

The dutch documentary controversy: an islamic response essay sample

[Religion](#), [Islam](#)



Introduction

The Muslim population in The Netherlands is growing. There are over million Muslims in the country. A prominent politician has been working for the ban of Qur'an in the country and is releasing a film about Qur'ans legitimisation of violence. This article covers the said issue; the man behind it and the Muslim's response to the controversy.

A Dutch Paradise of Long Ago

The Kingdom of Netherlands was once a paradise to the immigrants. The country was sought by different people from various races and countries to find refuge. This country, popular for its windmill, tulips, cheese, dikes, and clogs became the haven for immigrants whose search for a better life and opportunities led them to the place. It was once a safe country where Muslim residents are free to enjoy their life and religion. It was once a beautiful place where religious freedom is tolerated. This beautiful country promises a good future for its citizens, regardless of race, gender, belief, and nationality. It was heaven on earth; a place where bliss is sure; a home where respect was mutual.

I write in the past tense to directly say that the aforementioned situation was a thing of yesterday. In the past, The Netherlands evoked prosperity, tolerance, diversity, and peaceful co-habitation. Sadly, a sudden gush of political wind had transformed this lovely country into something which it is not – a country where religious persecution is rising.

Indeed, what was once paradise is being slowly eaten away by anger and hatred. This anger is hurled at the Muslim population. A virus has crept into the political system of the country. It is beginning to rot the system. It is infecting the whole society. It seeks to destroy the credibility of Muslims. For me, it aims to mar the reputation of the Dutch Muslim population by targeting the religion of Islam.

Even young Muslims are feeling the brunt of this persecution. They are touted at schools. How can they walk with all dignity at such young age when the world seems to frown at their customs, dress and religion? Their tender minds have been subjected to racial slurs, anti-Islamic taunts and hurtful words. You see, when a religion is under fire by a society, its children are brutally affected and traumatized. Children need acceptance. They need the love and protection of their country; they deserve the safety that their government is espousing. Above all, they have the freedom to live the religion which they are born on. How can the country be a happy abode for children whose minds are coping hard to understand the whole scenario unfolding before their little eyes. With such situation, the place where their young legs are treading upon is not a paradise but a hostile place.

Where, now then, is the country known for tolerance and freedom?

A Subtle War

In this advanced technological era, persecution comes with such force and gravity. Muslim inhabitants find themselves as the target of this modern persecution. The media, became the persecutor's tool in waging war against

Muslims. We all know that the media is a very powerful tool. It is being used to spread lies and deceit among the Dutch population. Who has never heard of its potential to wreak havoc? As a potent tool for information dissemination, it has sparked countless controversies.

Recently, the media, through the print and audio-visual communications, conveyed a subtle war against the sons of Ishmael.

The Controversial Film

A film was produced that obviously calls for hate and anti-Islamic measures. It is supposed to be a documentary film. It runs for ten minutes and features the Qur'an as a threat. It is entitled as Fitna, an Arabic word meaning "disagreement and division among the people. It may also mean "a test of faith in times of trial".

The film was produced as a direct attack to the Muslim beliefs by using the Qur'an. The film wrongly implies that the Qur'an directly admonishes its followers to commit crimes against the unbelievers.

The film is a blasphemous one and a below-the-belt punch against the Muslim community not only in The Netherlands but the whole Islamic community around the world.

As a matter of fact, the Dutch government is planning an emergency action once the film is shown. It is foreseen that the film will cause much uproar in the Islamic community. It is anticipated that violent reactions would be the result of showing the said film in different channels. Bloodshed may be

possible. With this anticipation, the Dutch government is recommending that its diplomats stationed in the Middle East be evacuated. Dutch nationals are also included in the evacuation plan. They may become the target for retaliation.

Another foreseen downfall of the film is on business. It may affect trades and businesses.

It can be said that the film has sparked debates on the international realm.

While the government knows the possible consequences of showing Fitna, nevertheless, it has difficulty tying the “ brain” behind. They could not stop him from what he intends to do and pursue. They have tried at least but they still cannot prevent him from telling the world his angst and biases against the Muslim faith.

The Man behind the Film

Who has never heard his name? Who has never heard the strong words of this 44-year old man whose passion could be rooted in his hate against Islam? Who has not recognized his bleached-white hair and his anti-Muslim sentiments?

