



## **Offensive Caricatures and Freedom of Speech and Charlie Hebdo: A Discourse Analysis of Turkish News Agency**

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### **Abstract**

Today, there is no doubt that the media has cast its deep imprints upon human life. Media touches every aspect of life in shaping the views of people. Still, the media should be responsible for their coverage, and their accountability is intensified where ethnicity, race, and religion are concerned. The French magazine Charlie Hebdo issued offensive caricatures of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), replicated under the pretext of freedom of speech. The debate on freedom of expression, self-censorship, and democratic values has been broad and lively in the aftermath of Charlie Hebdo's reprinting of offensive caricatures. The iconoclastic French publication attempted a loud and defiant declaration in defense of free speech and expression. Some others have said that Charlie Hebdo is needlessly reopening old wounds through its aggressive actions. In this study, the researcher examines an article and blogs of Anadolu Agency related to the issue. The finding shows that the reprinting of caricatures by Charlie Hebdo participates in the racial promotion. And offensive campaigns have hurt the feelings of more than 1.5 billion Muslims across the globe. Freedom of speech is of "great significance" and must be included in a "constructive manner" following the principle for peaceful coexistence and comprehension between religions.

**Disciplinary:** Journalism and Mass Communication, Peace and War Studies, Terrorism Study, Religion and Believe Study, Anger and Hatred Study.

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# 1 Introduction

In the modern world, the role of media cannot be underestimated, and in the game of power relations within a social formation, the media has a strategic position. Media performs an essential role as a source of information in society and as a "watchdog" or scrutineer. Media can choose the story they think is necessary or exciting, so the media is often seen as a public opinion influencer. While performing such an important role, the media becomes more accountable and responsible, especially when theological, racial, and cultural problems are discussed, the media responsibility becomes furthermore significant. Freedom of speech and expression is a fundamental right of media all over the world. No doubt, freedom of expression, egalitarianism, and autonomy are the western values that allow freedom of speech to the Media and every citizen. " The right to freedom of expression, however, is not absolute and is limited by the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which provides for the security of public order, health, and morality, and no one in the name of freedom of speech or the press, publish anything offensive and against the reverence of any religious or ethnic group." The ironic French weekly Charlie Hebdo republished offensive caricatures, which triggered a fatal attack in 2015. At that time, millions of people united under the popular banner 'Je Suis Charlie'-I am Charlie, to express their opposition to terrorist acts and their solidarity with the victims of the attacks [1]. The shooting left the rest of the Western world and France in shock, causing 12 people to die in terror. A day before the planned start of the proceedings, the cartoons were reprinted the day before the expected start of the trial of 14 alleged accomplices accused of supplying the two terrorists with logistical and material support. In a standoff outside Paris on 9 January 2015, French gendarmes killed the Kouachi brothers themselves. Many say that the iconoclastic French publication attempted to make a loud and defiant statement advocating free speech and expression by republishing the cartoons the day before the landmark trial [2]. Some others have said that Charlie Hebdo reopens old wounds needlessly [3]. These cartoons were initially printed in the Danish News Paper Jyllands-Posten in 2005 and republished in Charlie Hebdo and other Western newspapers in 2006. With the reappearance of caricatures considered offensive by many, France experiencing agitation against racism and calling for reflection in its culture, past and present, on the treatment of minorities. The improper adjustment made by the French journal, repeated on the pretext of freedom of expression, hurt millions of people's monotheistic feelings. The Muslim countries and media condemned the republication of caricatures by a notorious French magazine. Charlie Hebdo 's inflammatory change, a left-wing French journal notorious for printing anti-Islamic substance, has ignited general outrage and anger throughout the Islamic world [4]. These acts are provocative, reckless, and counter to the ideals and values of democracy. Moreover, these events are more likely to disassemble religious communities worldwide in the COVID-19 pandemic, bringing an extra burden to the world. This study presents a brief overview of the Charlie Hebdo, offensive caricature, and freedom of speech, giving an effort to account responsibly with religious sensitivity and respect for the continuing debate on absolute Freedom and Freedom of expression. Henceforward, the

researchers are also creating awareness about the real meaning of freedom of expression and identifying the significant position of The Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) in the heart of Muslim umma.

