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This document provides an overview of developments in the Mediterranean Basin and other regions of interest from 11 – 17 September, with hyperlinks to source material highlighted and underlined in the text. For more information on the topics below or other issues pertaining to the region, please contact the members of the Med Basin Team, or visit our website at www.cimicweb.org.



**In Focus: Recent Anti-US Protests
By Trista Guertin**

The derogatory depiction of Islam and the Prophet Mohammad in a film made in the United States is responsible for setting off a maelstrom of anti-US protests at embassies throughout the Middle East and at least [20 other countries](#) around the world. The English-language movie, disseminated under several titles, including “Innocence of Muslims”, has offended some Muslims by mocking the Prophet Mohammad. Originally created in 2011, a trailer of the film was uploaded to YouTube several months ago and began circulating widely earlier in the week of 11 September. The film was allegedly [produced](#) by a California man, who was subsequently taken in for questioning by US officials on 15 September, reports *Reuters*.

Events began when Egypt’s conservative [Salafi Muslims](#), who had already planned protests outside the US Embassy in Cairo for 11 September, were informed of the film after clips were shown on an ultra-conservative Islamic television show on 09 September. On 11 September, as approximately 2,000 Egyptian protesters gathered at the embassy, a small number of protesters scaled the embassy walls and pulled down the American flag, replacing it with a black banner with the words “There is no God but Allah and Mohammad is his messenger”. Protests continued for several days, [shutting down](#) the US Embassy until 16 September, when Egyptian security forces were able to restore order around the embassy and in nearby Tahrir Square. While the [initial protest](#) on 11 September comprised mostly older Salafis, by Thursday, the protesters reportedly comprised mainly young men and boys, according to the *Daily News*.

(continued on page 8)



North Africa

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Algeria

Algerian and foreign experts called for the creation of a special commission to protect the [rights of refugees](#) fleeing conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa at a workshop organised by the National Consultative Committee for Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (CNCPPDH), informs *Magharebia*. Recently, Algeria has received an influx of refugees, as improved social and economic conditions make the country an attractive settlement point. A lack of adequate legal protection, however, has left many women and children vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Workshop participants discussed local integration, access to education and healthcare and the repatriation of unaccompanied minors, many of whom are victims of trafficking. However, Algeria rejected European proposals to establish permanent or temporary centres for sheltering refugees.

Algeria hosted a [summit on counter-terrorism](#) in North Africa and the Sahel on 12 and 13 September, informs the *Nigeria Guardian*. The conference, co-organised by the European Union's Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Centres of Excellence and the United Nations' Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), aimed to improve regional capacity to fight illicit trafficking and reduce the risk of improvised weapons.

Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) [confirmed the death](#) of Nabil Makloufi, an Algerian member of the group, who was killed in a road traffic accident on 08 September. Makloufi, a long-standing member of AQIM, coordinated its operations in Northern Mali, and was responsible for explosive weapons as well as hostage negotiations, reports *AFP*.

Libya

Riots which started in Egypt on 11 September rapidly [spilled into Libya](#) and resulted in the death of US Ambassador Christopher Stevens, and three other staff members at the US Consulate in Benghazi, *Reuters* informs. Libyan President Mohamed Magarief and US President Barack Obama [agreed to cooperate](#) on apprehending those responsible for the killings, reports *NBC*. On 13 September, *Jerusalem Post* reported that Libyan authorities [arrested four men](#) suspected of "helping instigate the events at the US Consulate" said the Libyan Deputy Interior Minister Wanis Sharif. On 16 September, Libyan officials announced that up to fifty people had been [arrested](#) for their alleged involvement in the attacks, *Al Jazeera* informed. Moreover, on 17 September [Libya sacked](#) the Deputy Interior Minister Wanis Sharif and the head of national security for Benghazi, Hassan Bou Hmida, reports *Reuters*. Colonel Salahdeen Doghman will replace these officials. Meanwhile, Google [blocked access](#) in Libya to the clip which had been circulated on YouTube, reports *Economic Times*.

