



universität  
wien

# DISSERTATION / DOCTORAL THESIS

Titel der Dissertation / Title of the Doctoral Thesis

Christian-Muslim Relations in the Context of the Video  
“The Innocence of Muslims” in Egypt, Israel Jordan,  
Lebanon, and the Palestinian Territories  
(September 2012)

verfasst von / submitted by

Anna Hager, MA

angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doktorin der Philosophie (Dr. phil.)

Wien, 2016 / Vienna, 2016

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt /  
degree programme code as it appears on the student  
record sheet:

A 792 397 385

Dissertationsgebiet lt. Studienblatt /  
field of study as it appears on the student record sheet:

Dissertationsgebiet: Orientalistik,  
Fachbereich: Arabistik

Betreut von / Supervisor:

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Stephan Procházka  
Univ.-Prof. Dr. Wolfram Reiss



## Contents

<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	9
<b>Abbreviations</b> .....	10
<b>Transliteration</b> .....	10
<b>Introduction</b> .....	11
<b>The Video “The Innocence of Muslims”</b> .....	11
<b>The Context of September 2012</b> .....	12
<b>Christians in the Arab World</b> .....	13
<b>Research Gap</b> .....	16
<b>Subject of the Ph.D. Thesis and Methodology</b> .....	17
<b>Content</b> .....	19
<b>Chapter 1 The Content and Background of “The Innocence of Muslims”</b> .....	20
<b>1.1 The Video “The Innocence of Muslims”</b> .....	20
<b>1.2 The Background according to Western and Arab Media</b> .....	26
<i>Summary of Section 1.2</i> .....	32
<b>1.3 “The Innocence of Muslims:” a Cliché of Anti-Islam Apologetics</b> .....	32
<i>Conclusion to Chapter 1</i> .....	37
<b>Chapter 2 Egypt: An Averted Sectarian War?</b> .....	38
<b>Introduction</b> .....	38
<b>2.1.1 The Churches</b> .....	46
<b>2.1.1.1 The Coptic Orthodox Church</b> .....	46
<i>Summary of Section 2.1.1.1: Dissociating Christians in Egypt</i> .....	58
<b>2.1.1.2 The Coptic Catholic Church</b> .....	62
<i>Summary of Section 2.1.1.2</i> .....	64
<b>2.1.1.3 The Evangelical Church</b> .....	64
<b>2.1.1.4 The Episcopal Church</b> .....	66
<b>2.1.1.5 The Non-Official Evangelical Churches</b> .....	67
<i>Summary of Section 2.1.1</i> .....	68
<b>2.1.2 Islamic Institutions</b> .....	68
<b>2.1.2.1 The Muftī of the Republic</b> .....	70
<i>Summary of Section 2.1.2.1</i> .....	73

2.1.2.2 Al-Azhar .....	73
2.1.2.3 The Sufi Council in Egypt .....	78
<i>Summary of Section 2.1.2</i> .....	79
2.1.2.4 <i>Niqābat al-Ashrāf</i> .....	79
2.2 The State.....	80
2.2.1 President Mursī: A Silent “Muslim” President .....	80
2.2.2 The Government.....	81
2.2.3 The Shura Council .....	84
<i>Summary of Section 2.2</i> .....	85
2.3.1 Islamist and Salafi Reactions: Preventing Backlashes Against Christians.....	85
2.3.1.1 The Muslim Brotherhood and the Freedom and Justice Party .....	86
<i>Summary of Section 2.3.1.1</i> .....	90
2.3.1.2 The Nur Party and <i>al-Da`wa al-Salafiyya</i> .....	90
<i>Summary of Section 2.3.1.2</i> .....	97
2.3.1.3 <i>Al-Gamā`a al-Islāmiyya</i> and the Building and Development Party .....	98
<i>Summary of Section 2.3.1.3</i> .....	99
2.3.1.4 Salafi-Jihadi Reactions .....	99
<i>Summary of Section 2.3.1</i> .....	99
2.3.2 Islamic Preachers .....	100
2.3.3 Coptic Organizations .....	102
2.3.3.2 Reactions of the Coptic Activists.....	105
2.3.3.3 Father Fīlūbātir Gamīl `Azīz .....	107
2.3.3.4 Gamāl As`ad: Countering the Conspiracy against the Copts .....	108
2.3.3.5 The Coptic Lay Council of Asyūṭ.....	109
2.3.3.6 Other Coptic Organizations’ Reactions .....	109
<i>Summary of Section 2.3.3</i> .....	111
2.3.4 Political Parties and Organizations .....	111
2.3.4.1 Political Parties .....	112
2.3.4.2 Organizations.....	117
2.3.4.3 The April 6 Movement and the Loyalty of Egypt’s Copts.....	118
2.4 Protests and Joint Christian-Muslim Reactions.....	119
2.4.1 The Storming of the US Embassy .....	119
2.4.1.2 The Issue of Coptic Participation in the Protest on 11 September .....	123
2.4.2 The Protests of Friday 14 September and Friday 21 September .....	124
<i>Summary of Section 2.4.2</i> .....	127

2.4.3 Conferences .....	128
<i>Summary of Section 2.4.3</i> .....	132
2.4.4 Visits .....	132
2.4.5 <i>Bayt al-‘Ā’ila</i> .....	133
<i>Summary of Section 2.4</i> .....	134
<b>5. Creating a Sectarian Conflict</b> .....	134
2.5.1 <b>The Media Coverage: Manufacturing a Crisis</b> .....	134
2.5.2 <b>The Controversy between the Church and the Salafi Front</b> .....	139
<i>Summary of Section 2.5.2</i> .....	142
2.5.3 <b>The Case of the Coptic Diaspora</b> .....	142
2.5.4 <b>Anti -Christian Reactions</b> .....	145
<i>Summary of Section 2.5.4</i> .....	147
<i>Conclusion to Chapter 2</i> .....	147
<b>Chapter 3 Lebanon: Resisting Zionism</b> .....	153
<b>Introduction</b> .....	153
<b>3.1 The Competition for the Defence of Islam</b> .....	158
3.1.1 <b>Tripoli: An Abandoned City</b> .....	159
3.1.2 <b>Hezbollah: Leading the Resistance</b> .....	162
3.1.2.1 <b>Hezbollah’s Official Reactions</b> .....	164
<i>Summary of Section 3.1.2.1</i> .....	169
3.1.2.2 <b>The Hezbollah Protests</b> .....	169
<i>Summary of Section 3.1.2</i> .....	174
3.1.3 <b>Other Muslim Protests</b> .....	175
<b>3.2 Political Reactions</b> .....	177
3.2.1 <b>The March 8 Alliance</b> .....	178
<b>The Amal Movement</b> .....	178
<b>The Syrian Socialist National Party</b> .....	179
<b>Michel Aoun, Free Patriotic Movement (<i>al-tayyār al-waṭanī al-ḥurr</i>)</b> .....	181
<b>Ṭalāl Arslān, Democratic Lebanese Party</b> .....	181
<b>‘Alī ‘Ayd, Arab Democratic Party</b> .....	181
<b>The Baath Party</b> .....	182
<i>Summary of Section 3.2.1</i> .....	182
3.2.2 <b>The March 14 Alliance</b> .....	182
<b>March 14 Alliance</b> .....	182

<b>The Future Movement</b> .....	183
<i>Al-Jamā‘a al-Islāmiyya</i> .....	184
<b>Samīr Ja‘ja‘, Lebanese Forces</b> .....	186
<b>Kataeb (<i>ḥizb al-katā‘ib al-lubnāniyya</i>)</b> .....	187
<b>National Liberal Party</b> .....	188
<b>Buṭrus Ḥarb</b> .....	188
<i>Summary of Section 3.2.2</i> .....	189
<b>3.2.3 Other Political Actors</b> .....	189
<i>Summary of Section 3.2</i> .....	193
<b>3.3 The Religious Institutions</b> .....	193
<b>3.3.1.1 The Sunni Community</b> .....	193
<b>3.3.1.2 The Shia Community</b> .....	197
<b>3.3.1.3 The Druze Community</b> .....	200
<b>3.3.1.4 The Alawite Community</b> .....	203
<i>Summary of Section 3.3.1</i> .....	204
<b>3.3.2 The Churches</b> .....	204
<b>3.3.2.1 The Maronite Church</b> .....	205
<b>3.3.2.2 The Greek Orthodox Church</b> .....	208
<b>3.3.2.3 The Greek Catholic Melkite Church</b> .....	212
<b>3.3.2.4 The Armenian Apostolic Church</b> .....	213
<b>3.3.2.5 The Armenian Catholic Church</b> .....	214
<b>3.3.2.6 The Syriac Catholic Church</b> .....	214
<i>Summary of Section 3.3.2</i> .....	214
<b>3.4 The State</b> .....	214
<i>Summary of Section 3.4</i> .....	217
<b>3.5 The Reactions of non-Political and Non-Official Actors</b> .....	218
<b>3.5.1.1 Aḥmad al-Asīr</b> .....	218
<b>3.5.1.2 ‘Umar Bakrī</b> .....	223
<b>3.5.1.3 Māhir Ḥammūd</b> .....	223
<b>3.5.1.4 An Anti-Colonial Network against “The Innocence of Muslims”</b> .....	225
<b>3.5.1.5 ‘Alī Faḍl Allāh</b> .....	233
<i>Summary of Section 3.5</i> .....	235
<b>3.5.2 Christian Organizations</b> .....	235
<i>Summary of Section 3.5.2</i> .....	239
<b>3.5.3 Organizations</b> .....	239

<b>3.6 Joint Christian-Muslim Reactions</b> .....	241
<b>3.6.1 The “Spiritual Summit”</b> .....	241
<b>2.6.2 Christian-Muslim Reactions in Beirut</b> .....	246
<b>3.6.3 Christian-Muslim Reactions in the South</b> .....	248
<b>3.6.4 Christian-Muslim Reactions in the ‘Akkār Province</b> .....	250
<i>Summary of Section 3.6</i> .....	255
<i>Conclusion to Chapter 3</i> .....	255
<b>Chapter 4: Israel and the Palestinian Territories: Palestinian National Unity in the Shadow of Israeli Occupation</b> .....	260
<b>Introduction</b> .....	260
<b>4.1 Reactions in Jerusalem and the West Bank</b> .....	268
<b>4.1.1. Reactions of the Churches in Jerusalem and the West Bank</b> .....	268
<i>Summary of Section 4.1.1</i> .....	276
<b>4.1.2 Other Reactions</b> .....	276
<b>4.1.3 Countering “The Innocence of Muslims”</b> .....	277
<b>4.1.3.1 Protests</b> .....	277
<b>4.1.3.2 Christian-Muslim Reactions</b> .....	280
<b>4.1.4 The Issue of “Price-Tag”</b> .....	285
<i>Summary of Section 4.1</i> .....	287
<b>4.2 Arab-Israelis: An Indivisible Component of the Palestinian People</b> .....	287
<b>4.2.1 Official Israeli Reactions</b> .....	287
<b>4.2.2 Statements by Arab Israeli Leaders</b> .....	288
<b>4.2.3 Protests</b> .....	293
<i>Summary of Section 4.2</i> .....	297
<b>4.3 Gaza: The Competition for the Leadership against the “Zionist Enemy”</b> .....	297
<i>Summary of Section 4.3</i> .....	299
<i>Conclusion to Chapter 4</i> .....	299
<b>Chapter 5 Jordan: A Model of Coexistence under the Hashemite Leadership</b> .....	301
<b>Introduction</b> .....	301
<b>5.1 The State: Promoter of a Moderate, Tolerant Islam</b> .....	306
<i>Summary of Section 5.1</i> .....	311
<b>5.2.1 The Churches in Jordan</b> .....	311
<i>Summary of Section 5.2.1</i> .....	317

<b>5.2.2 Other Christian Organizations</b> .....	317
<b>Local Christian Reactions</b> .....	320
<b>5.3 Where are the Christians?</b> .....	322
<b>5.3.1 Political and Social Actors</b> .....	322
<b>5.3.1.1 Political Parties</b> .....	323
<i>Summary of Section 5.3.1.1</i> .....	325
<b>5.3.1.2 The Professional Associations: A Vocal Actor</b> .....	325
<i>Summary of Section 5.3.1.2</i> .....	328
<b>5.3.1.3 Organizations</b> .....	329
<b>5.3.1.4 The Tribes</b> .....	332
<i>Summary of Section 5.3</i> .....	334
<b>5.3.2 The Protests</b> .....	334
<b>5.3.2.1 Amman</b> .....	334
<b>5.3.2.2 Northern Governorates</b> .....	335
<b>5.3.2.3 Central Governorates</b> .....	339
<b>5.3.2.4 The South: Ma‘ān</b> .....	342
<i>Summary of Section 5.3.2</i> .....	342
<i>Conclusion to Chapter 5</i> .....	343
<b>Conclusion: The Crisis of “The Innocence of Muslims”</b> .....	345
<b>“The Innocence of Muslims:” A Collective Condemnation</b> .....	346
<b>Discussing the Background of the Video: The Issue of Zionism</b> .....	347
<b>“The Innocence of Muslims:” Pursuing Personal Interests</b> .....	348
<b>“The Innocence of Muslims:” The Question of Christian-Muslim Relations</b> .....	350
<b>Christian Reactions: Identity, Belonging, Loyalty</b> .....	352
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	355
<b>Attached Documents 1: Primary Sources</b> .....	390
<b>Attached Documents 2: Abstracts</b> .....	394



## **Acknowledgements**

It is a pleasure to record my thanks to the people who contributed to this Ph.D. thesis.

I would like to acknowledge a debt of gratitude to my two supervisors Stephan Procházka and Wolfram Reiss who have contributed greatly to this work thanks to their specific expertise and their encouragements. I am also very much indebted to the OeAD for granting me the Marietta Blau Scholarship which enabled me to carry out extensive field research in Beirut, Cairo, Jerusalem, and Amman from September 2014 to May 2015.

I would also like to thank the Faculty of Religious Sciences and the Modern Arab World Research Centre (CEMAM, Université Saint-Joseph), the Orient-Institut Beirut, the Institut français du Proche-Orient in Beirut; the Dominican Institute for Oriental Studies, the Franciscan Centre for Oriental Christian Studies, the Netherlands-Flemish Institute in Cairo; the National Library Givat Ram, the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum in Jerusalem; the Institut français du Proche-Orient in Amman and the Jordan University for allowing me the use of their facilities. Throughout the course of these seven months, I had the opportunity to meet many actors and was overwhelmed by the trust they showed me and by the information they provided me with, some of which goes beyond the scope of this Ph.D. thesis. I thank Antoine Khalife, George Sabra, Emir Hares Chehab, Jayson Casper, Fadi Youssef, Mina Magdi, Hani al-Gaziri, Bishop Murqus, Hans Putman, Peter du Bruk, Hans Bouwen, Marie-Armelle Beaulieu, Rafiq Khoury, Firas Abedrabbo, Amir al-Hafi, Bishop Maroun Lahham, Bishop Benedict, Jiries Habash. I would also like Bishop Gabriel whom I had the pleasure to meet in Vienna. I am especially grateful to Thom Sicking, Roula Talhouk, Cornelis Hulsman, Hanna Kildani, Bassem Farraj, and Raouf Abu Jaber for their invaluable help and insight.

Finally, this Ph.D. thesis would not have been possible without the love and support of my family and friends in Vienna and Amman.

### **Abbreviations**

FJP	Freedom and Justice Party, Egypt
IAF	Islamic Action Front, Jordan
ICG	International Crisis Group
MP	Member of Parliament
PA	Palestinian Authority
POC	Proche Orient Chrétien Journal
RIIFS	Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies

### **Transliteration**

The system of the IJMES was used to transliterate Arab words. Names and words that are familiar to the readers were kept in their familiar form. In the case of Egypt, the pronunciation of the “g” was kept for names.

## **Introduction**

In September 2012, a video entitled “The Innocence of Muslims” provoked an uproar in the Muslim world and seemed to raise far-reaching questions about the identity, the belonging, and even the loyalty of Christians in the Arab World. Thus, this Ph.D. thesis aims to analyse the issue of Christian-Muslim relations in the context of this video by comparing reactions to it in Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and the Palestinian Territories. Before defining the scope of this Ph.D. thesis, the introduction will first consider the various dimensions of the issue of “The Innocence of Muslims” in these countries.

### **The Video “The Innocence of Muslims”**

In early September 2012 a video entitled “*barā’at al-muslimīn*” (“The Innocence of Muslims”) was released in colloquial Arabic on YouTube. It was produced by extremist Copts in the US and was subsequently widely discussed on Egyptian Salafi TV channels. The video showed a group of Muslims attacked Copts while the police did not interfere. The second part of the video explained the “cause” of this persecution through a look at the character and life of the prophet Muhammad. Resorting to clichés of Christian apologetics in early Islam, the video consequently describes Muhammad as a womanizer, child-molester, and ruthless killer.

The video triggered widespread reactions and protests in the Arab and Muslim world. Given its features – its synchronisation in Arabic, the fact that Copts in the diaspora were responsible for it, and its very negative description of the prophet Muhammad – “The Innocence of Muslims” clearly had the potential to seriously damage already fragile interreligious relationships in Egypt, especially since the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* published cartoons on Islam just after the release of this video. However, not only both in Egypt and in the region as a whole, key Christian and Muslim actors tried to prevent an escalation and avoid potential violence against Copts in Egypt.

Previously, similar events had likewise caused uproar in the Muslim world. “The Innocence of Muslims” seemed to be part of a series of criticisms of Islam that had taken place in the West and was already making waves in the Muslim world. This series comprised the novel *The Satanic Verses* by Salman Rushdie (1988-1989), the so-called Mohammed cartoons published by the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* (early 2006), the speech by Pope Benedict XVI in Regensburg (September 2006),<sup>1</sup> the short-film *Fitna* by the Dutch MP Geert Wilders

---

<sup>1</sup> In this controversial speech, Benedict XVI quoted the Byzantine emperor Manuel II: ‘Show me just what Mohammed brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to

(2008), and the burning of copies of the Quran by the American priest Terry Jones (September 2010). Yet some of these events actually used the theme of Islam to criticise specific issues; Benedict XVI was criticising secularism in Europe and *Jyllands-Posten* was commenting on self-censure. In addition, the uproar resulting from these events in the Muslim world occasionally seemed manufactured. For instance, although *Jyllands Posten* published the cartoons in September 2005, the controversy only gained momentum in late 2005 and early 2006 after Danish Muslim actors had toured the Middle East and drawn attention to these cartoons.

Some of these events had an impact on Christian-Muslim relations and did result in backlashes against Christians. For instance, a protest in reaction to the “Danish cartoons,” which was held in front of the Danish embassy in Beirut, turned violent and a nearby Maronite church was attacked (see Section 3.3.1.1). Similarly, following Benedict XVI’s lecture in Regensburg, churches in Nablus and Tulkarem in the Palestinian Territories and in Gaza were firebombed (Kårtveit 2014, 102). In these two cases, local Christian symbols were targeted.

As a result, the video “The Innocence of Muslims” embodied a sensitive and potentially dangerous moment, more so since this time the criticism against Islam came from *within*, i.e. from Copts originally from a Muslim-majority country, Egypt.

### **The Context of September 2012**

The various reactions to “The Innocence of Muslims” seemed to point to the various problems the countries of the Arab Spring were facing. In the first place, these protests raised questions about weakened states and security forces, as US embassies (or consulates) were assaulted by protesters in Egypt, Libya, and Yemen. Besides, following the Arab Spring, Islamist forces dominated in Egypt on a political and discursive level, as the Muslim Brother Muḥammad Mursī won the presidential elections. Thus, September 2012 was the second year into the Arab Spring and the third month into Mursī’s presidency. Overall, the January 25 2011 Revolution had created a different framework for Christian-Muslim relations in Egypt.

Besides this, the conflicts in Iraq and Syria had provoked anxiety amongst Arab Christians about their future in the region. In particular, the plight of Christians in Iraq following the war in 2003 had heavily traumatised the Christians in the region. In addition, the war in Syria ongoing since 2011 had put a severe strain on Lebanon.

---

spread by the sword the faith he preached.’ In Benedict XVI. 12 September 2006. Lecture of the Holy Father. Faith, Reason and the University. Memories and Reflections. Doi: [http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20060912\\_university-regensburg.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg.html) (retrieved May 18, 2016).

## **Christians in the Arab World**

This section will give a short overview of the religious and political situation of Arab Christians, the question of their Arab identity, the history of Arab Christians under Islam, and the question of sectarianism.

An important issue of concern for the Christians in the Arab world is their decreasing proportion in the countries they live, although their absolute numbers have actually increased (Heyberger 2013, 18). Currently they represent approximately 7-10% of the population in Egypt (6-8 million); 2% in Israel (150,000); 5.5% in Jordan (350,000); 36% in Lebanon (1 million); and 1.2% (60,000) in the Palestinian Territories (Heyberger 2013, 15-17). However, estimates for the proportion of Christians in the various countries vary and will be further discussed in the introductions to each chapter.

The high level of religious, cultural, political, social and economic heterogeneity of Christians in these countries is noteworthy. As regards religious diversity, no church can lay claim to being a “national church” with the exception of the Coptic Orthodox Church and the Maronite Church. Yet the other churches in Egypt and Lebanon have questioned this claim. The wide range of churches emerged following a number of ecumenical councils. In 431, the council of Ephesus saw the emergence of a separate church, the Assyrian Church of the East (and later the communion of parts of this church with Rome, the Chaldean Catholic Church). Following the Council of Chalcedon in 451, a separate Alexandrian tradition (the Coptic Orthodox Church), an Armenian tradition (Armenian Apostolic Church) and an Antiochian tradition (Syriac Orthodox Church, the Maronite Church) emerged. The churches that accepted the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon were the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria, the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Amongst these churches, some of them or parts of them entered in communion with Rome: The Chaldean Catholic Church, the Coptic Catholic Church, the Armenian Catholic Church, the Syriac Catholic Church, the Maronite Church, the Greek Catholic Melkite Church. In addition, the Vatican re-established in the nineteenth century a Latin Patriarchate in Jerusalem. Besides, some Protestant churches, particularly the Episcopal and Lutheran churches, are officially recognized in these countries; however, many non-recognized Evangelical churches also exist (see Chapter 2 and Chapter 5).

Another field illustrating the high level of heterogeneity of Arab Christians is their political representation. While there are quotas in the Palestinian Territories and Jordan that over-represent Christians, there are no such quotas in Egypt. As a result, until 2011, Mubārak used to nominate Copts to the Parliament to compensate for their under-representation. In

Lebanon, the confessional system guarantees the representation of every single community. This representation is not limited to parliament, but also covers the presidency and the position of parliamentary second speaker; these positions are occupied by a Maronite Christian and a Greek Orthodox Christian respectively.

