weapons and arms that they have been pouring into Syria have ended [up in the arms of extremists](#) but they are still doing it.

This selective over-play by the mainstream media combined with [social media Giant Facebook's response](#) makes you wonder why the victims in France are more important than the victims in Lebanon 2 days prior, or the victims of France's colonial aggression in the Middle East and Africa. How about the [5.4 million people who have died](#) in the Democratic Republic of Congo? When will Facebook propose a flag change for the solidarity of the people who suffer these kinds of attacks daily?

In the wake of the attacks in Paris, the Mayor of New York, [Bill de Blasio](#), stated "the only answer to terrorism is to be resolute, to not let the terrorists change who we are".

But perhaps it is time to change who we are. Whether you like it or not, France has become an aggressive colonial power in the last decade. The France that was opposed to the 2003 invasion of Iraq has become a nation responsible for the death and suffering of millions of people. Let's not forget that ISIS was born out of the [US invasion and occupation of Iraq](#), meaning that France had the morally superior position back in 2003. Yet, the public now are sleep-walking and are eating up every single bit of President Hollande's response.

If Hollande truly cared about terrorism, he should stop funding it.

What has he proposed instead? To close the borders of France, to allow right-wing xenophobia take root and blame this whole issue on the refugee crisis, and to immediately [start aggressively bombing Syria](#). Apparently, France has not done enough bombing in the Middle East and North Africa. Note how quickly Hollande has referred to the Paris attacks as an [act of war](#). The perpetrators of this crime were few and were not acting on behalf of any sovereign government. Who is France now at war with? With ISIS? Given that Western leaders still [blame Assad for the rise of ISIS](#) it should not be hard to predict where France's campaign is headed. It would also be a safe bet that we will start to see an

activation of France's new democratic and transparent surveillance [laws passed earlier this year](#).

If blowing up civilians in France is a tragic and cowardly act which can generate so much fear, anger and sympathy, it cannot be realistically said that blowing up civilians in Syria in response is a realistic solution.

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