In a report for the UN Security Council, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon raised questions about justice for [conflict-related detainees](#) in Libya and urged the Libyan authorities to either charge or release approximately 7,000 detainees, most of whom are held in government facilities without being charged and are vulnerable to mistreatment, informs *United Kingdom Press Association (UKPA)*. The Secretary General expressed concerns that "[a]ssurances from Libyan officials that incidents of torture or mistreatment would be investigated and perpetrators duly punished have not been translated into effective action". Judges and prosecutors face threats from revolutionary brigades, and Gaddafi loyalists have obstructed judicial proceedings in most parts of the country.

Libya's interim President Mohammad el-Megarif visited the [town of Bani Walid](#), where a majority of residents are loyal to the former leader Moammar Gaddafi, reports *Associated Press (AP)*. Parliament spokesman Omar al-Houmidan said the aim of the president's visit was to achieve national reconciliation. Residents agreed to hand over anyone wanted for crimes and to release three prisoners, one of whom is a revolutionary fighter from the group who captured Gaddafi.

Morocco

Hundreds of protesters [gathered outside](#) the US Consulate in Casablanca on 12 September for anti-American protest, reports *AFP*. Moreover, about 200 hard-line Islamists gathered in the town of Sale on 14 September, where they burned US flags and shouted anti-US slogans. Morocco's King Mohammed VI [offered his condolences](#) to US Secretary of State Hilary Clinton over the killing of US Ambassador Chris Stevens in Benghazi, Libya, informs the *Daily Star*. He also condemned the movie that caused a stir in the region in a statement that appeared in the state news agency *MAP*.

Moroccan authorities [increased security](#) in El Aaiun, the capital of occupied Western Sahara, before the visit of United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture, Juan E. Mendez, on 15 September, according to *Sahara Press Service*. The authorities also removed dozens of Saharawi prisoners from the Black Jail in El Aaiun, and sent a delegation, which included representatives of the Human Rights Council, to visit Saharawi prisoners to "calm them down" prior to the visit. In a related story, Eric Goldstein, Human Rights Watch's (HRW) deputy Middle East and North Africa director, said five activists convicted last week were "sent to jail on the basis

of confessions obtained [under torture](#) while refusing to summon the complainants to be heard in court”, reports *Reuters*.

In economic news, Morocco’s [trade deficit](#) rose to 6.1% in the period January to August 2012, compared to a year earlier, reports *Reuters*. In addition, tourism revenues fell about 5%, due to a decrease in visitors from Europe, which is the main source of foreign tourists for Morocco. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) granted a USD 6.2 billion line of credit to the country in case of a sudden economic deterioration. Prime Minister Abdelilah Benkirane of Morocco presented the [2013 Finance Act](#), which proposes spending cuts, informs *Magharebia*. Benkirane urged civil servants to cut spending on extra expenditures such as foreign travel, new vehicles, or construction of new homes and offices. The government will also limit the public sector recruitment to maintain a 3.4% growth rate. Minister-Delegate for the budget, Idriss Azami El Idrissi, said that, with the new finance act, the government is aiming to “maintain the level of investment in social sectors including health, education and social housing”.

Tunisia

Thousands [gathered](#) in front of the US Embassy in Tunis and clashed with the police on 14 September to protest the movie ridiculing the Prophet Mohammad, reports *AP*. Dozens of protesters were able to briefly enter to the compound where they burned cars and raised a banner with a Muslim profession of faith. The protesters also burned an American school near the compound and prevented fire-fighters from approaching the building to extinguish the fire. Police responded with tear gas and gunshots. The events left two dead and about forty injured.

The president of Tunisia’s Organisation Against Torture, Radhia Nasraoui, alleged that the [torture of detainees](#) in Tunisian prisons has not stopped since the ouster of the former President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, reports *Reuters*. Amnesty International backed Nasraoui’s claims. A Justice Ministry spokesman denied the allegations. Tunisian authorities, however, have said that [four police officers](#) were detained on suspicion of torturing Abderraouf Khamassi, who was arrested on charges of robbery on 28 August, reports *AP*. Khamassi went into “deep coma” during his questioning and was hospitalised before he subsequently died.

