

In Defense of Tariq Ramadan, Hatem Bazian Tries to Write English

by Hugh Fitzgerald



[Hatem Bazian](#), April 15, 2018:

Professor Tariq Ramadan's case and the solitary confinement he faces in a French prison sheds

Sic for "shed"

some light on the differentiated

Sic for "discriminatory"

treatment Muslim subjects receive in the legal system

Sic for "criminal justice systems"

of the Western states. In this article, I am not defending or making any arguments for the charges levied against Professor

Ramadan – they are serious and require full and fair examination by the authorities and the courts as well as more responsible coverage from the media. The cause [sic] of sexual harassment is rightly

Sic for “Cases of sexual harassment are now rightly”

receiving a much needed and overdue global attention. What is important is to make sure that the scales of justice in pursuit

Sic – “scales of justice” do not go in “pursuit” of anything

of a needed legal, social and political corrective does not lead to undermining the rights and standing of a similarly

“Similarly” to whom? what are those two communities?

demonized community.

This sentence, like so many in this article, is not English. Many of Bazian’s sentences don’t even try to be in English.

Demanding justice, fairness, and transparency is a universally supported set of principles,

“Demanding justice,” etc. is not “a set of principles”

which are critical in the case of Professor Ramadan. The guilt or innocence after a transparent legal process and a trial are what all parties to this painful case deserve and expect.

“All parties” do not “deserve and expect...guilt or innocence,” but rather, “all parties deserve a finding of guilt or innocence after a transparent legal process and a trial.”

Muslim subjects

Sic for 'Muslims'

have become accustomed to an abnormal

Sic for "to unfair"

legal treatment from the moment they are arrested and charged, and even throughout the court proceedings. This unfair treatment is becoming the normal

Sic for "becoming the norm"

no matter whether the charges are civil or criminal for both civil and criminal trials

Sic – cut the pleonastic "for both civil and criminal trials"

for and is for sure the case

Sic for "and this is especially the case"

when the charges are remotely related [are related] to terrorism. I do think that the initial attempts to defend Professor Ramadan were wrong in disparaging the women who levied the charges. These short-sighted attacks on the women who came forth caused a mix-up and confusion

Sic for "resulted in a certain tension"

between the demands on the French legal system to treat Professor Ramadan fairly and the attempts to win public debates and alter the demonized

Sic for "demonizing"

media coverage of the Muslim subject. These two

Sic – for which “two”? “Demands” and “attempts”? Or “attempts” to “win public debates” and “alter the demonizing media”? It’s unclear, like so much else in this comical piece.

should be separated and I am not sure how this should be done but it should be part of any serious approach.

Now you tell us that you are “not sure how this should be done”?!

A basic analysis [sic for “An analysis”] of the [sic – strike “the”] French media coverage of this case points to the problematic

Sic for “disturbing”

nature of the coverage and the preponderance

Sic for “propensity”

of journalists to pile-on and sentence Professor Ramadan before even the end of the investigation and before the court proceedings have started.

Where, in what article, or on what television or radio show, has any French journalist declared Ramadan to be guilty?

What is expected of the French State and its legal system to adhere to the due process of the law

To make a modicum of sense, this should read: The French State should respect due process of law

and accord Professor Ramadan the same rights that are granted to any non-Muslim, non-Arab and non-Maghrabi person in the

country. Indeed, the legal process in France is tainted by the differentiated

Sic for “discriminatory” – this is the second time this word has been used, still incorrectly

treatment accorded to all “non-French to the source”

This is a confusing mistranslation of the phrase “pas français de souche,” meaning not French by birth, going back generations on French soil, but instead, recently made “French” through immigration and naturalization, within the last few generations.

populations that face systemic discrimination at all levels of society, including foremost

Sic for “and especially”

in the legal system.

This charge of unfair and discriminatory treatment of non-French is made again and again, but no evidence is offered.

The treatment is similar to the one faced by the African-Americans in the U.S.

Now? During the Jim Crow days? During the time of slavery?

entrenched racism dating from the colonial period is ever present in France. Let’s be clear – Professor Ramadan travelled willingly to France and surrendered to the police authorities in order to face the charges levied against him and then to prepare for the legal proceedings.

Ramadan could hardly have done otherwise if he wanted to keep

his post as a professor at Oxford. A refusal to go to France to face charges would have been devastating. And, as an arrogant past master in deception, Ramadan thought he'd be able to emerge unscathed. He'd gotten away, after all, with so much for so long. He wasn't expecting the determination of the three French Muslim accusers to see their cases against him – despite the threats made to them – through to the end.

The French authorities moved to arrest Professor Ramadan, refused to grant bail, placed him in solitary confinement, and limited family visitation

Sic for “visitation rights”

and access to proper medical care, which collectively point to the differentiated

Misused for the third time to mean “discriminatory”

treatment reserved for the Arab [sic for “for Arab”] and Muslim subjects.