The first methodological challenge faced when focusing on Christians in Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and the Palestinian Territories is their accurate designation: Oriental Christians? Eastern Christians? Arab Christians? Christian Arabs? Copts, Maronites, Greek Orthodox? Or simply, Egyptians, Arab-Israelis, Jordanians, Lebanese and Palestinians who happened to be born and registered as Christians?

This latter suggestion is put forward by Joseph Maïla, who asked ‘pourquoi donc s’archarner sur “Arabes Chrétiens” alors qu’ils sont Arabes?’ (Maïla 2004, 38). The denomination *Chrétiens d’Orient*, which is widely used in French, is criticised by Antoine Fleyfel for implying these Christians are homogenous despite the variety of countries they live in (Fleyfel 2013,15). Interestingly, Kāmil Jābir, the former director of the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies in Jordan, evoked the plurality of his identities: ‘I am a Christian by faith and I am a Muslim by culture and identity’ (Sabra 2014, 146). These various and seemingly contradictory and competing dimensions of identity, cultural belonging, being Christian and/or Arab, proximity to or otherness to Islamic culture and history were widely expressed in the different Christian reactions to “The Innocence of Muslims.”

This question of the Arab identity is rarely mentioned in Western scholarship on Christians in the Arab world, although the most widely used term to designate these Christians in Arabic is *al-masīḥīyyūn al-‘arab*, “Arab Christians.” Bat Ye’or argued: ‘Far from recovering and defining their true identity, they chose to assimilate with the culture of their conquerors: Arabization implied abandoning the Syriac culture and language and repudiating 12 centuries of dhimmi history’ (Ye’or 1996, 202). In contrast, besides the historical Christian Arab tribes like the Ghassānid, some Christian scholars in the Arab world tend to systematically predate the Arabization of Christians to before the Islamic conquest in an attempt to enshrine the Christians historically and culturally in the Middle East. By quoting the Epistle to the Galatians 1:11, the Greek Orthodox priest and intellectual, Georges Massouh, stated that ‘from the establishment of the Church on, Christianity spoke in Arabic’ (Massouh 2013).

All in all, these different discourses on the identity of Christians are, to some extent, the result of the varying historical experiences of the Christian communities with Islam. Although important Christian polemics were of Greek Orthodox extraction, Greek Orthodox Christians have generally tended to emphasize their Arab identity more and also contributed to the

emergence of Arab nationalism, a tendency exemplified through people like Michel Aflaq or Anṭūn Sa‘āda, the founder of the Syrian Social National Party,<sup>2</sup> because this community had an historical experience of coexistence with Muslims in the cities. In this regard, Patriarch Ignātyūs IV Hazīm of the Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch offered the example of John of Damascus (676-749) who was a high ranking official in the administration of the Umayyad Caliphate. The patriarch also differentiated between John of Damascus’ religious identity and his political loyalty (Ignatius IV. Hazim 2005, 491). In contrast, the Maronites, who enjoyed much more religious and political freedom in Mount Lebanon, tended to reject their so-called *dhimmi*-status. The former Lebanese president (and Maronite) Bachir Gemayel (Bashīr al-Jumayyil) expressed his desire for ‘a real country for Christians where we can hold our heads high, without anyone telling us [...] “walk to the side”’ (Nga Longva, Roald 2012, 63). Overall, both Christian and Muslim actors constantly refer to history and recall certain historic examples. For instance, the pact between Caliph ‘Umar and Patriarch Sophronius of Jerusalem was said to enshrine the relationship between Christians and the new Islamic rule. It will be mentioned in Chapter 4 in the context of the Palestinian reactions to “The Innocence of Muslims,” and was used to prove good Christian-Muslim relations in the Palestinian contexts.

In this context, the concept of “dhimmi” (*dhimmi*) was popularised by Bat Ye’or. Bernard Heyberger objected that this concept essentialises the situation of Christians under the rule of Islam (Heyberger 2013, 105-106), and argued that this “*dhimmi*”-status developed throughout time as a reaction to (specific) circumstances (Heyberger 1994, 39). Actually, the individual personality of different Caliphs and the economical and international situation at any given time had much more impact on the status of Christians (Corm 1969, 173) than general legal frameworks.

Recent scholarly findings have indeed shed light on close Christian-Muslim interactions and shared values. Prior to the nineteenth century, Christians widely used the Islamic legal system for succession, marriages, and commercial contracts (Heyberger 2003, 53). There are reports on nineteenth-century Transjordan of Christians abstaining from consuming alcohol and pork as well as reports about Muslims baptizing their children (Rogan 1999, 28). Thus, Jean Corbon, the Melkite priest of French origin, wrote that Christians and Muslims were ‘façonnés par la même histoire, partagent une culture, une civilisation et une mentalité’ (Corbon 2007, 150). As the example of Transjordan shows, Christian-Muslim coexistence prospered in the absence of firm ecclesiastical and governmental structures (see Heyberger 2013, 139).

---

<sup>2</sup> About the Syrian Social National Party, see Section 3.2.1.

An important feature of the countries analysed in this Ph.D. thesis is the historical institutionalisation of sectarianism. Until the nineteenth century, the central state, whether in Ottoman Syria or in emerging khedival Egypt, had not had the means to continuously assert its control throughout the country. In 1856, the *hatt-ı hümayun* established the equality of all Ottoman subjects and abolished discrimination based on religion. However, even if such discrimination had previously existed in theory (“*dhimmī*”-system), this does not mean that they actually existed in practice, as there was no state to enforce them. In fact, local Ottoman bureaucracy was more interested in maintaining law and order. Moreover, the growing European influence throughout the nineteenth century exerted by means of Western schools, missionary preaching (“re-Christianise Oriental Christians”), and economic control, had deeply destabilizing effects on Christian-Muslim relations, especially in the Syrian provinces, and led to civil wars. Muslim animosities towards Christians grew as the latter were considered favoured by European powers. Interestingly, local Churches and Christian lay notables used these new opportunities to increase their power within the Christian communities.

### **Research Gap**

As the previous paragraphs have suggested, this Ph.D. aims at filling three gaps. Firstly, previous scholarly works dealing with similar events to “The Innocence of Muslims” have only focused on coverage by the Western media<sup>3</sup> and not on the content of the reactions in the Muslim world. Secondly, as of September 2012 the political context had very much changed. Thirdly, a focus on Christian-Muslim relations in the context of “The Innocence of Muslims” provides an opportunity to investigate Christian discourses in the Arab world, an issue little attention has been paid to so far. Previous work on Christians in the Arab world has shown their effort at grounding a Christian presence in this region, both culturally and historically, by uncovering the Christian past; monasteries, churches, etc (Chatelard 2000; Mayeur-Jaouen 2005). Yet little attention has been paid to the discourses supporting these attempts. Analysing Arab Christian reactions to “The Innocence of Muslims” is particularly significant, as one may assume that their reactions might have been motivated by preventing backlashes against Christians. Similarly, this focus sheds light on the expectations and attitudes Islamic and Islamist actors had concerning the Christians in the Arab world as far as “The Innocence of Muslims” is concerned, and is thus a display of the possibilities of religious coexistence in these countries, especially following the Arab Spring.

---

<sup>3</sup> Kunelius, Risto. 2007. (Ed.) Reading the Mohammed Cartoons Controversy: An International Analysis of Press Discourses on Free Speech and Political Spin. Bochum: Projekt Verlag.



## **Subject of the Ph.D. Thesis and Methodology**

The scope of this Ph.D. thesis is the dimension of Christian-Muslim relations in the context of the video “The Innocence of Muslims” in Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and the Palestinian Territories in September 2012. The thesis encompasses this broad range of countries because the comparison of the various reactions allows us to uncover the existence of established and structured discourses on Christian-Muslim relations in these different countries. At the same time, the thesis does not extend its scope to Iraq and Syria because these two countries were in a state of war at that time; significant numbers of Christians had been displaced and there were too few reactions to “The Innocence of Muslims” for conclusions to be drawn.

Thus, all the reactions to this video in Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and the Palestinian Territories will be subjected to the question: How and to what extent was the dimension of Christian-Muslim relations raised in this context? The word “Christian” comprises Christian institutions and key actors in the countries mentioned. However, as previously alluded to, this word itself must be subject to further definition, as its very meaning lay at the core of Christian and Muslim reactions to “The Innocence of Muslims.” The term “Muslim” comprises Islamic key actors, institutions and, in some cases, the state itself. More importantly the issue of “relations” is to be investigated both at an actual (i.e. joint protests and conferences) and a discursive level, that is to say, how Christians were defined in this context and how Christian-Muslim coexistence was framed.

Three hypotheses were established. First, “The Innocence of Muslims” raised far-reaching questions about the identity, the belonging, and even the loyalty of Arab Christians. Second, the Christian reactions were not only motivated by fear of backlashes. Thirdly, the reactions of the various actors were not only interesting because of what they said about the video but also because of what they revealed about the actor himself.

This Ph.D. focuses on Christian and Muslim reactions to the video, on joint Christian-Muslim reactions (statement, protests, conferences), and on the video’s background and its content. This material (“primary sources”) was to be found in written and oral texts drawn from Arabic newspapers, ecclesiastical magazines, websites like <http://www.coptstoday.com/>, <http://www.abouna.org/>, and <http://www.al-tawhid.org/>, as well as videos.

This Ph.D. is “text-based,” that is to say that philological and historical approaches were used to analyse the sources. These primary sources were individually analysed by means of a contextual analysis to highlight their content and philological aspects. Subsequently, connections were made between the findings of the first analysis, by means of secondary

sources, the context, the background, and the motivation of the primary sources were investigated. Such secondary sources included media articles, monographies, and qualitative interviews.

In the course of the analysis, a number of questions emerged which guided the analysis of the primary sources and these will be answered at the end of each chapter, i.e. each country analysed:

- Who reacted and how? Who was a key player? Did the actor try to mobilize?
- How was the video viewed? Had the actor watched the video and how did he discuss its content? Which goals were ascribed to the video?
- How was the background of the video discussed? How was the involvement of Copts in the production of this video referred to?
- How did joint Christian-Muslim relations take place?
- Was a counter-model to the video formulated? How was Christian-Muslim coexistence defined and explained?
- Which counter-arguments were formulated against the video? Which criticisms? What demands were made?
- Who spoke in the name of Christians? How were the Christians defined?
- What motivated the Christians to react?
- Who spoke in the name of Islam and Muslims? How did they view their role within Islam?
- How did Muslim actors and institutions define the Christians and which role, if any, did they assign to them?
- How were Muhammad and Jesus Christ mentioned in the various reactions?
- How was the violence arising in connection with “The Innocence of Muslims” discussed?
- Were there anti-Christian reactions?

This Ph.D. thesis is largely based on field research that was carried out between September 2014 and May 2015 in Beirut, Cairo, Jerusalem, and Amman thanks to the Marietta Blau Grant from the Austrian Ministry of Science and Research. In particular, the archives of the Modern Arab World Research Centre (CEMAM, Université Saint-Joseph), and the Orient-Institut in Beirut; the Franciscan Centre for Oriental Christian Studies in Cairo, the National Library Givat Ram in Jerusalem, and Jordan University were very helpful for gathering both materials in Arabic and ecclesiastical newspapers. In addition, various research centres proved to be very valuable institutions for gathering secondary sources, these include the Faculty of

Religious Sciences of the Université Saint-Joseph, the Orient-Institut Beirut, the Dominican Institute for Oriental Studies in Cairo, Givat Ram and the Ifpo Beirut and Ifpo Amman. Additionally, in all of these cities, a number of qualitative interviews were conducted mainly with Christian church leaders, activists, and key actors. The aim of these interviews was to illuminate the motivations for the Christian reactions to “The Innocence of Muslims” and to gather missing information (especially in the case of Jordan).

### **Content**

Chapter 1 will look at “The Innocence of Muslims” background and its content. The subsequent chapters will analyse the reactions in Egypt (Chapter 2), Lebanon (Chapter 3), Israel and the Palestinian Territories (Chapter 4), and Jordan (Chapter 5). Each chapter comprises an introductory section that explains the context of each country more clearly. In addition, these chapters were structured differently depending on the particularities of the reactions in each country. For instance, Chapter 5 on Jordan will contain no subsection on joint Christian-Muslim reactions.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Except when stated otherwise, the primary sources are referred to in the foot-notes. If these primary sources are websites, the first mention will be complete, whereas all subsequent mentions of these sources, will not mention the Doi. As for the secondary sources, these are referenced to within the text when there is an author, otherwise the reference is mentioned in a footnote.

## **Chapter 1 The Content and Background of “The Innocence of Muslims”**

Following the controversies over the Danish cartoons, the speech by Pope Benedict XVI, and the recurrent polemic surrounding the French magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, “The Innocence of Muslims” would seem to be yet another (Western) criticism of Islam, focusing primarily on the violence it allegedly promotes and the submission of women. However, both the background and content of this video mean that it is necessary to understand it in the context of a Coptic experience of Islam. More specifically, the video aims to connect the situation of Christians in contemporary Egypt to the very beginnings of Islam. In doing so, the video uses a broad catalogue of criticisms of Islam (apologetics), which was established by early Eastern Christian apologists and then, to some extent, “updated” by the controversial Coptic priest Zakaryā Buṭrus.

Therefore, this chapter is divided into three parts. The first part (1.1) is the transcript of the video, the second part (1.2) traces the background of the video to a small network of Copts living in the United States, and the third part (1.3) analyses the content of the video.

### **1.1 The Video “The Innocence of Muslims”**

Some passages of the video were synchronized. These manipulations are underlined (for their explanation see Section 1.3).

#### **First part of the video**

**Scene 1.** A police officer (Police officer 1), a Coptic doctor and a third person (Rustam) are having a discussion in the doctor’s clinic.

Police officer 1: For your knowledge, doctor, our prophet Muhammad had 61 wives, eleven at the same time. He even had a girlfriend.

Coptic Doctor: I know; I have heard about this.

The police officer turns away and thinks:

Police officer 1: If my sick wife died today I would sell the medicine, eat the food, and marry a young girl tomorrow.

Police officer 1 (aloud): I will marry her tomorrow!

Rustam: Oh, congratulations, constable, you should invite me to the wedding.

The police officer: Oh, shut up, Rustam!

The police officer pushes Rustam aside.

**Scene 2.** An “Islamist mob,” i.e. men dressed in white *jilabiyya*, bearing a head covering and carrying sticks. At the same time, the muezzin starts the call for prayer.

The doctor runs outside into the street and calls out:

Coptic Doctor: **Maria! You upstairs? Maria!**

Maria appears on the balcony: **What’s going on?**

Coptic Doctor: **There is an angry mob in the street. Tell your mother to release the patients and close the clinic. We must go home now!**

In the background we see women with short sleeves.

A police car arrives with Egyptian flag on it. Policemen get out. The mob destroys everything in the clinic with axes and sets it on fire. The policeman (Police officer 2) prevents his colleagues from intervening:

Police officer 2: **Please do not take any action until everything is over and await my further instructions.**

An “Imam” with a long beard and a *jilabiyya*.

Imam: **Set fire to this place. We’ll burn this, forsake the Christians.**

The mob kills a woman wearing a long dress and a cross around her neck.



**Scene 3.** The doctor comes home; two women are waiting for him. The home seems well off. There is a cross on the wall, a picture of Jesus and some whiskey on a table.

Coptic Doctor: **The Islamic police arrested 1,400 Christians, tortured them and forced them to confess to the killings.**

Maria: **Why did they do that?**

Coptic Doctor: **To protect Islamic crimes. The Egyptian police committed force upon the Christians.** [cut]. They could have saved thousands of lives and billions of dollars of taxpayers’ money.



The Coptic Doctor takes a pen and begins to write on a flip chart.

Coptic Doctor: **Man plus “x” equals Islamic terrorism [but “BT” is written on the flip-chart instead of “Islamic terrorism”]. Islamic terrorism minus “x” equals Man.**

Maria: **What is “x”?**

Coptic Doctor: **You need to discover it for yourself.**

## Second Part of the video

**Scene 4.** Scene takes place in the desert. Two men are having a discussion, the younger man (Man 1) has a long black beard and the older man (Old Man 1) a white beard.

Old Man 1: A two-year old son whose father has been dead for six years. This is preposterous. This is a stand-up!

Man 1: Father, calm down.

Old Man 1: How can I calm down? My son cannot possibly have a child of two years. We were married on the same day. My son Hamza is six years old now. Well, this is madness!

Man 1: Father, we are not stupid. I know, I understand, father. But we must conceal this disgrace. You must raise him, take him. Raise him as one of your slaves if you must.

Old Man 1: What shall I call him? To whom shall I attribute him?

Man 1: His name is Muhammad and we can call him “of father unknown.”

Old Man 1: If you think it’s right, my son.

**Scene 5.** Big screenshot of a man (Mohammed) eating meat. Background: oasis. A woman (Woman 1) watches Mohammed eating his meat as if she were hungry. A man (Man 2) comes out of a tent.

Man 2: Mohammed, the bastard. Your Lady summons you.

Mohammed: My Lady? My lady?

He stands up, and the bone falls down. The girl picks it up.

Mohammed: Don’t finish it! I’m watching you! Don’t finish it! Goodness, I know you are a glutness.

Woman 1: Ok, Bastard of Unknown father.

Mohammed: What did you say?

Woman 1: Ok ... Unknown Father.

Mohammed: Dalel, take me to my lady.

Man 2 seizes Muhammad and drags him into the tent.

**Scene 6.** Khadija and Mohammed are in the tent.

Khadija: Come in, Mohammed. I command you, sit! [Mohammed sits down] You are not wearing under-garments [turns away, shocked]. Cover yourself.

Mohammed: Sorry.

**Scene 7.** Khadija is wearing a pink dress and a white scarf. Mohammed is beside her; he seems scared and hides between her legs.

Khadija: Do you see him? ... Put your head between my thighs. Do you see the devil [?] still?

Mohammed: Yes.

He hides in her arms. She pushes him away, between her legs. Mohammed now has a beard. She draws his face to her.



Khadija: Now, do you see him?

Mohammed looks around.

Mohammed: She's gone, Khadija, she's gone! How have you done this?

**Scene 8.** Outside the tent. An old man dressed like a Coptic priest (Bahira), Khadija, Mohammed and a donkey.

Mohammed, laughing, addresses the donkey: And this shall be the first Muslim animal! What is your name? Yafor! His name is Yafor! Yafor, do you like the women? No! Yafor does not like the women!

Mohammed kisses the priest on the hand, Khadija on the lips, and goes.

Khadija: Please, my cousin, you must help us.

Bahira: I will help you, Khadija. I will make you a book for him. It will be a mix between some versions from the Torah and some versions from the New Testament and mix them into false verses.



**Scene 9.** Mohammed and two companions.

Mohammed: And the inspiration has disappeared.

Abu Bakr: Walika is dead and the inspiration has disappeared.

Companion 1: I don't understand. What is the relationship between Walika's death and the inspiration?

Mohammed: I should return to the mountain and find a solution or kill myself. I have been to the top of the mountain to jump and kill myself twice before. Now I will. I will kill myself. Now I will kill myself.

**Scene 10.** Mohammed in a group with two companions who look very lustful.

Mohammed: Killing the men, capturing the women, we shall loot the goods, the cats, any animals and anything else we've found.

Companion 2: What about the children, master? You know, some of us prefer the children.

Mohammed: May you use whom you wish of the children. The rest shall be sold as slaves to buy more horses and swords.

Companion 2: God, what ... free to kill the battle.

**Scene 11.** Three men shake their swords and scream:

Mohammed is our Messenger and the Quran is our constitution!



**Scene 12.** An old man (Man 3) speaks to Mohammed.

Man 3: You do not understand [cut].

**Scene 13.** Mohammed is sitting with men and a woman (Woman 3). A woman dressed in pink with a red scarf (Woman 2) is telling Mohammed something.

Woman 2: My husband just set off to the caravan.

Mohammed: Yes. Go and wait for me in your tent. I'm coming.

Woman 3: Isn't it shameful for a woman to expose herself to a man she does not know?

Mohammed: Haven't you heard what God has said in the Quran? A master may desire whom he wants and shall be given whom he wants.

Woman 3: God is true in all that He says in the book.

Mohammed: Also, if a married woman offers herself to the master and he wishes to have her, he is allowed, even if the rest of the believers are not allowed.

Companion 1: Everything Allah says in the Quran is true. How pleasurable are our Islamic ways.

**Scene 14.** The old man from scene 12 (Man 3) addresses Muhammad who is sitting with his companions.

Mohammed: Remember, God in the Torah commanded the Jews to destroy the city of Jericho. Killing all the people, even the women and the children. Am I right?

Man 3: Yes, Ilihi, our God did that. But, if you noticed, he also gave the city a 450-year chance and he didn't expect extortion. Or ask anyone to convert to Judaism... for your knowledge, we believe in One God. Before you were born, even the pharaohs of Egypt believed in one God - 5000 years ago.

Mohammed: It is not enough to believe in one God. You must say: "God and Mohammed his messenger". Now go, read the Quran, move to Palestine or pay the extortion.

Man 3: I received your message and I will not read your Quran!



The man spits, turns away and goes. Two companions make to follow him but Mohammed prevents them from doing so.

**Scene 15.** Abu Bakr and his wife are having a discussion in a tent.

Abu Bakr: My daughter shall have the stars.

His wife: Is your Mohammed a child-molester? Our daughter has been a child. And he's 55 years old.

Abu Bakr: He's 53, not 55, and he has wealth and power. My daughter shall be his bride whether you say yes or no.

**Scene 16.** Mohammed drinks from a glass (probably wine) and holds a sword. Companion 1 and 2 are having a discussion in a low voice beside him.

Companion 2: Is the messenger of God - gay?

Companion 1: Yes, he is and Omar, also.

Man: I know about Omar, but he is the master Domant [?] was submissive

Mohammed: Do you remember the night of the *jinn*?

Companion 2, shakes his head, then: Of course, master.

**Scene 17.** Mohammed and a woman in a tent. Oriental music is played.

Mohammed: I do not know him. [he gropes her] You're mine. You're only for me. For you I'm cancelling the adoption. Islamic nation forbids adoption because of saying that. That is the next person in the Quran.

They kiss each other and have sex.



**Scene 18.** An old woman and two companions

Old Woman: My age has exceeded 120 years and in all my young life I have not seen such a murderous thug as Mohammed. He kills men, captures women and children, robs the caravans, breaches agreements and treaties. He sells the children as slaves after he and his men have used them. And what's more, he does this all in the name of God. What God is this? That he's such an oppressor and so unfair to the people.

Her feet are bound to two camels who run off; she is quartered. The companions laugh and the woman screams.

**Scene 19.** Mohammed sits with his companions.

Mohammed: Whoever refuses to follow Islam has only two choices; pay extortion or die.

**Scene 20.** Mohammed, older, sits in front of some treasure

Mohammed: Let us take the other treasure, cut off his arms and cut off his legs and then his head. And do it in front of his beautiful wife, Sophia.

All laugh.

Companion 1: As you command, master.

