



No Outrage When Arab Paper Published the Muhammad Cartoons

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While Muslims across the world have rioted in the past week against countries whose newspapers have published cartoons of the prophet Muhammad, there was no uproar when the same caricatures were prominently displayed in an Arab newspaper four months ago.

The images originating in Denmark's Jyllands-Posten (click [here](#)) in September were reportedly featured on the cover and inside pages of Egypt's al-Fagr (the Dawn) in October, during the holy month of Ramadan.

According to the [Freedom for Egyptians](#) blog, al-Fagr included the cartoons on the front cover and page 17 of its edition dated Oct. 17. The headline, when translated, is said to read: "Continued Boldness. Mocking the Prophet and his wife by Caricature."

"The Egyptian paper criticized the bad taste of the cartoons but it did not incite hatred protests," notes the blog. "It would have been better that this [current] holy war against Denmark be launched during the holy month of Ramadan as many Muslims believe that Jihad during Ramadan would have been more worthy. This irrelevant outrage timing is but a sign that this violent response to the cartoons is politically motivated by Muslim extremists in Europe and the so-called secular governments of the Middle East. I want also to mention that despite the fact that all editors who tried to reprint the cartoons in the Middle East nowadays were arrested, the Egyptian editors went unharmed."



Muhammad cartoons on page 17 of Egypt's al-Fagr newspaper in October 2005 (courtesy: Egyptian Sandmonkey blog)

To date, at least 10 people have been killed in Afghanistan alone from Muslim riots in connection with the cartoons, though protests have been taking place in many countries throughout Europe and the Mideast. Some 4,000 angry Muslims took to the streets of the Egyptian capital of Cairo this week, though there were no protests when al-Fagr published the images during Ramadan in October.

Interestingly, an Associated Press story in the Khaleej Times of the United Arab Emirates reports al-Fagr reprinted copies of the cartoons this week, but published only "the upper half of some of the controversial cartoons, omitting any facial representations. Adel Hamoudah, editor of al-Fagr, said he took copies of the cartoons from the Internet for the Tuesday edition and published them as a means of emphasizing their 'impudence.' He did not explain, however, why he chose only to print the upper half of the caricatures."

It's not clear if the paper even mentioned it previously published the entire images on its cover and interior in October.

"This tells me one thing, at least, and that is the Egyptians who get this newspaper and who took to the streets are either incredibly stupid, hypocritical, or both," said an anonymous poster on FFE's blog. "They are stupid because they believe what they're told by the Arab press in the previous week without checking for the facts. They are hypocritical if they protested the second time they saw the cartoons and not protested when it was first printed. Here, I'm going to go out on a limb and say 'both.'"

Meanwhile in the U.S., the AP, the largest news-gathering organization in the world, is being attacked by a California newspaper editor over the wire service's refusal to distribute the cartoons of Muhammad.



Muhammad cartoon on Egypt's al-Fagr newspaper cover in October 2005 (courtesy: Freedom for Egyptians)

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"But what is incredible is that the Associated Press, which distributes news stories and photos from across the globe, has decided that you shouldn't see it," writes editor Don Holland of the Daily Press in Victorville, Calif. "What is offensive is that AP fancies itself to be the guardian of good taste for thousands of American newspapers rather than letting individual newspapers make that decision.

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