Actually, the medical treatment he is now receiving is superior to that he would have received in normal circumstances, for the French government is determined to make sure neither Ramadan, nor his lawyers, can complain of substandard treatment.

In reality, the French authorities are treating this case as if it was one of a terrorist who was caught “red-handed” with a ticking bomb in his possession.

No, this is hyperbolic nonsense. The French authorities have not treated this case as anything but what it is: multiple charges have been made by three different French women, accusing Ramadan of rape, sexual violence, and threats. Similar accusations have been made by two other women, one in

Switzerland and one in the United States. All five of the women, Hatem Bazian carefully refrains from noting, are Muslims.

Maybe the French prosecutor's office needs to be reminded of the type of case under consideration and that Professor Ramadan is not being charged under the terrorism laws.

This is a cheap charge by Hatem Bazian, who knows that the French magistrates have behaved scrupulously in sticking to the facts of the rape cases. The only person to have dragged in the word "terrorism" in order to obliquely accuse the French court of bias is Hatem Bazian himself.

The entanglements' of the French state and professor Ramadan are all well-known and documented over a long period of time, and to call it antagonistic would be a polite description.

Tariq Ramadan has been removed from teaching posts in Switzerland and the Netherlands, and prevented from taking up a teaching post in the United States, but the French state has left him entirely alone. The French government, far from being antagonistic to Ramadan, knew of his unsavory sexual behavior over many years, as was revealed by its Islam "expert" Bernard Godard, and chose neither to say nor to do anything about it. For years, that French state was not antagonistic to, but protective of, Tariq Ramadan. He has had his critics in France, most notably the writer Caroline Fourest, who wrote *Frere Tariq* about his ties to the Muslim Brotherhood and his general meretriciousness. More often, Ramadan has been treated over the last decade as a star by the French media, appearing endlessly on talk shows, attending conferences where he is treated with great deference, and giving interviews to deeply respectful, even sycophantic, questioners. It is absurd to claim he has been badly treated, ever, by the French state, for that state turned a blind eye to his most disturbing, and even criminal, behavior with women. It was not until charges

were made publicly by first one and then another Muslim woman – Henda Ayari and “Christelle” – charges then found to be credible, that Ramadan’s well-deserved mini-cavalry began.

However, if the current case against Ramadan is used to settle a previous public injury by those who were often accustomed to total obedience and deference by post-colonial subjects, then it would be a travesty and the long-term domestic relations with the Arab and Muslim communities in France and abroad will certainly be impacted.

What “previous public injury” can Hatem Bazian possibly mean? And who are those French who are accustomed to “total obedience and deference by post-colonial subjects”? Where and when has that “total obedience and deference” been demanded, much less offered ? Certainly not in any Muslim state, and especially not in North Africa, where France has been giving billions in aid over the last sixty years. When Bazian claims that the “current case against Ramadan” is being used by the French state to settle scores with Muslim Arabs who have been insufficiently submissive to their former colonial masters, he still fails to tell us who these Arabs are. He never names them. And he never lets us know that all three of the cases brought in France against Ramadan involved Muslim women. The threat he makes is that if Ramadan is convicted – even though Bazian earlier claimed that he was not making a judgment as to his guilt or innocence – then “the long-term domestic relations with the Arab and Muslim communities in France and abroad will certainly be impacted” (sic for “affected.”) What might that mean? Mass mayhem by Muslims, with the usual burning of cars and breaking shop windows, by those who think that as a celebrated Muslim, Ramadan must be set free?

Is Tariq Ramadan the only one to be accused and charged with sexually related offenses in France and other Western States? If the answer is yes, then we can consider this case as the first and set new legal standards based on it. However, if

the answer is no, which I am afraid is the case, then who else in France, UK or U.S.A. is under arrest in solitary confinement and not allowed bail or sufficient medical care because of mere accusations?

As far as I can tell and from all the current cases arising from similar accusations not a single person has been arrested or is in jail, let alone being placed in solitary confinement, before a trial even taking place

Nonsense: the defendants are always arrested before a criminal trial takes place.

Tariq Ramadan is serving as the most recent case

Sic for “example”

of the notion of the “dirty Arab” in the French racial imaginary [sic] that must be disciplined and put in his place. Professor Ramadan – and I would argue other Arabs and Muslims – in the French and other Western legal systems face a differentiated

This is the fourth appearance, and fourth misuse, of this word. “Discriminatory” is meant.

treatment by the police first and then throughout the legal process. The innocent until proven guilty legal standard does not apply to the Arab and Muslim subjects in France and other Western countries. The law is born and is shaped by social conditions, which are currently subjected to a heavy dose

Sic – “conditions” cannot be “subjected to a heavy dose.”

of Islamophobia and fear mongering [sic] at all levels of the society. I maintain that the current imprint [sic] on the [sic] western society [sic] is a function of latent

Islamophobia, which worked to produce the manifest Islamophobia type that Professor Ramadan is currently experiencing.