**Scene 21.** Mohammed, three companions. A prisoner (Prisoner) is tied up and his wife is held by companions.

Mohammed: I'd like to hear, what are the last words you would like to say to your wife?

Prisoner: Sophia, this is my will. God remembers the Jews and brings them together in the Holy Land. I hope that he won't forget our bones and I wish Mohammed's sons are given as a restitution for grandfather's blood, for the rape of our women, for our children and our riches.

Sophia: Bkinana, Bkinana

Prisoner: I'm leaving so you are grieving

Sophia: No, no.

The prisoner is executed, a bloody sword. Oriental music. Sophia is brought to Mohammed.

**Scene 22.** Mohammed is in bed with a woman, another woman enters.

Mohammed: Hasa, please, do not yell! Aisha can hear you.

Hasa: Are you afraid from hearing me? If she doesn't hear me tonight, I'll make sure she knows of the scandal with my servant.

Mohammed: Please, Muhasa, don't tell Aisha. I will make your father caliph of the Muslims.

She hits him with her shoe. A young woman enters and also hits him with her shoe.

Woman 4: Do you need help with him?

Hasa: I can handle him on my own. In my bed on my night [...]. In my bed on my night.

Mohammed: The battle. I'm late for the battle, I have to go to the battle.

**Scene 23.** Mohammed gets dressed, leaves the tent. Cut. Mohammed has blood on his face. Oriental music.

Mohammed: Every non-Muslim is an infidel! Their lands, their women, their children are our spoils.

Fire, special effects.



## 1.2 The Background according to Western and Arab Media

As the reactions against "The Innocence of Muslims" gained momentum, the media

began to investigate the background of the video. The reports on Western and Arab media varied. Western media mostly mentioned Sam Bacile, also known as Nakoula Basseley Nakoula (Niḡūlā Bāsīlī Niḡūlā), Joseph Nasrallah (Jūzīf Naṣr Allāh), Steve Klein, Morris Sadek (Mūrīs Ṣādiq) and, to a lesser extent, Father Zakarya Botros (also Zakaria Butros or Zakaryā Buṭrus) and Terry Jones. In contrast, Arab media mostly focused on Mūrīs Ṣādiq, Terry Jones and ‘Ismat Zaqlama. The latter is not mentioned at all in Western media. This section will first analyse the background according to Western media and then the background as revealed in Arab media. Finally, the section will also look more closely at the people who produced this video.

As the protests in the Arab and Muslim world grew louder Western media started investigating the background to the video and revealed the involvement of five people; Sam Bacile – who was revealed to be Niḡūlā Bāsīlī Niḡūlā –, Jūzīf Naṣr Allāh, Mūrīs Ṣādiq, Steve Klein, Father Zakaryā Buṭrus, and Terry Jones. In addition, Western media traced the history of the video. At first, the name “Sam Bacile” emerged. In an interview with the Associated Press on 12 September 2012, “Sam Bacile” presented himself as an Israeli real estate agent living in California,<sup>5</sup> who had received five million dollars from ‘Jewish donors’ to produce a film on Islam.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, “Sam Bacile” described Islam as ‘a cancer.’<sup>7</sup> However, the Associated Press soon discovered that “Sam Bacile” was in fact Niḡūlā Bāsīlī Niḡūlā, a 55 year-old Egyptian-born Coptic American<sup>8</sup> with a criminal record. In 2010 he was sentenced to twenty-one months in prison and five years of supervised probation for having used fake identity cards and social security numbers to open credit accounts.<sup>9</sup> However, Niḡūlā Bāsīlī Niḡūlā denied any responsibility, limiting his involvement to providing the logistics for the company producing the film.<sup>10</sup> This production company was “Media for Christ,” a non-profit Evangelical organization run by Egyptian-born Jūzīf Naṣr Allāh. In recent years Jūzīf Naṣr Allāh has increasingly devoted himself to criticizing Islam.<sup>11</sup> For instance, in 2010 he delivered a speech

---

<sup>5</sup> The Guardian. 12 September 2012. Mystery surrounds 'Sam Bacile', maker of controversial anti-Muhammad film. Doi: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/sep/12/mystery-sam-bacile-innocence-muslims?INTCMP=SRCH> (retrieved May 2, 2016).

<sup>6</sup> The Guardian. 12 September 2012. Muhammad film: director goes into hiding after protests. Doi: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/sep/12/ant-islam-israeli-film-protests?INTCMP=SRCH> (retrieved May 2, 2016).

<sup>7</sup> The Guardian. 13 September 2012. Anti-Islamic film search leads to Coptic Christian in California. Doi: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/sep/13/anti-islamic-film-us-nakoula?INTCMP=SRCH> (retrieved May 2, 2016).

<sup>8</sup> The Guardian. 13 September 2012. Anti-Islamic film search leads to Coptic Christian in California.

<sup>9</sup> The New York Times. 13 September 2012. Man of Many Names Is Tied to a Video. Doi: [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/14/us/origins-of-provocative-video-are-shrouded.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/14/us/origins-of-provocative-video-are-shrouded.html?_r=0) (retrieved May 2, 2016).

<sup>10</sup> Al-Jazeera. 15 September 2012. Who is Nakoula Basseley Nakoula? Doi: <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2012/09/2012915181925528211> (retrieved May 2, 2016).

<sup>11</sup> Los Angeles Times. 13 September 2012. Christian charity, ex-con linked to film on Islam. Doi: <http://articles.latimes.com/2012/sep/13/local/la-me-filmmaker-20120914> (retrieved May 2, 2016).

as an uninvited guest at a protest against the building of the so-called “Ground Zero mosque.” This protest was organized by Pamela Geller, a famous anti-Islam activist in the United States.<sup>12</sup> In his speech, Jūzīf Naṣr Allāh issued a warning against Islam and Muslims who ‘came and conquered our country [Egypt] the same way they want to conquer America.’<sup>13</sup> Alongside Jūzīf Naṣr Allāh, Niqūlā Bāsīlī Niqūlā also had connections to Mūrīs Ṣādiq,<sup>14</sup> the leader of the National American Coptic Assembly, who is said to be close to ‘extremist Christians and Jewish circles.’<sup>15</sup> Mūrīs Ṣādiq’s role was to promote “The Innocence of Muslims” by sending it to an Arabic-speaking blog and posting it on his Twitter-account.<sup>16</sup> On his Twitter-account the video was entitled “Muhammad, Messenger of Islam” and was described as showing the ‘true story of Muhammad, drawn from the Coran.’<sup>17</sup> The extremist priest Terry Jones likewise also promoted “The Innocence of Muslims.”<sup>18</sup> In addition to these people, the Western media also revealed the name of Steve Klein, a Vietnam-veteran<sup>19</sup> and anti-Islam activist. As part of his engagement against Islam, he established the group “Concerned citizens with the First Amendment”<sup>20</sup> and demonstrated in front of mosques, thereby getting in touch with Christian Arabs,<sup>21</sup> among them Jūzīf Naṣr Allāh<sup>22</sup> and Mūrīs Ṣādiq.<sup>23</sup> Unlike the Coptic Egyptians involved in the film, Steve Klein was more willing to talk to the media, and thus came to describe himself as a consultant for “The Innocence of Muslims.”<sup>24</sup> Eventually, a few media outlets established a connection between these people and the controversial Coptic priest

---

<sup>12</sup> Blumenthal, Max. 13 September 2012. Inside the strange Hollywood scam that spread chaos across the Middle East. *The Guardian*. Doi: <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/sep/13/egypt-libya-hollywood-film> (retrieved May 2, 2016).

<sup>13</sup> YouTube. 11 September 2011. Joseph Nasrallah Speaks at the FDI/SIOA Rally 9/11/2010. Doi: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bEJMRDqsMCE> (retrieved May 2, 2016).

<sup>14</sup> RT. 13 September 2012/October 2012. Law enforcement confirms convicted fraudster behind anti-Muslim movie. Doi: <https://www.rt.com/usa/nakoula-confirmed-anti-muslim-movie-063/> (retrieved May 2, 2016)

<sup>15</sup> Le Monde. 20 September 2012. Dans la diaspora copte, des extrémistes minoritaires mais très actifs. Doi: [https://univpn.univie.ac.at/+CSCO+10756767633A2F2F6A6A6A2E79726B766661726B766662E70627A3A3830++/de/business/results/docview/docview.do?start=35&sort=BOOLEAN&format=GNBFULL&risb=21\\_T17466346303](https://univpn.univie.ac.at/+CSCO+10756767633A2F2F6A6A6A2E79726B766661726B766662E70627A3A3830++/de/business/results/docview/docview.do?start=35&sort=BOOLEAN&format=GNBFULL&risb=21_T17466346303) (retrieved May 24, 2013).

<sup>16</sup> The New York Times. 12 September 2012. Updates on Rage Over Anti-Islam Film. Doi: <http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/09/12/latest-updates-on-rage-over-anti-islam-film/> (retrieved May 2, 2016).

<sup>17</sup> Sadek, Moris. Twitter. Doi: <https://twitter.com/morrissadek/status/244998938401308672> (retrieved May 2, 2016).

<sup>18</sup> The New York Times. 12 September 2012. Origins of Provocative Video Are Shrouded. Doi: <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/13/world/middleeast/origins-of-provocative-video-shrouded.html?ref=innocenceofmuslimsriots> (retrieved May 2, 2016).

<sup>19</sup> The New York Times. 12 September 2012. Origins of Provocative Video Are Shrouded.

<sup>20</sup> The New York Times. 12 September 2012. Updates on Rage Over Anti-Islam Film.

<sup>21</sup> The New York Times. 12 September 2012. Updates on Rage Over Anti-Islam Film.

<sup>22</sup> Blumenthal, Max. 13 September 2012. Inside the strange Hollywood scam that spread chaos across the Middle East. *The Guardian*.

<sup>23</sup> The New York Times. 12 September 2012. Origins of Provocative Video Are Shrouded.

<sup>24</sup> The Guardian. 13 September 2012. Anti-Islamic film search leads to Coptic Christian in California.

Zakaryā Buṭrus, at least in terms of influence.<sup>25</sup> The next section (1.3) will discuss to what extent the influence of Zakaryā Buṭrus on “The Innocence of Muslims” is evident.

Finally, with regards to the chronology of this video, the media discovered that it was shot in 2009 under the title “Desert Warriors” and produced by a “Sam Bassiel.”<sup>26</sup> On 2 July 2012, an English trailer of the film was uploaded on YouTube on “Sam Bacil’s” channel; on 4 September 2012, it was dubbed into Arabic and published again on YouTube; on the next day Mūrīs Ṣādiq added a link to this video in a message in which he announced with Terry Jones a mock trial of Muhammad on the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks.<sup>27</sup>

To sum up, the Western media established that Niqūlā Bāsīlī Niqūlā and Jūzīf Naṣr Allāh were involved in the production of this video, and Mūrīs Ṣādiq in its promotion. Yet Steve Klein and Zakaryā Buṭrus seem to have played marginal roles. Noteworthy is the confusion for a few days about the identity of “Sam Bacile” and the alleged Jewish-Israeli background, before it was revealed that extremist Copts were mainly responsible for the production and promotion of this film.

However, when it comes to the Arab media, a brief overview suggests that the involvement of so-called “Copts in the diaspora” (*aqbāṭ al-mahjar* or “*aqbat al-majgar*”) had initially been established before a Jewish-Israeli background was suggested – the latter seemingly influenced by Western reports.

On 6 September 2012 the website Copts United reported that ‘Ismat Zaqlama, Mūrīs Ṣādiq and Terry Jones had produced a film ‘offending’ Muhammad.<sup>28</sup> With regards to this, *al-Shurūq* reported on 12 September that the “Higher Authority” of the self-ascribed “Coptic state” had published a statement under the leadership of ‘Ismat Zaqlama and Mūrīs Ṣādiq, warning the ‘free world’ against Islam.<sup>29</sup> In this statement they asserted that the Copts had a right to hate Muhammad given the history of persecution experienced by Copts under Islam. Thus, the statement cited various events, such as the Maspero massacre on 9 October 2011; the attacks in Naj‘ Ḥammadī in January 2010 and in Alexandria in January 2011, as well as the conquest of Egypt by ‘Amr bin al-‘Ās and the execution of thousands of young Copts by the ‘terrorist’ Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn for refusing to convert to Islam. This imaginary “Coptic state” was established by ‘Ismat Zaqlama, who emigrated to the United States in the 1970s.<sup>30</sup> However, as the Western media

---

<sup>25</sup> Le Monde. 20 September 2012. Dans la diaspora copte, des extrémistes minoritaires mais très actifs.

<sup>26</sup> The New York Times. 12 September 2012. Origins of Provocative Video Are Shrouded.

<sup>27</sup> The New York Times. 12 September 2012. Updates on Rage Over Anti-Islam Film.

<sup>28</sup> Copts United. 6 September 2012. أقباط المهجر ينتجون فيلماً مسيئاً ضد الإسلام وسيرة الرسول الكريم. Doi: <http://www.copts-united.com/article.php?I=1284&A=69401> (retrieved May 2, 2016).

<sup>29</sup> Al-Shuruq. 12 September 2012. ثورة غضب: إسلامية مسيحية ضد الإساءة للرسول. Number 1320. Year 4. Page 5.

<sup>30</sup> Al-Shuruq. 13 September 2012. زقلمة وموريس ... رأسا حربه إسرائيلية للهجوم على مصر. Number 1321. Year 4. Page 6.

started to focus on the background of “The Innocence of Muslims” and revealed the existence of a “Sam Bacile,” Arab media began to question the involvement of “Copts in the diaspora.” The Lebanese newspaper *al-Safir* wrote on 13 September 2012 that there were various speculations concerning the background of the video “The Innocence of Muslims” or “Muhammad, Messenger of the Muslims,” depending on the synchronization in Arabic.<sup>31</sup> According to *al-Safir*, there were speculations concerning the involvement of Copts living in the United States or of Terry Jones, and concerning a connection to the film “Fitna” produced by the Dutch extremist politician Geert Wilders. Yet *al-Safir* concluded: ‘the truth is that Sam Bacile, a 54 year-old real estate agent from South California produced it.’ However, on 15 September 2012, the Palestinian newspaper *al-Quds* contradicted this assumption and reported, probably based on findings by Western media, that, contrary to suggestions made in previous reports, it was not Mūrīs Ṣādiq who was the producer of the film, but rather Sam Bacile.<sup>32</sup> Yet after having entangled himself in contradictions, Sam Bacile was revealed to be a Coptic Egyptian who acted as “Sam Bacile” on YouTube. Additionally, *al-Quds* reported that an actress in the film, Cindy Garcia, had asserted that the film was manipulated. A trailer of the film was had been on YouTube for three months until it was synchronized into Arabic and spread on Arabic blogs, therefore drawing the attention of a wider audience.<sup>33</sup> This assumption about the actual role of Mūrīs Ṣādiq had been corroborated a few days earlier by Mūrīs Ṣādiq himself. In an interview with Reuters, he defined his role as having promoted “The Innocence of Muslims” and not as having produced it.<sup>34</sup> However, he insisted on the importance of the first part of the video which shows how Copts are allegedly being treated as second-class citizens in contemporary Egypt. Yet Mūrīs Ṣādiq did not see any offense in the depiction of Muhammad in the second part of the video. The responsibility of “Copts in the diaspora” was again asserted by *al-Ahrām* on 22 September 2012 in an article entitled “The Dark Triangle of the Production of the Film.”<sup>35</sup> This alleged triangle was composed of Fr. Zakaryā Buṭrus, Īlī Bāsīlī also known as Niqūlā Bāsīlī Niqūlā, and Jūzīf Naṣr Allāh (ibid). Zakaryā Buṭrus is described in this article

<sup>31</sup> Al-Safir. 13 September 2012. *الإسلاميون يحرقون سفير واشنطن في ليبيا ... وكليبتون تتهمهم بقلة الوفاء*. Number 12282. Year 39. Page 1.

<sup>32</sup> Al-Quds. 15 September 2012. *مفاجأة ... الفيلم المسيء للرسول غير موجود أصلاً*. Number 15479. Page 16.

<sup>33</sup> Al-Quds. 15 September 2012. *مفاجأة ... الفيلم المسيء للرسول غير موجود أصلاً*. Number 15479. Page 16.

<sup>34</sup> Al-Youm Al-Sabi. 13 September 2012. *المتطرف موريس صادق: الفيلم لم يهن الإسلام وهدفه كشف اضطهاد الأقباط*. Doi: [http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/13/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AA%D8%B7%D8%B1%D9%81\\_%D9%85%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B3\\_%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%82\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85\\_%D9%84%D9%85\\_%D9%8A%D9%87%D9%86\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85\\_%D9%88%D9%87%D8%AF%D9%81%D9%87\\_%D9%83%D8%B4%D9%81\\_%D8%A7%D8%B6%D8%B7%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AF\\_%D8%A7/784171#.Vi9o125OfVJ](http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/13/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AA%D8%B7%D8%B1%D9%81_%D9%85%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B3_%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%82_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85_%D9%84%D9%85_%D9%8A%D9%87%D9%86_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85_%D9%88%D9%87%D8%AF%D9%81%D9%87_%D9%83%D8%B4%D9%81_%D8%A7%D8%B6%D8%B7%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AF_%D8%A7/784171#.Vi9o125OfVJ) (retrieved May 2, 2016).

<sup>35</sup> Al-Ahram. 22 September 2012. *أصلاع “المثلث الأسود” لصناعة الفيلم المسيء*. Number 45946. Year 137. Page 21.

as having stirred ‘extremist thoughts’ and increased tensions between the Coptic Orthodox Church and the authorities in Cairo in the 1970s and 1980s (ibid). As a result, he was sent to Australia and then to the United States (ibid). In the United States, thanks to a ‘Protestant lady,’ he hosted a television show for some time in which he questioned the ‘Islamic creed’ (ibid). He continued his activities on the internet where he made contact with Niqūlā Bāsīlī Niqūlā (ibid). However, *al-Ahrām* denied the direct involvement of Zakaryā Buṭrus in the production of the film, although his influence in it is said to be pervasive (ibid). As for Niqūlā Bāsīlī Niqūlā, *al-Ahrām* described him as a ‘mysterious person’ and the writer and producer of the film. The third corner of this “black triangle” is Jūzīf Naṣr Allāh, described here as coming from a low-income family in Gizeh and directing the TV channel “The Way” (*al-ṭarīq*) and the organization “Media for Christ” which produced the film (ibid). Arab media only dealt with the content of the video to a limited extent. According to *al-Yawm al-Sābi*, Muhammad was depicted as a ‘liar, womanizer, homosexual and bloody leader.’<sup>36</sup> Similarly, *al-Quds* reported that the video mocked Muhammad, his ‘sexual practices with men and children,’ cited the donkey as being the first Muslim animal, and accused Muhammad of killing children.<sup>37</sup> *Al-Quds* also asserted that the video aimed to support Israel by showing the alleged true face of Islam.<sup>38</sup> Eventually, even though the Arab media in general and especially the Egyptian media in particular had established the involvement of a few Copts living in the United States, the Palestinian newspaper *al-Ḥayāt al-Jadīda* continued to write that the film was produced by Sam Bacile, an ‘American citizen.’<sup>39</sup>

As will be shown in the subsequent paragraphs, further research tends to balance out the image of Zakaryā Buṭrus, Mūrīs Ṣādiq and Jūzīf Naṣr Allāh as conveyed by the Arab media.

Zakaryā Buṭrus was born in 1934 in Egypt and is often described as a ‘Coptic televangelist’ (Elsässer 2014, 201). However, the critical reports about him mentioned above were balanced by the work of French scholar Laure Guirguis, for instance. She states that one of the main reasons for his having been sent to Australia was that Pope Shinūda III felt threatened by Buṭrus’ charisma and popularity when he was explicitly challenging the Islamist stream (Guirguis 2012, 134). Sebastian Elsässer likewise underlines his intense spirituality and style (Elsässer 2014, 201).

As for Mūrīs Ṣādiq, he applied for asylum in the United States in 2000, claiming that he

<sup>36</sup> Al-Youm al-Sabi. 13 September 2012. المتطرف موريس صادق: الفيلم لم يهن الإسلام وهدفه كشف اضطهاد الأقباط.

<sup>37</sup> Al-Quds. 13 September 2012. تظاهرة في غزة احتجاجا على الفيلم المسيء للسلام. Number 15477. Page 2.

<sup>38</sup> Al-Quds. 13 September 2012. منتج ومخرج الفيلم المسيء يهودي إسرائيلي. Number 15477. Page 2.

<sup>39</sup> Al-Hayat al-Jadida. 18 September 2012. الهباش يطالب العالم باستنكار الفيلم المسيء للسلام ويدعو لسن قوانين تجرم انتهاك الأديان. Number 6067. Page 13.

was under threat in Egypt.<sup>40</sup> Mūrīs Ṣādiq has dealt with several controversial issues in Egypt and has used an equally controversial style: his promotion of a persecution discourse concerning Copts (Sedra 2007, 232), his numerous reports on the kidnapping of Christian girls by Muslims,<sup>41</sup> and his call for international intervention in Egypt to protect Copts.<sup>42</sup>

In contrast, Joseph Naṣr Allāh seems to have undergone a certain progression. For instance, in June 2011 in his first press release he expressed his support for the Coptic Orthodox Church's refusal of Western interference in Egypt.<sup>43</sup> Additionally, he criticised the denomination "*aqbāṭ al-mahjar*," which he alleged cuts off Copts from their country, and he argued that there was no similar denomination for Egyptian Muslims living abroad (ibid).

### **Summary of Section 1.2**

In brief, both the Western and Arab media established the involvement of a small and loose network of Copts living in the United States – Niqūlā Bāsīlī Niqūlā, Jūzīf Naṣrallāh and Mūrīs Ṣādiq –, who had some connection to American evangelical extremism – Terry Jones and Steve Klein –, all of whom were all more or less influenced by Zakaryā Buṭrus. However, the emergence of a "Sam Bacile" briefly raised questions about an "Israeli connection," a theory which was quickly rejected. Despite this, it is unlikely that this speculation and its rejection had any impact on Christian and Muslim reactions in the countries we will analyse. In fact, some reactions continued to point at a "Jewish," "Zionist" or "Israeli" background. One of the main questions in the next chapters will be how and to what extent the involvement of three to four Copts in the US was mentioned in these reactions.

### **1.3 "The Innocence of Muslims:" a Cliché of Anti-Islam Apologetics**

Ever since Islam first appeared, it has drawn Christian scholars into defending

<sup>40</sup> Arab West Report. 12 September 2012. Hatemongers, deliberately inciting hate and misinformed politicians. Doi: <http://arabwestreport.info/en/year-2012/week-37/42-hatemongers-deliberately-inciting-hate-and-misinformed-politicians> (retrieved May 3, 2016).

<sup>41</sup> Arab West Report. 12 September 2012. Hatemongers, deliberately inciting hate and misinformed politicians.

