

Girl who sparked online hate campaign ending in French teacher's beheading 'never attended class'

From the [grisly beheading of a French teacher](#) has admitted to lying and spreading false claims about him, her lawyer said on Monday.

The unnamed girl had claimed the teacher, Samuel Paty, who was beheaded by an Islamic extremist in the street in October last year, had asked Muslims to leave the class when he showed cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed during a debate on free speech and blasphemy.

The cartoons had previously been published in the Charlie Hebdo magazine.

The girl's father later filed a legal complaint and posted his allegations online. That prompted a social media hate campaign that ended an 18-year-old Chechen refugee tracking down Mr Paty in the town of Conflans-Sainte-Honorine, northwest of Paris.

On Monday, a lawyer for the girl, who had a history of disciplinary problems, confirmed she in fact never attended the class and was away on sick leave at the time. She has since been charged with slander, while her father and another man, an Islamist preacher and campaigner, have been charged with "complicity in murder" over the killing.

Mr Paty's murderer, who was shot dead by police shortly after the attack was in contact with someone in Syria who is a member of a jihadist group just before the murder, according to Le Parisien.

Meanwhile the French government warned today that a student poster campaign accusing two university professors of "Islamophobia" could put the lecturers' "lives in danger". Students slapped the posters on the walls of a leading political science faculty in Grenoble last Friday, likening the professors to "fascists" and naming them both in a move backed by the main UNEF student union.

On Monday, junior interior minister Marlène Schiappa said: "These are really odious acts after what happened with the decapitation of Samuel Paty who was smeared in the same way on social networks." Such action "very clearly puts their lives in danger", she told BFM TV.

Sciences Po university, which runs the Institute of Political Studies in Grenoble in eastern France, also condemned the campaign on Monday and has filed a criminal complaint. An investigation has been opened into slander and property damage after the posters saying "Fascists in our lecture halls. Islamophobia kills" were found on the walls of the faculty.