Secretary of State for Immigration and Tunisian Expatriates Houcine Jaziri said the [search for missing](#) Tunisian nationals off the island of Lampedusa continues as of 11 September, informs *Tunis Afrique Presse*. The Italian Coast Guard rescued 56 people and recovered two bodies, while the remainder of the 79 passengers from the sunken boat are still missing. Jaziri stated that “Tunisia is ready to make a plane available to those people wishing to return home”.

The journalists of the Dar Assabah group, which publishes *Le Temps* and *Assabah*, [went on strike](#) to protest the new director of the group, Lotfi Touati, whom they allege “[compromised] the independence of its French- and Arabic-language publications”, according to *AP*. The strike on 11 September was the first example of such an action since the ouster of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali last year.

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Northeast Africa

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Egypt

Over 2,000 protesters gathered outside the [US Embassy](#) in Cairo on 11 September, in retaliation for anti-Islam video made in the US, which purportedly insulted the Prophet Mohammad, reports *Al Jazeera*. Protesters climbed over embassy walls, destroying the American flag and replacing it with a black banner, similar to ones used by al Qaeda. [Riot police](#) and protesters continued to clash throughout the week, resulting in one death and several hundred arrests, reports *CNN*. Egyptian [President Morsi](#) was criticised for reacting slowly to Tuesday's attack on the embassy. With Egyptian-US relations already strained following the removal of President Mubarak in 2011, President Obama called Egypt neither an ally nor an enemy, indicating that "relations with Egypt will be shaped by how the country responds to the violence". Subsequently, [Prime Minister Qandil](#) visited the American Embassy, reports the *NY Times*, to express his support and called for the West to strike a balance between freedom of expression and respect for other people's beliefs. Egypt has subsequently reinforced security around the embassy. The US Embassy [reopened](#) on 16 September after shutting its doors for five days, reports *Ahram Online*.

Violence in the [Sinai Peninsula](#) continues, according to *BBC*, as suspected Islamic militants launched attacks on Egyptian security posts, wounding three and killing one in separate incidents on 16 September. Suspected Islamic militants also stormed the base of an international [peacekeeping force](#) near the Gaza-Israel border, wounding four officers on 15 September, according to *Israel National News*. The base accommodates around [1,500 multinational troops](#), who are part of a force established under the 1979 peace accord between Egypt and Israel. Egyptian security forces have recently mounted the largest counter-terrorism operation in decades in Sinai after [terrorists killed 16 border guards](#) on 05 August. President Morsi has promised to restore order in the area, as attacks by [Islamist militants](#) on Egyptian security posts in Sinai and the Israeli border have increased over the past year.

[Sudan's President](#) Omar al-Bashir met with President Morsi in Cairo on 16 September, reports *CNN*. Though Bashir is wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) on charges of war crimes, he spent two days in Egypt to discuss regional issues, including development and Nile River water rights. Egyptian authorities, following the lead of the African Union, which has pressed members not to heed the charges, disregarded calls to cancel the meeting or arrest the Sudanese leader; Egypt is not a member of the ICC.

Despite continued unrest within Egypt, President Morsi continued to pursue his foreign policy objectives, seeking, in particular, much needed economic aid and investment. In his first [trip to Europe](#) since his election earlier this year, Morsi met with European Union (EU) officials in Belgium on 13 September to discuss the economy and other political and diplomatic topics, reports *EUBusiness*. Morsi then flew to Rome, one of Egypt's most important economic partners in Europe. The latest contribution to bolster the flagging Egyptian economy has been [pledged by Turkey](#), which has committed USD 2 billion in financing, reports *Ahram Online*.

South Sudan

The vice-president's press secretary, James Gatdet Dak, told the *Sudan Tribune* that South Sudan was making efforts to [import fuel](#) to ease the fuel crisis which has severely affected business in the country. Towns are experiencing blackouts and hundreds of vehicles are lined up at gas stations. Public electricity in the capital has been cut for two weeks, forcing government offices to close early. Electricity and Dams Minister David Deng Athorbei blames the power cuts on the shutdown of oil production in January 2012, which resulted in the loss of South Sudan's only source of hard currency – thereby making it more difficult to import fuel. He told *Reuters* that the country aims to complete two [power projects](#) worth USD 350 million by 2015. The lack of oil production has disrupted various other development projects, as investors have denied loans until oil flows resume. For example, Higher Education, Science and Technology Minister Peter Adwok Nyaba stated that South Sudan plans to build five new [university campuses](#) with USD 2.5 billion in oil-backed loans from China, reports *Reuters*. The project was slated to start this year and be completed by 2017; however, the shutdown of oil production has forced delays. An oil official said on 12 September that once oil production resumes, the country could yield at least [300,000 barrels](#) per day (bpd); however, full production is unlikely to be reached until mid-2013, reports *Reuters*.