## 1.1 Charlie Hebdo

Charlie Hebdo is an ironic weekly sympathizing with political agendas of the far-left, self-described secular, atheistic, and anti-racist newspaper, which is renowned for its cartoons that ridicule, which impend all philosophies and faiths, containing the left-wing festivities [5]. While there is a limited circulation of the Charlie Hebdo magazine, only 45,000-60,000 copies symbolize press freedom in French culture. It can be set in a very long tradition of comic strips and satire in France, as a kind of humor that is dumb and mean ("bête et méchant") and prompts the state. The fortnightly was published in 1970; the magazine was banned after its predecessor, Hara-Kiri, Who became known for mocking the death of former president Charles de Gaulle in the 1960s. The name refers to the character from the Peanuts comic books, Charlie Brown, and the Hebdo is a brief (weekly) hebdomadary version. From 1981 to 1992, due to a shortage of resources and a limited number of subscribers, Charlie Hebdo did not print any magazines. In 1992, it rose from its ashes and began its journey like never disappeared. The magazine started to concentrate more on Islam and radical Islamism after 9/11. The magazine has become popular in 2006 due to the Danish paper Jyllands-Posten republishing various Prophet Muhammad cartoons, which had led to demonstrations among Muslims around the world. That has contributed to multiple French Muslim groups denouncing the magazine ("Great Mosque of Paris" and "Union of Islamic Organizations of France"). The judge, who believed the cartoons related to radical Islam and not Islam, rejected the lawsuit. Charlie Hebdo went on to print the Prophet Muhammad's comics and was blamed for it [6].

## 1.2 Muslim Believes and Their Heartiest Love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

Islam is estimated to be the second-largest faith, accounting for about 20 % of the global population. It is also the fastest-growing religion. Muslims follow the teachings of Muhammad (PBUH), their Prophet. He was born in a Makkah in 571 CE and was a messenger of Allah, who brought the Quran (The Islamic holy book). Loving the Prophet (PBUH) is a natural feeling that flows within the heart of believers. This love is considered a virtue and condition for every believer, as mentioned in the Hadith:

*"None of you truly believe (complete faith) until I am more beloved to him than his father, his son, and all of humankind."*

A profound love brings the lover to venerate the beloved. It causes the lover also to love what is dear to the beloved. This love occupies the mind and drives us in the direction of what we love. If we reflect on this, we would certainly be able to relate our love for the Prophet s.a.w. Loving the Prophet leads us to observe his beautiful teachings. The Prophet s.a.w have made this clear in a hadith[7]:

*"Whoever actively observes my Sunnah, then he has loved me. And whoever loves me, shall be with me in Paradise".*

### 1.3 Significance of Anadolu Agency

The Anadolu Agency was founded a century ago by Mustafa Kamal Atatürk and Yunus Nadi Abalıođlu on 6 April 1920. The headquarters are in Cankaya, Ankara, Turkey. Its factual reporting for the highest ranking in Turkey is always correct. It determinedly has faith in the freedom of the press and impartiality. It is the leading news agency of Turkey with the most extensive online readership worldwide [8].

### 1.4 Media Content as Narrative

In a well-ordered and predictable way, much of the media content tells a story about something. The highest critical role assigned to the narrative is to simplification the interpretation of the context of the news story. This purpose is done in two ways: through the coordination of actions and events in a logical sequence (chronological, causal) or concluded the implementation of individuals and locations that are frequent and rational. The narrative helps to explain the logic behind human actions, while scattered observations form a cohesive whole [9].

This study explores the effects of Charlie hebdo caricatures on the minds of Muslims. What kind of agency shows the stances on the subject issue. What kind of physical and mental stress faces by the Muslim. When this caricature is published, to what degree they are incorporated in media. This research analysis is beneficial for how media should be responsible for their coverage. Their accountability is intensified where ethnicity, race, and religion are concerned.

