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Putin, Charlie Hebdo, and Free Speech

by [Anna Borshchevskaya](#)

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



[Anna Borshchevskaya](#)

Anna Borshchevskaya is a senior fellow at The Washington Institute, focusing on Russia's policy toward the Middle East.



Articles & Testimony

As the Kremlin continues to undermine Western values, institutions, and influence while expressing distorted views of counterterrorism, liberals would do well to keep defending liberalism.

At his annual press conference this month, Russian President Vladimir Putin claimed that Western multiculturalism has failed. He made the comment in response to a question about security threats to Russia after recent terrorist attacks in France because of Prophet Muhammad cartoons in satirical French magazine Charlie Hebdo. “A person’s freedom ends where another person’s freedom begins. This is a universal formula,” Putin claimed, and added that those who “act thoughtlessly, insulting the rights and feelings of religious people, should always remember there will be an inevitable backlash.” Meanwhile, it turns out, Putin’s Russia can stifle domestic dissent, use the Russian Orthodox Church as a political tool, abuse its own Muslims, and help Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad perpetuate one of the worst humanitarian atrocities since World War II against his own Muslim people...

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WASHINGTON INSTITUTE
for Near East Policy

1111 19th Street NW - Suite 500
Washington D.C. 20036
Tel: 202-452-0650
Fax: 202-223-5364

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