

Tariq Ramadan: One More Accusation with “Aggravating Circumstances”

by Hugh Fitzgerald



The latest news about Tariq Ramadan, one of the world’s “foremost intellectuals,” “one of the most renowned of Islamic scholars,” named by TIME in 2004 as “one of the 100 most influential people in the world today,” comes from Switzerland. It’s not about the four underage pupils he taught in a Geneva high school in the 1970s and 1980s, managing to get three of the four, aged 15 to 18, to sleep with him; the youngest, aged 14, wise beyond her years, was the only one not to succumb to his oily charms. No, this time it is a Swiss woman, a convert to Islam like two of his French victims, who is accusing him of rape. She is now 45, making her 35 when she was raped by Ramadan in 2008. I know what you’re thinking – doesn’t Ramadan deserve a little credit from the Swiss, say a month off from a 20-year sentence, for this time having picked

on a grownup instead of another teenage genevoise?

Her lawyer says that the criminal complaint may amount to “rape, with aggravated [‘aggravating’] circumstances.” The “aggravating circumstances” can be many things. They can be the extreme physical violence, and threats to harm her children, that Ramadan inflicted on Henda Ayari, as she described in her book *J’ai choisi d’être libre* (I Chose To Be Free), where – not yet emboldened by the #MeToo movement – she used the alias “Zoubeyr” for Ramadan:

“This man, Zoubeyr, transformed before my very eyes into a vile, vulgar, aggressive being – physically and verbally.” she wrote. And then she explained that she was now giving him, in the wake of the Harvey Weinstein scandal, his real name: Tariq Ramadan. **“For modesty, I will not give the precise details here of the acts he made me submit to. But it is enough that he took great advantage of my weakness and the admiration I felt for him. ”**

“He allowed himself gestures, attitudes and words that I could never have imagined.”

“And when I resisted,” she writes, **“when I cried to him to stop, he insulted and humiliated me. He slapped me and attacked me. I saw in his crazy eyes that he was no longer master of himself. I was afraid he would kill me. I was completely lost. I started crying uncontrollably. He mocked me.”** And she described his violence: **“He choked me so hard that I thought I was going to die.”** She also described him as threatening that her children might be harmed if she were to tell anyone.

All that amounts to “aggravating circumstances.”

Then there was “Christelle.”

That is the name being used by a second Muslim woman in Paris who has accused Ramadan of raping her in a hotel room in 2009.

The unnamed 42-year-old, who is reported to have disability in her legs, said that the professor had subjected her to a terrifying and violent sexual assault. The French edition of Vanity Fair magazine, whose staff met the 45-year-old woman, said **her lawsuit against Ramadan described “blows to the face and body, forced sodomy, rape with an object and various humiliations, including being dragged by the hair to the bathtub and urinated on.”**

Still more “aggravating circumstances.”

And “Marie,” the third French Muslim who has accused Ramadan of multiple rapes, was the object of attack by two Ramadan loyalists. She described them as having grabbed her by the throat, sprayed her with water, verbally abused her, and threatened her that “next time it will be gasoline,” before running away.

We still don’t have the details about Ramadan’s repeated rapes of “Marie” but his record certainly suggests that there would have been “aggravating circumstances.”

Here’s the Swiss lady’s story: “Swiss woman files rape complaint against Islamic scholar,” [Reuters](#), April 13, 2018:

A Swiss woman has filed a criminal complaint in Geneva for rape against the Islamic scholar Tariq Ramadan – already being held in custody in France on similar allegations – her lawyer said on Friday.

The allegation by the unnamed Swiss woman, a convert to Islam, relates to an alleged incident in Geneva in October 2008, the daily Tribune de Geneve said, citing a 13-page document. The woman was about 40 [sic for 35] at the time.

*“At this stage of the procedure, I can confirm that we have filed a criminal complaint,” her lawyer Romain Jordan told Swiss Television TSR on Friday night. **“The complaint puts forward facts that may amount to rape with aggravated***

[aggravating] circumstances.”

He declined to give further details.

Yael Hayat, one of Ramadan’s lawyers in Geneva, declined to comment on television, saying she was unaware of the case filed with the Geneva prosecutor. The prosecutor’s spokesman did not immediately respond to a query...

And the report on his latest accuser from rfi (Radio France Internationale) adds an important detail about the hotel encounter and rape: “New rape accusation against Islamic scholar Tariq Ramadan,” [RFI](#), April 14, 2018:

...The new accusations come from a woman who has converted to Islam says Ramadan raped her and held her against her will in a hotel in Geneva in 2008, according to the Tribune de Genève newspaper.

In 13 pages of testimony she says she looked to him for support when she was going through difficulties with her family and started corresponding with him after meeting him at a book signing in Geneva.

Ramadan invited her to meet for coffee but then persuaded her to go to his hotel room, where he raped her and kept her prisoner for several hours.

She says she was too frightened to make a legal complaint at the time.

Holding her prisoner for several hours surely constitutes “aggravating circumstances.”

And why would she have been “too frightened to make a legal complaint” unless Ramadan had in some way threatened her, as he had threatened Henda Ayari and “Christelle,” and indirectly, “Marie”?

Those threats would also be “aggravating circumstances.”

We have been here before, in France, Switzerland, the United States.

And we will be here again. Ramadan. Rape. Aggravating Circumstances.

First published in