## 2 Literature Review

This work discusses the offensive caricatures to understand the issue through existing, unpublished literature and relevant literature on this topic.

McBride has claimed in a podcast on a media information website that the cartoon controversy may be, freedom of speech & expression issue, an Intolerance question, or ethnocentricity. "Political cartoons are the visual equivalent" of an influential editorial or column, said Bob Steel, a researcher on journalism principles. "They should speak out clearly. They should call out and threaten. Those who see the political cartoon should provoke some form of emotional reaction[10]. Another researcher, Keith Woods, dean of the Poynter Institute's Faculty of Journalistic Ethics, said many journalists are ignorant and do not know the religious issues of portraying the Prophet Muhammad at its heart, and then making a knowledgeable optimal. He enquired why reproduction of the blasphemous cartoons is compulsory: "What ensures we recognize the issue of portraying all of Prophet Muhammad that might make this a problem for us today? Roy Peter Clark, a senior scholar at the University, said journalists need to make an informed choice in matters such as the cartoon controversy: " On the one hand, to be completely trained, we want to be able to represent the origins of this great anger and chaos, and on the other hand, replicating their ad cartoon images will make the problem worse. And then we want to know the truth of this conflict, we want to minimize the damage, and at the same time, it's very different in these aspects [Ibid10]. Shamsi notes that the replication of negative caricatures of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) offends Muslims. And it is much more disgusting than the initial republishing

of such sacrilegious caricatures [11]. Mahlmann adds that "religious freedom is guaranteed because of the value of religious belief and respect for everyone who believes. Accordingly, any religious expression that is offensive would be 'hate speech' [12]. Tariq wrote what we now need from Muslims on both sides, and the West was an "understanding that this is not a legal issue or a question of rights." Free speech and freedom of expression are a privilege that is constitutionally protected in Europe and the West; no one should contest this and against it. But at a similar time, there should be an understanding and a face-to-face reality that immigrants have transformed the picture of European society and the group from different cultures. Because of that, the Muslim community and other religions living in Europe should be alert to this [13]. Mamdani states that everybody believes that the Danish cartoons are belligerent, not just representing the Holy Prophet in a human form. Their meaning is at the core of illegality and offense. This message goes further away from Muslims' demonization towards a direct physical attack on Muslims in the West. It is painfully evident that the problem of Danish cartoons is a manifestation of Islamophobia[14]. David Canning, the editor of the Durban-based The Mercury (part of the Independent Newspaper group), said: "I am deeply religious and sensitive to other people's religious feelings, and would probably not have used the cartoons." Canning's moral knowledge means he knows his readers' impact on publishing such content as offensive cartoons. He must have considered the negative feeling that there would be no readers to publish such offensive illustrations[15]. Haffajee notes that cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad did not intend to offend people in her studies. "The cartoon was used as an analogy to show our readers what sparked an international furor [16]. Tariq Ramadan argues this concerning the blasphemous cartoons; governments in the Muslim countries were just too happy to demonstrate their devotion to Islam, especially in the Middle East[17]. Muslims worldwide demonstrated their frustration and emotions by violent marches, burning Danish flags and embassies, boycotting Danish goods and products, and boycotting all the media that chose to screen blasphemous cartoons. That is both a massive loss of life and tremendous property damage (Jyllands-Posten)[18]. Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, head of the International Movement for a Just Planet, wrote: "What is the cartoon debate? "There is a significant reason for Islam's demonization. "It is the disgraceful result of September 11 and the war on terror against Muslims and their overt media stereotyping as a community prone to violence." She adds that TV photos and media expression of opinion have often strengthened and promoted the religion's misleading association with terrorism. She said the West is equating East oil with money, and money is equivalent to strength. Therefore, it is no accident that where since the early 1970s, Muslim countries in the world have begun exercising control over their oil, Arabs and Muslims have been vilified in the mainstream Western press [19]. Peterson argues that the medium, the structure, and logic of the news genre is based on a paradigm that demands that all sides be portrayed of an issue or dispute that, on the one hand, suits beautifully with the narrative and thoughts of the class of society and, on the additional, depend on a presentation of news that represents or reverberates with the views of the audience and the media. In these terms, in an overview of the Boston Globe's

