



TGTE STRONGLY CONDEMNS THE COWARDLY ATTACK ON FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND OPINION IN PARIS

Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam's (TGTE) reaction to the attack in Paris

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The Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam [TGTE] strongly condemns the barbaric terrorist attack on editors and cartoonists of the French satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo and French police officers. The TGTE pays its respects to the victims.

Charlie Hebdo fearlessly exercised the freedom of expression and freedom of press, the pillars of democracy. These values date back to the French Revolution that championed “liberty, equality and fraternity”. As many have pointed out Charlie Hebdo is an equal opportunity offender in targeting Christians, Jews, Muslims, etc. Its reach did not only limit to religious people but also intellectuals and artists.

The words of Charlie Hebdo editor Stephone Charbonier, who is also one of the victims, that “I prefer to die standing than in on my knees” are inspiring and reflect the best traditions of journalism around the world. The TGTE salutes Charlie Hebdo for its courageous fearless journalism. The utterance of one of the mourners that “We aren’t afraid” sends a clear message to the fanatics that their tactics of terror will not result in self-censorship.

Satire is a valuable intellectual form of political discourse that amuses as well as provokes our thinking and provides insights that cannot be made through any other means of expression. We also note that France has a long tradition of political satire starting from the era of European Enlightenment.

We also caution that this barbaric act of few fanatics should not contribute to growing Islamophobia and anti-immigrant sentiment in Europe. The condemnation of the French Islamic Council that “it is a barbaric act against democracy and freedom of press” reflects the sentiment of a majority of Muslims. We also would like to point out that the killing of 77 people in Norway in 2012 was carried out not by Islamic fanatics but by fanatics from the far right.

We the Tamils have also been subjected to extrajudicial killing and torture for exercising our freedom of expression. The Sri Lankan government through the Sixth Amendment to the Constitution has criminalized us for peacefully articulating our political demands and aspirations. During the last eight years alone 19 journalists have been assassinated by the fanatic Sri Lankan regime in their efforts to suppress freedom of expression.

However as the French President Hollande said that “Freedom will always be stronger than barbarity.” At this distressful hour the TGTE extends its heartfelt solidarity to the proud people of France.

“We are all Charlie – Je suis Charlie”

Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE)

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