South Sudan army spokesman Col. Phillip Aguer said that South Sudanese soldiers [accidentally sank](#) one of their own boats carrying 170 soldiers on the Nile River, mistaking them for enemy forces, reports the *Associated Press (AP)*. At least ten soldiers are reported dead and fifty more are still missing. Prior to the incident, high ranking government officials held consultative meetings to discuss the country's numerous security issues and ways to improve the organisation and [professionalism](#) of the national army (SPLA), reports the *Sudan Tribune*. In other military-related news, the SPLA dismissed rebel claims that two groups of disaffected soldiers [staged mutinies](#) in Upper Nile and Lakes states, according to the *Sudan Tribune*. In Jonglei state, a rebel leader, David Yau Yau, is gaining more local support following an unpopular government [disarmament campaign](#) in the area, reports *Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN)*. The disarmament campaign began in March and officials claim to have collected 12,000 guns; however,

there were reports of abuse as well as theft of food and other humanitarian aid by soldiers during the campaign.

Sudan

In a recent [escalation](#) in the southern states of Sudan, Sudanese armed forces attacked Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) rebels in South Kordofan, killing eighteen people on 10 September, reports *Reuters*. Ambassador Daffa-Alla Elhag Ali Osman, Permanent Representative of Sudan to the United Nations, met with UN Secretary General [Ban Ki-moon](#) on 14 September and urged him to apply pressure on the South Sudanese government to cease their support for the SPLM-N, reports the *Sudan Tribune*. Juba and SPLM-N deny the accusations. A [SPLM-N delegation](#) is visiting the United States to hold talks with government officials and to mobilise political parties and civil society support for their cause in Sudan, reports the *Sudan Tribune*. The SPLM-N and its allies in Darfur aim to establish a new regime in Khartoum. An Arab League representative in Khartoum stated that the [humanitarian operation](#) in the zones held by the Sudanese rebels in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states will be launched within the next two weeks, reports the *Sudan Tribune*. The announcement followed a coordination meeting between delegates of the tripartite humanitarian initiative of the African Union (AU), Arab League and UN, and the head of Sudan's Humanitarian Aid Commission. The envoy stated that the delay in aid was the result of routine procedures related to the selection of technical committee members.



Sudanese refugees gather in a makeshift shelter after being displaced by conflict in [Southern Kordofan](#) (UN Photo_Paul Banks)

The Sudanese Ministry of Oil has expressed dissatisfaction over the slow pace of [oil exploration](#) activities in East Darfur state, reports the *Sudan Tribune*. In October 2010, Sudan announced the start of oil exploration activities in three areas of southeast Darfur, a region affected by an eight year conflict. The oil minister asked the governor to provide security for the next three months to companies conducting geological surveys in the area. Over the last month, violence has continued to increase in the Darfur region, with the state news agency *SUNA* reporting on 11 September that rebels [killed eleven civilians](#) during an attack on a market and an area used by artisanal miners, according to *Reuters*. The Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), the largest rebel group in Darfur, has issued a Command Order mandating the demobilisation of [child soldiers](#) from their ranks and prohibiting their recruitment in the future, reports the *Sudan Tribune*. Other rebel groups supporting the measure include the Sudan Liberation Movement of Abdel Wahid Al-Nur and the Liberation and Justice Movement.