<sup>42</sup> Al-Youm Al-Sabi. 10 May 2011. موريس صادق يدعو لاحتلال مصر ويطالب باعتماد "القبطية" لغة رسمية. Doi: [http://www.youm7.com/story/2011/5/10/%D9%85%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B3\\_%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%82\\_%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%B9%D9%88\\_%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%AA%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%84\\_%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B1\\_%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8\\_%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AF\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%A8%D8%B7%D9%8A%D8%A9\\_%D9%84%D8%BA%D8%A9\\_%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%A9/409140#.Vi915m5OfVJ](http://www.youm7.com/story/2011/5/10/%D9%85%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B3_%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%82_%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%B9%D9%88_%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%AA%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%84_%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B1_%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8_%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AF_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%A8%D8%B7%D9%8A%D8%A9_%D9%84%D8%BA%D8%A9_%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%A9/409140#.Vi915m5OfVJ) (retrieved May 3, 2016).

<sup>43</sup> Al-Youm Al-Sabi. 17 June 2011. رئيس قناة الطريق: المسيحيون ليسوا قلة ونطالب بالمشاركة السياسية للأقباط. Doi: [http://www.youm7.com/story/2011/6/17/%D8%B1%D8%A6%D9%8A%D8%B3\\_%D9%82%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%A9\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%82\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%AD%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%86\\_%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%A7\\_%D9%82%D9%84%D8%A9\\_%D9%88%D9%86%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8\\_%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A9\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A7/436930#.Vi-cHm5OfVJ](http://www.youm7.com/story/2011/6/17/%D8%B1%D8%A6%D9%8A%D8%B3_%D9%82%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%A9_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%82_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%AD%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%86_%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%A7_%D9%82%D9%84%D8%A9_%D9%88%D9%86%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8_%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A9_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A7/436930#.Vi-cHm5OfVJ) (retrieved May 3, 2016).



Christianity against it and criticising Islam. The motivation for the development of Christian apologetics was the political and religious challenge posed by Islam (Hoyland 1997). Its key idea was that Islam is a worldly religion (Hoyland 1997, 543). These criticisms mostly focused on the character of Muhammad, and questioned the veracity of his prophecy. The video “The Innocence of Muslims” made use of this catalogue of clichés directed at Islam, while formulating the criticism in the context of contemporary Egypt. Thus, this section will first analyse the various references establishing the political context of the video, then the manipulations undertaken on the video. This section will then move on to deal with Zakaryā Buṭrus’ connection to this video before finally analysing the content of the second part of the video, i.e. the life and character of Muhammad.

Throughout “The Innocence of Muslims,” references to Egypt as a country of Christian-Muslim strife are made both implicitly and explicitly. The first part of the video shows present-day Egypt, in which the state participates in the alleged persecution of Copts by “Islamists.” The video tells the story of a – presumably Coptic – doctor who is dressed in a Western style. An “Islamist mob,” i.e. a group of men dressed in traditional Egyptian dress and wearing a head covering, attacks Copts and Coptic property while the police do not interfere. Subsequently, the Coptic physician comes home and tells his two daughters: ‘the Islamic Egyptian police arrested 1,400 Christians, tortured them and forced them to confess to the killings’ (Scene 3). When asked by his daughters what the cause for this assault is, the doctor takes a flip chart and writes the equation ‘Man plus “x” equals Islamic terrorism. Islamic terrorism minus “x” equals man.’ As for the meaning of “x,” the Coptic doctor tells his daughters: ‘You need to discover it for yourself.’ The video goes on to retrace the life of Muhammad from his birth to his conquests. Thus, throughout the first part of the video, explicit reference is made to Egypt.

In addition to this, the video appeals to the associations the audience would make when seeing men dressed in traditional dress or hearing the call to prayer when the assault starts. In contrast, the Christian identity of the doctor is established through his Western dress, the display of alcohol in his house, as well as a picture of Jesus Christ and a crucifix in his home. Furthermore, that this is an attack on Christians is made explicit by the cross a murdered woman wears around her neck (Scene 2). Apart from Christian and Islamic symbols, the video refers to Egypt several times. As stated above, the country seems to be an Islamic state here – ‘the Islamic Egyptian police’ is the phrase used by the doctor. Moreover, the police car is bearing an Egyptian flag. The second part of the video retracing the life of Muhammad likewise continues to refer to Egypt. Khadīja’s cousin, Bahira (who will be mentioned later on), is dressed like a Coptic cleric. Equally, an opponent of Muhammad asserts: ‘Before you were born even the

pharaohs of Egypt believed in one God – 5,000 years ago’ (Scene 16). All in all, throughout both parts of the video, references to Christianity, Islam and Egypt are made.

In addition to this, the English version of the video is proven to have been manipulated. On the one hand, names like Khadija, ‘Ā’isha, and ‘Umar seemed to have been part of the original video while on the other hand, every mention of Muhammad and the Quran were seemingly added later. These additions were apparently made by re-synchronising whole scenes. For instance, the sequences ‘Three men shake their swords and scream Mohammed is our Messenger and the Quran is our constitution!’ (Scene 11) (in reference to the slogan of the Muslim Brotherhood), and ‘Mohammed: Whoever refuses to follow Islam has only two choices, pay extortion or die’ (Scene 19) were subsequently added at a later point. In other instances, however, the additions were made within the script: ‘Mohammed: Haven’t you heard what God said in the Quran? A master may desire whom he wants and shall be given whom he wants’ (Scene 13); ‘The mother of ‘Ā’isha: Is your Mohammed a child-molester? Our daughter has been a child. And he’s 55 years old (Scene 15). These synchronizations are of poor quality.

As the controversy over “The Innocence of Muslims” arose, some media eventually connected it to Zakaryā Buṭrus. Yet, as was shown previously (Section 1.2), the priest was not directly involved in the production of the video. Still, “The Innocence of Muslims” seems to epitomize his criticisms directed at Islam, a position which will be demonstrated in the subsequent paragraph. For the time being, this paragraph will investigate Zakaryā Buṭrus’ connection to the video and the methodology he uses to criticize Islam. Following the controversy of “The Innocence of Muslims,” the Coptic priest published a statement on his website in which he asserted:

I, Fr. Zakaria have not been involved in any shape or form in the creation, production or finances of the provocative short-film the “Innocence of Muslims.” I have absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with the filmmakers and their organization. Any alleged links to the You-Tube sensation have been falsely fabricated to incite aggression towards a scapegoat.<sup>44</sup>

However, he admitted that the video was based on ‘Islamic books;’ therefore ‘[n]o one appreciates such provocative scenes, they are offensive and unnecessary, yet the real problem is that they are consistent with the story of Mohamed as revealed in the authoritative Islamic literature.’<sup>45</sup> In the same way, he refuted the accusations of being an ‘extremist,’ since his alleged concern has always been to discuss the content of Islam. This discussion has been

---

<sup>44</sup> Buṭrus, Zakaryā. September 2012. Fr Zakaria Statement concerning his relationship to the making of Mohamed movie. Doi: <http://www.fatherzakaria.net/main/fr-zakaria-mohamed-movie.htm> (retrieved May 3, 2016).

<sup>45</sup> Buṭrus, Zakaryā. September 2012. Fr Zakaria Statement concerning his relationship to the making of Mohamed movie.

undertaken by a method using ‘Islamic sources’ and eventually directing the discussion towards Christianity, like holding a mirror up to Islam. This procedure is applied in this very statement. His first step was to state his genuine wish to ‘stimulate spiritual, academic and calm discussions,’ while his second step was to reveal his actual purpose; ‘[i]n fact I want to encourage all people (Muslims or non-Muslims) to experience the love, freedom and peace that comes from knowing Jesus.’<sup>46</sup> In brief, Zakaryā Buṭrus combines an alleged scientific approach with a Christian equivalent to Islamic *da‘wa*. Even though this procedure is not obvious in the case of “The Innocence of Muslims,” Fr. Zakariyā Buṭrus’ influence is visible throughout the second part of the video.

Christian apologists of Islam, among whom Zakaryā Buṭrus can be counted, have mainly formulated three parameters for the criticism of Islam; they have questioned the foundations of Muhammad’s revelation, the violence with which Islam was allegedly spread, and the sexuality of Muhammad and his companions. In the first place, the video questions the foundation of Muhammad’s revelation in different ways. Firstly, it mocks his origins by describing Muhammad as an illegitimate child. In this regard, the famous Christian apologist Bartholomew of Edessa (13<sup>th</sup> century) asserted that Muhammad was the son of a slave and an unknown father (Khoury 1972, 64). Moreover, the video suggests that Muhammad’s prophecy was phony by making his character say: ‘The inspiration has disappeared’ (Scene 9). This revelation is also questioned by emphasizing the role of Muhammad’s first wife, Khadīja. The video depicts the first time Muhammad had a revelation by putting the character between the legs of his wife, who asks him: ‘Do you still see [it]?’ (Scene 7). This so called “test by Khadīja” is evoked several times by Zakaryā Buṭrus. In one of his episodes, he listed all the Islamic biographies which mention this scene and concluded: ‘The numerous references to this story confirm its veracity.’<sup>47</sup> The role of Khadīja is also evoked by her asking her cousin, a priest, to help her. The priest, who is shown in the video as a Coptic cleric, replies: ‘I will help you, Khadija. I will make you a book for him. It will be a mix between some versions of the Torah and some versions of the New Testament and mix them into false verses’ (Scene 8). This Coptic priest represents the monk Bahira whose story has been recounted in many languages such as Syriac, Christian Arabic, and Armenian (Hoyland 1997, 476). Hence, the very nature of the Quran is questioned. Classical Christian apologetics accused Muhammad of having been in

---

<sup>46</sup> Buṭrus, Zakaryā. September 2012. Fr Zakaria Statement concerning his relationship to the making of Mohamed movie.

<sup>47</sup> Buṭrus, Zakaryā. 2009. Les preuves de la Révélation dans l’Islam et dans le Christianisme. Episode 28. NotreDamedeKabylie.net & jesusmarie.com. Doi: [http://jesusmarie.free.fr/islam\\_zakaria\\_boutros\\_28.html](http://jesusmarie.free.fr/islam_zakaria_boutros_28.html) (retrieved May 3, 2016).

contact with “heretic” Christianity, especially with Assyrians and Arians (see Khoury 1972, 74).

In addition to the foundation of Muhammad’s revelation and prophecy, Christian apologists strongly criticized the violence reportedly used by Muhammad to spread Islam. This video deals with this violence at length. Firstly, it displays Muhammad as a ruthless warrior; ‘Mohammed: Killing the men, capturing the women, we shall loot the goods, the cats, any animals and anything else we find. [...] May you use whom you wish of the children. The rest shall be sold as slaves to buy more horses and swords’ (Scene 10). Particularly cruel is the torture of an old woman who denounces him for his violence and cruelty. She is subsequently attached to two camels and quartered. She is mentioned by Zakaryā Buṭrus in one of his episodes entitled “Muhammad confronted by the Great Principles of Ethics and the Murder of his Enemies.”<sup>48</sup>

In addition to this seemingly random violence, the video aims to represent the systematic violence against anyone opposing the prophecy of Muhammad. In this regard, there seems to be a progression in the dealing with Non-Muslims or reticent Muslims: ‘Mohammed: it is not enough to believe in one God. You must say “God and Muhammad his Messenger.” Now, go, read the Quran. Move to Palestine or pay the extortion’ (Scene 14). Later on, this turns into ‘pay extortion or die’ (Scene 19). In the same way, the distinction between unbelievers on the one hand and Christians and Jews as belonging to the *ahl al-kitāb* on the other hand is no longer made. Instead, the video ends with Muhammad stating: ‘Every non-Muslim is an infidel!’ (Scene 23). Moreover, the video displays the execution of a captured Jewish man in front of his wife. In one of his episodes, Zakaryā Buṭrus mentioned the extermination of three Jewish tribes and the capture of the women and children by Muhammad.<sup>49</sup> The Jewish tribe Banū Qurayza was indeed annihilated in 627, because the Jewish tribes refused to submit to the nascent Islamic state and hence threatened the cohesion of the fragile confederation Muhammad had managed to form (Noth 2004, 38). As for the other Jewish tribes, they were subject to heavy tributes (ibid). This outlining of Muhammad’s dealing with the Jewish tribes was subsequently understood by the Egyptian *al-da‘wa al-salafiyya* as proof of the alliance between the so-called Coptic diaspora and the ‘Zionist movement’ (see Section 2.3.1.2). However, it can be assumed that this scene aims to epitomize the fate of Non-Muslims, i.e. Jews and Christians, in majority Muslim countries as a result of Islam itself.

---

<sup>48</sup> Buṭrus, Zakaryā. ? Mohammed confronté aux grands principes de la morale, et l’assassinat de ses adversaires. Episode 37. NotreDamedeKabylie.net & jesusmarie.com. Doi:

[http://jesusmarie.free.fr/islam\\_zakaria\\_boutros\\_37\\_Mohamed\\_et\\_ses\\_adversaires.html](http://jesusmarie.free.fr/islam_zakaria_boutros_37_Mohamed_et_ses_adversaires.html) (retrieved May 3, 2016).

<sup>49</sup> Buṭrus, Zakariyā. ? Mohammed confronté aux grands principes de la morale, et l’assassinat de ses adversaires. Episode 37. NotreDamedeKabylie.net & jesusmarie.com.

Lastly, the video also deals at length with the alleged sexual perversion of Muhammad, which ranges from paedophilia to homosexuality and uncontrolled lust (in sharp contrast to Western secular criticism of Islam). This sexual permissiveness allegedly promoted by Islam seriously dismayed early Christian apologists. John of Damascus (675-749) stated that the revelation actually served Muhammad's sexual appetite (Khoury 1972, 88). To back this accusation, Christian apologists pointed to the Quran in which Muhammad is given a privilege over common Muslims in matters of marriage: 'If she gives herself to the Prophet [and] if the Prophet wishes to marry her, [this is] only for you, excluding the [other] believers' (33,55).<sup>50</sup> Thus the video displays a woman who gives herself to Muhammad while her husband is away. Similarly, the video shows how Muhammad abolished adoption to enable him to have sex with a woman. This story was also mentioned by Zakaryā Buṭrus in his evocation of the story of Zaynab, the daughter-in-law of Muhammad's adopted son.<sup>51</sup> Eventually, the video outlines the case of 'Ā'isha, whom Muhammad married at the age of seven. In particular, the video ridicules Muhammad, by showing the jealousy of his other wives to whom Muhammad pleads: 'I'm late for the battle' (Scene 22). This emphasis on Muhammad and his companions' sexual practices needs to be understood in the context of Oriental Christianity's dismay at the alleged sexual permissiveness promoted by Islam. This theme was again epitomized in the thirteenth century chronicle *The Martyrdom of John Phanijōit*, which tells the story of a Copt converting to Islam in order to satisfy his desires. His return to Christianity and martyrdom is consequently pictured as a moral purification (Zaborowski 2005, 13).

To sum up, "The Innocence of Muslims" aimed to explain the oppression of Copts in contemporary Egypt through the use of the life and character of Muhammad and particularly denounced the foundations of the revelation, the systematic violence, and the sexual perversions of Muhammad and his companions.

### ***Conclusion to Chapter 1***

This chapter has shown that the video "The Innocence of Muslims" has to be understood in the context of a Coptic experience which resorts to Christian apologetics to understand the contemporary situation of Copts in Egypt. In doing so, the video entirely removes any historical context at the time of Muhammad as well as the content of his message (i.e. the strict monotheism). Therefore, in this case, criticizing Islam is denouncing the personality of Muhammad and accusing him of being cruel, sexually perverted, and an impostor.

---

<sup>50</sup> Quran. Doi: <http://quran.com/33> (retrieved May 3, 2005).

<sup>51</sup> Buṭrus, Zakariyā. 2009. Les épouses du Messager. Episode 39. NotreDamedeKabylie.net & jesusmarie.com. Doi: [http://jesusmarie.free.fr/islam\\_zakaria\\_boutros\\_39\\_femmes\\_du\\_messager.html](http://jesusmarie.free.fr/islam_zakaria_boutros_39_femmes_du_messager.html) (retrieved May 3, 2016).

## **Chapter 2 Egypt: An Averted Sectarian War?**

### **Introduction**

This chapter will first analyse the reactions of various religious, political, and civilian actors (2.1; 2.2; 2.3) then look at the protests (2.4) before finally examining the potential for a sectarian war (2.5). “The Innocence of Muslims” was a dangerous moment for the Copts in Egypt. Therefore, the first three sections will specifically look at how key actors and institutions in Egypt tried to prevent backlashes against Christians in Egypt.

### **Building a Modern State, Building a Nation**

The rule of the Albanian commander in the Ottoman army, Muḥammad ‘Alī (1769-1805-1849), had a tremendous effect on Egypt. He established a highly centralised administration that was headed by a Turco-Circassian elite (Ibrahim 2013, 17) and implemented control over the whole country, controlling the whole process of agricultural production (Schölch 2004, 370) and the manufacturing industry (Schölch 2004, 371) as well as internal and external commerce (Schölch 2004, 372).

In this context, the state required a large amount of human resources including those such as the Copts who were better trained in accountancy and land surveying (Ibrahim 2013, 17). However, the attitude of the state towards the Copts also changed. Muḥammad ‘Alī himself said ‘Muslims and Christians are all our subjects. The question of religion has no connection to political considerations’ (Raheb 1995, 38). In addition, the Copts were allowed to ring church bells for the first time (Ibrahim 2013, 16) and the prescriptions on dress were abolished (Reiss 1998, 6). In 1831 equality was introduced (Reiss 1998, 6) and in 1855 the very symbol of Christians’ status as second-class subjects, the *jizya*, was abolished (Sedra 2007, 223).

Some Copts succeeded in benefitting from these developments and a Coptic landowning class emerged, especially in Upper Egypt (Elsässer 2014, 19). According to Vivian Ibrahim, in 1914 Copts controlled 50% of the wealth in Egypt but paid only 16% of the taxes on agriculture (Ibrahim 2013, 49). This new elite was able to assert its control over the church and in 1874 a Coptic Lay Council (*al-majlis al-millī*) was established to ensure lay control over Christian endowments (Ibrahim 2013, 117). The council was composed of twelve lay members and twelve deputies that were elected by general suffrage (Ibrahim 2013, 35). According to Laure Guirguis, however, this council institutionalized sectarianism (Guirguis 2012, 121). A group of reformists emerged from among this landed Coptic elite (Ibrahim 2013, 49) and in 1907 the

Coptic Reform Association was founded. It aimed to defend Coptic rights and access to education (Ibrahim 2013, 52-53).

The British occupation is often accused of having promoted “sectarianism” in Egypt by privileging Copts over Muslims. Vivian Ibrahim argues that the British press increasingly promoted the idea of a “Coptic question” in cases of violence and inequalities in Upper Egypt (Ibrahim 2013, 46). S.S. Hasan, on the other hand, reports on the dismay expressed by British sources at not being able to distinguish between Copts and Muslims, as both practiced circumcision, clitorrectomy and even polygamy (Hasan 2003, 20). However, the general consul of Egypt, Lord Cromer, tended to promote the “*shawwām*” (Christians of Ottoman Syria), whom he called ‘the cream of the Near East’ (Philipp 1985, 99-100) and reportedly did not trust the Copts (Ibrahim 2013, 43).

In reaction to the British occupation from 1882 onward, a genuine Egyptian nationalism emerged that immediately made use of a religious dimension as a distinctive marker compared with the Turkish elite and British colonization, as Hamit Borzarslan argues (in Guirguis 2012, 53). At the same time, from that time on, a core issue was the struggle over who was a “true Egyptian.” In 1908, the newspaper *al-Waṭan* stated:

Die Kopten sind die echten Ägypter, sie sind die wahren Herren des Landes. Alle anderen hingegen, seien es Araber, Türken, Franzosen oder Engländer, sind nichts Anderes als Besatzer. Der Ursprung der Nation sind ohne Zweifel die Kopten (Reiss 1998, 36).

During the revolution of 1919 powerful symbols arose, such the first Coptic priest to preach in al-Azhar (Ibrahim 2013, 64). However, when it comes to the symbol of the crescent and the cross, Vivian Ibrahim notices that it was not to be found in photographs at that time (Ibrahim 2013, 60). In addition, Farīd Zahrān, a leading member of the Social Democratic Party, questioned the myths of this revolution stating that the presence of two Copts in the executive committee of the Nationalist Party did not mean that Copts played a significant role in the revolution (Zahran 2014). Following the revolution, there were discussions concerning the representation of minorities in parliament, but the Copts were against quotas (Reiss 1998, 40).

### **Upheavals: A New Role for the Church**

Throughout the second part of the twentieth century, a number of external and internal developments led to an increased assertion of the political role of the Coptic (Orthodox) Church and resulted in an increasing political tutelage of Christian Egyptians by the Church. However, the latter continued to be politically active, independent of the church and even in opposition to it.

On an external level, i.e. external to the Christian community, Egypt has experienced far-reaching demographical, social, economic, and political developments throughout the twentieth century, all of which have affected both the situation of the Copts and Christian-Muslim relations. For instance, migration to the cities contributed to the appearance of a Coptic presence in regions where there was none previously, such as in the Sinai and the Suez (Reiss 2013, 19). In Cairo, Copts mainly migrated to the suburb of Shubrā al-Khayma where there was no church until 1926 (Reiss 1998, 81). Similarly, in the 1930s the suburb of Gizeh had only one church (Reiss 1998, 98). Following the Revolution of 1952, the regime of the Free Officers and that of Gamāl ‘Abd al-Nāṣir introduced economic and agrarian reforms aimed at breaking the power of the former elite, amongst them the Coptic landowners. In addition, Nasser abolished the Coptic Lay Council (*al-majlis al-millī*) (Sedra 2012b).<sup>52</sup> As a result, the long conflict between the church and lay notables for supremacy in the Coptic community was resolved to the benefit of the church. This new relationship between Nāṣir and the Coptic Patriarch, Kyrillos VI, was termed “*millet*”-partnership. In addition, large parts of the economy and of the media began to be controlled by the state.

Yet the defeat of 1967 marked a new inflection towards a stronger Islamization of society. Both the “re-Islamization” and the “re-Christianization” which will be analysed below, contributed to a growing estrangement between Copts and Muslims. Both the Islamist stream and the church acted against popular religion. As a result, Muslims no longer participated in Coptic pilgrimage (Voile 2004, 243). Similarly, on a political level, both Anwar al-Sādāt and Ḥusnī Mubārak tended towards greater “Islamization.” While this led to a temporary break between al-Sādāt and Pope Shinūda III, the latter and Mubārak seemed to re-establish the “*millet*”-partnership. Yet under the presidency of Ḥusnī Mubārak, teachers, social workers, and preachers with an “Islamic outlook” were massively recruited in the ministries of education, social affairs and Islamic endowments (Roussillon 1994, 106-107).