Sheer gobbledygook.

Guilty until proven innocent is the legal standard applied to Arabs and Muslims.

One more charge without any evidence.

Furthermore, any accusation or crime committed by Arabs and Muslims gets immediately the embedded latent Islamophobia enhancement of connecting it to some type of terrorism, either directly or through a six-degrees of separation going back possibly seven generations.

No, I couldn't make sense of it either.

In Professor Ramadan's case, the standing accusations against him are often linked back to his grandfather, Hasan Al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood Movement and this "pedigree" cast an unforgiven shadow over all his involvements.

What evidence does Bazian have that the "standing accusations" – just "accusations" would be clearer, but clarity is not Bazian's strong suit – made by five Muslim women were affected in any way by their knowing he is the grandson of the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood?

I have my own epistemological, historical, economic, and political critique of the origins and ideas of the Muslim Brotherhood Movement but I don't confuse them with the ongoing demonization campaign directed at individuals and groups that are connected to it.

With the thoughts he'd be thinking/He could be another Lincoln/if he only had a brain...

More importantly, the Muslim Brotherhood Movement is a legal entity across the Western World and throughout the Cold War was recruited as a major piece and a partner in the anti-communist and anti-Arab Nationalist campaigns.

Not a single example of the Western world's supposed "recruitment" of the Muslim Brotherhood, whether as an ally against domestic Communists or against Arab nationalists, is offered by Bazian.

I was very critical of this involvement early on and before the many Johnny-come-lately crowed.

Sic: "many...crowed"? How about "before many in the Johnny-come-lately crowd?"

The contemporary Islamophobes, neo-Cons, or post-Arab Spring Johnnys engaged in metaphorical food fights centering on crafting good Islam versus bad Islam that pivots

Sic for "is based"

on demonizing and essentializing the role of the Muslim Brotherhood Movement in the region.

Not a sentence, but why worry about that when we have already entered the realm of the completely absurd.

So, if the Muslim Brotherhood Movement is the cause of all evils in the Muslim World

Who ever said so? Can't Bazian be bothered to provide even one quote by someone who thinks that?

then what country or countries did they actually manage to rule since 1945?

The answer is none, unless one wishes to consider Hamas-ruled Gaza as being governed by the Muslim Brotherhood. But what does any of this have to do with the accusations against, and likely trial of, Tariq Ramadan? It is Bazian who wants to make much of Tariq Ramadan's Muslim Brotherhood connection, not the French judges who are sticking to the charges of rape and other sexual violence, and to the evidence for such charges provided by Ramadan's Muslim accusers.

The failure in the region is rooted in a long series of dictatorships and monarchies that set [sic for "sit"] on top of a vast oil ocean that propels the modern global economy.

No, he attributes too much importance to Arab oil; it is not oil that any longer "propels the modern global economy," but rather, advances in technology, and innovation of all kinds.

Oil is a curse that is masquerading as a blessing and is at the root [sic for "the cause"] of the last 100 years of utter destruction in the region,

That oil began to flow in significant quantities only in the 1940s.

not Islamic groups [sic] are the easy [sic] bearded patsies used to produce the needed compounded ignorance of the sources and causalities of the unfolding and never-ending disasters.

Whatever this sentence is, it is not English. The trillions of dollars that the Arab oil states and Iran have received over many decades turn out to have been, in Bazian's view, a "curse" for which the West, which buys all that oil and thus

provides the money that is such a source of misery, is responsible. It is oil money that enables the Muslim Lords of Misrule to remain in power. Apparently, Bazian fails to notice that these Lords of Misrule are everywhere in the Muslim world, not only in the oil states. Think of the authoritarian rulers in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Egypt, Malaysia, Turkey, Morocco. Don't blame the oil money for the failings of Muslim states – for ISIS and al-Qaeda, for the failures to educate women, for Sunni-Shi'a hostilities, for genocidal attacks on Christians and non-Arabs, for authoritarian rulers (kings, despots, military men) who rule over all but a handful of the 57 Muslim-majority states. In Western democracies, a government's legitimacy depends on how well it follows the will of the people as expressed, however imperfectly, in elections. In Muslim political theory, a ruler's legitimacy depends on how well he follows the will of Allah, as expressed in the Qur'an. None of that has to do with oil wealth.

