

Vulgar Prophet Muhammad Cartoons Could Prove Deadly for Christians

The last day or two have been without blaring headlines describing Muslim rioting over the anti-Islam film, but that could soon change.

A French magazine this week published vulgar caricatures of the **Prophet Muhammad**, despite government entreaties not to publish the images. In response, the French government ordered embassies and schools to close Friday in about 20 countries.

The incident is likely to raise tensions that were already dangerously high. It follows days of violent protests from Asia to Africa against the film *Innocence of Muslims* and turned France into a potential target of Muslim rage.

But don't be fooled, says Rae Burnett with Christian Aid Mission. As she sees it, the film was just a pretext for the rising tide of violence.

"Since the violence has subsided, nothing has gotten better because these believers are in grave danger," Burnett says. "They're afraid of being slaughtered because everything is intensifying."

That concern is magnified by the feeling of isolation. "Extremists are overtly burning churches and **persecuting** Christians and kidnapping their children ... just terrible things far surpassing what they used to experience, and the world is silent."

Burnett says the real story is the uncertainty. Christian Aid supports indigenous ministries who seek to engage the lost people of Egypt through holding house meetings, setting up

Bible training, and doing evangelistic outreach.

“One of these guys called me the first day of the rioting in Egypt and said, ‘They’re burning Bibles in front of the U.S. embassy.’ They were doing those kinds of things just to show their hostility, and they were burning churches and things that weren’t reported,” Burnett claims.

The threat plays out on the political stage, but Burnett says it’s all **spiritual warfare**.

“We’re seeing it in a political environment because that’s the environment through which this takes place,” she says. “But the point is to destroy the work of the Lord and to destroy those who might come into the kingdom, to keep people in darkness.”

With that in mind, workers Christian Aid Mission supporters haven’t fled.

“It hasn’t diminished any of their efforts. The main group that we help just had a conference of their workers, training their workers and **praying** together to ask the Lord for direction,” Burnett says. “So they are going forward in the work, but they are really discouraged about the political situation and the future of Christianity in Egypt.”

They’re careful, but they won’t be intimidated. Burnett says the Coptic Church is targeted because it has a noticeable presence in Egypt. However, the people Christian Aid Mission is helping generally meet in homes.

“They might have an office somewhere if they can afford that, so they’re less of a target,” she explains. “Of course, because of their evangelistic efforts, people know who they are.”

Amid the violence and persecution, the gospel is still going forward. Burnett says it’s about standing shoulder-to-shoulder

with the worn out believers of Egypt and advancing together:
“We have to understand that and **pray** accordingly and act
accordingly to be lights in the darkness.”