coverage of the offensive cartoons dispute, Peterson argued that readers are invited to see events after the cartoons have been released as a single world case in which legitimate Western and European actors engaged in equal, liberal, and democratic practice are faced with an undifferentiated violent 'Muslim' response from the world whose security [20]. Nabi states that a group of European observers appealed the liberty of speech and expression as a camouflage for the neutral form of racial maliciousness [21]. Jorgensen wrote that the situation was worsening rapidly and becoming worse and that on January 1, 2006, the Prime Minister of Denmark, Mr. Rasmussen, condemned that situation [22]. In his report, Hassan argues that this weak reconciliation action was rapidly suppressed on January 6, when Viborg's local community prosecuting attorney stopped investigating the blasphemous cartoons. Some of the Muslims in Denmark also thought that Danish Prime Minister Rasmussen had "prejudiced the investigation by taking a strong position against the investigation"[23].

### 3 Research Methodology

This research employed the quantitative and qualitative discourse analysis of Anadolu Agency (a renowned Turkey news agency) about republished Offensive Caricatures in the satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo. This paper analyzes all online published articles, and blogs in Anadolu Agency related to republished offensive caricatures from 1-30 September 2020 issues, i.e., "Offensive Caricatures, Freedom of Speech and Charlie Hebdo: A Discourse Analysis Turkish News Agency". Researchers proceed by analyzing, in turn, the material components published by the Anadolu Agency and the textual elements, then compile this and consider how the Anadolu Agency and the textual are interwoven in the construction of a situated discourse. The study population was online articles and blogs in which the words: offensive caricatures, Charlie Hebdo, freedom of speech, religion, global reaction, sacrilegious caricatures, mocking the Prophet Mohammad, anti-Islamic material, contempt for respected Islamic figures, controversial cartoons, Islamophobia.

### 4 Data Collection

Figure 1 and Table 1 shows the date wise treatment of the Anadolu Agency on research issues. According to the results, the Anadolu Agency published a total of 19 (100%) online articles and blogs during the selected period of 1-30 September 2020.

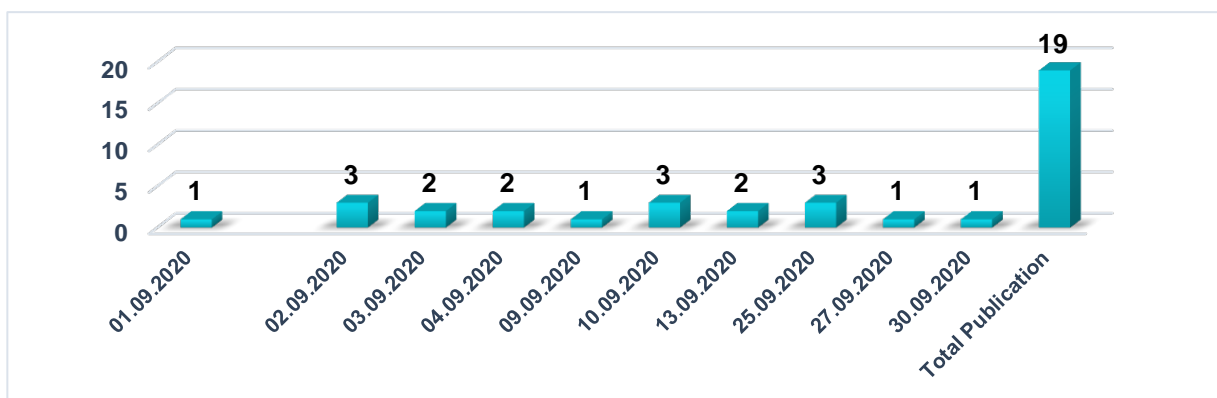


Figure 2: Anadolu Agency Date Wise Articles and Blogs Publication.