His fiery tongue makes him stand out among the whole Dutch population. He may be envied by some for his fierceness. He has become the subject of many controversies, comments, threats, and others. Albeit all the accusations against him, he does not seem to care.

He is Geert Wilders. He chairs the party for Freedom and a very prominent Dutch political figure. He was raised as a Roman Catholic by his parents. He has a wife of Hungarian nationality. He earned Law Certificates from the Dutch Open University.

His party coveted nine seats out of 150 in the parliament. He has established himself as a right-wing leader who has libertarianism points of view. He has been serving for ten years in the parliament since 1998.

Wilders is a lawyer who loves to be in the forefront of debates. He uses the power of his tongue to slash out at his enemies. He uses the wits by delivering one-liners to keep people and the press at awe with his gift of gab. He has this charisma which he combines with his cunning words to deliver agitating words to anyone who crosses his path.

The lawyer is very outspoken. He gained for himself both enemies and supporters. He knows his craft very well and uses it to influence others and manipulate his political career. His is an acid tongue which brings forth unrestricted flow of words.

He never stops thinking his mind out loud. He never ceases from speaking what he thinks is right even if he could make a country of enemies. Actually, he is gaining not only a country of nemesis but a global one, as well.

He was awarded as the Politician of the Year in 2007, though. His speeches and wit made him a darling of the press.

Wilder's Political Views

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Wilders worked on lowering the taxes. Consequently, he wants to overhaul the welfare service by modifying it. He obviously hates the left-wing politicians who he deems as elitist in nature. He also supports an anti-immigration stand. He wants to limit the number of immigrants coming from non-western countries. It can be remembered that in the previous years, anti-immigration has been a banner in the Parliament. Immigration became a hot issue and for a time, immigrants were subjected to pressure.

Wilders is reported to be a fan of Israel. He has worked in the country for a time. It even crossed to his mind to stay in the country. Even before he got into the Dutch Parliament, he has been in and out of the Jewish state. He has a genial relationship with Israel's leaders. He personally confessed in 2003 that: " The past years I have visited many interesting countries, from Tunisia to Turkey and from Cyprus to Iran, but nowhere I have that special feeling of solidarity that I always get if I set foot on the Israeli Ben Gurion Airport."

Clearly, Israel is the apple of his both eyes. During his stint at the Parliamentary, he has been in favour with Israel. It seems that he loves Israel as his own native country. He even goes to the point of attacking Israel's detractors through his cutting weapon- his tongue.

Up Against Qur'an

Wilders was quoted as saying that he does not hate the followers of Islam. "I don't create hate. I want to be honest. I don't hate people. I don't hate Muslims. I hate their book and their ideology."

Wilders is thought to be bothered by the increasing Islamic population in the country. He fears that the Muslim population would soon dominate the country. He was reported saying in 2007, “ Take a walk down the street and see where this is going. You no longer feel like you are living in your own country. There is a battle going on and we have to defend ourselves. Before you know it there will be more mosques than churches!”

True enough, Wilders has relentlessly pushed on with his passion of going against the Muslims.

On October 10, 2005, Wilders worked on banning the burqa- the traditional dress for Muslim women. Exactly two months after, the Lower House adopted it. Then, in 2007, he filed for a bill criminalizing the use of burqa. The bill stagnated for the Cabinet never had its hand on the implementation.

August 2007 saw Wilders’ rallying call for ban on Qur’an. He wanted the whole Netherlands to ban and get rid of the holy book. He considered it as a fascist book. He even likened it to Mein Kampf- Adolf Hitler’s book which was published in 1925. History shows that Mein Kampf was pulled out of the shelves and banned in the country immediately after the Second World War.

Wilders viewed that the holy book legitimises violence, which inspires Muslims to commit crimes. Aside from banning the Qur’an, he prescribed that it must not be used in mosques and in the homes.

Wilders, wrote an article and sent it Volksrant, a Dutch daily newspaper. It was published and generated reactions. A quote from his writing is as follows:

In various Sura's Muslims are called upon to oppress, persecute, or kill Jews, Christians and others, believers and non-believers and to beat women and to rape and to use violence to implement a worldwide Islamist state.

Numerous other Suras' are used by Muslims to incite to death and destruction.

