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Double standards, anti-Muslim rhetoric, generalisations and spreading fear from their front pages – this is what some of the leading news organisations, as well as tabloids, have been criticised for since the tragic events on 9/11 in the US. Covering the Paris attacks, some journalists have failed to practice ethical reporting, did not fact-check and did not quote only reliable sources thus spreading xenophobia, hatred and discrimination.

Reporting on the Paris attacks should have been different than the forms of journalism we saw in the coverage of the Iraq war, the Ukraine and the refugee crisis. Most of the editors and reporters could have avoided repeating a monolithic approach to the Muslim population, as [CN N did assigning collective responsibility](#) to a Muslim civil right activist in Paris.

“It’s absolutely the really scary climate that has emerged in the wake of Paris—an extremely anti-Muslim strain of animosity that we’ve seen historically in the past and that is both ugly and really dangerous,” said the Pulitzer Prize winning journalist [Glen Greenwald](#) .

Italian magazine Libero got sued because of its front page headline “Bastardi Islamici” (Muslim Bastards), while the press regulator in the UK has received a record number of complaints about the claim by the British tabloid Sun that “1 in 5 Brit Muslims have sympathy for jihadis”. As [the Independent](#) reports, the newspaper’s interpretation of the poll data was called into question by numerous critics who noted that an earlier survey had shown that more than 30 per cent of non-Muslims had shown a degree of sympathy with young Muslims fighting in Syria.

How some Muslims might feel while reading anti-Muslim headlines and generalised, xenophobic and Islamophobic columns, could be summarised in the Guardian’s title [“The media have failed us’: British Muslims on coverage of the Paris attacks”](#)

“The media has treated this subject with a degree of sensitivity. But the tabloids are constantly injecting fear regarding the Islamic State, and about how the refugee crisis is causing strain on the EU. If the media continues to channel negativity, I think there’ll definitely be an impact on the Muslim community,” says 35-year old Jo for the Guardian.

One of the issues raised about media coverage of the attacks in Paris was why news organisations didn’t pay similar attention to the attacks in Beirut that killed 43 people a day earlier. “No monuments in Europe were lit up with the tricolour Lebanese flag; no Facebook safety check was turned on for Beirut residents; there was no one-click feature to allow Facebook users to add a Lebanese flag filter to their profile picture. Not many Western heads of state felt obliged to offer public condolences to Lebanon, a country of 4.4 million people which has [taken in](#) more than a million Syrian refugees,” Adam Rasmi, a reporter from Beirut, wrote in [London Review of Books](#).

But “the problem with this argument is that it oversimplifies the reality of news judgement,” reports [Columbia Journalism Review](#) explaining that media outlets have obligations to their audience. CJR reports that “it was a piece on an ISIS attack in Lebanon, tucked on page A6, that garnered more than [210,000 shares on social media](#) by Tuesday, five times more than the four Paris-related stories combined”.

Not only editorial lines and ethics, but also the language has been in the focus of analysis. [So me mainstream](#)

media, most notably
[the New York Times](#)

, described a suburb in Beirut where deadly attacks took place, as “Hezbollah stronghold”.

The New York Times later changed its headline, which had been already object of debate and criticism. “It’s not a neutral way to describe a civilian neighbourhood that has just been bombed. It implies that the civilians who live there are part of the military campaigns of the people who are in charge,” wrote [the Washington Post](#) concluding that “we don’t usually criticize the cultural values or the security measures of the place that has just been targeted. Instead, we talk about the victims — as we should for any city”.