**Table 1: Data Collection Tool (Coding Sheet)**

Sr. No	Publication Date	Article and Blogs Title
1	01.09.2020	France: Charlie Hebdo reprints inflammatory cartoon
2	02.09.2020	France: Trial opens for 14 in Charlie Hebdo attacks
3	02.09.2020	Pakistan blasts magazine reprinting Muhammad cartoons
4	02.09.2020	Turkey slams Charlie Hebdo for anti-Muslim cartoons
5	03.09.2020	Malaysian group decries reprinting of Muhammad cartoons
6	03.09.2020	Muslim scholars slam reprinting of anti-Islam cartoons
7	04.09.2020	Iran condemns sacrilegious cartoons by French magazine
8	04.09.2020	Indonesia denounces provocative acts against Muslims
9	09.09.2020	Analysis - Paradox of France's Macron between chiding reporter and defending free speech
10	10.09.2020	Pakistan aims to fight Islamophobia via Quran education
11	10.09.2020	Sweden: Racist group burns the holy Quran
12	10.09.2020	Turkey condemns 'disrespect' against Quran in Sweden
13	13.09.2020	Muslim scholars union condemns Quran burning in Sweden
14	13.09.2020	Christian Council of Sweden condemns Quran burning
15	25.09.2020	Pakistan urges UN to act for resolution of Kashmir, Palestine issues
16	25.09.2020	4 injured in Paris knife attack, one suspect arrested
17	25.09.2020	France opens terrorism probe over Paris knife attack
18	27.09.2020	Knife attacks in Paris: 9 remain in custody
19	30.09.2020	Pakistan urges UN to mount efforts against Islamophobia

## 5 Discussion and Analysis

### 5.1 Responding to the Republished Offensive Caricatures: A Voice of Muslims Across the Globe

Iran strongly denounced a notorious French magazine's republication of sacrilegious caricatures mocking the Prophet Mohammad. Charlie Hebdo, a French left-wing magazine notorious for its publication of anti-Islamic material, the inflammatory move has attracted extensive anger and resentment in the Muslim world. In a statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran said that irreverence to the Prophet of Islam or other divine prophets is "unacceptable" to Muslims worldwide. Saeed Khatibzadeh, the spokesman for the foreign ministry, said, "The aggressive move of the French journal, which was repeated on the pretext of freedom of speech, hurt the feelings of the monotheists." Following the principle of peaceful coexistence and comprehension between religions, freedom of speech has a "great importance" and must be used in a "constructive way." "Their disdain for Islamic ideals and contempt for respected Islamic figures motivate such acts" [24]. The French satirical journal, Charlie Hebdo, has been condemned by a leading global group of Muslim scholars for republishing provocative cartoons of Islam's Prophet Muhammad. In an Arabic address, Ali al-Qaradaghi, Secretary-General of the International Union of Muslim Scholars, said that there is no moral and honor for those who mock Prophet Muhammad, who teaches goodness, justice, and equality. Al-Qaradaghi said that Muslims would not respond to such ignorance with ignorance, stressing that neither the magazine nor its executives would ever be able to understand the exalted role of the Prophet Muhammad. He said that Muslims follow good and righteous ideas, not bad, and think that all religious practices are sanctified [25]. Indonesia strongly condemned the burning of the Quran during a rally in Sweden and the French magazine Charlie Hebdo's republication of insulting the Prophet Muhammad's caricatures. Besides, these events are more likely to disunite religious groups worldwide, which brings an additional