Attempts at renewals in the Coptic Orthodox Church started in the mid-nineteenth century but reached their climax under the patriarchate of Shinūda III, who institutionalized the Sunday School Movement (Bishoy, Metropolitan 2005, 775). This renewal marked a tradition that was cleaned of its “foreign” – Latin, Greek, Islamic – influences (Mayeur-Jaouen 2005, 363). It aimed to re-Christianize the Christians in a similar fashion as Islamism re-Islamized Muslims, by establishing the church as the only moral, historical, and pedagogic framework (el-Khawaga 1992, 47-48). The reform encompassed a reorganization and centralization of the dioceses and a revival of monasticism (see Reiss 1998, 179). For instance, in 1844 there were

---

<sup>52</sup> It was re-established in 1973 and drew its members from the middle-class.



twelve dioceses, in 1971 there were seventeen, and in 2009 there were 47 dioceses (Elsässer 2014, 52-55; Bishoy 2005, 790). Bigger dioceses were divided into smaller ones. Before the accession of Shinūda III, the Holy Synod comprised twenty-three members; that number has now reached eighty-three (Reiss 1998, 273). In addition, social services such as kindergarten and evening schools were introduced (Hasan 2003, 184) and the creation of Coptic student associations (*usar*) was promoted by the newly established Bishopric for Youth (Guirguis 2012, 46). All these measures aimed to fully assimilate the Coptic community and Coptic youth into the church (Hasan 2003, 184) but, according to Laure Guirguis, Shinūda III also contributed to the creation of a sense of minority (Guirguis 2012, 112). In addition, these measures also faced resistance. Likely under pressure from President al-Nāṣir, Pope Kīrillus VI opposed the political character of the Sunday School Movement (Sedra 2007, 225). This movement was the product of a newly urbanized middle-class in Cairo and faced opposition from the rural population of Upper Egypt (Mayeur-Jaouen 2005, 363). The actors of the Sunday School Movement managed to enter the revived monasteries and, from there, to become a leading force in the patriarchate. All in all, the reform turned the patriarchate into an increasingly opaque (Sedra 2012a) and authoritarian institution. Shinūda III seems to have especially contributed to this development. Interestingly, he developed powerful and sometimes questionable means with which to pressure the government. Following the violent clashes between the police and Coptic protesters in November 2010, Shinūda III retreated to the monasteries of the Wādī al-Naṭrūn to obtain the release of 133 imprisoned Copts.<sup>53</sup>

### **The Revolution: Emancipation from Church Tutelage**

Overall, the Revolution of 25 January 2011 did not start that day but was the final result of a long series of growing protests against the regime of Ḥusnī Mubārak. It was a revolution against authoritarian and corrupted institutions which had also affected the Copts. Their involvement in the revolution was also a revolt against the church tutelage (see Section 2.3.3). Despite the patriarch's calls on Copts not to participate in the protests, some youths did participate. This involvement signalled their intention to participate both as Egyptians and as Copts, and to be visible as Copts., Several protests supporting the victims of the attack on the Coptic church in Alexandria took place in Tahrir Square, as did prayers in Coptic and in Arabic.<sup>54</sup> Interestingly, however, churches in Egypt officially expressed their opposition to this

---

<sup>53</sup> Al-Ahram Hebdo. 22-28 December 2010. Encourager l'esprit de citoyenneté. Number 850. Year 17. Pages 3-4.

<sup>54</sup> Watani. 13 February 2011. الأقباط والمسلمون أقاموا صلوات واحدة من أجل مصر. Number 2564. Year 53/Number 530. Year 11. Page 4.

revolution until after the fall of Mubārak. As the Coptic Orthodox bishop of Shubrā al-Khayma, Murquṣ, stated: ‘We do not know the goal of these protests, nor the details, nor who is behind it’ (POC 2011, 399). Finally, the Coptic Orthodox Church issued a statement praising the ‘revolution of the youth’ on 15 February, one day after the departure of Mubārak. In this regard, the different attitudes displayed by the churches are interesting. After the revolution, Shinūda III continued to express his fears by listing all the assaults on Copts and churches in the newspaper he edited, *al-Kirāza*.<sup>55</sup> In contrast, not only did the Coptic Catholic bishop Qutla participate in the protests, in civilian clothes (Reiss 2013, 30), but the magazine issued by this church, *al-Ṣalāḥ*, criticized the ‘production of fear’ in several articles, for instance in connection to the reportedly high figure of Coptic emigration following the revolution, allegedly aimed at emptying Egypt of its Copts.<sup>56</sup> Subsequently, however, church leaders told another story about the Arab Spring. In an interview, Bishop Murquṣ, whose stance was mentioned above, alluded to Shinūda III’s fear that the revolution would lead to a take-over by the ‘Islamists,’ but he recalled the opposition of the bishops to the patriarch’s position.<sup>57</sup> Similarly, the Coptic Catholic patriarch Anṭūnyūs Naguīb later expressed his praise of the revolution, which ‘revealed a new image of the Christians; full of energy, boldness, perseverance.’<sup>58</sup>

The aftermath of the revolution led to a gradual break between Shinūda III and young Copts, whose premises were visible before the revolution. As the assaults on Copts continued after the revolution, Maspero Square in Cairo developed into an alternative Tahrir Square for Coptic grievances. The patriarch called on the protesters to go home.<sup>59</sup> On the evening of 9 October 2010, security forces finally attacked the protesters, the majority of whom were Copts, killing twenty-eight people and wounding over two hundred (Younis 2011). While the assault took place, state media called on the people to defend the army (ibid). The statement issued by the Coptic Orthodox Church the following day seems to reflect the official discourse:

We insist on our Christian faith not using violence in any of its forms. As we do not forget that some foreigners have lurked among our sons and committed the errors that were connected to

<sup>55</sup> Al-Kiraza. 1 April 2011. الكنيسة وسط التغييرات والأحداث. Number 1-2. Year 39. Page 1.

<sup>56</sup> Al-Salah. 2012. لماذا يهاجم الأقتاط صناعة تخويف المسيحيين. Number 28. Year 9. Pages 29-41.

<sup>57</sup> Murquṣ, Bishop. 29 January 2015. Personal Interview. Cairo.

<sup>58</sup> OASIS. December 2011. On the crest of the Tahrir Square. Interview with Antonios Naguib. Number 14. Year 8. Pages 24-27.

<sup>59</sup> Ahram Online. 18 November 2012. Church-state relations yet to change in Morsi's Egypt. Doi: <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/58089/Egypt/Politics/-Churchstate-relations-yet-to-change-in-Morsis-Egy.aspx> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

them [...]. The Holy Synod calls on the Coptic people for a three-day prayer and fast starting tomorrow.<sup>60</sup>

Yet despite the patriarchal calls, a march on the fortieth day after the massacre was not cancelled and went from St. Mark's Cathedral in al-'Abāssiya to Tahrir Square.<sup>61</sup> During the Christmas mass in January 2012, when the patriarch wanted to thank the representatives of the SCAF present there, young Copts protested.<sup>62</sup>

Following the death of Shinūda III in March 2012, the lead was taken by Bishop Bākhūmyūs who tried to reduce the political role of the church. For the presidential elections in June 2012, the Coptic Orthodox church announced that it would remain neutral towards all candidates and would punish priests that expressed their support for any of the candidates.<sup>63</sup> Similarly, at his enthroning ceremony, Pope Tawāḍrūs II, expressed the wish for a non-political church: 'The most important thing is for the church to go back and live consistently within spiritual boundaries because this is its main work; spiritual work.'<sup>64</sup>

However, external factors again played a role in defining the place of the church in Coptic society. Firstly, the new government and presidency under the Muslim Brotherhood did not cease to consider the Copts a homogenous minority under the tutelage of the church. In addition, in November 2012, when Muḥammad Mursī declared his decisions immune (see below), opposition to his leadership increased and the church felt increasingly compelled to react. In April 2013, St. Mark's Cathedral, the see of the Coptic Orthodox Church, was attacked by unknown people.<sup>65</sup>

### **The Rule of the Muslim Brotherhood**

In the aftermath of the revolution, Islamist forces dominated politically. Yet a competition emerged between the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafī forces. The greatest surprise at the Parliamentary elections in 2011/2012 was the success of the Nur Party and its alliance. The Nur Party won 111 seats; the Building and Development Party (*ḥizb al-binā' wa l-tanmiya*),

---

<sup>60</sup> و إذ نؤكد ايماننا بعدم استخدام العنف بكل صورته. كما لا ننسى أن يعرض الغرباء قد يندسون وسط أبنائنا و يرتكبون أخطاء تنسب اليهم (...), مصر يلا دننا. In Al-Kiraza. 30 December 2012. "المجمع المقدس يدعو الشعب القبطي للصلاة والصوم ثلاثة أيام ابتداء من غد المحبوبة... إلى أين. Number 15-16. Year 39. Page 1.

<sup>61</sup> Ahram Online. 18 November 2012. Church-state relations yet to change in Morsi's Egypt.

<sup>62</sup> Al-Ahram Hebdo. 11-17 January 2012. Prêtres, généraux et barbus. Number 904. Year 18. Page 7.

<sup>63</sup> Ahram Online. 18 November 2012. Church-state relations yet to change in Morsi's Egypt.

<sup>64</sup> The New York Times. 4 November 2012. Coptic Church Chooses Pope Who Rejects Political Role. Doi: [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/05/world/middleeast/coptic-church-chooses-pope-who-rejects-politics.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/05/world/middleeast/coptic-church-chooses-pope-who-rejects-politics.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1) (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>65</sup> Al-Ahram Hebdo. 10-14 April 2013. Sectarisme : Les « mains invisibles » frappent encore. Number 969. Year 19. Page 6.

Al-Ahram Hebdo. 17-23 April 2013. Samir Morcos « Les conflits interconfessionnels ». Number 970. Year 19. Page 17.

the political arm of *al-gamā'a al-islāmiyya*, thirteen seats; and *ḥizb al-aṣāla* (Party of Authenticity) three seats (Lacroix 2012). In addition, Islamist forces dominated the Shura Council of the Parliament. The Freedom and Justice Party, the political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood, controlled 56% of the seats, the Nur Party 25%, and the secular forces barely over 10%.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, in the constituent assembly, the Muslim Brotherhood controlled half of the seats and Salafī forces 12 seats out of 50.<sup>67</sup> As a result, even before the election of Muḥammad Mursī, the Muslim Brotherhood was repeatedly accused of “brotherhoodization.” In particular, the Nur Party expressed significant criticism towards the organization and asserted in February 2013 that the Muslim Brotherhood controlled 1,300 key positions in the state institutions.<sup>68</sup> In addition, *Al-Ahram Hebdo* reported that at that time, five of the twenty-seven governorates were led by members of the Muslim Brotherhood and five vice-governors (ibid). The Muslim Brotherhood was also ‘massively’ present in the institutions of human rights organizations, of the press, and of Islamic affairs (ibid). In November 2012, Muḥammad Mursī declared his presidential decrees immune against any juridical prosecution and immunized the constituent assembly.<sup>69</sup> In early November 2012, just one day before the Pope Tawāḍrūs II was enthroned, the representatives of the church withdrew from the constituent assembly (Casper 2012c). Kārim Raḍwān, a leading member of the Muslim Brotherhood (whose reaction to “The Innocence of Muslims” will be mentioned later on), justified this measures as follows: ‘Brotherhoodization is a legitimate procedure the Brothers will not renounce.’<sup>70</sup>

### **The Issue of “Sectarian Violence”**

Since the issue of attacks on Copts is a main, if not *the main* issue of the video “The Innocence of Muslims,” an entire section is dedicated to this subject. Such attacks are said to have begun in 1972 when an illegal church in Khanka was attacked by Muslims and one hundred priests protested in reaction, marking the beginning of clashes on grounds of church building (Reiss 1998, 289). However, Vivian Ibrahim and Sebastian Elsässer note that there had already been attacks on Copts in the 1950s and 1960s (Ibrahim 2013, 159; Elsässer 2014, 68). The politician Farīd Zahrān, mentioned above, even asserts that ‘Sectarian strife [...] by some historians and intellectuals to be the largest and most important example of strife in

<sup>66</sup> Al-Ahram Hebdo. 7-13 March 2012. Un deuxième bastion islamisé. Number 912. Year 18. Page 6.

<sup>67</sup> Al-Ahram Hebdo. 28 March-3 April 2012. Les tentacules se déploient. Number 915. Year 18. Page 3.

<sup>68</sup> Al-Ahram Hebdo. 27 February-5 March 2012. Egypte: La frémisation, toujours plus loin. Number 963. Year 19. Page 3.

<sup>69</sup> Al-Ahram Hebdo. 12-18 December 2012. Crise politique: Les agissements problématiques de Morsi. Number 952. Year 19. Page 4.

<sup>70</sup> Al-Ahram Hebdo. 27 February-5 March 2012. Egypte: La frémisation, toujours plus loin. Number 963. Year 19. Page 3.

Egypt's modern history, exploded between 1908-1918' (Zahran 2014). In this article he also roundly criticises the attitude towards such "sectarian violence:"

This opacity and blindness to what is considered by some to be very dark times in history is part of an Egyptian tradition that does not see the shame in the incident itself but rather in the people knowing that something negative occurred [...] we try to cover up the strife and insist that things are "just fine", and that colonialism, Israel, the Crusades, communism, imperialism, or maybe even the country, is the reason for the strife, and that all Egyptians are one people cut of one fabric... to some extent this rhetoric is not correct, or rather, inaccurate.

Such events of "sectarian strife" seem to have significantly increased in the years before the Revolution of 25 January 2011 and mainly resulted from conflicts over marriage, land and the disappearance of young Coptic women. The cases of Camilla Shehata and Wafaa Constantine in 2010 in particular attracted the most attention. Both were married to priests and seemingly converted to Islam in order to escape abusive marriages. Yet their whereabouts were unknown and it stirred the anger of Islamist radicals. However, the alleged forceful conversion and/or kidnap of Coptic women often results from the women's own desire to escape stifling and dominant family structures (see Guirguis 2012, 75-81).

The way the official authorities and the media have dealt with such issues has shown both an eagerness for sensationalism and a taboo. On the one hand, the liberalization of the media in 2005 resulted in a more open discussion of inter-religious relations and clashes. As Elizabeth Iskander showed, this became a "hot topic" that increased sales, while still covering the issue in the context of national unity (Iskander 2012, 32-33).<sup>71</sup> On the other hand, political and official sources, both Christian and Islamic, resort to denial and to promoting discourses of national unity (Guirguis 2012, 42-44). For instance, following the killing of six people leaving Christmas mass in January 2010 in Nag' Hammadi, the bishop of the diocese, Kīrillus refused to testify against the instigator of this attack, a former member of parliament from Mubarak's Mubarak.<sup>72</sup> In general, such attacks on Copts or the destruction of churches are often ascribed to the mental illness of the offender or to a conspiracy from abroad (Shenoda 2011). Instead of a fair prosecution, peace gatherings take place between the victim and the offender in which the victim usually has to forgive the offender (Shenoda 2011). In this regard, the journalist Youssef Sidhom rejects the very idea of "sectarian sedition" (*fitna ṭā'ifiyya*) as it places the victim and the offender on the same level (Sidhom 2011).

---

<sup>71</sup> However, the media seem to arbitrarily report on such events. For instance, the media did not report on the clashes between a Coptic family and a Muslim family in a village in the al-Minyā Governorate just after the revolution which resulted in the death of eleven Copts. In Al-Shuruq. 10 September 2012. القنوات والمواقع القبطية.. منابر خاصة جدًا. Number 1318. Year 4. Page 17.

<sup>72</sup> Ahram Online. 18 November 2012. Church-state relations yet to change in Morsi's Egypt.

Following the Revolution, there was hope that such attacks would stop (Guirguis 2012, 23). However, throughout 2011 and 2012 attacks on churches and Copts continued. Under the rule of the SCAF, a church was burnt in the Hilwān (southern Cairo) (and subsequently rebuilt) (Shenoda 2011). Also, in March 2013, there were violent clashes in al-Muqattam (ibid). In May 2011, rumours about a woman having converted and being detained in a church provoked the anger of Salafis in Imbaba, in Gizeh (ibid). There are various figures regarding the numbers of churches burnt, the number of deaths and people injured. According to Antony Shunouda, two churches, ten homes, and thirteen stores were burnt, twelve people were killed and 238 were injured (Shenoda 2011). Youssef Sidhom reported that these attacks were foreseeable but that the police did not intervene to prevent them (Sidhom 2011). Ironically, the priest of a church that was burnt in Imbaba, participated in a protest against “The Innocence of Muslims” (see Section 2.4.2). In summer 2012, there were attacks in Dashshūr (Gizeh governorate), in Asyūt (Upper Egypt), in Rafaḥ (Sinai), and Copts had to temporarily leave their homes (POC 2013, 170-171). Yet, during his visit to the United Nations, Muḥammad Mursī denied the existence of such problems and of discrimination against Copts (Sidhom 2012).

### **2.1.1 The Churches**

This first section will analyze the reactions to the film by means of official statements, speeches at joint Christian-Muslim conferences, and comments reported by the media. These reactions are those of both official and non-official churches in Egypt; the Coptic Orthodox Church (2.1.1.1), the Coptic Catholic Church (2.1.1.2), the Evangelical Church (2.1.1.3), the Episcopal Church (2.1.1.4), and non-recognized Churches (Baptist, Adventist) (2.1.1.5). This section will pay particular attention to the motivation behind these reactions and the strategies of condemnation.

#### **2.1.1.1 The Coptic Orthodox Church**

On the whole, the official reactions of the Coptic Orthodox Church reflect the attempt to dissociate the Church and the Copts from “The Innocence of Muslims.” In this regard, the Holy Synod of the Coptic Orthodox Church gathered twice to issue a statement condemning the film; the first time on 9 September 2012 and the second time on 12 September 2012, probably following the thwarted storming of the US embassy in Cairo.<sup>73</sup> In addition, on 22

---

<sup>73</sup> The Holy Synod gathered a third time on September 21 for an urgent meeting to counter the accusations made by the Salafi Front. See Section 2.5.2.

September 2012, Bishop Bākhūmyūs weighed in again to emphasize the condemnation emanating from the Church.

The two statements issued by the Holy Synod display a certain progression in terms of clarification of its position. The first statement was issued on 9 September 2012 in the name of the Church, the Holy Synod, and the Coptic Orthodox Lay Council (*majlis millī*) and was signed by Bishop Bākhūmyūs, the bishop of Sūhāg and the then provisional patriarch.<sup>74</sup> It does not refer to “The Innocence of Muslims” by its title, but instead uses other terms such as ‘an offense (*isā’a*)’ and ‘a crime’ that needs to be punished, ‘violating their feelings [of Muslims], their creeds and their religious symbols.’ Interestingly, Muhammad is described here as a “religious symbol.” However, it is not clear what this offense and crime are about. Instead, the statement uses more circumlocutions: ‘the Church has learnt that some Egyptians living in foreign countries (*duwal al-mahjar*) work on spreading disunion (*tafarruqa*) between the sons of the united nation (*abnā’ al-waṭan al-wāḥid*) by offending (*isā’a*) Islam and its noble prophet (*al-nabī al-karīm*).’<sup>75</sup> Thus, the Church silences the specific involvement of Copts and instead invokes the responsibility of ‘some Egyptians.’ Moreover, the statement expresses both explicitly (in the case of the Church) and implicitly (in the case of the Copts) respect for ‘Islam, the Muslims, and the partners of the nation (*waṭan*) and humanity.’<sup>76</sup> In addition, the Church criticizes the video by stating that it contradicts Christian teachings and explicitly ‘distances’ itself from this.

Following the attempted assault on the US embassy in Cairo on September 11, the Holy Synod gathered anew on 12 September 2012.<sup>77</sup> In a statement composed of six points, it repeated its condemnation of “The Innocence of Muslims.” This time, however, the statement uses a more specific language; ‘the production, the showing or [the] promotion of this offending film.’ Furthermore, the background of the video is mentioned more clearly, albeit implicitly; ‘Copts of the diaspora who belong to the Church have already expressed their harsh resentment’ and ‘this statement is the honest expression of the feelings of the Copts in Egypt and outside [of the country].’ Thus, the Church attempts to avoid any generalization between the Copts and “The Innocence of Muslims” and establishes itself in this context as the sole legitimate spokesman of the Christians of Egypt. In contrast, the Holy Synod refers to a few arguments

---

<sup>74</sup> Copts United. 10 September 2012. الكنيسة الأرثوذكسية ترفض الفيلم المسيء للإسلام، وتؤكد: هذا يخالف تقاليد المسيحية. Doi: <http://www.copts-united.com/Article.php?I=1288&A=69777> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>75</sup> علمت الكنيسة أن بعض المصريين المقيمين في دول المهجر يعملون على نشر الفرقة بين أبناء الوطن الواحد بالإساءة إلى الإسلام ونبيه،، “الكريم

“الإسلام والمسلمين وشركاء الوطن والانسانية”.

<sup>77</sup> Copts Today. 12 September. بيان من المجمع المقدس يدين الفيلم المسيء للإسلام ويؤكد انه جزء من حملة خبيثة. Al-Ahram. Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=32605> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

made in the first statement; the unequivocal condemnation of the ‘offense’ embodied in the film, the contradiction with ‘Christian values and the teachings of the Lord Christ,’ ‘despising (*izdirā`*) religion and offending (*isā`a*) its symbols is a crime’ which requires examination, and solidarity with Muslims: ‘Islam and Muslims are partners in the nation (*waṭan*) and humanity.’ Thus this statement more clearly underlines the dimensions of national unity than the first one; ‘this is the noble origin of the Egyptian people and its unity – Muslims and Christians – which will overcome this test by a joint expression of collective rejection on all levels.’ Eventually, it is mentioned that a copy of this statement was sent to *shaykh al-Azhar* Aḥmad al-Ṭayyib and President Muḥammad Mursī, a fact which stresses the awareness of a potential threat for Christians in Egypt.

In addition to these two statements issued by the Holy Synod, Bishop Bākhūmyūs<sup>78</sup> addressed a special declaration to *al-Ahrām* on 22 September 2012 in his capacity as head of the Coptic Orthodox Church. In his declaration to *al-Ahrām*, Bishop Bākhūmyūs began by repeating the Church’s condemnation of this video and its solidarity with Muslims; ‘I say to our Muslim brothers that we do not agree with the offense of any religious symbol.’ However, he went on to harshly condemn the ‘disgraceful act’ of the burning of the Bible (here *injīl*) by “Abū Islām” as a result of the backlash against Christians. In doing so, Bishop Bākhūmyūs used the discourse of national unity: ‘this does not serve our religious and national causes.’ Quite interestingly, in appealing to ‘political and religious forces’ to take the necessary measures to prevent new backlashes against Christians and Christianity, he “Islamized” Christianity to some extent: ‘to stop these attacks on religions, their symbols, their sacred items (*muqaddasāt*) and their revealed books (*kutubihā al-samāwiyya*).’ In short, the Bible, especially the Gospel, was defined as “revealed books” like the Quran, which is not quite accurate. It can be suggested that in doing so, Bishop Bākhūmyūs was attempting to make the Bible worthy of respect and protect it from Islamist and Salafi forces.