Ban that wretched book like Mein Kampf is banned!

I have had enough of Islam in Holland: Not one more Muslim immigrant should be let in. I have had enough of the reverence for Allah and Mohammed in the Netherlands: There should not be even one more mosque. I have had enough of the Koran in the Netherlands. Ban that wretched book. Enough is enough.

Wilders wrote the article in August 2007 and by November of same year, announced that he is making a film.

In connection to the ban, Wilder suggested that the constitution be revised for the ban to take effect. He also expressed his desire for the Muslim immigrants to leave the country. The government has to pay those who would decide to leave. He proposed that Muslim criminals be stripped of their dual citizenship and be deported back to their respective countries. He wanted to stop Muslim immigrants from pouring in.

Of the controversial film, in an interview, he said that the film is like a “ walk through the Qur’an”. He has been delving into the verses or suras of the holy book. He further added, ““ my intention is to show the real face of Islam. I see it as a threat. I’m trying to use images to show that what’s written in the Koran is giving incentives to people all over the world. On a daily basis Moroccan youths are beating up homosexuals on the streets of Amsterdam.”

Wilders commented that he was not afraid of the film’s outcome. He went on to say, “ Islam is something we can’t afford any more in the Netherlands. I want the fascist Koran banned. We need to stop the Islamisation of the Netherlands. That means no more mosques, no more Islamic schools, no more imams... Not all Muslims are terrorists, but almost all terrorists are Muslims.”

Due to his much publicized anti-Islamic endeavours, his security became fragile. He has been under heavy security for years. He lives a life full of death threats and body guards. He has not lived a normal, secure life ever since. It is a price to pay for his drive against the Qur’an.

Questioning the Freedom of Speech

Wilders harsh comments and outright criticisms on Islam have brought forth the issue of freedom of speech into the limelight. In western societies, the freedom of speech is fundamental to the freedom to live. Democracy has paved way for the unrestricted amount of expression. Even the authorities in the Netherlands did not stop Wilders from manufacturing his film and showing it in televisions as a respect for his freedom of expression.

But why do we really mean by freedom of expression? Who are entitled to it?

Wilders might be practicing this freedom but his liberty is too unrestricted. He may be in the politics but he abuses his authority putting his own thoughts too much in the newspapers and media. What if an ordinary citizen happens to declare same words? Will that citizen be respected or instantly killed?

The Netherlands holds the distinction of being one of the most liberal countries in the world. Perhaps, it could be the most liberal country. Have you ever heard that Amsterdam is dubbed as the “ Sin City”? Compared to other countries in the world, the country has extremely liberal policies. Prostitution, euthanasia, and same-sex marriage are legal. Narcotic drugs are very prevalent; so with trafficking.

The above paragraph somehow explains the country’s stand on freedom of speech.

However, the western notion of freedom of speech needs to be controlled. In Wilders’ case, he has broadcasted his personal opinions and displeasures so sharply even to the point of insulting Islam and its adherents. He uses that freedom as an excuse for his selfish and ethnocentric ways. He has been blaspheming and he has been ever proud of it.

If one would go to an Islamic country, Wilders’ action is considered not only as a grave insult but a sin so great it merits the penalty of death.

In some Asian countries, his writings and speeches are classified as libellous and would mean a term in jail or hard labour.

The Importance of Qur'an

Wilders repeatedly say that he is only against the holy book, but not the people themselves. Yet, his immigration measures reveal that he is contradicting his words. And how can he say that he has nothing against the Muslims when he repeatedly defiles the holy book? A Muslim life's revolve around the Qur'an. In fact, for a Muslim, the Qur'an means life. It is more than a holy book. It contains Allah's Words as revealed to the Great Prophet Muhammad (May He Live Forever!).

The Qur'an, contains instructions and wisdom. Muslims read it for guidance and for inspiration. Without the Qur'an, Islam is incomplete. The Qur'an contains the Words of Life. Muslims revere it so much. The Qur'an is dearly loved and honoured.

So when somebody defiles the Qur'an, it seems too, that he is defiling a Muslim. In an Islamic society, even a just Qur'anic verse is esteemed highly. Qur'an is much respected. Muslims have the ritual of washing their hands first before touching or reading it. Such is the reverence and emphasis given to the holy book. Now, why don't non-Islam followers understand the premium that Muslims put on the book. Clearly, an attack against the Qur'an is an attack against the Muslim people.

