

## 13/11: The 9/11 of Paris

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CHICAGO, IL, USA, November 13, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today marks the 6th anniversary of the 13th November, 2015 Paris attacks — a series of terrorist attacks that took the lives of 130 people and injured 416 more. "France has had it's 9/11. What happens next?" Marc Champion asked emphatically, (Champion 2015). The attacks were concentrated in the heart of Paris but their effects reverberated all over the world.



9/11 Memorial in Paris, on 9/11/2011, the 10th anniversary of 9/11.

The 13/11 Paris attack is looked upon as an international terrorist incident that is often compared to the 9/11 terrorist attack in the US. 9/11 has become a metaphor and potent symbol of terrorist attacks on nation-states globally.

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Flanking the Eiffel tower with two structures that look like the twin towers, and putting the phrase “We will Never Forget” on them, is a significant statement of co-memorialization.”

*Pritika Chowdhry*

There's more to these two horrific incidents than meets the eye, however. It's important for us to look into aspects of these tragedies in order for our nations to move forward in the right direction.

When France Stood by America

In order to understand the relationship between these two monumental events in our modern history, we need to go

back and remember what happened in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks.

Jacques Chirac, prime minister of France, was the first out of all foreign heads to meet with then US President George W. Bush. He surveyed ground zero within just weeks of the attack.

Chirac said, and we quote, "Today it is New York that was tragically struck, but tomorrow it may be Paris, Berlin, London" (Coffey 2021). Looking back, that statement was almost prophetic.

Just a year later, France was already in full support of the United States' mission to invade Afghanistan with the goal of overthrowing the Taliban, catching Osama Bin Laden, and ending international terrorism.

### 9/11 Memorial in Paris

France created a temporary monument to commemorate 10 years of 9/11, building a temporary monument for 9/11. The monument frames the Eiffel tower with two columns, and there's text on both columns, one in French, and the other in English, that states, "The French will never forget" (The 9/11 Lesson 2021). There's also the Luxembourg Gardens Memorial Oak Tree, which honors the victims of 9/11 and is a symbol of the friendship between the two countries (Memorial Mapping 2021).

"Visually, this is a striking act of memorialization," said Pritika Chowdhry, an artist and counter-memory expert, in an interview. "The phrase 'We will Never Forget' was a rally cry after 9/11. And in this temporary monument, the Eiffel tower is flanked by two buildings that look very much like the twin towers. Locating the twin towers right next to the Eiffel tower in this way is a significant statement of co-memorialization," Pritika continued.

### US memorializes 13/11

The 9/11 memorial in the US has made several tributes to and honored the victims of the 13th November, 2015 Paris attacks, as a show of solidarity and support for the country in times of peril and instability. "The National September 11 Memorial and Museum stands in solidarity with France, just as the French people stood united with us in support of our city and country when we needed it," said 9/11 Memorial President Joe Daniels. "In darkness we shine brightest, and



Spontaneous memorial at the Carillon and Le Petit Cambodge in Paris, France, on Nov. 16, 2015.



Badge of Operation Chammal.

together we will find strength and healing" (Coffman 2021).

The 9/11 Museum hosted another event in which Muslim children made a tribute to the French victims of 13/11 (Guido 2021). The 9/11 Memorial partnered with SoulCycle to host the third annual 9/11 Memorial Ride to Remember to memorialize the French victims of 13/11 (9/11 Memorial).

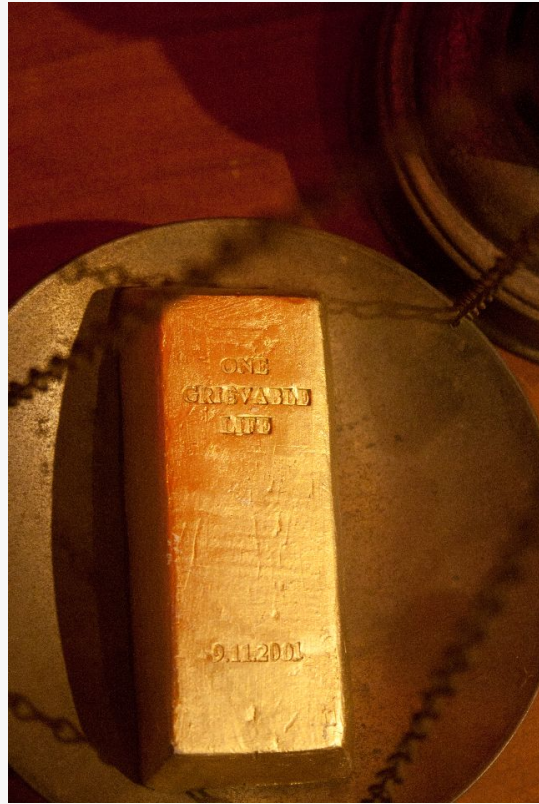
### 9/11 as a Metaphor

"I think it is interesting that the US is encouraging the connection between 9/11 and 13/11 by creating these acts of memorialization specifically at the 9/11 Memorial Museum" observed Pritika Chowdhry. "Seen together with the temporary monument to 9/11 in Paris, it is not too much of a leap to connect the dots between 9/11 and 13/11," Pritika exclaimed.

