

- [English](#)

5. Okt. 2016

- von Hakim Khatib
- in Terrorismus
- Kommentare ( 0 )

## Perfect Assassination of Jordanian Writer

by *Hakim Khatib*

*A Jordanian writer, accused of sharing a cartoon considered offensive to Islam, killed two weeks after his release from prison on bail.*

A perfect assassination starts with demonizing of a person and ends with a condemnation of the assassin.

On 25 September 2016, the prominent Jordanian writer Nahed Hattar, 56, was shot dead ahead of a trial before the courthouse in Jordan's capital Amman. He was accused of sharing a caricature deemed offensive to Islam on his Facebook page. Hattar was an outspoken leftist, secular writer and a self-described Christian atheist, known for his controversial views on issues regarding refugees, his support of Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad and his hostility to movements of political Islam.

According to the Jordanian state news agency *Petra*, an armed man fired three shots at the writer at close range in front of the courthouse ahead of a hearing.

The long-bearded shooter, who was wearing a long grey robe characteristic of ultra-conservative Muslims, was identified as the 49-year-old Jordanian imam Riad Ismail Ahmed Abdullah, from one of Amman's poor neighbourhoods – Hashmi. The perpetrator, Abdullah, was referred to the state security court on terrorism-related charges and might face the death penalty.

But why was Hattar arrested in the first place?

### Contempt of Religion

Hattar was arrested on 13 August 2016 on charges of insulting Islam upon sharing a cartoon on his Facebook page. The writer removed the post thereafter and wrote that the cartoon “mocks terrorists and their concept of God and heaven. It does not infringe God's divinity in any way”.

This is not the first time Hattar's life was endangered, but it was the last. Hattar's [family said](#) “the writer was given no protection by authorities” despite of him receiving hundreds of death threats recently. Although Hattar's family filed 200 names of people who had threatened the writer (including that of the assassin) and handed them over to the governor of Amman Khaled Abu Zeid, protection was [denied because there was, as estimated by the governor, “no real threat”](#).

Upon sharing that cartoon on social media, a storm of hysteria blew against Hattar, led by lawyers and media campaigns, mainly by Al-Jazeera and well-known individuals such as the Jordanian Prime Minister Hani Mulqi, who ordered an investigation into the issue, which resulted in multiple charges against Hattar.

Hattar was charged with “inciting sectarian strife” and publishing material that offends “other people’s religious feelings” under articles 150 and 278 of Jordan’s penal code. In addition to these accusations, Hattar has become the anti-Islam devil, who purposely [causes offence to Jordanian Muslims](#). On 13 August when Hattar was arrested, Al-Jazeera reported that: “Jordan’s Muslim Brotherhood issued a statement in response to Hattar’s comments that called on the government to take strong measures against those who publish seditious material that undermined national unity”.

Noting that freedom of expression is protected for all but within the constitutional and legal limitations, [Mulqi said few weeks ago that](#) he will not tolerate crossing the red lines of the sacred, and that the laws will be firmly applied on all those who commit such intrusive practices in the religious and conservative Jordanian society, which always defends the sanctity of religion.

Hattar denied the charges and commented before closing his account on Facebook:

“Those who were offended by the drawing are of two types: Good-intentioned people, who didn’t understand that the intended irony of the cartoon mocks how terrorist Daesh militants and the Muslim brotherhood envision God and heaven. I respect and appreciate those people.” The second type, he continued, represents “Islamists and Daesh sympathizers, who hold a pathological imagination of man’s relationship with the divine. They took advantage of the caricature to settle political issues that have nothing to do with what they claim.”

After all, Hattar shared the cartoon. He didn’t draw it.

But why is the cartoon offensive?

### **Heaven in a Jihadist Mind**

The cartoon is offensive because it is simply cynical. The cartoon depicts Allah opening the flap of a tent and having a conversation with a bearded man, who is smoking in bed with two women asking Allah to serve him wine and take empty plates with him.

While the cartoon portrays heaven, there are three sarcastic captions beside the drawing and they read as follows:

Allah: “May your evening be joyous, Abu Saleh, are you in need of anything?”