This is the reason why Muslims react against Wilders. He is hitting directly the hearts and minds of the Muslims. Consider this scenario: it is but normal for a father to avenge the death of his daughter who is wrongly killed or a man to go against the murderer of his beloved. The human instinct is to react when a perceived injustice is done to him or to someone he loves. How much more for a Muslim? Belittling and degrading the Qur'an is not only an offense against a beloved but an assault to the faith. It explains why many Muslims outraged.

Addressing the Misconceptions

Wilders professed that he has been studying the holy book that's why he came out with what he called as a "scholarly" film. He claimed to know the truth. But does he truly understand what he has read in the holy book?

The Qur'an is not like to any book that is just read and can easily be understood. The verses in the Qur'an have been written through a divine revelation. The verses of the Qur'an have contextual bases and so, someone who will study it has to understand these contexts.

The way I see it, Wilders has missed the whole context and has interpreted the verses based on his perceptions. How can he be right in his judgments when his biases are all there within? He interpreted the way he saw the verses according to his wrong perceptions. How can he then say that what he had produced in the film is truth?

One significant claim that he said was that Qur'an legitimizes violence. Again, that is a faulty statement; just a mere "human" understanding. He read the holy book with wrong motive and anger in his heart. Qur'an does not legitimise violence. However, Muslims are called to defend the faith whenever there's a need.

On women and rape, it is very wrong to state that the Qur'an allows it. The truth is, the holy book has high regard for women. Islamic history proves that women were given rights as early as 1,400 years ago. Women, under Islam, are not classified as second-class citizens. Moreover, they are allowed to own a property even before the western world has thought of it!

Women were admonished to wear a burqa, or cover themselves with clothes to protect themselves from men's prying and gazing eyes. The burqa serves as a safety measure, not just a traditional, religious dress. To avoid harassment, a Muslim woman wraps herself contrary to the western way of flaunting the body. It is a woman who wears skimpy mini-skirts and tight clothes that call a rapist's attention.

An Islamic Response

Times have been rough on Muslims these days in Netherlands. Amidst the insults, discrimination and the possibility of deportation, Muslims are called to show to the world what their religion stands for – that is peace, love and submission to the will of God.

On peace, Muslims are people of peace, not of violence. There are Muslim extremists but they are a minority. Every religion has fundamentalists among its ranks. Islam is not an exception or a special case. With all the troubles and violent reactions, Muslims still call for peace. It may be elusive but nothing beats a peaceful country brought by peaceful negotiations.

On love, Muslims have learned to love in spite of harassment. Though marginalized, love is the bond that transcends culture and religion. Love works in the midst of racial diversity and political turmoil. As a marginalized group struggling to live in increasingly hostile environment, a better option for violence and retaliation is love.

Muslims believe that every thing happens as willed by God. Muslims know that in every way, God has a purpose for allowing things to take place. God sees and someday, God will avenge for His people. With God, there is justice.

Likewise, Muslims recognized that Wilders is just a man from one political party that seeks to use them as a political tool for his own glory. Muslims acknowledged that Wilders is not representing the whole Netherlands, though he has much influence. Understanding the present situation is very critical. It is not a collective effort but a single man's effort.

Meanwhile, the use of expression or the vague liberty that has been attached to it, will not be tolerated by Muslims. Muslims have high regards for words and do not use words to defame, insult or profane other religion is unacceptable. Same principle applies with the media tools.

Further, Muslims condemn documentary irresponsible, irrational and very disrespectful. Muslims can always correct and point the errors included in the documentary. The said documentary is aimed at the whole global Muslim community or the ummah. Hence, it is an international concern.

Sheer ignorance on Islam made the film possible. Muslims feel sympathy toward the people behind the film's production. In the end, the Truth will always come out. It is hoped that the film will be rejected and come to its futile end.

In closing, Muslims deserve the respect that they need especially on the Qur'an. What Dutch people need is respect: on religion, race and ethnicity. It is a basic human right.

The Netherlands is proud to be of host to five international courts, bringing justice to other countries in the world. Isn't it high time that it brings justice among its own minority groups, especially the Muslims? They need it badly especially at this moment when Wilders is on the loose to deprive them of dignity.