Islam expert Nilüfer Göle: ‘a new Europe where Muslims play a great role’

14/01/2015

"I believe we will start building a new civilisation... not a 'clash of civilisations' but a new European society where Muslims should play a great role"

After the terrorist attack on the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo, not only France but many across the whole of Europe came together against it. Around four million people poured onto the streets of France to protest against terrorism on Sunday.

Euronews turned to a prominent Turkish sociologist who has carried out studies on Muslim women. Professor Nilüfer Göle is director of studies at l’École des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) – the School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences in Paris.

Bahtiyar Küçük, euronews: “How did the recent attack in Paris affect France? Do you think it will undermine the fundamental dynamics of a multicultural society?”

Nilüfer Göle, EHESS:

“This attack is being compared with the events of 9/11. We hope that the rally held on 11 January will be considered as a different response to that of America. In other words, that the attacks will push us into positive moves, to rethink the rules about living together in unity.

“Today Europe has protected its Muslim communities more than ever. We’ve seen this with the rally. The religious authorities not just in Europe but also in Muslim countries should keep their distance from those who try to convey these attacks as rightful.”

Bahtiyar Küçük, euronews: “The aggressors were French Muslims. It raises questions about the integration of Muslims and embracing the values of the republic. Would you say that these attacks are the results of a failure of integration?”

Nilüfer Göle, EHESS: “I believe we will see the creation of a new community. A community which consists not only of an elite minority but one where everyone lives in unity. I believe we will start building a new civilisation. The response should not be a “clash of civilisations” but creating a new European society where Muslims should play a great role in building it.

“Today ordinary citizens, whether religious or not, should stand up for themselves and they have already begun doing so. In this way they took part in the rally. Muslims in France have asserted themselves as European citizens.”

Bahtiyar Küçük, euronews: “Once again a caricature of the prophet Mohammad has been published on Charlie Hebdo’s front page. What is your reaction to this?”

Nilüfer Göle, EHESS: “The prophet has tears in his eyes. He is saddened by what has happened. It is an image of amnesty at the same time. I think it’s a nice front page, let’s not call it a cartoon but a good front cover.”

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