Professor Ramadan is discussed through [sic] the use of a demonization strategy

Bazian loves the word "demonization"; he uses it a half-dozen times in this piece. But what "demonization strategy" is he talking about? Has the French government made any public remarks about Tariq Ramadan? Has it been telling the world everything it knows about Ramadan, or has it been behaving, rather, in quite the opposite fashion, reluctant even now to discuss what Bernard Godard finally revealed, that he, and therefore the French government, had known about Ramadan for some time? There is no demonization of Ramadan. The vivid testimonies of his Muslim victims – see Henda Ayari, see "Christelle," see "Marie" – are horrifying enough.

directed at his supposed family connection

That family connection to the Muslim Brotherhood is not "supposed," but well-documented.

to the Muslim Brotherhood Movement and this is possibly one of the reasons why the French authorities are acting to discipline him as a representative of political Islam in the Western context.

The French authorities are not out to “discipline” Tariq Ramadan, but to slowly and methodically investigate the charges made against him by several Muslim women, and if the evidence proves sufficient, to bring him to trial.

Failure yet again, in the Arab and Muslim world in the current period is simplistically attributed to the role played by the Muslim Brotherhood Movement, which is a weak argument and uses [sic for “relies on”] a single causality [sic for “cause”] to explain a very complex set of political, economic, social, and religious stimuli and agents that shaped the region to [sic] what it is today. The case of Tariq Ramadan sits at the intersection of debates related to his voice and role in the field of political Islam rather than on the issues related to the accusation itself, which goes a long way to explain the French State’s differentiated

Is this the fifth or the sixth appearance, and misuse, of this word? He means, yet again, “discriminatory.”

treatment before the actual trial. The basic demands are for Professor Ramadan to be granted immediate bail, to be allowed to organize his defense, and to be able to face the accusers in court.

Why should Tariq Ramadan be granted bail? Plenty of prisoners are not granted bail when there is a likelihood that they might flee. Now let’s see – is there such a risk in this case? Ramadan has two million friends on Facebook and 200,000 followers on Twitter. He has millions of dollars from the sale of his audiotapes, his books, his former well-paid sinecure in

Qatar, and Oxford. 142,000 people have signed a petition demanding his immediate release. He has powerful and deep-pocketed admirers all over the Arab world, especially in North Africa, and in the Gulf. Given all that support, isn't it possible that if released he would manage to flee from France? Many Arabs see him not as a serial rapist but as a Muslim victim of Infidel "justice," a brave standard-bearer for Islam, who deserves to be rescued from the (colonialist, neo-colonialist, islamophobic, racist) French state. All of that contributed to the decision that he was a definite flight risk and needed to be kept in custody.

Furthermore, the failing health and well-being of Professor Ramadan are the direct and sole responsibility of the French State – an innocent man until proven guilty that has not yet had his day in court or found guilty is being held in solitary confinement.

In fact, his health is not noticeably failing; Ramadan has for more than a decade had multiple sclerosis, which is a long-term illness; he can live with it for decades more. He is receiving, by all accounts, excellent medical treatment, including four sessions of physical therapy every week, which is more than many M.S. sufferers can count on. The French state is not about to create a martyr out of Ramadan and will be sure to continue to provide him with the best treatment available.

Lastly, the charges and the case in general should not be linked to any developments or possible carrying [sic for "currying"] of favors for any segments of the domestic right-wing Islamophobes or interested Arab and Muslim political elites that are seeking to settle political accounts through it. We seek justice and fairness, nothing more and nothing less, for all involved.

Bazian says he seeks "justice and fairness," and early on

claims he does not know if Tariq Ramadan is guilty of the charges made against him, and he just wants a fair trial, but he then proceeds, through the rest of his piece, to refer repeatedly to the “demonization” of Ramadan by a French state he claims has long been determined to settle scores with him (despite that French state knowing for decades about Ramadan’s sexually violent behavior) as a prominent Muslim, and that treats him cruelly, by keeping him locked up, for apparently Bazian doesn’t believe Ramadan could be a flight risk, capable of being whisked off to some safe haven in Dar al-Islam.

A few sentences from this article made my day:

What is important is to make sure that the scales of justice in pursuit of a needed legal, social and political corrective does not lead to undermining the rights and standing of a similarly demonized community.

Demanding justice, fairness, and transparency is a universally supported set of principles, which are critical in the case of Professor Ramadan.

A basic analysis of the French media coverage of this case points to the problematic nature of the coverage and the preponderance of journalists to pile-on and sentence Professor Ramadan before even the end of the investigation and before the court proceedings have started.

The entanglements’ of the French State and Tariq Ramadan are all well-known and documented over a long period of time, and to call it antagonistic would be a polite description.

Lastly, the charges and the case in general should not be linked to any developments or possible carrying of favors for any segments of the domestic right-wing Islamophobes or interested Arab and Muslim political elites that are seeking to settle political accounts through it.

The substandard English in the article is part of the fun, but it's the series of claims made, without the slightest supporting evidence, that make this bizarre and deplorable performance so memorable, and a fitting tribute to its subject, Tariq Ramadan, by one of his admirers, Hatem Bazian.

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