Humanitarian Issues along Sudan and South Sudan Border

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has expressed concern about the [welfare of refugees](#) in four camps in Maban County, Upper Nile state of South Sudan, due to recent heavy rains. The UN has also expressed fears that another [influx of refugees](#) into South Sudan when the heavy rains stop could quickly overburden the camps and undermine recent modest improvements in the refugee camps, where nutrition has improved and malnutrition has dropped from around 40% to 26%, reports *Voice of America (VOA)*. UNHCR has called on relief agencies to scale up operations in expectation of more refugees. Government authorities and the UN reported that sixteen people have died from an outbreak of the [Hepatitis E](#) virus in three South Sudanese refugee camps, reports *Reuters*. Almost 400 cases of the virus have been reported by South Sudan's Ministry of Health since the outbreak was identified in July. The daily rise in cases is "placing immense pressure on the available health services and resources" and is becoming a "grave humanitarian concern", the ministry said in a joint statement with UN agencies. There is concern that the virus could spread to local people who have less access to healthcare than those in the camps. Hepatitis E mostly affects young people between the ages of 15 and 40 and is particularly dangerous for [pregnant women](#). Among the refugees who have died, five were pregnant.

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Horn of Africa

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Ethiopia

Hailemariam Desalegn, the current Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, [has been approved](#) by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), Ethiopia's ruling coalition, to become the next Prime Minister of Ethiopia, informs *Reuters*. Hailemariam is scheduled to take the oath of office at the beginning of October.

To mark the start of Ethiopia's New Year on 12 September, more than 1,950 prisoners [have been pardoned](#), reports Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Included in the pardon were two Swedish journalists, Johan Persson and Martin Schibbye, who had been incarcerated since July 2011, after receiving an eleven-year jail sentence for supporting terrorism and crossing the border illegally. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) called on the Ethiopian government [to release](#) six additional journalists convicted under the anti-terrorism law. Shimelis Kemal, State Minister of the Government Communications Affairs Office, reiterated Ethiopia's commitment to [guarantee freedom](#) of the press, as enshrined in the constitution, by "enabling them [to] undertake journalistic activities without any threat", reports *Walta Information Center (WIC)*.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) urges Ethiopia [to slow](#) construction of the USD 4.5 billion Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, in order to allocate money to other relevant development projects, reports *Bloomberg*. The IMF has voiced concerns that the dam project will divert much needed investment in other sectors of the economy. Once completed in 2018, the project will be Africa's largest hydropower plant. It is expected to generate 6,000 megawatts, a portion of which will be exported to the region, and projected to generate USD 1.6 billion a year in revenue. The project was the vision of the late Prime Minister Meles, and Communications Minister Bereket Simon said that the government will "commit itself unconditionally" to its completion.

Kenya

Kenyan police thwarted a major terrorist attack on strategic locations in Nairobi, arresting two people, and [seizing explosive](#) devices, weapons and ammunition on 14 September, reports *Associated Press (AP)*. The suspects were apprehended in a predominately Somali neighbourhood in Nairobi. The police are still looking for eight more suspects, including the architect of the planned attack. One of the arrested suspects [has admitted](#) to being a member of al Shabaab, informs *Standard Media*.

Renewed inter-communal clashes between the rival Orma and Pokomo tribes have [raised the death toll](#) to over 100 civilians and police officers since August, including 38 killed in Kilelengwani village on 10 September, states *The Guardian*. In an effort to [stabilise the situation](#) in Tana River, 2,000 police officers were deployed to the area, including 1,800 recent graduates from the General Service Unit in Nairobi, writes the *Daily Nation*. Human Rights Watch has urged the Kenyan authorities [to investigate](#) and prosecute those responsible for the clashes it says has resulted in 110 dead and 6,000 displaced. Local politicians vying for a seat in the March 2013 general elections have been accused of inciting the violence, and despite warnings by residents, police have failed to prevent the clashes. The International Criminal Court (ICC) has [ruled out](#) an investigation, since the primary responsibility lies with the Kenyan government to provide security and investigate the matter, reports *Standard Media*.

The Kenya Medical Practitioners, Pharmacists and Dentist Union (KMPDU), South Rift branch members announced a [nationwide strike](#) on 12 September in protest of the government's failure to comply with the agreement it signed after the December 2011 strikes, reports the *Daily Nation*. However, a court subsequently halted the [doctor's strike](#) until an application from the Attorney General challenging the strike is heard and determined, reports *Daily Nation*.