Jihadist: “Yes Lord, bring me a glass of wine from over there and tell Angel Gabriel to bring me some cashews. Afterwards, send me an eternal servant to clean the floor, and take the empty plates with you.”

Jihadist continues: “Don’t forget to install a door for the tent so that you knock before you enter next time. You are glorious!”

Parody involving Islam has inspired violence in various countries across the world and is still one of the most sensitive, yet dangerous forms of expression.

### **Persistent Controversy**

Although many journalists and human rights activists condemned the assassination of Hattar and considered the attack a staggering assault against humanity, there are some who celebrated the assassination and considered the attack a victory against blasphemy.

While social media accounts of prominent conservatives were celebrating Hattar’s death, saying he deserved it for blasphemy, official response of the Jordanian government was mustered with condemnation. This,

however, wasn't the case before the murder happened.

Upon his sharing of the cartoon, a backlash lambasting Hattar swept conservative and non-conservative social media, in which people called on the government to arrest him. He was even attacked for being Christian and a secularist.

There are further reports that question the government's role of creating a hostile atmosphere that incites violence, especially that judiciary, Jordanian government, and several writers, lawyers and journalists, had demonized Hattar over the past weeks, which made him a target for extremism.

The violence-encouraging atmosphere created by governments in Arab countries is not novel. [There are other examples of which writers were criminalized](#) or put to death such as the stories of Farag Foda, Islam Al-Buhairi, Sayed Al-Qemany, Naguib Mahfouz, Nasr Abu Zayd, Haidar Haidar, Mohammad Wild Imkheter, Fatima Naoot, Ashraf Fayyad, Karam Saber and many others.

Contrary to previous governmental accusations of Hattar, a government spokesman Mohammad Momani described the shooting as a "heinous act" and commented that: "The law will be strictly enforced on the culprit who did this criminal act."

Calling on the people of the Jordanian society of all faiths and backgrounds to stand united behind the leadership of the Hashemite family against terrorism and troublemakers, the General Dar Al-Iftaa (the house of religious regulations) denounced the killing of Hatter, stressing that "the religion of Islam is innocent of this heinous crime."

Expectedly, the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan also condemned killing Hatter. Badi Rafayeh, Muslim Brotherhood spokesman in Jordan, said that the group "condemns this heinous attack".

"We warn against inciting communal strife and invite everyone to maintain security and stability in our beloved country," he added.

These statements remain controversial because they are exactly contrary to what was said before the writer's death. The problem doesn't lie in a so-called divide between secularists and the Muslim brotherhood in the Jordanian society, as was suggested by Western media. Jordanian authorities, considered secular by Western standards, have been instrumental in creating such a hostile atmosphere against free thinkers. Suffice to say that streamlining laws to criminalise writers on the ground of insulting religion seem to be profoundly divisive. Condemnation of the attack inside Jordan was loud after Hattar's death and equally so was the demonization of him before his death. Is this a perfect assassination?

---

**[Hakim Khatib](#)** is a political scientist works as a lecturer for politics and culture of the Middle East, intercultural communication and journalism at Fulda and Darmstadt Universities of Applied Sciences and Phillips University Marburg. Hakim is a PhD candidate in political science on struggle over ideological power in the Middle East and the link thereof to democracy at the University of Duisburg-Essen and the editor-in-chief of the Mashreq Politics and Culture Journal ([MPC Journal](#)).

---

Tags: [cartoon](#), [facebook](#), [islamism](#), [Jordan](#), [social media](#)

[« Waffenruhe und Flugverbot – ein Plädoyer für klare Worte  
Neuer Blogfokus: Terrorismusbekämpfung – Strategien und Herausforderungen »](#)

Bislang keine Kommentare

**[Einen Kommentar hinterlassen](#)**

Name

Email

Webseite

Kommentar

Ich bin kein Roboter.

reCAPTCHA

[Datenschutzerklärung](#) - [Nutzungsbedingungen](#)

Benachrichtige mich über nachfolgende Kommentare per E-Mail.