In consequence, it seems that under pressure from the events and reactions in Egypt, which will be analyzed subsequently, the highest level of the Coptic Orthodox Church repeated its position and put forward more or less the same arguments. Its main goal was to distance both the Church and the Copts from “The Innocence of Muslims” and to avoid any backlash. In doing so, it made use of theological arguments and the national discourse.

In this paragraph, we will look at how the Egyptian media mentioned the official

---

<sup>78</sup> Anbā Bākhūmyūs was consecrated bishop of Sūhāg, in Upper Egypt in 1986 (Meinardus 2006, 43). He has been a key actor in the Sunday School Movement and opened more than 50 literary classes, some of which he directed himself (Hassan 2003, 139).



reactions by the Coptic Orthodox Church. Prior to the first Holy Synod on September 9, *al-Yawm al-Sābi* ' seemed to have contacted representatives of three Churches in Egypt to ask them about the position of their Churches on "The Innocence of Muslims."<sup>79</sup> In the case of the Coptic Orthodox Church, Bishop Murquṣ, the bishop of Shubrā al-Khayma, a northern middle-class suburb of Cairo, was quoted as having said 'he rejected' this video. Both Bishop Murquṣ and Ṣafwat al-Biyāḏī, the representative of the Evangelical Church in Egypt, stated that it contradicted 'Christian teachings.' In addition, Ṣafwat al-Biyāḏī and Father Rafīq Garīsh, the spokesman of the Coptic Catholic Church, emphasized that Christians in Egypt were not responsible for this. These positions were quoted following *al-Yawm al-Sābi* 's mention of 'a number of Copts in the diaspora [who] produced a film offending Islam and the prophet Muhammad (PBUH)' (for further details see Section 2.5.1). Moreover, the first statement issued by the Orthodox Holy Synod was mentioned as 'the Orthodox Church announced on Monday in an official statement issued by *anbā* Bākhūmyūs, the transitional patriarch' which is correct.<sup>80</sup> *Al-Maṣrī al-Yawm* then went on, however, to assert that the Holy Synod described the producers of the video as 'extremists,' which it did not. In another instance, *al-Ahrām* correctly described *anbā* Bākhūmyūs as the '*qā'im maqām al-baṭriyark*' (which can be translated as "provisional patriarch"),<sup>81</sup> and provided the background to the second statement as 'the Holy Synod the Orthodox Church yesterday issued a statement after a meeting.'<sup>82</sup> Obviously, *Waṭanī* correctly mentions 'the Holy Synod under the leadership of *anbā* Bākhūmyūs, provisional patriarch (*qā'im maqām al-baṭriyark*), issued a statement.'<sup>83</sup> All in all, the media put the emphasis on the harsh condemnation and dissociation expressed by the Church and quoted two main arguments in particular; solidarity with Muslims and the contradiction of Christian principles. The consideration of Muslims 'partners in the nation and humanity' was particularly referred to in several instances; *al-Maṣrī al-Yawm* on 11 September 2012,<sup>84</sup> *al-Shurūq* on 11 September

<sup>79</sup> الكنائس المصرية ترفض فيلمًا يسىء للإسلام والرسول ويهاجمون صناعه.. الأنايا مرقص: 8 September 2012. Doi: [http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/8/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%B3\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9\\_%D8%AA%D8%B1%D9%81%D8%B6\\_%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85%D9%8B%D8%A7\\_%D9%8A%D8%B3%D9%89%D8%A1\\_%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85\\_%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84\\_%D9%88%D9%8A%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AC%D9%85%D9%88%D9%86\\_%D8%B5%D9%86/779002#.VjHqy25OfVJ](http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/8/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%B3_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9_%D8%AA%D8%B1%D9%81%D8%B6_%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85%D9%8B%D8%A7_%D9%8A%D8%B3%D9%89%D8%A1_%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85_%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84_%D9%88%D9%8A%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AC%D9%85%D9%88%D9%86_%D8%B5%D9%86/779002#.VjHqy25OfVJ) (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>80</sup> Al-Masry al-Yawm. 10 September 2012. «جريمة».. وحرية الإبداع مرتبطة باحترام المقدسات». Doi: <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/162860> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>81</sup> Al-Ahram. 12 September 2012. غضب شعبي من الإساءة للرسول. Number 45936. Year 137. Pages 1 and 5.

<sup>82</sup> Al-Ahram. 13 September 2012. الغضب يجتاح مصر احتجاجا على الفيلم المسيء للرسول. Number 45937. Year 137. Page 5.

<sup>83</sup> Watani. 16 September 2012. الكنائس المصرية تندد بالإساءة إلى الإسلام. Number 2647. Year 54/Number 613. Year 12. Page 1.

<sup>84</sup> Al-Masry al-Youm. 11 September 2012. الكنيسة تتبرأ من صناعى الفيلم المسيء للرسول وتؤكد: نرفض المساس بمشاعر شركاء الوطن. Doi: <http://today.almasryalyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=352975> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

2012.<sup>85</sup> Equally esteemed was the idea of “*abnā’ al-waṭan al-wāḥid*,” may it be ‘a high offense for Islam, his noble prophet and the sons of the united nation’ in *al-Ahrām* on September 11,<sup>86</sup> or ‘spreading division between the sons of the one united nation’ in *Waṭanī* on September 16.<sup>87</sup> Moreover, the idea that “The Innocence of Muslims” contradicted basic Christian principles was quoted several times; *al-Maṣrī al-Yawm* in September 11,<sup>88</sup> *al-Shurūq* on September 11,<sup>89</sup> *al-Ahrām* on September 13,<sup>90</sup> *Waṭanī* on September 16.<sup>91</sup> In addition, the background was mentioned to differing degrees; *al-Ahrām* on September 13 ‘part of a Western attack,’<sup>92</sup> *Waṭanī* on September 16 ‘Copts in the diaspora belonging to the Church expressed their resentment’<sup>93</sup> and ‘those who produced or promoted the offending film’ or ‘some living in foreign countries.’<sup>94</sup>

Subsequently, a number of Coptic Orthodox bishops reacted to “The Innocence of Muslims” using various means of expression such as statements, conferences and others. With regards to these reactions, a significant question, again, is the issue of motivation. Yet we will also investigate whether the bishops referred to some of the aspects of the two official statements by the Holy Synod: whether they repeated them, developed them, or added new arguments. First of all, the reactions expressed via official statements will be analyzed and then we will look at the speeches delivered in conference and lastly, at the reactions that were expressed by other means. Hence, another core issue is the question of whether the context in which the reaction was expressed influenced the content and the language of the reaction.

To begin with, Bishop Mūsā (Youth), Bishop Ārāmyā (Coptic Orthodox Cultural Center), Bishop Tādrus (Port Said), Bishop Mīkhā’īl (Asyūt), Bishop Būlā (Ṭanta), and Bishop Athanāsīyūs (Banī Mazār) issued official statements.

<sup>85</sup> Al-Shuruq. 11 September 2012. الكنيسة المصرية تنتقد الفيلم المسيء الأمريكي للمسيء للرسول ... وبولس يقاضى أقباط المهجر. Number 1319. Year 4. Page 3.

<sup>86</sup> Al-Ahram. 12 September 2012. غضب شعبي من الإساءة للرسول. Number 45936. Year 137. Pages 1 and 5.

<sup>87</sup> Watani. 16 September 2012. صناعة خارجية لتقسيم الوطن. الفيلم المسيء للرسول.. Number 2647. Year 54/Number 613. Year 12. Page 8.

<sup>88</sup> Al-Masry al-Yawm. 11 September 2012. الكنيسة تنبرأ من صانعي الفيلم المسيء للرسول وتؤكد: نرفض المساس بمشاعر شركاء الوطن.

<sup>89</sup> Al-Shuruq. 11 September 2012. الكنيسة المصرية تنتقد الفيلم المسيء الأمريكي للمسيء للرسول ... وبولس يقاضى أقباط المهجر. Number 1319. Year 4. Page 3.

<sup>90</sup> Al-Ahram. 13 September 2012. الغضب يجتاح مصر احتجاجا على الفيلم المسيء للرسول. Number 45937. Year 137. Page 5.

<sup>91</sup> Watani. 16 September 2012. الكنائس المصرية تندد بالإساءة إلى الإسلام. Number 2647. Year 54/Number 613. Year 12. Page 1.

<sup>92</sup> Al-Ahram. 13 September 2012. الغضب يجتاح مصر احتجاجا على الفيلم المسيء للرسول. Number 45937. Year 137. Page 5.

<sup>93</sup> Watani. 16 September 2012. الكنائس المصرية تندد بالإساءة إلى الإسلام. Number 2647. Year 54/Number 613. Year 12. Page 1.

<sup>94</sup> Watani. 16 September 2012. صناعة خارجية لتقسيم الوطن. الفيلم المسيء للرسول.. Number 2647. Year 54/Number 613. Year 12. Page 8.

Bishop Mūsā<sup>95</sup> published two statements; the first was published on September 11 on the website of *Copts Today*, the second on September 13. In his first hand-written statement,<sup>96</sup> Bishop Mūsā did not evoke the video by its title but instead spoke of ‘an offense,’ ‘the offense against religion and its symbols,’ ‘the offense against Islam and its Messenger.’ Thus, he made use of the argument put forward by the Holy Synod that “The Innocence of Muslims” is an ‘offense.’ However, Bishop Mūsā dealt more explicitly with the background of this ‘offense,’ ascribing it to ‘a small deviant group’ made of ‘some Copts living abroad’ and Terry Jones. Moreover, he quoted Pope Shinūda III who reportedly said to the “Coptic diaspora” ‘You harm Egypt and all Copts.’ Hence, Bishop Mūsā undermined the efforts undertaken by the Holy Synod to remain as vague as possible on the background and to dissociate the Copts in the diaspora from the group which produced the film. Additionally, Bishop Mūsā argued that the video contradicted Christian principles by quoting the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians 4:29 ‘Let no evil talk come out of your mouths,’<sup>97</sup> but more importantly, he underlined that ‘our Coptism (*qibṭiyyatunā*) [underlined by the author] teaches us the preservation of the feelings of our partners in the nation.’ Lastly, he thanked the Muslims for protesting against the video with ‘their Christian brothers.’ This means that, according to Bishop Mūsā, this Coptic identity is one which goes beyond a mere belonging to the Christian religion and encompasses the idea of an original Egyptian attachment. Moreover, it is not dissociable from solidarity with Egyptian Muslims. This first statement seemingly attracted a number of criticisms, as the bishop published another statement a few days later<sup>98</sup> in which he repeated his earlier reaction, but spoke this time in the first person singular and dealt more precisely with his quotation of Pope Shinūda. In particular, he repeated the rejection of this video by ‘us all, Christians and Copts, because the Lord Christ taught us respect for the religions and human beings, and our Coptism teaches us the preservation of the feelings of our brothers in the nation (*waṭan*).’ As to his quotation of Pope Shinūda criticizing the attitude of Copts in the diaspora, Bishop Mūsā asserted that he had witnessed the late patriarch saying: ‘You harm Egypt and all Copts.’

On September 17, *al-Ahrām* quoted Bishop Ārāmyā’s reaction to “The Innocence of Muslims.” He is the president of the Coptic Orthodox Center and of the monastery of the Black

<sup>95</sup> Like Bishop Bākhūmyūs and Bishop Binyāmīn (Minūfiyya), Bishop Mūsā was close to Patriarch Shinūda III (Hassan 2003, 116). He was consecrated as bishop of the youth in 1980, a newly established bishopric (Reiss 2013, 8). A physician by training, he is very popular and is currently sick (Guirguis 2012, 182).

<sup>96</sup> Copts Today. 11 September 2012. بيان من نيافة الأنبا موسى ردا على الفيلم المسيء للرسول. Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=32480> (retrieved March 3, 2014). This source is to be found in Attached Documents 1.

<sup>97</sup> Ephesians 4. Doi: <http://bible.oremus.org/?passage=Ephesians+4> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>98</sup> Copts Today. 13 September 2012. بيان بخط يد الانبا موسى بشأن المتورطين في الفيلم المسيء. Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=32712> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

Father Moses as well as being the former secretary of Pope Shinūda.<sup>99</sup> The circumstances under which the bishop expressed his view are not clear, as *al-Ahrām* simply wrote: ‘he insisted.’ Bishop Ārāmyā stated that ‘Christianity does not offend others and does not accept offense,’ like Jesus Christ ‘said in his sermons on the mountain.’

In contrast, the formulation of the reaction of the diocese of Port Said under Bishop Tādrus<sup>100</sup> seems to have been more considered. Under his leadership, the clerics of the diocese gathered together and issued a statement which was published on *Gate al-Ahrām* on September 12.<sup>101</sup> In this statement, ‘the bishop emphasizes that the Church of Port Said’ viewed the video as ‘immoral’ and ‘cowardly,’ as an offense (‘those who offended’) to the ‘person of’ Muhammad and the ‘feelings of Muslims in the world.’ Interestingly, Muhammad was not ascribed to religious symbols/figures (*rumūz*) or designated in his quality as prophet or messenger but as a *person* against whom the offense was directed. As to the background of this video, the statement did admit the involvement of ‘some Coptic Egyptians in the diaspora (*ba‘d al-aqbāt fī al-khārij*),’ but denied their representativeness, as it does not ‘agree with the tolerant Christian teachings.’ In addition, the diocese views this video in the context of the new democracy in Egypt, aimed at stirring up ‘a battle (*waqī‘a*) between the Muslims and Copts of Egypt.’ Yet according to the diocese, this attempt is doomed to fail because of the ‘awareness of the people of Egypt and the love that has connected the Muslims and Copts of Egypt for fourteen centuries.’ In short, the statement expresses a belief in the strength of national unity in Egypt.

In slight contrast, Bishop Mīkhā’īl, bishop of Asyūt,<sup>102</sup> repeated the content of the two official church statements and seemed to develop them further.<sup>103</sup> In his press declaration published on September 12, he also viewed “The Innocence of Muslims” as an ‘offense’ targeting the ‘Islamic religion and its noble Messenger (*rasūlihi al-karīm*)’ as well as an ‘excuse for sectarian strife (*fitna tā’ifiyya*).’ He underlined the Church’s respect for the ‘feelings of our Muslim brothers, partners in this dear nation (*waṭan*).’ Yet, unlike the official statements, he emphasized that Copts condemned the ‘film’ before Muslims did.

On 15 September 2012, *al-Shurūq al-Jadīda* published the reaction given by Bishop

---

<sup>99</sup> Al-Ahrām. 17 September 2012. رموز إسلامية ومسيحية تطالب بتجريم ازدياء الأديان. Number 45941. Year 137. Page 5.

<sup>100</sup> Bishop Tādrus was consecrated Bishop of Port Said, a newly established diocese, in 1976 (Meinardus 2006, 42).

<sup>101</sup> Gate al-Ahrām. 12 September 2012. مطرانية الأقباط الأرثوذكس ببورسعيد تستنكر الفيلم المسيء للرسول الكريم. Doi: <http://gate.ahram.org.eg/News/250354.aspx> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>102</sup> Bishop Mīkhā’īl was consecrated in 1946 (Meinardus 2006, 38) and was viewed for some time as a traitor following his telegram sent to President Anwar al-Sādāt expressing his support when the president was attempting to reconcile with Islamist forces (S.S. Hassan 2003, 114).

<sup>103</sup> Al-Sharq al-Arabi. 12 September 2012. أعضاء المجلس الملي بأسبوط: الفيلم المسيء للرسول ذريعة للفتنة الطائفية. Doi: <http://asharqalarabi.org.uk/barq/b-qiraat-92.htm> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

Athanāsyūs,<sup>104</sup> of Banī Mazār in Upper Egypt.<sup>105</sup> In this statement he did not mention the involvement of Copts in the diaspora at all, but instead only evokes Terry Jones, whom he described as a ‘another supporter of strife.’<sup>106</sup> He also suggested that Christianity had been likewise targeted and mentioned the film *The Da Vinci Code*, which will be mentioned below (see summary to Section 2.1.1.1). According to Bishop Athanāsyūs, both *The Da Vinci Code* and this video shared the same goal; ‘a battle (*waqī‘a*) between humanity.’ However, both attempts were condemned to fail, since ‘Muslims and Christians in Egypt experienced a common national position and have been united across time.’ Thus national unity is given a historical foundation.

Lastly in the statements category, the diocese of Ṭanṭa, in Lower Egypt, issued two statements. In addition, its bishop, *anbā* Būlā, initiated a joint Christian-Muslim conference (which will be mentioned in Section 2.4). *Al-Sharq al-‘Arabī* published a statement issued by the priests of the diocese on September 13;<sup>107</sup> and *al-Ahrām* mentioned on September 14 that the diocese had gathered to issue a statement.<sup>108</sup> It is possible that both newspapers are referring to the same event. However, the content of the reports differs to some extent. *Al-Sharq al-‘Arabī* quoted or paraphrased from the statement issued in the name of the priests of the diocese, who described “The Innocence of Muslims” as ‘the offending film (*al-film al-musī‘*),’ ‘the contempt of religions (*izdirā‘*),’ ‘disgraceful behavior’ and ‘racist calls to religious disunion (*tafarruqa*)’ undertaken under the pretense of ‘freedom of thought,’ aiming to ‘stir strife, charge feelings of hatred and strife and chaos between the peoples.’ As to its background, the statement remained vague and only mentioned ‘people whose minds [are] filled with hatred.’ In contrast, the video was said to have no link whatsoever to Christians and Christianity. As a counter-reaction, the diocese called on Muslims and Christians in Egypt not to be tempted by this video, but instead to overcome this ‘test’ in peace. In comparison, the statement mentioned by *al-Ahrām* was reportedly issued by a Synod of the diocese of Ṭanṭa and its annexes in cooperation with the local Lay Council (*majlis millī*). In this context, the designation of “The Innocence of Muslims” differed; ‘all attacks on sacred items (*muqaddasāt*), insulting (*ihāna*) religious symbols and

<sup>104</sup> Bishop Athanāsyūs was consecrated bishop of Banī Mazār in 2001 (Meinardus 2006, 39). This diocese was previously part of the diocese of Banī Swīf which was directed by Bishop Athanasius until 2001 (Meinardus 2006, 39).

<sup>105</sup> Arab West Report. 17 September 2012. الإساءة مؤكدة مخالفتها لسماحة المسيحية. Doi: <http://www.arabwestreport.info/ar/lsn-2012/lsbw-37/73-sqf-bn-mzr-ytdhr-llmslmyn-n-ls-mwkd-mkhlft-h-lsmh-lmsyhy> (retrieved November 2, 2015).

<sup>106</sup> “هو صاحب أكثر من فتنة”

<sup>107</sup> Al-Sharq al-Arabi. 12 September 2012. الأديان ازدراء المسيحية ويدعو لعدم ازدراء الأديان. Doi: <http://asharqalarabi.org.uk/barq/b-qiraat-92.htm> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>108</sup> Al-Ahram. 14 September 2012. الأزره يطالب بالالتزام بضوابط الاحتجاج والبعد. استمرار ردود الفعل الغاضبة على الفيلم المسيء: الأزره يطالب بالالتزام بضوابط الاحتجاج والبعد. عن العنف. Number 45938. Year 137. Page 6.

Islam, as well as violating the creed of the other' are harshly condemned. Again, Christianity was asserted not to promote such "offense" but instead to forbid it.

In the following paragraphs, we will look at joint Christian-Muslim conferences in which a number of Coptic Orthodox bishops participated. These are Bishop Mārtūrūs (general bishop and delegate of the Coptic Orthodox Church), Bishop Kīrillus (Naj' Ḥammadī, Upper Egypt), Bishop Būlā (Ṭanṭa, Lower Egypt), Bishop Murquṣ (Shubrā al-Khayma, a northern suburb of Cairo), and Bishop Bisantī (Ḥilwān wa l-Ma'ṣara, South of Cairo).

On 13 September 2012 Bishop Mārtūrūs participated in a conference entitled "No to stirring strife ... Yes to supporting the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)" which was organized by the professional Association of Lawyers.<sup>109</sup> Besides Bishop Mārtūrūs, several other personalities participated such as Gamāl As'ad<sup>110</sup> whom we will mention later on, as well as a delegate of the Faculty of Law from the University of Banī Swīf, Dr. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Zāhir, and a member of the Association of Lawyers, Ībrāhīm Īlyās. During this conference, Bishop Mārtūrūs submitted a document that would establish a joint committee composed of members of Al-Azhar, the Church and the *bayt al-'ā'ila* (a joint Azhari-Church institution). Moreover, Bishop Mārtūrūs demanded the formation of a legal group composed of Egyptian lawyers to undertake legal proceedings against the producers of the video, especially Mūrīs Ṣādiq and Terry Jones. He also condemned art that offends any 'religious symbol.'

In comparison, Bishop Kīrillus' intervention at the eleventh festival of the diocese of Naj' Ḥammadī for interreligious understanding took a different tone.<sup>111</sup> The diocese was established in 1977 with the consecration of Kīrillus (Meinardus 2006, 42). In January 2010 the diocese witnessed a serious sectarian incident when a man shot at Coptic followers leaving the Christmas mass and killed six people. Subsequently, Bishop Kīrillus refused to testify against the instigator of this attack, a former member of parliament of the party of Mubārak.<sup>112</sup> As will be shown later on, this event was an important step in the gradual emancipation of Copts from church tutelage (see Section 2.3.3.1). This event might explain the content of Bishop Kīrillus'

---

<sup>109</sup> Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 13 September 2012. مطالب بشطب موريس صادق من نقابة المحامين.. مؤتمر "لا لإثارة الفتنة" يطرح وثيقة. Doi: [http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/13/%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B1\\_%D9%84%D8%A7\\_%D8%84%D8%A5%D8%AB%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%A9%D9%8A%D8%B7%D8%B1%D8%AD\\_%D9%88%D8%AB%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%A9\\_%D9%84%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%AF%D9%89\\_%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B2%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A1\\_%D8%A%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%A7%D9%86/784864#.VjszJF5OfVJ](http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/13/%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B1_%D9%84%D8%A7_%D8%84%D8%A5%D8%AB%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%A9%D9%8A%D8%B7%D8%B1%D8%AD_%D9%88%D8%AB%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%A9_%D9%84%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%AF%D9%89_%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B2%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A1_%D8%A%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%A7%D9%86/784864#.VjszJF5OfVJ) (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>110</sup> See Section 2.4. Protests and Joint Christian-Muslim Reactions; and 2.3.2. Coptic Organizations.