Somalia

Somali president-elect Hassan Sheikh Mohamud [was inaugurated](#) on 16 September, reports *Reuters*. The new president survived an [assassination attempt](#) in Mogadishu by al Shabaab, which killed eight people on 13 September, reports *Al Jazeera*. Al Shabaab have openly expressed their discontent over the presidential elections, calling Mohamud a "traitor", stating that [the elections](#) were not in the interest of the Somali people but "represent Western interests, and interests of their agents in the region", informs *Reuters*. The United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS) [remains committed](#) to supporting the Somali president in various capacities and welcomes the end of the eight-year transitional period as a new era for Somalia, according to the *United Nations (UN) News Centre*.

Heavy [clashes between](#) allied forces and al Shabaab in the Biibi and Birta Dheer districts in the lower Jubba region resulted in more than 10 casualties and displacement of civilians, reports *Garowe Online*. Residents report that the militants [have retreated](#) from their stronghold in Kismayo after renewed attacks by Somali government and AMISOM troops on 18 September, informs *United Press International (UPI)*. However, al Shabaab states that their militant forces pushed back government troops. About 4,000 people [have](#)

[fled](#) Kismayo in the last several months, reports *Voice of America (VOA)*.

For the first time in 14 years, the Puntland Election Commission [has opened up](#) registration for political associations to run for seats on the District Councils in 2013, writes *Garowe Online*. Puntland President Abdirahman Mohamed Farole announced on 16 September, that [political party elections](#) will take place throughout the semi-autonomous region and the clan-based system will be phased out, informs *Garowe Online*.

Piracy

The Puntland government [rejects allegations](#) made by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) that the Puntland Maritime Police Force (PMPF) is a private army, reports *Garowe Online*. “PMPF is a legitimate government security force mandated with fighting piracy and illegal fishing activities along the Puntland coastline”. The allegations are based on a report by Matt Bryden, former head of the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea, who refers to the PMPF “as a private army for the president of Puntland”.

No [piracy incidents](#) were reported in the High Risk Area (HRA) from 05 – 11 September 2012, according to the NATO Shipping Centre (NSC). However, there have been continued reports of suspicious activity in the Southern Red Sea (SRS), Bab-al-Mandeb (BAM) and the Gulf of Aden (GOA) during the past few weeks.

The Singapore Anti-Piracy Task Group, comprising the Formidable class stealth frigate RSS INTREPID and a Seahawk helicopter, deployed to the Gulf of Aden to support Combined Task Force (CTF) 151 and [disrupt piracy activities](#) for the next three months, reports Combined Maritime Forces.

Organisation	Number of Hostages	Vessels Held
EU NAVFOR	177 as of 12 September 2012	7
IMB*	212 as of 30 August 2012	11
NATO	177 as of 20 September 2012	7

** The number of hostages and vessels held can vary from entity to entity. For example, EU and NATO statistics account for vessels hijacked for ransom, while IMB includes fishing vessels and dhows hijacked for reasons other than ransom.*

For further information on piracy-related topics please visit our [Horn of Africa](#) page.

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(continued from page 1)

On 11 September, protests rapidly spread to Libya, turning violent when rocket-propelled grenades were fired at the US Consulate in Benghazi, setting it on fire and subsequently killing the [US Ambassador](#), Christopher Stevens, and three other Americans in the consulate at the time. Libyan leader Mohammad Magarief announced [the arrests](#) of 50 people on 16 September for the killing of Ambassador Stevens, which he alleged had been pre-planned by foreigners linked to al Qaeda, reports *Reuters*. Contradicting Magarief's claim that the attacks were premeditated, US Ambassador to the UN Susan Rice stated on 16 September that there was [no evidence](#) that the attacks were planned, reports the *Washington Post*. However, American and Libyan officials are further investigating if the protests were a cover for militants, possibly [al Qaeda sympathisers](#), to attack the consulate and kill Americans. In response to the attack, US President Barak Obama [deployed warships](#) off the Libyan coast, vowing to "bring to justice the killers who attacked our people", reports *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*. Elite US Marine anti-terrorism units were also sent to the country, and the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) opened an investigation into the attacks.

