The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Chechnya Plans Mass Rally to Protest Prophet Muhammad Cartoons

By The Moscow Times

January 15, 2015



A man holds the new issue of satirical French weekly Charlie Hebdo entitled "Tout est pardonne" ("All is forgiven"), which shows a caricature of Prophet Mohammad, at a kiosk in Nice on Jan. 14, 2015.

Authorities in Russia's mainly Muslim republic of Chechnya on Wednesday announced a large-scale protest against publications "insulting" the prophet Muhammad.

"The initiator of the event was the republic's spiritual leadership, which has condemned any form of terror ... They also denounce any actions that directly or indirectly insult the Prophet Muhammad," a statement on the administration's official website said Wednesday.

Although a date has not yet been set for the rally, Chechen authorities promised in the statement that "several hundred thousand people will take part" to protest the publication of cartoons of the prophet in the Western media.

After a deadly terrorist attack last week on the Paris offices of French satirical magazine

Charlie Hebdo, apparently carried out in revenge for the publication's depictions of Muhammad, several Western media outlets republished the controversial cartoons in a show of support for freedom of speech.

In response, Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov vowed to mobilize demonstrators if any Russian news agencies followed suit, saying on his Instagram page Friday that he would bring "millions of people to their feet across the world to march in protest against those who repeat insults against Muslims' religious sentiment."

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