<sup>111</sup> Copts United. 14 September 2012. بالفيديو والصور الانبا كيرلس اسقف نجع حمادى : لا لاذراء الاديان ... واحترسوا من التعالاب الصغيرة Doi: <http://www.copts-united.com/article.php?I=1292&A=70190> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>112</sup> English al-Ahram. 18 November 2012. Church-state relations yet to change in Morsi's Egypt.

speech. At this festival, he delivered a speech in front of 5,000 people, among them representatives of the Muslim Brotherhood. Throughout his speech, the bishop backed his thesis concerning good Christian-Muslim relations by using examples from history. For instance, the conqueror of Egypt, ‘Amr bin al-‘Ās restored Patriarch Binyāmīn I (623-662) to the Coptic Orthodox papal see and ended the ‘Byzantine occupation.’ In addition, he quoted Pope Kīrillus IV (1854-1861) who explained his refusal of Russian protection: ‘the near neighbor is better than the distant friend.’ This argument lacks a certain conviction, though. Moreover, the bishop reminded his audience of the statement issued by the Church condemning “The Innocence of Muslims” and emphasized the ‘Copts’ utter rejection of ‘despising religions (*izdirā*).’ Despite this, he seemingly tried to some extent to overcome the Christian-Muslim binomial by pleading: ‘Yes to the peace between and the love for each other as Egyptians and no to despising each other’s religion as Egyptians.’

In Ṭanṭa, a conference was organized on the initiative of Bishop Būlā (see Section 2.4.3). Quite surprisingly, *Gate al-Ahram* entitled his article published on September 15 ‘*anbā* Būlā: ‘the offending film is a diabolical Zionist thought to destroy religions ... and its hero is an agent of Mossad.’<sup>113</sup> Indeed, the speech by Bishop Būlā<sup>114</sup> sharply contrasted with the sober statement(s) issued by the diocese of Ṭanṭa, as the background of the film was now ascribed to an ‘Israeli-American person’ and the main character is played by ‘the son of a leader of Hamas who has converted to Christianity and has become an agent of the Israeli Mossad, and the promoter is an Evangelical priest.’ This ‘Israeli-American person’ is probably “Sam Bacile” and the priest is Terry Jones. However, as it was shown in Chapter 1, the Egyptian media had established the involvement of some Copts living abroad from the beginning and by then (on 15 September 2012), even the Western media had refuted the speculation concerning “Jewish/Israeli” involvement. Moreover, the “agent of Mossad” is Muṣ‘ab Ḥasan Yusif who first started to spy for the Shin Bet and then converted to Christianity. In his memoirs, *Son of Hamas*, he alluded to the defining influence of Zakariyā Buṭrus on his conversion (Yousef 2011).<sup>115</sup> Yet it is unlikely that Bishop Būlā had any precise knowledge concerning Muṣ‘ab Ḥasan Yusif. Still, this purported connection to “Zionism” and “Mossad” can be viewed as an

<sup>113</sup> Gate al-Ahram. 15 September 2012. وبطله عميلا للموساد. ويطله عميلا للموساد. فكرة شيطانية صهيونية لضرب الأديان.. <http://gate.ahram.org.eg/News/251298.aspx> (retrieved May 21, 2016). Doi: الأنبا بولا: الفيلم المسيء فكرة شيطانية صهيونية لضرب الأديان..

<sup>114</sup> To some extent, Bishop Būlā, who was consecrated bishop of Ṭanṭa in 1989 (Meinardus 2006, 43), can be described as a controversial figure in Egypt due to his fairly good relations with the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafi leaders. As a result, his nomination for the representative of the Coptic Orthodox Church for the constituent assembly was heavily criticized by youths and secular forces. In Al-Shuruq. 12 September 2012. “البابا” الذي يريد “الإخوان”. Number 1320. Year 4. Page 8.

<sup>115</sup> ‘I liked him – until I realized what he was saying. He was systematically performing an autopsy on the Quran, opening it up, exposing every bone, muscle, [...], organ and then putting them under the microscope of truth and showing the entire book to be cancerous’ (Yousef 2011, 227).

attempt to divert attention away from Coptic involvement in “The Innocence of Muslims.” Additionally, the bishop called for laws forbidding ‘attack[s] on religion and religious symbols,’ the boycott of TV channels offending religions and he also reminds listeners that Christianity has likewise been targeted.

In contrast, Bishop Murquṣ, the bishop of Shubrā al-Khayma,<sup>116</sup> used sober language to deliver his speech at a conference in Cairo which was organized by the Public Coptic Association (*hay’at al-aqbāṭ al-‘āmm*) and the newspaper *al-Muhāshīr* on Saturday 15 (see Section 2.4.3).<sup>117</sup> Like Bishop Būlā, *anbā* Murquṣ called for international laws against blasphemy and, in particular, called on the United Nations to intervene. He also demanded the establishment of a commission in Europe, the United States, and Australia. Referring to a criticism formulated in the official statements of the Church, he asserted that by the Christian injunction “love thee each other,” Jesus Christ ‘commanded us to love the other even if he differed in creed, thought, or religion,’ and concluded ‘Christ was a strange figure in his relationship with other religions.’ All in all, according to Bishop Murquṣ, this video had no impact on Christian-Muslim relations.

Bishop Bisantī of Ḥilwān wa l-Ma’ṣara participated in the conference “Together to support the Messenger” which was mentioned on *al-Muhīt* on 20 September 2012,<sup>118</sup> and on *al-Zamān* on 21 September 2012.<sup>119</sup> Besides Bishop Bisantī, high-ranking members of the Muslim Brotherhood also participated in this conference, such as the Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood, Muḥammad Badī’ (see Section 2.4.3). Perhaps for this reason, Bishop Bisantī defended Copts living in the diaspora against likely accusations, asserting that those who produced the video did not represent all Copts. In contrast, these few Copts were reportedly balanced by ‘hundreds of Copts in the diaspora who esteem Muslims and refuse offense’ and ‘thousands of Copts who love Egypt’ (*al-Zaman* 21 September 2012). Here Bishop Bisantī emphasizes a national unity which is not based on a common history. Instead, this national history rests on common values; ‘Christianity and Islam agree on the good treatment and non-offense’ (*al-Zaman* 21 September 2012), ‘we are one people’ (*Moheet* 20 September 2012)

<sup>116</sup> The see of Shubrā al-Khayma was re-established in 1992 with the consecration of *anbā* Murquṣ (Meinardus 2006, 43).

<sup>117</sup> Copts Today. 16 September 2012. الأقباط يطالبون الأمم المتحدة بسن قوانين ضد الإساءة للأديان. Doi:

<http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=33167> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>118</sup> Moheet. 20 September 2012. الأقباط بسنتي: المنتجون للفيلم المسيء للرسول لا يمثلون أقباط المهجر. Doi:

<http://moheet.com/2012/09/20/1668478/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%86%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%B3%D9%86%D8%AA%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%AC%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%84%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85-%D8%B3%D9%8A.html#.VjeIwm5OfIV> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>119</sup> Al-Zaman. 21 September 2012. أقباط مصر بين معركة حقوقهم ونداءات الفيلم المسيء. Doi:

<http://www.azzaman.com/?p=14174> (retrieved May 21, 2016).



which only differs in prayer, ‘we love God and one another’ (Moheet 20 September 2012), ‘the Egyptian people is one woven fabric (*nasīj*), because every Christian has a Muslim friend and brother’ (Moheet 20 September 2012). This idea was famously expressed by Lord Cromer, who was consul-general of Egypt from 1883 to 1907, and expressed the dismay of the British colonial administration at not being able to differentiate Muslim Egyptians from Christian Egyptians. Lord Cromer therefore stated that a Copt was an Egyptian who prayed in a church and a Muslim was an Egyptian who prayed in a mosque (Hasan 2003, 19). The idea that Egyptians only differ in worship is a recurrent theme which was mentioned previously and was mentioned again during the Revolution by *Waṭanī*: ‘it is difficult to distinguish a Copt from a Muslim, as the Muslim bears the cross and the Christ bears the Quran.’<sup>120</sup>

Finally, amongst the alternative ways to react, we have subsumed the cases of the diocese of al-Minūfiyya and the diocese of Banī Swīf.

The diocese of al-Minūfiyya displayed a banner over its see, stating ‘His Excellence *anbā* Binyāmīn,<sup>121</sup> the bishop of al-Minūfiyya, the priests and the Coptic people harshly condemn (*yastankirūna*) the film offending the prophet of Islam, and announce their resentment together with their Muslim brothers and refuse the offense (*isā`a*) of religions and their symbols.’<sup>122</sup> Interestingly, Copts are designated here as a “people.” In contrast, however, the diocese of al-Minūfiyya represent the only case of a condemnation of the violence arising as a reaction to the film by the Churches in Egypt. Father Būlā Ya`qūb criticized the violence in connection to “The Innocence of Muslims” (‘it is necessary to behave wisely’) and demanded that legal measures be taken against the producers and called for the making of a counter film to refute the content of this video.

Finally, the bishop of Banī Swīf, Bishop Ghubryāl,<sup>123</sup> expressed his opinion on “The Innocence of Muslims” during a Bible lecture he gave.<sup>124</sup> He described the video as an

<sup>120</sup> Watani. 13 February 2011. الأقباط و المسلمون أقاموا صلوات واحدة من أجل مصر. Number 2564. Year 53/Number 530. Year 11. Page 4.

<sup>121</sup> Bishop Binyāmīn who was consecrated in 1976 (Meinardus 2006, 41), is said to have been close to Patriarch Shinūda III (Hassan 2003, 134).

<sup>122</sup> Al-Balad. 15 September 2012. "مطرائية المنوفية تستنكر الإساءة للرسول.. وترفع لافتة "مسلم مسيحي إيد واحدة". Doi: <http://www.el-balad.com/265222> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>123</sup> As previously mentioned, Banī Swīf was one of dioceses which were re-organized under Patriarch Shinūda. Prior to 2001, Bishop Athanāsīyūs was its bishop but since then the diocese has been directed by Bishop Ghubryāl (Meinardus 2006, 39).

<sup>124</sup> Watani. 15 September 2012. الأنبا غبريال : الفيلم المسيء لعهه صهيونية وأسلوب رخيص يهدف لبث الفرقة. Doi: <http://www.wataninet.com/%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1/%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%7%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%B3%D8%A9/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%86%D8%A8%D8%A7-%D8%BA%D8%A8%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A1-%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A8%D9%87-%D8%B5%D9%87%D9%8A%D9%88/85570/> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

‘offending film,’ ‘this act’ and a ‘provocative work and insult.’ Indirectly he made Copts in the diaspora responsible for it, since he defended them: ‘they love their country; Muslims and Copts are friends in the diaspora.’ Moreover, he both refuted a Christian connection as ‘they do not know anything about the essence and teachings of Christianity,’ and considered its aim to be ‘spread[ing] division and strife (*fitna*) and instability in Egypt.’ Therefore: ‘this is a Zionist game to destabilize the Arab region.’ He also mentioned the participation of priests and Copts in the protests on Friday, 14 September (Section 2.4.2).

### ***Summary of Section 2.1.1.1: Dissociating Christians in Egypt***

All in all, the Holy Synod of the Coptic Orthodox Church issued two statements, and out of 49 bishops in Egypt, twelve bishops reacted at least once in statements, comments to the press, speeches at conferences, and through participation in protests. Lower Egypt is more heavily represented than Upper Egypt, with the exception of Naj‘ Ḥammadī. Even though the reactions did not encompass all bishops, this overall collective effort is interesting because it shows that the effort to dissociate Copts from this video was not undertaken solely by one person, as was the case under the patriarchate of Shinūda III. Instead, this effort was collectively undertaken by involving the Holy Synod as well.

“The Innocence of Muslims” was condemned without exception and overwhelmingly qualified as *isā’a*, (an) “offense,” against Islam, Muhammad, and Muslims as well as against religious symbols or figures in general (the first statement from the Holy Synod, Bishop Mūsā, Bishop Tādrūs, Bishop Mīkhā’īl, the diocese of Ṭanṭa, Bishop Binyāmīn, and Bishop Ghubryāl). In some cases, the video was also misunderstood as a film (second statement from the Holy Synod, diocese of Ṭanṭa, and Bishop Ghubriyāl). Besides *isā’a*, the most recurrent word to qualify this video was *izdirā’*, “contempt” (second statement from the Holy Synod, diocese of Ṭanṭa, Bishop Kīrillus, and Bishop Ghubryāl). In some instances, the video was condemned using moralizing objections (the first and the second statement by the Holy Synod, diocese of Ṭanṭa, and Bishop Ghubryāl). All in all, however, in no instances was the video or “film” mentioned by its title and if it were not for the context, it would be very unclear what these bishops actually condemned.

Most of the bishops were similarly vague when evoking the background to this video, which in some cases they did not mention at all (Bishop Ārāmyā, Bishop Mīkhā’īl, Bishop Mārtīrūs, Bishop Kīrillus, Bishop Murquṣ, and Bishop Binyāmīn). In other cases, the involvement of “Copts in the diaspora” is mentioned (Bishop Mūsā) or the mention takes place indirectly when emphasizing the “loyalty” of Copts in the diaspora (second statement, Bishop

Bisantī, and Bishop Ghubryāl). However, the first statement by the Holy Synod and Bishop Tādrūs did try to put forward the Egyptian identity of the small network behind the film. In a few other cases, the involvement of Copts in the diaspora is denied by only mentioning Terry Jones (Bishop Athanāsīyūs) or diverting the attention towards a “Zionist” or “Israeli” background (Bishop Ghubryāl and Bishop Būlā). In contrast, Bishop Mūsā and Bishop Būlā (in the statements) attempted to downplay the importance of those behind this video by describing them as a ‘small deviant group’ (Bishop Mūsā) and ‘persons [underlined by the author] whose minds are filled with hatred’ (Bishop Būlā).

Thus, both the designation given to the video and the definition of its background hint at the sensitive position in which these bishops felt themselves to be. So far, these statements have suggested the wish to condemn the video but by remaining as vague as possible. Yet there were two recurring criticisms against this video that seemed to be more explicit; the issue of Christianity and the alleged purpose of this video. Some bishops asserted that this “offense” contradicted Christian values or teachings (the second statement of the Holy Synod, Bishop Mūsā, Bishop Ārāmyā, Bishop Tādrūs, and Bishop Būlā in his statement). In this regard, Bishop Būlā and Bishop Athanāsīyūs referred to the fact that Christianity had also been “targeted” in the past, by *The Da Vinci Code*. In addition, some bishops criticized the video for its alleged purpose, that is to say to spread *fitna* or *futun*, “strife” (Bishop Mīkhā’īl, Bishop Ghubryāl), *tafarruqa*, “disunion” (the first statement by the Holy Synod and Bishop Būlā in his speech), as well as *waqī’a*, “battle” (Bishop Tādrūs).

The Coptic Orthodox Church attempted to dissociate Christians in Egypt and in the “diaspora” from this video by three means; denying any Christian legitimization for this video, as has been mentioned previously, by speaking in the name of the Christians, and by making use of the discourse of national unity. The second statement from the Holy Synod establishes the Church more explicitly as the sole representative of the Copts; ‘this is the honest expression of the feelings of the Copts in Egypt and in the foreign countries.’ Furthermore, the statement asserted: ‘the Copts in the diaspora who belong to the church have already expressed their harsh resentment [for this video].’ In consequence, the Church draws a clear line between “us,” i.e. those who belong to her, hence to Christianity, and thus cannot be associated with “The Innocence of Muslims,” and “them,” the network behind it whose mention has been very cryptic, as shown above. This “we” is consequently associated with Muslims in Egypt. The Church uses slogans of Egyptian nationalism, such as *abnā’ al-waṭan al-wāḥid*, “the sons of the one nation” (the first statement by the Holy Synod), *yadan wāḥida*, “the one hand” (Bishop Athanāsīyūs). In addition, the second statement from the Holy Synod formulated a national unity

‘Muslims are partners in the nation and in humanity,’ that was used by the bishops (Bishop Mūsā, Bishop Mīkhā’īl). This idea of “partners” or “brothers” in the Egyptian “nation” expresses the desire to achieve equality. In other instances, the Egyptian nation rests on a shared history (Bishop Tādrus, Bishop Athanāsīyūs, and Bishop Kīrillus) or shared values and a common “woven fabric” (Bishop Bisantī). To some extent, this ever-present discourse of national unity was also used to convey criticism; for instance, Bishop Bākhūmyūs backed his condemnation of “Abū Islām’s” burning of the Bible using this national discourse.

Another interesting issue is the manner in which both Muhammad and Jesus are mentioned. In some cases, Muhammad is ascribed to the “religious symbols/figures” (*al-rumūz al-dīniyya*) (the Holy Synod, and Bishop Mārtīrūs to some extent), or evoked as “its Messenger” (Bishop Mūsā), nay the “[Islam’s] noble Messenger” (*al-rasūl al-karīm*) (Bishop Mīkhā’īl) or as “its noble prophet” (the Holy Synod). In contrast, Bishop Tādrus described the video as an offense against the “person” of Muhammad. With regards to the mention of Jesus Christ, it will be shown later that the reactions of the non-officially recognized Evangelical Churches (section 2.1.4) emphasized Jesus Christ as an ethical model for emulation. This *imitatio jesu* is not obvious at all in the reactions of the Coptic Orthodox Church; instead Jesus Christ’s general command for mutual respect is emphasized (Bishop Ārāmyā, Bishop Murquṣ). However, there is a small hint at the “Islamization” of Christianity, as Bishop Bākhūmyūs calls for the attacks on “revealed books” to be stopped, including among them the Gospel in a likely attempt to delegitimize the verbal attacks of Salafi preachers on Christianity.

In defining the motivation for the Coptic Orthodox Church’s reactions, it is equally relevant to look at what is *not* mentioned. Two main issues that were not evoked at all are the content of the video itself, especially the first part displaying the alleged persecution of Copts, and the violent reactions which ensued. These two omissions can be understood as attempts to de-escalate the situation.

A few bishops and one of the lawyers from the Coptic Orthodox Church, Ramsīs al-Naggār,<sup>125</sup> demanded an international law condemning the “offense” against religions (Bishop Mārtīrūs, Bishop Būlā in his speech, and Bishop Murquṣ). However, Ramsīs al-Naggār expressed the hope that such a law would not be discriminatory. Interestingly, he states ‘a creed is something [...] the human being is educated by since his childhood and respects its symbols, and it is not permissible for anyone outside this creed to offend its symbols. Insulting religious symbols is a red line.’

---

<sup>125</sup> Al-Ahram. 17 September 2012. شباب مصر يطلق مبادرة عالمية تجريم دولي ... لآذراء الرموز الدينية. Number 45941. Year 137. Page 14.

In addition, these reactions can be placed in the wider context of the Church's reactions against similar "offenses." The Coptic Orthodox Church is indeed one of the greatest promoter of censorship (Guirguis 2012, 144). For instance, in reaction to the film *The Da Vinci Code*, the Churches in Egypt issued a statement on 30 May 2006 severely condemning it.<sup>126</sup> This statement was signed by the heads of the Coptic Orthodox Church, the Coptic Catholic Church, the Evangelical Community, the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Armenian Catholic Church, the Greek Orthodox Church, the Episcopal Church, the Greek Catholic Church, the Chaldean Church, the Maronite Church, and the president of the Middle East Council of Churches. These Churches condemned *The Da Vinci Code* film as lacking any 'scientific foundation' and denied that it was a product of 'artistic creativity' considering it instead 'dominated by violence and cruelty.' According to the churches, the film aimed to 'despise (*izdirā*)' religion and its spiritual and moral values.' Interestingly, the film was viewed as 'propagat[ing] the Zionist thought [sic!]' that strived to establish 'a materialistic civilization, emptied of the spiritual and religious pulse, of the meaning of life and of the eternal destiny of the human being.' Therefore, this statement condemning *The Da Vinci Code* shows very clearly that the Churches in Egypt dislike the criticism or "offense" of religious content. This dislike is shared to some extent by the other Churches in the Arab World as both the book and the film were also forbidden in Jordan and Lebanon.<sup>127</sup> The book and the film *The Da Vinci Code* questioned the very founding narrative about Jesus Christ, as the author Dan Brown ascribed to him a wife and children (Brown 2003, 2004). However, the reactions of the Coptic Orthodox Church's to the novel *Azazeel* by Egyptian author Youssef Ziedan revealed the Church's dislike for any questioning of Christianity's history in Egypt.<sup>128</sup> *Azazeel* relates the dismay of Coptic monk Hiba at the fanaticism and violence of the Coptic Orthodox Church under Patriarch Kīrillus I (412-444) in fifth-century Alexandria (Zaydān 2008). Consequently, the Coptic Orthodox Church's condemnation of "The Innocence of Muslims" followed a pattern of condemnation of similar criticisms directed at religion. The Bishop of Austria, Bishop Gabriel, justified these condemnations by Christianity's imperative to respect other religions.<sup>129</sup>

However, Bishop Gabriel implied that the reactions in Egypt made a condemnation

---

<sup>126</sup> Muntada. July-September 2006. بيان من رؤساء الكنائس المسيحية بمصر حول فيلم شيفرده دافمسي. Middle East Council of Churches, Page 26.

<sup>127</sup> New York Times. 16 September 2012. Cultural Clash Fuels Muslims Angry at Online Video. Doi: [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/17/world/middleeast/muslims-rage-over-film-fueled-by-culture-divide.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/17/world/middleeast/muslims-rage-over-film-fueled-by-culture-divide.html?_r=0) (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>128</sup> The Guardian. 29 April 2012. *Azazeel* by Youssef Ziedan – review. Doi: <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/apr/29/azazeel-youssef-ziedan-book-review> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>129</sup> Gabriel, Bishop. 11 September 2015. Personal Interview. Vienna. This source is quoted in this chapter as "Gabriel, Bishop 11 September 2015."

necessary, as these are ‘always dangerous’ (Gabriel, Bishop 11 September 2015). The idea that “The Innocence of Muslims” was potentially very dangerous for the Christians in Egypt also seemed to have been a core motivation for the Church’s and the bishops’ reactions. This feeling of a threat is particularly epitomized by the fact that the Holy Synod gathered three times in order to issue an official statement; on 9 September 2012, on 12 September 2012, and on September 21, and to refute the allegations by the Salafi Front (see Section 2.5.2). Further aspects which back this assumption are the common patterns of the reactions: the condemnation without exception of this “video,” its description as an “offense” and “contempt,” the general silencing or minimizing of its background, the dissociation of Copts in Egypt by various means, the use of the national discourse, the silencing of sensitive and potentially dangerous issues.

### 2.1.1.2 The Coptic Catholic Church

The Coptic Catholic Church numbers approximately 170,000 followers in Egypt.<sup>130</sup> The patriarchate was established in 1824 following decades of contact between clerical members of the Coptic Orthodox Church and some Roman Catholic orders (in particular the Dominicans, the Jesuits, the Capuchin, and the Franciscans) (ibid). The church had no patriarch from 1908 to 1947 but since the mid-twentieth century, the Coptic Catholic Church has increased in importance (ibid.)

Interestingly, the reactions of the Coptic Catholic Church differed from those of the Coptic Orthodox Church and the Evangelical Church both in terms of tone and content. There were two main types of reaction; the official statement issued by the Coptic Catholic Bishops and the declarations made by its spokesman, Father Rafīq Garīsh.