## Social Media



## Suche

## Twitter Feed

- Wird schon helfen: Martin Kahl vom IFSH zu Datenbankfusion in der EU zur Terrorbekämpfung <https://t.co/o3hwylT9bd>  
[13. Oktober 2016, 11:14](#) from [TweetDeck](#)
- An analysis of the UK's Counter-Terrorism Strategy, CONTEST, and the challenges in its evaluation by [@enibhradaigh](#)  
<https://t.co/AhV3Vf6tig>  
[10. Oktober 2016, 10:15](#) from [Twitterrific](#)
- Über die nächsten Wochen bei uns: Neuer Blogfokus: Terrorismusbekämpfung – Strategien und Herausforderungen  
<https://t.co/ONhcDRS074>  
[7. Oktober 2016, 11:14](#) from [TweetDeck](#)

## Tags

BELIEBT KOMMENTARE NEU

Preparing for (intellectual) civil war – the New Right in Austria and Germany

"War in peace. The return of civil war in Mozambique?"

Waffenruhe und Flugverbot – ein Plädoyer für klare Worte

Linkhinweis: Berlinangst. Ein Podcast zum Umgang Berlins mit der Terrorbedrohung

Der Aufstieg und Fall Swobodas: Restrukturierung im ukrainischen Nationalismus

## Kategorien

- [Außenpolitik](#) (72)
- [Bürgerkriege](#) (27)
- [Cyber Security](#) (53)
- [Demokratisierung](#) (14)
- [Digitalisierung](#) (1)
- [Drohnen](#) (15)
- [Entwicklung](#) (1)
- [Europa](#) (2)
- [Flüchtlinge](#) (18)
- [Genozid](#) (1)
- [Humanitäre Interventionen](#) (15)
- [Innere Sicherheit](#) (34)
- [Interviews](#) (10)
- [Katastrophen](#) (4)
- [Konferenz](#) (32)
- [Militär](#) (31)
- [Pandemien](#) (3)
- [Podcast](#) (8)
- [Popkultur](#) (23)
- [Raketenabwehr](#) (1)
- [Rechtsradikalismus](#) (27)
- [Sanktionen](#) (8)
- [Security Culture](#) (27)
- [Sicherheits-Kommunikation](#) (16)
- [Sicherheitskultur](#) (244)
- [Sozialwissenschaft Online](#) (72)
- [Stellenangebote](#) (58)
- [Strategie](#) (12)

- [Terrorismus](#) (71)
- [Theorie](#) (5)
- [Umwelt](#) (2)
- [Versicherheitlichung](#) (23)
- [Visualisierung](#) (6)
- [Whistleblowing](#) (8)
- [WikiLeaks](#) (17)
- [WMD](#) (10)
- [Zivilgesellschaft](#) (67)

## Blogroll

-  [Arbeitskreis soziale Bewegungen](#)
-  [Augen geradaus](#)
-  [Dan Drezner](#)
-  [Dart-Throwing Chimp](#)
-  [David Campbell](#)
-  [de.hypotheses.org](#)
-  [Demokratieforschung Göttingen](#)
-  [Duck Of Minerva](#)
-  [Future and Politics](#)
- [Hylaeon Flow](#)
-  [Internet und Politik](#)
-  [IR Blog](#)
-  [Just Security Blog](#)
-  [justsecurity.org](#)
-  [Killer Apps](#)
-  [Kings Of War](#)
- [MPC Journal – Muslim Politics and Culture](#)
-  [netzpolitik.org](#)
- [percepticon](#)
-  [shabka.org](#)
-  [Terrorismus in Deutschland](#)
-  [theorieblog.de](#)
-  [Verfassungsblog](#)
-  [Vom Bohren harter Bretter](#)
-  [whistleblower-net.de](#)

## Archiv

Archiv  ▼



Dieses Werk bzw. Inhalt steht unter einer [Creative Commons Namensnennung-NichtKommerziell-KeineBearbeitung 3.0 Unported](#)

Lizenz.

Über diese Lizenz hinausgehende Erlaubnisse können Sie unter [redaktion@sicherheitspolitik-blog.de](mailto:redaktion@sicherheitspolitik-blog.de) erhalten

[Impressum](#) | [Datenschutz](#) |

