

Islamophobia in the EU: “Ethnically Profiled” At Gun Point in Brussels, Under My Own Window!

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[Letters from Brussels](#)

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Last night, at a late hour, my friend Mohamed Benhaddou was dropping me in front of my door, in my street. I step out and two police officers storm out of a police car and head towards me.

- What are you doing here? They ask in French.

They were young French speaking cops, so they did not recognize me. I say calmly, this is my street, I live here. I see the look in their eyes, and feel that they do not believe me. They ask my identity card, I give it and I ask why is that necessary, I live here, you want me to show you? They ask me to take my hands out of my pockets and to stand against the wall. Me, a father and a man who is 43 years old, who has never committed a crime in his life. I have to stand against the wall like some teenage delinquent.

- I am not standing against the wall I say in a calm tone.

One of them is already pointing his machine gun at me. I hear them calling for back up on the radio. In the meantime My friend turns the car and comes towards us. They ask him to stop the car and to stand next to me. He does that.

Two more police cars arrive with more cops with machine guns.

I see some of them looking surprised, they are Flemish and they recognize me obviously. One French speaking cop asks “what did they do”... The answer is “ they were in the street looking suspicious”... Me and my friend laugh bitterly... We were looking suspicious... I think they meant, our look is suspicious... you know the black hair and the dark eyes.

We stay 20 minutes at gun point, in my street, in front of my door, under the window where my two daughters are sleeping... At gun point!

Eventually, a cop comes to us and gives back our identity cards and say that we can go. He looks worried, I think his boss told him on the radio that he is for no reason at all ethnically profiling an activist, and a writer in a newspaper and that this is not a smart thing to do... but then again, I don't think they care... we are all suspected terrorists now... we are all ethnically profiled.... We look like these terrorists right? We look like these cartoons everybody is so keen to publish now.... Ethnically profiled at gun point in my own street, under my own window, they could have just went with me few meters to see my name on the bell and compare it with the name on my ID. I walk feeling heavy, very heavy inside, I stand in front of my door and wonder if I have the right to open it... I see blond blue eyed

people walk next to the cops, they walk not looking suspicious at all... I guess they were right.... I guess.

Update

It is already days after, it is time to look back at this and assess it without too much emotion. Or at least try. I conclude the following:

- I am still somewhat emotional about this. I think it is not normal to have your "home feeling" taken away from you this way. I always thought that my street is my street, that I cannot be just asked to go stand against the wall with a machine gun pointed at me just because I was walking towards my door, to enter my house. If this had happened in down-town somewhere, or far from my doorstep I would maybe be less moved by it than now. But this is outrageous.

- The reaction of the people could not be more divided. it ranged from outrage and indignation to outright fury! And from understanding or even supporting the cops and blaming me for not obeying, to people writing things like "they should have killed that scum". Our society is more divided than ever. Our vision of what is a state of law is also so contradictory. Some clearly believe in a police state and some others believe apartheid is normal. Differentiating between citizens is normal.

- The reaction of the police was outright shocking. They told the media that "standard procedure was applied" because I "disobeyed" and order of a cop. Meaning that it is standard procedure to intercept a person walking to his door, with no reason whatsoever, except his ethnicity. Ask him his ID card, and command him to stand facing the wall while checking who he is. Not listen to him when he says I live here, this is my house, I was just walking to my own door. And when he refuses to be treated like a criminal for no reason at all and refuses to stand facing a wall, it is standard procedure to point a machine gun at him, putting his life in danger.

- Some said that this is to be understood in the current context. That the attacks against Europe today are coming from Muslim terrorists so it is normal to ethnically profile Muslims. First of all it is absurd, because a Muslim can be also white and European. Secondly, Attacks do not come only out of Muslim extremism. Only yesterday a Muslim father was slaughtered in front of his children by a Muslim hater. Should I remind people of Breivik? of Hans Van Tamsche? of Volkert van der G.? Should I predict the next attack were Immigrants or Muslims will be victims? No Ethnically profiling people is not the solution, it is part of the problem. You can use checkpoints where you can randomly control. And of course if you see something, a certain item or behavior that is suspect, then you can control, while respecting the law and the liberties and rights of citizens. Putting citizens against the wall in front of their doorsteps at gun point for no reason at all but their racial profile is not part of security measures, it is part of terror!

- Finally, luckily that this happened to me, a public figure with access to the media, because I can open a debate about it and that debate can make the police think, and can make the people aware of the problem of ethnic profiling. This is something that is happening every day to hundreds of people in Belgium and to millions world wide. Generations are growing with this treatment and no wonder they grow to consider the

police as an enemy.

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