Protesters in Sudan [targeted embassies and consulates](#) in the capital Khartoum on 15 September. After the protests turned violent, killing three Sudanese, the US government offered to deploy a US Marine security team to protect the embassy and its staff, which the [Sudanese government](#) declined, reports *Sudan Tribune*. As a result, the US State Department ordered all non-essential staff and family members to leave Sudan. Protesters also targeted the British and German embassies, which included the storming of [German embassy](#) walls, setting fire to the building, and raising an Islamic flag above the mission, informs *VOA*.

[In Yemen](#), protesters breached US Embassy walls in the capital, Sana'a, and set fire to the American flag, reports *BBC*. No one was injured during the attack; however, al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), an [al Qaeda faction](#) in Yemen, has issued a statement calling for [more killings](#) of US diplomatic staff, informs the *Washington Post*, and urged fellow Islamic militants to oust US Embassies from Muslim nations, reports the *New York Daily News*. Following the violence, the Yemeni parliament demanded that all foreign troops in the country be sent home, including fifty US Marines recently deployed to protect the embassy.

Similar protests took place in [Morocco, Tunisia and Gaza](#), where protesters also burned American flags, informs *EuroNews*. In [Casablanca, Morocco](#), between 300 and 400 Muslim protesters demonstrated outside the US Consulate, shouting anti-US slogans, on 12 September, reports *Now Lebanon*. Other protests were held in Rabat on 15 September, where several hundred Salafists burned US flags after Friday prayers. In Gaza, thousands of people demonstrated in [Gaza City](#) and Rafah, a day after the ruling Hamas party urged citizens to protest after Friday prayers, informs *Al Jazeera*. Non-essential US Embassy staff have also been evacuated [from Tunis](#), the capital of Tunisia, reports *BBC*. Americans have been warned not to travel to the North African country, after the embassy and a neighbouring American school were attacked, killing two people.

In Lebanon, [Hezbollah's powerful leader](#), Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, called for protests over the controversial film on 17 September, reports *BBC*. Calling the video an "unprecedented" insult to Islam, he said it was worse than Salman Rushdie's novel "The Satanic Verses" and the cartoons of the Prophet Mohammad, published in a Danish newspaper in 2005. "Those who should be held accountable, punished, prosecuted and boycotted are those directly responsible for this film and those who stand behind them and those who support and protect them", primarily the US, Sheikh Nasrallah said. Further protests throughout Lebanon have been planned, but are expected to be mainly peaceful, following the directive of the Sheikh to the protesters to "act legally".

Protests in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Indonesia targeted not only embassies, but government buildings, and a US military base. In Kabul, Afghan government efforts to [block internet users](#) from viewing the video failed as demonstrators threw stones at police and buildings in the capital in protest, reports *EuroNews*. Protesters also burned US and Israeli flags and set fire to police cars. Several Afghan elders and religious leaders have urged for calm. In southern Afghanistan, Taliban fighters attacked a British military base in Helmand Province, killing [two US Marines](#), claiming the attack was partly in retaliation for the anti-Islam film, reports *VOA*.

Many Middle Eastern leaders have moved quickly to denounce both the film and the attacks, including the highest [religious authority](#) in Saudi Arabia, which condemned the attacks as un-Islamic, reports *Reuters*. Iranian officials were the exception, however, stating they would hunt down those responsible for making the video. The country's first vice-president, Mohammad Reza Rahimi, said the Islamist regime would take it upon itself to [bring to justice](#) Nakoula Basseley Nakoula, the Egyptian Coptic Christian in the US suspected of producing the film, informs the *Telegraph*.

Meanwhile, Google, which owns YouTube, has refused a [White House request](#) to remove the clip, but has restricted access to it in certain countries, reports the *Associated Press*. The White House had asked YouTube to review whether the video violated its terms of use. YouTube issued a statement on 14 September that the video was widely available on the Web and "clearly within our guidelines and so will stay on YouTube". As protests intensified over the video, YouTube blocked access to it in Libya and Egypt, citing "the very sensitive situations" in those two countries. Access to the video was also blocked in India and Indonesia after their governments told YouTube the video violated their laws. YouTube has stated that outside of those four countries, the video will remain on its website, insisting that the website does not permit hate speech.

