

Paris attacks: Grieving over slain wife, man sends open letter to IS

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Paris: A Parisian's open letter to the killers of his wife is moving nations to tears as it spreads on social media and television.

Antoine Leiris' wife, Helene Muyal-Leiris, was among the 89 slain in the Bataclan concert hall Friday night. His original letter in French on his Facebook page has been shared nearly 200,000 times since Monday and has been translated into several other languages being read by millions.

The BBC filmed Leiris, a radio journalist, reading his English version and broadcast it Wednesday night. His message powerfully combines the poetry of a love letter with a grief-defying determination to rise above evil.

“I will not give you the gift of hating you. Responding to hatred with anger would be to give in to the same ignorance that has made you what you are,” Leiris told the attackers, reading aloud in English. “You want me to be afraid. To cast a mistrustful eye on my fellow citizens. To sacrifice my freedom for security. You lost.”

Leiris then describes how he identified his wife's body in the morgue.

“I saw her this morning. She was just as beautiful as she was when she left home Friday evening, as beautiful as when I fell madly in love with her more than 12 years ago,” he said, accompanied by a montage of scenes from the attacks, their aftermath and a portrait of his 35-year-old wife holding the couple's 17-month-old son, Melvil. “Of course I am devastated with grief, I will give you that tiny victory, but this will be a short-term grief. I know that she will join us every day and that we will find each other again in a paradise of free souls, which you will never have access to.”

His conclusion, not broadcast, emphasizes Leiris' determination to ensure he raises Melvil “happy and free. Because no, you will not have his hatred either.” “Because no, you will not have his hatred either.”

- AP