burden to the world amid the COVID-19 pandemic [26]. "These actions are provocative, reckless, and counter to the ideals and values of democracy." "The move was described as" deliberate coercion "and" an uncivilized operation, "by Mohamad Azmi Abdul Hamid, president of the Malaysian Consultative Council of Islamic Organisations (MAPIM)." In the name of what is seen as liberty under France's law, it wants to create tensions between religious groups," he expressed the Anadolu Agency on Thursday, September 3. The publication appears to be part of a hate campaign aimed at religions' sanctity, particularly Islam, he said and warns that announcing a Muslim showdown was equivalent to the jump. "We record our unambiguous opposition to French law, which does not exclude such attacks on religions," Hamid said. The alliance urged the French government to prevent controversial cartoons from being published, arguing that this use of freedom of expression caused tensions between cultures and had an impact outside France's borders [27]. Foreign Ministry spokesman Hami Aksoy said that this insult and disrespect towards Muslims could not be justified by claiming freedom of the press, art, or speech. It is also "unacceptable," for the French authorities, in particular President Emmanuel Macron, to ignore the incident under the pretext of freedom of expression Aksoy expressed. "Those who identify themselves as democratic and liberal, on every occasion, serve the new generation of fascists and racists in France and Europe by using such racist and discriminatory steps that strengthen the anti-Islam regime." Aksoy said that this "pathetic mindset," which seeks to alienate millions of Muslims living in peace, deals a blow to social cohesion, unity, and equality every day. "Those who do this unwittingly should be mindful that social harmony is being affected," he said. Turkey has called on politicians and European allies to take a strong stand against such rising attacks and negative Muslim feelings [28]. "The decision by the French magazine, Charlie Hebdo, to republish Pakistan firmly condemns highly insulting caricatures of the Holy Prophet Muhammad(PBUH)," On Twitter, Foreign's ministry wrote [Ibid3] (IndianExpress.com,2020) Such an intentional act to damage the feelings of billions of Muslims cannot be justified as an exercise in freedom of the press or freedom of speech. These activities challenge global hopes for peaceful coexistence and social and inter-faith harmony. The president of the French Muslim Worship Council (CFCM), Mohammed Moussaoui, urged individuals to ignore the cartoons. Everyone is also granted the right to caricature, the right to love, or not to love (caricatures). Nothing can avoid reasoning violence,' AFP was told by Moussaoui [Ibid3]. On Friday, # ShameOnCharlieHebdo trended in India, with many Indian Muslims joining the criticism chorus after French President Macron defended the "right to commit blasphemy" of Hebdo and France [29]. People from several countries, including France, Nigeria, Indonesia, Pakistan, Iran, Chechnya, and Yemen, took to the streets to agitate against the Prophet Muhammad's cartoons. Every kind of visual representation of the Prophet is forbidden in Islam and is considered blasphemous. In Pakistan, in particular, thousands of people marched in anti-France protests led by the hardline party Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan, which has staged many protests against alleged blasphemy past [30]. Pakistan's foreign ministry also denounced the move and tweeted, "# Pakistan firmly condemns the decision of the French magazine, Charlie Hebdo, to



republish the Holy Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) highly offensive caricature" [31]. After republishing notorious cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad, Al-Qaeda threatened the French satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo with a replay of the massacre of its workers in 2015, and the SITE Observatory said on Friday [32]. Al-Qaeda cautioned in its One Ummah publication that Charlie Hebdo would be mistaken if he claimed that the 2015 attack was a "one-off" after the magazine printed the "contemptible caricatures" in a defiant topic that marked the beginning of the Paris trial of alleged assault accomplices. The comments came in the English version of the journal Al-Qaeda, which purported to mark the anniversary of the terrorist network's attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001.

