

Warning: Islamic Attack on French Paper Could Be Just the Beginning

At least two heavily armed gunmen killed 12 and injured others in an attack on French magazine *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris. In the latest incident of an attack inspired by Islamic extremism, gunmen targeted the magazine known to openly criticize Islam and that has been targeted in the past by Muslims angered over its content.

The gunmen fled by car and remain at large as authorities hunt for them, French President Francois Hollande announced.

Two gunmen, clad in black combat gear and ski masks, carrying Kalishnokv assault rifles, reportedly entered into the hallways of the magazine and began to open fire. According to at least one eyewitness, the gunmen were asking for people by name, *CBS News* reported.

The editor and chief cartoonists are believed to be among those who were killed in the attack. Gunfire continued on the streets outside the offices. Horrifying video of an injured police officer being executed at close range was captured by eyewitnesses from a building across the street.

Two police officers were among those killed, according to *Sky News*. The gunmen then escaped in a waiting car, before abandoning it and hijacking another in northeast Paris, the *Guardian* reported.

Eyewitnesses reported the gunmen called out, "We've avenged the honor of the prophet!" and "Allahu Akbar" [God is Great]. Another witness said, "The gunmen spoke French without any accent," *Fox News* reported.

Charlie Hebdo is a satirical magazine that is known for its open critique of social issues, including Islam. In 2011, the magazine was fire-bombed after it announced that the prophet Muhammad would be the “editor-in-chief” for its up-coming issue. In 2012, it again openly addressed Islam and Muhammad and again came under threats of violence, with France closing embassies around the world out of fear of reprisal attacks.

“This is an act of exceptional barbarism,” French President Francois Hollande said at the scene shortly following the attacks. He also announced that the highest security measures were being taken to prevent a follow-up attack and to hunt down those responsible for the attack.

No one has yet claimed responsibility for the attacks, but the most recent tweet sent from the magazine’s Twitter account less than an hour before the attack was a cartoon image of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, and purported caliph of the “Islamic State.”

In a September 2014 speech, ISIS Spokesman Abu Mohammad al-Adnani called for attacks by Muslim supporters on Europeans and Americans. In an ominous foretelling of today’s attack, he said, “Strike their police, security, [...] If you can kill a disbelieving American or European—especially the spiteful and filthy French—[...] kill him in any manner or way, however it may be. Do not ask for anyone’s advice and do not seek anyone’s verdict. Kill the disbeliever whether he is civilian or military.”

Islamic extremism is the driving cause of terrorist attacks like what struck the heart of Paris today, and is the driving force behind Christian persecution around the world. From the recent string of attacks on Christians in Libya, the murderous actions of ISIS in Iraq and Syria, or Boko Haram in Nigeria, all are driven by a radical interpretation of Islam that calls for its promotion by violence.

"Today's attack on a French magazine once again puts the dangers of radical Islam back into the headlines. While we grieve with those who've lost loved ones today on the streets of Paris, these kinds of attacks from Islamic extremists are the daily reality for Christians around the world and for those who are willing to criticize its teachings," said Jeff King, president of International Christian Concern and author of *Islam Uncensored*.

"It is imperative that the world address the dangers of Islamic extremism and speak out in protest of the radical ideology promoting these kinds of heinous acts. These attacks will not remain confined to faraway places, but in all probability will continue to strike here at home."