It is worth looking at 9/11 as a metaphor in a broad way. "The 9/11 attacks in the US have become the metaphor for international terrorist attacks. "9/11-style attacks" is a phrase that has gained increasing currency to describe terrorist attacks," Pritika explained.

"Think about it, if somebody tells you that a 9/11-style attack just happened in xyz city, you will know exactly what is being described. It has become a shorthand for bloody terror attacks, involving jihadis that most likely die in the attack, and they use coordinated bombings, using bombs or planes, they take hostages, or cause a large number of civilian casualties," Pritika elaborated. 9/11-style attack is a vernacular term for what Pierre Nora describes as "Monster Event" (Nora and Hildreth 1983).

### Counter-Memory of 13/11



Close-up of gold bullion bar from "Ungreivable Lives," by Pritika Chowdhry



Close-up of a piece of meat, hair shavings, and nail clippings, from "Ungreivable Lives," by Pritika Chowdhry.

Concurrent with America's War on Terror, there was France's War on Terror, and it was called Operation Chammal, started in 2014 and it is still going on. Just two days after 13/11, a large airstrike on the Islamic State was launched as part of Operation Chammal. Five days later, Abdelhamid Abaaoud, said to be the lead operative of the attacks, was killed (2021).

Operation Chammal has an official death toll of about 1,000 middle-eastern lives, and the unofficial counts are likely much higher than that number. "This is the counter-memory of 13/11, that most people do not know about," Pritika said in a heavy voice.

In the aftermath of the 13/11 Paris attacks, the country was in a 3-month state of emergency and all measures necessary were implemented to capture the perpetrators.

### The [Ungrievable Lives](#)

In her anti-memorial to 9/11, "Ungrievable Lives: Ghosts of 9/11," Pritika makes a pointed reference to the Iraqi, Afghani and middle-eastern lives lost in America's War on Terror, that are absent from the 9/11 Memorial museum (ABC 2021).

Six years on from the November 2015 Paris attacks, there have been at least 1,000 "Ungrievable" lives as a result of 13/11 (2021).

As an expert on 9/11 memorialization and counter-memory, Pritika claims, "I would contend that these 1000 middle-eastern lives that have been lost due to France's war on terror, are the ungrievable lives of 13/11."

Pritika is not afraid to be called unpatriotic by bringing up the millions of lives that were lost in the War on Terror post-9/11, or the thousands of lives that were lost in France's war on terror. "Are American and European lives the gold standard of "grievable lives?" she asks. Pritika Chowdhry has posed the same questions concerning the Madrid 2004, the London 2007, and the Mumbai 2008 terrorist attacks.

### 13/11 Museum in Paris

Paris is building a museum in Paris to memorialize the victims of terrorist attacks. The new museum is expected to be inaugurated in the Paris area by 2027. In a surprising departure from the 9/11 memorial museum, the perpetrators of the attacks will also be included in the museum (Fournier 2021).

"That is a significant move, and I am cautiously optimistic. The 9/11 Memorial museum eulogizes and glorifies the American lives lost, and it is almost unpatriotic to mention the millions of lives that have been lost in the Middle East as a direct result of 9/11," Pritika explained. "I am encouraged by Henry Rousso's approach to memorialization (Rousso 2020). Sounds to me like the 13/11 museum will be more even-handed by taking a historical approach, rather than an

ideological one."

## The Counter Memory Project

Pritika is the founder of the Counter-Memory Project (2021), the Partition Memorial Project in 2007, and she is a senior curator at the South Asia Institute in Chicago, IL. Pritika's 9/11 anti-memorial was featured in prominent news media affiliates on the 20th anniversary of 9/11 (ABC 2021) (Fox 2021) (NBC 2021) (NBC 2021). Pritika's work has also been featured in a book called "Affective Heritage and the Politics of Memory after 9/11" by Jacque Micieli-Voutsinas, Ph.D. (Micieli-Voutsinas 2021).

The Counter Memory Project undertakes intensive research on alternative modes of memorialization. The outcome can sometimes be provocative, but it sheds light on questions that have been erased from dominant discourse amid nationalist rhetoric (Counter-Memory Project 2021).

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