## **6 Defending Reprint the Caricatures, Free Speech & France**

"In the new issue, the editors of Charlie Hebdo wrote that without showing readers and people the "bits of indication," it remained "unacceptable to start the trial." It would have amounted to "political or journalistic weakness," they added, not republishing the caricatures. Do we want to live in a country that claims to be a wonderful free, liberal democracy that does not confirm its deepest beliefs at the same time? Fifty-nine percent of respondents said the magazine was "right" to print cartoons in the name of free speech, up from 38 percent in 2006, according to IFOP, a polling firm, and the Jean Jaurès Foundation, a French think tank. François Kraus, a political analyst who oversaw the research, said, "It shows that the French are finally ruling in favor of the newspaper for having dared to publish these cartoons." "An editorial accompanying the cartoons, scheduled to come out on Wednesday to coincide with the beginning of an attack-related trial, said the staff of the paper" will never lie down" [33]. In its editorial on the reprints of offensive caricatures, the paper said the sketches "belong to history. History can not be rewritten or deleted." Some may view the decision to republish the cartoons as a defiant move in defense of free speech. But some will see it as a resurrected provocation by a newspaper with its satirical attacks on religion that has long courted controversy [Ibid2]. Their republication comes as French Minister of the Interior Gerald Darmanin announced that the threat of terror "remains extremely high in the country" and vowed to fight terrorism "without let-up." "The editorial team wrote that they thought that republishing the cartoons as the trial opened was" necessary "and had previously declined to do so because they wanted" a justification that has meaning. On Sunday, former French President François Hollande argued that extremists had not divided the country's population. "Mr. Hollande, who was president at the time, said they" failed "to stoke religious or racial hatred in their bid because the reaction of the population" was remarkable " [Ibid30]. "We're never going to lie down. We will not ever give up," editor Laurent Riss "Sourisseau wrote in a piece that will be published in print on Wednesday 2 September to accompany the front cover." For President Emmanuel Macron, ignoring the incident under the pretext of freedom of speech is indeed "unacceptable". "At every opportunity, those who define themselves as democratic and liberal serve the new generation of fascists and racists in France and Europe by using such racist and discriminatory measures that increase anti-Islamism and xenophobia"[34]. Charlie Hebdo republished on his cover. On Tuesday,

President Emmanuel Macron refused to comment on Charlie Hebdo 's decision to reprint the cartoons, saying it was not his place as an executive to comment on a free speech issue. "There is the freedom to blaspheme in France, which is linked to freedom of conscience. I am here to protect all these freedoms." Publishing director Laurent 'Riss' Sourisseau, who suffered injuries in the 2015 attack, wrote in an editorial note accompanying the new version, "We will never give up. Emmanuel Macron denounced in his country what he called" Islamic separatism "and those who pursue French citizenship without acknowledging the" right of France to commit blasphemy. The hate that hit us is still there and since 2015, it has taken time to mutate, to change its shape, to go unnoticed, and quietly continue its violent jihad.

## 7 Conclusion

The republication of controversial cartoons has been interpreted as evidence of increasing Islamophobia because of the well-developed democracy in the West and France. It is impossible to justify this deliberate act of offending millions of Muslims' feelings as an exercise in freedom of the press or speech. The global aspirations for peaceful coexistence as well as social and inter-faith harmony are compromised by these actions. Sadly, Western media and notably Staricle magazine Charlie Hebdo misrepresented Islam and Muslims over the years. Beyond question, Western media, particularly after the 9/11 event, play a crucial role in Islamophobia and the world's understanding of Islam and Muslims. And the French magazine's republication of the blasphemous caricatures was a highly offensive act, and it puts more oil on the flames. The Western media should realize that the publication of blasphemous caricatures has hit Muslims around the world very hard (deep hurt and widespread indignation). The right to blasphemy is not one of the press's protections; however, open it may be, and it should not be seen as anything but a deliberate insult to the extensive reproduction of blasphemous content. Understandably, all Muslims' reaction was massive, and Muslim governments expressed their concern to the notorious magazine and French governments about the publication of offensive caricatures. There is no question that the media play a significant role in influencing the attitudes of people. Still, the media should be accountable for their coverage, and their responsibility becomes greater where the issue of ethnicity, race, and religion. There is a strong need for consultation between the Muslim and French governments and the Charlie Hebdo administration on this offensive caricature problem to address it through proper negotiations and discussions.

- Given the presence of extreme Islamism and caregiving against the Holy Prophet Muhammad ( PBUH), media practitioners need to practice peace journalism to help strengthen interfaith pluralism. That will facilitate the establishment of harmony rather than the development of diversity.
- If the freedom of expression exists, then we Muslims are also free to answer in the media, take part in peaceful protests, or take legal action seeking punishment or compensation.

## 8 Availability of Data and Material

Information can be made available by contacting the corresponding author.

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