

# France: An Eight Year Old Child Arrested by Police for allegedly “Glorifying Terrorism”

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*A school director has filed a complaint against the father of a fourth grader. He is also supposed to have inflicted “bullying” onto the schoolboy, according to the family lawyer.*

January 8th, 2015, the day after the killing at *Charlie Hebdo*. In a primary school in Nice, fourth grade pupils discuss the tragedy with their schoolteacher. “Are you Charlie?”, he asks them. Ahmed, aged 8, says no. Why not? “Because they caricatured the Prophet. I am with the terrorists.” The teacher alerts the school headmaster, who decides to summon the boy, and then his parents, who reason with their offspring. But he does not stop there. On January 21st, the head of the school, which is located in the south of the city, lodged a complaint at the police station for “glorification of terrorism”, according to the lawyer for the family of the child, Mr Sefen Guez Guez.

Contacted Wednesday evening by *Libération*, the Minister of Education confirmed that a complaint had been filed against the father of the child, who is supposed to have made an “intrusion” into the school premises. And that “an alert had been sent to child protection services.”

“From there, the judicial machine is launched,” explains to *Libération* Mr Guez Guez, the lawyer defending Ahmed. Summoned on Wednesday afternoon to the police station in Nice, as part of an unofficial hearing, the child remained there for almost two hours. What next? [The lawyer related the events in a series of tweets, under the moniker “IbnSalah”](#).

[Tweet] [S. Ibn Salah](#) Question from OPJ [police officer in the French Criminal Investigation Department]: “What does the word terrorism mean to you ? – I don’t know.” Ahmed. 8-year-old.

[Tweet] [S. Ibn Salah](#) “Did you really say that the journalists deserved to die? – It’s not true, I never said that.”

“Placing a child of 8 years in an unofficial hearing, is telling of the current state of hysteria around this notion of glorifying terrorism. In these kind of cases, pedagogy is necessary”, considers Mr Guez Guez, furious. “We do not think of leaving it there, the headmaster’s attitude is unacceptable.” He accuses him of inflicting “bullying” onto Ahmed by “putting him in the corner” and “depriving him of recreation.”

According to the lawyer, the child also recounted having endured this remark while he was playing in the sandbox: “Stop digging, you will not find a submachine gun to kill us all with.” Ahmed, a diabetic, had even once been deprived of taking his insulin, according to the lawyer. Contacted by *Libération*, the prosecutor of Nice confirmed the existence of this

unofficial hearing, but did not have any further comment to make.

*"In the current context, the school principal decided to report what happened to the police", Commissioner Marcel Authier explained to the AFP [French Press Agency], noting that it is was absolutely not a judicial complaint. "The child and his father were summoned to try to understand how a boy of 8 years could be able to make such radical statements", said the director for the department of public safety. "Obviously, the child does not understand what he said. We do not know where he found his declarations sentiment from", he said. The primary school, closed, could not be reached on Wednesday evening.*

"Glorifying terrorism": French Minister of Education Najat Vallaud-Belkacem supports the measures taken by Nice Elementary school

Source: [http://www.liberation.fr/societe/2015/01/29/enfant-convoque-au-commissariat-pour-apologie-du-terrorisme-la-droite-applaudit\\_1191086](http://www.liberation.fr/societe/2015/01/29/enfant-convoque-au-commissariat-pour-apologie-du-terrorisme-la-droite-applaudit_1191086) - JANUARY 29, 2015

Translated by Jenny Bright for [Tlaxcala](#)

Politicians react after the summoning of Ahmed, 8-years-old, to the police station for having affirmed his support for the perpetrators of the "Charlie Hebdo" attack.

Najat Vallaud-Belkacem supports the administration of the Nice Elementary School where studies Ahmed, 8, [summoned to the police station yesterday for "glorifying terrorism"](#). The staff *"responded appropriately"*, the Minister of Education said this Thursday. *"I say it strongly, not only has this team done well to behave as such, but its monitoring work, educational as well as social, is a useful endeavour and I thank them for it"*, the Minister has insisted from the Presidential Palace where she had met with teachers, educators and associations.

Najat Vallaud-Belkacem also affirmed that *"when the father [of the schoolboy] came into the school facility, he had [...] a brutal attitude, he even repeatedly entered without authorisation into the school building while threatening school staff. So it is for this precise reason and for that reason only that the school director filed a complaint against the father and not against the child."*

A statement which the child's lawyer, Me Sefen Guez Guez, again challenged on his Twitter account.

[Tweet] [S. Ibn Salah @najatvb](#) Nonsense. I signed a police report that testifies to the contrary. Go ahead slandering and defaming, but the truth will always emerge. State lie.

On the right-wing scene as well, some were keen to show their full support for the school headmaster who made the complaint against the child, as for instance Christian Estrosi, UMP mayor of Nice, where the incident occurred, and Eric Ciotti (UMP).

[Tweet] [Christian Estrosi](#) Full support for the school headmaster who courageously denounced the facts. I await justice and firmness in front of parental responsibility.

[Tweet] [Eric Ciotti](#) I wonder about the collective hysteria merely because of the unofficial hearing of a child and of his parents after alarming declarations had been uttered.

[Tweet] [Eric Ciotti](#) Child heard at Nice, the police and teachers have perfectly reacted given the context, I fully support them.

More cautious, Chantal Jouanno (UDI) has wondered, in a message on Twitter, why *"no one [has been] putting their trust in the principal and the police."*

[Tweet] [Chantal Jouanno](#) Child heard at Nice with his father. No one trusts the school headmaster and the police?

The communist deputy of the mayor of Paris, Ian Brossat, has not reacted on the substance of the case but to the declarations of some right-wing members.

[Tweet] [Ian Brossat](#) Those who rejoice at an 8-year-old being summoned by justice howl when their dear Sarkozy is in custody. [#Go figure it out.](#)

As for the National Islamophobia Observatory (OIC), he was indignant: *"The National Observatory against Islamophobia is indignant about the treatment inflicted on Ahmed, a child of 8 years, summoned to a police station in Nice"*, writes in a statement this authority attached to the French Council of the Muslim Faith (CFCM), the representative body of Islam in France. *"The fight against radicalisation should not lead to mass hysteria but must be inscribed within the Republican legal framework"*, said the Observatory, which calls on the Minister of Education, Najat Vallaud-Belkacem, *"to ensure that such excesses do not happen again and to give priority to dialogue in similar cases."*

On Twitter, where the hashtag [#Ahmed8 was used nearly 4000 times](#) Thursday morning, users have already taken up the case, with [irony](#) , [dismay](#) , [annoyance](#) , [humour](#) , or to [express their agreement](#) with the decision of the school headmaster.

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