Starting with the reaction of the Church’s spokesman, Father Rafīq Garīsh was quoted by *al-Yawm al-Sābi* on 9 September 2012, as the representative of a third Church (alongside Bishop Murquş for the Coptic Orthodox Church and Şafwat al-Biyāḏī for the Evangelical Church).<sup>131</sup> In this article, Father Rafīq Garīsh who is quoted with ‘on his side, he said,’ described the video as ‘this film’ produced by people ‘without any politeness or ethics,’ ‘ignorant of religion and its religious symbols/figures.’ Thus he remained highly vague with regards to the background of this video. Instead, responsibility was indirectly ascribed to the “West,” which ‘issues films that attack God himself.’ In contrast, ‘we reject this in Egypt.’ Moreover, Father Rafīq Garīsh dissociated the Church from the video by asserting the ‘Catholic

<sup>130</sup> Pro-Oriente. Koptisch-Katholische Kirche. Doi: [http://www.pro-orient.at/Koptisch\\_Katholische\\_Kirche/](http://www.pro-orient.at/Koptisch_Katholische_Kirche/) (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>131</sup> Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 9 September 2012. أقباط المهجر يشعلون الفتنة بإنتاج فيلم مسيء للرسول .. سياسيون يهاجمون القس الأمريكي. رضوان: المسيحيون المصريون قبل المسلمين ضد الفيلم Doi: <http://www.youm7.com/story/0000/0/0/-/780136#.Vjhs7m5OfVI> (retrieved May 22, 2016).

Church[’s]’ respect for all ‘religious symbols’ and the fact that Christianity and Judaism are likewise targeted. However, this reaction also contained a slight criticism against ‘the simpletons (*busaṭā*) amongst the Muslims’ who, according to him ‘have already been affected [by this]’ and viewed this as part of Christianity, but ‘Christianity is innocent.’ In addition to this criticism, a few days later Father Rafīq Garīsh accused the media of having ‘indirectly made free propaganda.’<sup>132</sup> Furthermore, he stated that the purpose of this video was to instigate a ‘battle (*waqī’a*) between Christians and Muslims,’ but ‘we will not allow this.’ Besides this siding with Muslims, Rafīq Garīsh drew another line, demarcating the producers of the film from *us*; ‘those Copts who have participated in the production of this offending film are not Egyptians.’ This is the only mention by the Coptic Catholic Church of a Coptic involvement in “The Innocence of Muslims,” provided *al-Shurūq* faithfully quoted the spokesman, which is not certain.

Subsequently, Bishop Kīrillus Willyam issued a statement in the name of the members of the Council of Catholic Bishops in Egypt on the Patriarchate’s website.<sup>133</sup> The statement dealt with several issues that were previously mentioned by Rafīq Garīsh. First of all, the Catholic bishops mentioned the role of the media but did not formulate the criticism of their spokesman; ‘with regards to what the media have published about the showing of a film offending Islam.’ Thus, the mention of the video *by* the media and not the video itself seemed to have triggered this statement. In addition, the bishops formulated a condemnation of ‘all forms of offense (*isā’a*) against religious symbols whatever they are and from whichever source they come’ as well as of ‘every attempt to offend, distort or spread hatred.’ Therefore, the Coptic Catholic Church demanded ‘respect for all religious symbols (*al-rumūz al-dīniyya*): book, person, symbol (*ilāmāt*).’ Thus, it tried to include into the sanctity of so called religious symbols a broad spectrum, perhaps including things that are usually targeted by Salafists as practices of polytheism, such as the Christian mass. In contrast, the video – which was not explicitly defined as the subject of this statement – reportedly contradicted the ‘teachings of the Holy Book (*al-kitāb al-muqaddas*)’ which calls for the ‘love and respect of all.’ Furthermore, the statement addressed relations to Muslims by referring to the *Nostra aetate* of the Second Vatican Council. Here, national unity is not based on history or on a common “woven fabric” but instead on a shared theological foundation: believing in ‘the one God, living and subsisting in Himself; merciful and all-powerful, the Creator of heaven and earth.’ Finally, the statement

<sup>132</sup> Al-Shuruq. 12 September 2012. ثورة غضب “إسلامية مسيحية ضد الإساءة للرسول. Number 1320. Year 4. Page 5.

<sup>133</sup> Coptic Catholic Patriarchate. 11 September 2012. بيان الكنيسة الكاثوليكية بشأن ما تنتشره وسائل الإعلام عن ظهور فيلم يسىء. Doi: <http://copticatholic.net/p12776/> (retrieved May 22, 2016).

formulated a prayer addressed to God, in which it called on Him to ‘enlighten the hearts of all with love and truth,’ likely expressing a fear of backlashes against Christians in Egypt.

### **Summary of Section 2.1.1.2**

These reactions were much less alarming. Yet the Coptic Catholic Church expressed some implicit criticism towards the role of the media and the violent reactions of some Muslims. Interestingly, this Church did not use the binomial “Muslim-Copt” to back its condemnation, but rather referred to a more general belonging to Egypt and to the shared values of Muslims and Christians.

### **2.1.1.3 The Evangelical Church**

The first Evangelical mission was established in 1854 by American missionaries (Meinardus 2006, 108-109). It founded schools, provided medial services, and gave Bible lectures. Currently, the Evangelical Church is led by the Evangelical Synod of the Nile (*majma‘ injilī al-Nīl*) and leads 312 congregations in Egypt (Meinardus 2006, 108-109).

Unlike the previous sections on the reactions of the Coptic Orthodox Church and of the Coptic Catholic Church, the reactions by the Evangelical Church in Egypt showed a common pattern. Therefore, this section will first briefly list all the reactions from the Evangelical Church and provide a short description of this church, and then analyze the recurrent patterns; i.e. the general condemnation of “The Innocence of Muslims,” the criticism of the media, and the attempt to dissociate Evangelical Egyptians in particular from this video by various means.

An initial comment by the president of the Evangelical Church, Şafwat al-Biyāḏī, was published in *al-Yawm al-Sābi‘* on September 9;<sup>134</sup> the Presbyterian Church on September 10, 2012;<sup>135</sup> two days later, on September 11, the Evangelical Synod of Cairo published a short statement;<sup>136</sup> on September 12, Şafwat al-Biyāḏī expressed himself again in the media;<sup>137</sup> on September 15, *Gate al-Ahram* published a statement by a priest from the Evangelical Church

---

<sup>134</sup> Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 9 September 2012. «سياسيون يهاجمون القس الأمريكي .. و«زقلمة» و«صادق» و«تبرى جونز» ويطالبون بالملاحقة القانونية للفيلم.. رضوان: المسيحيون المصريون قبل المسلمين ضد الفيلم This source is quoted in this section as “al-Yawm al-Sabi 9 September 2012.”

<sup>135</sup> Al-Shuruq. 11 September 2012. الكنيسة المصرية تنتقد الفيلم المسيء الأمريكي للرسول ... وبولس يقاضى أقباط المهجر. Number 1319. Year 4. Page 3. This source is quoted in this section as “al-Shuruq 11 September 2012.”

<sup>136</sup> Copts Today. 11 September 2012. مجمع القاهرة الانجيلي يدين الفيلم المسيء للإسلام. Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=32438> (retrieved March 3, 2014). This source is quoted in this section as “Copts Today 11 September 2012” and is to be found in Attached Documents 1.

<sup>137</sup> Al-Shuruq. 12 September 2012. ثورة غضب “إسلامية مسيحية ضد الإساءة للرسول. Number 1320. Year 4. Page 5. This source is quoted in this section as “al-Shuruq 12 September 2012.”



in Alexandria, Rādī ‘Aṭā’ Allāh;<sup>138</sup> and on September 20, *al-Ahrām* quoted the General Secretary of the Evangelical community (*tā’ifa*), Reverend George Shākīr.<sup>139</sup>

The first common pattern in the reactions by the Evangelical Church was their harsh condemnation of “The Innocence of Muslims.” For instance, in its article on September 9, in which *al-Yawm al-Sābi* ‘asked several representatives of the churches in Egypt for their opinion on this video (see Section 2.5.1.), it also asked Ṣafwat al-Biyādī, the president of the Evangelical Church for his opinion (al-Yawm al-Sabi 9 September 2012). He expressed the ‘resentment’ felt by his church and its rejection. Similarly, General Secretary George Shākīr expressed its rejection by the ‘Evangelical people of Alexandria’ as well as their condemnation and anger (al-Ahram 20 September 2012). Rādī ‘Aṭā’ Allāh, a priest in Alexandria, said he felt ‘hurt by the offense against the feelings, the symbols and creeds’ (Gate al-Ahram 15 September 2012). However, Ṣafwat al-Biyādī also directed a certain criticism towards the role of the media in drawing attention to this video, ‘calling on them to stop following the issue of this film’ (al-Shuruq 12 September 2012). Another recurring pattern in the reactions of the Evangelical Church was the attempt to dissociate themselves from this video by various means. Firstly, this attempt took place by simply stating the churches’ dissociation as the Evangelical Synod of Cairo did (Copts Today 11 September 2012). Another possibility was to back this dissociation by refuting, for instance, any connection to Christianity whatsoever. Unlike other statements, the Presbyterian Church underlined the contradiction of this “offense” not only with the content of Jesus’ message but with Jesus Christ himself, as an ethical model for emulation (*imitatio jesu*): ‘the method of the life of Lord Christ’ and ‘his noble teachings’ (al-Shuruq 11 September 2012). On September 9, Ṣafwat al-Biyādī stated: ‘Christianity refuses any offense against the other’ (al-Yawm al-Sābi’ 9 September 2012). Nevertheless, his reference to Christianity may also contain some criticism towards the way the film was dealt with which was by then widely discussed on Salafī channels. Ṣafwat al-Biyādī said: ‘if someone offends us, we do not offend back. Instead Jesus said: “dominate your hatred,”’ and quoted Mathew 4:43 ‘But I tell you, love your enemies and [...] pray for those who persecute you.’ Interestingly, however, in the original Arabic quotation Ṣafwat al-Biyādī is giving, the brackets contain the sentence ‘bless so I help you, do right to those who loathe you.’ He may have possibly added this sentence to put more emphasis on his point of view. Likewise, Rādī ‘Aṭā’ Allāh quoted Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians

---

<sup>138</sup> Gate al-Ahram. 15 September 2012. راعي الكنيسة الإنجيلية بالإسكندرية: من قاموا بإنتاج الفيلم المسيء ليسوا أقباطاً ولا مصريين. Doi: <http://gate.ahram.org.eg/News/251392.aspx> (retrieved May 22, 2016). This source is quoted in this section as “Gate al-Ahram 15 September 2012.”

<sup>139</sup> Al-Ahram. 20 September 2012. “الإنجيلية” تدين الإساءة للمعتقدات. Number 45948. Year 137. Page 5. This source is quoted in this section as “al-Ahram 20 September 2012.”

‘do not let any unwholesome talk come of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.’ (4,29) (Gate al-Ahram 15 September 2012). As a result, according to these actors, the producers of this video could not possibly be Christians, since it ‘contradicts Christian principles and the Gospel’ (Gate al-Ahram 15 September 2012). In this statement, Rādī ‘Aṭā’ Allāh put even more emphasis on this disconnection by addressing Muslims: ‘Oh, Muslim brothers, I say that those who offended your feelings are not Copts because they belong to American citizenship and were stripped of their Egyptian citizenship, and they are not Christians because they are the furthest away possible from the values and love of Christ’ (Gate al-Ahram 15 September 2012). This idea of not being Egyptian is also put forward by Ṣafwat al-Biyādī: they ‘do not have weight in the diaspora or in Egypt and do not belong to the Egyptians’ (al-Shuruq 12 September 2012). Similarly, the Presbyterian Church insisted on the video being the product of ‘individual (*fardī*) acts,’ remaining vague as to the producers who only ‘express their views’ and hinting at the danger of ‘generalization’ (al-Shuruq 11 September 2012). Finally, even before all these reactions were published, Ṣafwat al-Biyādī insisted in his conversation with *al-Yawm al-Sābi*: ‘We are not responsible for these acts that they commit outside [of Egypt] and we do not have to bear the responsibility for their mistakes’ (al-Yawm al-Sābi 9 September 2012). This quotation is interesting for two reasons. Firstly, because it sheds light on the difficulty Christian institutions and Christians in general in Egypt face in reacting to this video without putting themselves at more unease; that is to say the use of “they” and “their mistake” epitomize the difficulty of defining those behind this video without putting all Copts on trial. Moreover, this quotation also epitomizes the threat the video represented for Copts in Egypt: the accusation of treachery, suspicion, and confusion. The fact that this fear is most vividly expressed by the head of the Evangelical Church may result from the fact that Evangelical Christians still struggle to some extent with the accusation of being foreigners: ‘Theologically we are always on the attack somehow. I mean, we are on the defense against attack, namely is it legitimate to be a Protestant here, isn’t it a Western creation,’ stated Professor George Sabra of the Near East School of Theology in Beirut.<sup>140</sup>

#### 2.1.1.4 The Episcopal Church

On September 14, *al-Ahrām* quoted Bishop Muṅīr Ḥanna, the bishop of the Episcopal Church in Egypt and North Africa and the Horn of Africa, as he ‘expressed his total rejection

---

<sup>140</sup> Sabra, George. 21 November 2014. Personal Interview. Beirut.

of any picture offending the noble Messenger.<sup>141</sup> He added ‘the teaching of the Holy Book (*al-kitāb al-muqaddas*) forbids the contempt (*izdirā*) and insult of any human being.’ Here, the Episcopal bishop equated the offense of a religious content with a personal offense.

### 2.1.1.5 The Non-Official Evangelical Churches

In addition to the reactions of some of the officially recognized Churches in Egypt, a few non-recognized Churches reacted also to “The Innocence of Muslims.” These were the Baptist Church of Egypt on September 10 and the Adventist Church on 13 September 2012. When looking at these two statements, two questions arise: what is the content of the reactions and what is the extent to which they differ from those of the other officially recognized Churches.

The statement by the Baptist Church of Egypt, which was sent to *al-Yawm al-Sābi* ‘ on September 10,<sup>142</sup> showed a number of similarities with the other churches’ reactions in general and with the reaction of the Presbyterian Church in particular. Like the other churches, the Baptist Church rejected “The Innocence of Muslims” as an ‘offense against Islam’ and expressed its rejection of ‘any offense against religion and creeds.’ Similarly, the Baptist church tried to dissociate itself from this video, as its president Buṭrus Flāūs underlined the video as being the product of ‘individual cases’ and ‘when religious radicals appear from the Islamic side and declare Copts as unbelievers, they only represent themselves and not Islam.’ This sentence can be understood both as an attempt to prevent any confusion and as a criticism of Salafī preachers who declare Christians unbelievers. A similar criticism can be found in the Church’s statement when it says: ‘he [Jesus Christ] argued with their opinion [those who did not agree with him] and without harming their honor and invalidating the noble teachings.’ Again, this sentence can be understood as a criticism of some Salafī preachers. Like the Presbyterian Church, the Baptist Church formulated an *imitatio jesu*, i.e. it put Jesus forward as an example in his dealing with his opponents. Eventually, the Reverend Buṭrus Flāūs did make a reference to the Egyptian context ‘the relations between Christians and Muslims are strong [because] they live in one country.’

---

<sup>141</sup> Al-Ahram. 14 September 2012. استمرار ردود الفعل الغاضبة على الفيلم المسيء: الأزهر يطالب بالالتزام بضوابط الاحتجاج والبعد عن العنف. Number 45938. Year 137. Page 6.

<sup>142</sup> Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 10 September 2012. "Doi المعمدانية": منتج الفيلم المسيء للإسلام لا يعبرون إلا عن أنفسهم". <http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/10/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%85%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%6%D9%8A%D8%A9--%D9%85%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%AC%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%89%D8%A1%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85-%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%A5%D9%84%D8%A7-%D8%B9%D9%86%D8%A3%D9%86%D9%81/781694#.Vjs2HF5OfVJ> (retrieved May 22, 2016).

The statement by the Adventist church – ‘the community (*tā’ifa*) of Coptic Adventists’<sup>143</sup> – which was issued on 13 September 2012, differed slightly in its tone from the two previous churches.<sup>144</sup> Firstly, it viewed the video as a ‘film’ that was ‘harmful for the feelings of both Muslims and Christians.’ As to its background, it defined it as a ‘small group that does not know the meaning of love, responsibility and respect.’ However, the statement referred to the violence in reaction to the video, unlike the vast majority of the church reactions, albeit in a cautious way ‘the violent reactions in Egypt and some Arab countries in the last two days.’ Therefore, the Adventist Church prayed to God to preserve Egypt.

Interestingly, these two churches reacted early compared to other churches. Their reactions use an *imitatio jesu* and criticize Salafī extremism as well as the violent reactions to the video.

### ***Summary of Section 2.1.1***

All the churches in Egypt officially condemned “The Innocence of Muslims” as an “offense.” Yet none mentioned the first part of the video and very few even evoked the violence at all. These condemnations were backed by different strategies. The Orthodox and the Evangelical churches in particular attempted to dissociate the Christians in Egypt from this film. While the Evangelical church put more emphasis on the moral dimension of Christianity, the Orthodox Church strongly resorted to the discourse of national unity using the binomial “Muslim-Copt.” This binomial, however, was not present at all in the reactions from the Coptic Catholic Church. As to the motivations, it can be assumed that the condemnations expressed a general dislike for “offending” any religious symbols and content. To some extent, these reactions might also have been a symbolic show of solidarity. However, the Holy Synod’s statements clearly attempted to prevent backlashes against Christians.

### **2.1.2 Islamic Institutions**

The previous section analysed the Churches’ reactions in Egypt. This sub-chapter will focus on the reactions by “Islamic institutions,” i.e. the reactions of the *mufī* (2.1.2.1), of al-Azhar (2.1.2.2), and the president of the Higher Council of Sufi orders (2.1.2.3). This chapter views these three actors as “official Islamic institutions” because they are regulated by state laws, compared to Islamist organizations like the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafī organizations (which will be mentioned in a section further below) and claim to embody the legitimate voice

---

<sup>143</sup> The existence of this church in Egypt goes back to the 1920s (Guirguis 2012, 184).

<sup>144</sup> Al-Masry al-Youm. 13 September 2012. «طائفة الأقباط «الأدفنتست» بمصر تدين وتشجب «الفيلم المسيء» Doi: <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/163409> (retrieved May 22, 2016).

of Islam. In this section, I thus argue that “The Innocence of Muslims” showed a high level of awareness of Egypt’s and the reacting actors’ core role in defending and speaking for Islam, i.e. Sunni Islam, be it the *mufī* or al-Azhar. This idea that Egypt has a role to play was backed by Islamist and Salafi organizations and parties, as will be shown in Section 3.1; at the heart of this idea lies the Al-Azhar institution.

Pierre-Jean Luizard rightly pointed out that al-Azhar, as a Sunni institution, is an essential political tool for the rulers in Egypt (Luizard 1995, 519). Since the nineteenth century the state has tried to incorporate this institution. Interestingly, al-Azhar has to some extent displayed a resistance to governmental encroachment and questioned its power by joining the revolt of Aḥmad ‘Urābī in 1882 (Luizard 1995, 541) and supporting the revolution in 1919 (Luizard 1995, 543). During the revolution of 1919, Coptic priests preached in the al-Azhar mosque, while *Azharī ‘ulamā’* went into churches (Luizard 1995, 543), thus providing the discourse of national unity with a powerful symbol. The coercion of Al-Azhar that had challenged the rulers too often was achieved by a law in 1961 which basically “nationalized” al-Azhar (Luizard 1995, 545). As a result of this law, from then on “Al-Azhar” was composed of the Council of Senior Scholars (*conseil supérieur d’al-Azhar; hay’at al-‘ulamā’ al-kubbār*), the Council for Islamic Research (*majma‘ al-buhūth al-islāmiyya; direction de la culture et des recherches islamiques*), the University of Al-Azhar, and the various institutes of Al-Azhar (Luizard 1995, 547). In the 1930s, Al-Azhar had begun to establish affiliated annexe institutions throughout the country (Luizard 1995, 544).

In the post-revolutionary period, its relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood was ambiguous. On the one hand the Muslim Brotherhood can be seen as competing with Al-Azhar, as the organization has promoted a revival of Islamic religious practice since its establishment, thus questioning the monopoly of Al-Azhar over religion. Dissident *Azharī ‘ulamā’* such as Yusif al-Qarāḍawī have joined the Muslim Brotherhood. However, on the other hand, the Muslim Brotherhood counts no high-ranking *‘ulamā’* of Al-Azhar amongst its members.<sup>145</sup> Still, following the Revolution of 25 January 2011, *shaykh al-Azhar* Aḥmad al-Ṭayyib, received the Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood, Muḥammad Badī’. In addition, the new constitution – forcefully implemented by Muḥammad Mursī –, amplified al-Azhar’s role because it enshrined the institution’s role in defining the conformity of new laws with the Sharia Law. This function was previously carried out by the Constitutional Court. However, afterwards, tensions grew between Muḥammad Mursī and Al-Azhar. In particular, President

---

<sup>145</sup> Al-Ahram Hebdo. 17-23 April 2013. Al-Azhar: Le jeu de la politique et de la religion. Number 970. Year 19. Page 3.

Mursī was accused of trying to infiltrate all state institutions, including Al-Azhar.<sup>146</sup>

Despite the state's interest in using al-Azhar as a tool of political legitimization, the institution continues to envision a role of its own. For instance, at the fifth conference of the Council for Islamic Research in 1971, the institution attempted to overcome its history as an Ismaili institution, by stating that these were just buildings. Accordingly, al-Azhar ought rather to be 'identified with a religious and scientific mission' (Al-Azhar 1971, 287). Thus it defined Islam not only as a religion but also an 'integrated culture' (Al-Azhar 1971, 286). Similarly, following the revolution of 25 January 2011, *shaykh al-Azhar* Aḥmad al-Ṭayyib expressed, the institution's views for the political future of the country. In a programmatic document, he supported the establishment of a national, constitutional, democratic, and modern state founded on the separation of power and on equality amongst its citizens.<sup>147</sup>

### 2.1.2.1 The *Muftī* of the Republic

One of the first key questions when looking at the reactions of the *muftī* of the Republic and head of *dār al-iftā'*, 'Alī al-Gum'a, is whether and to what extent he claimed to speak in the name of Islam. Indeed, there were some tensions in the past between *shaykh al-Azhar* and the *muftī* over their competences with the *shaykh al-Azhar* eventually accepting the plurality of institutions issuing legal opinions (*fatwā*) (Luizard 1995, 547). Interestingly, in October 2011, *dār al-iftā'* warned against the spread of Shiism in Egypt, which allegedly threatened to provoke "fitna" (strife) and destabilization.<sup>148</sup> Thus the *muftī* and the *dār al-iftā'* view themselves as a bulwark of Sunni Islam in Egypt.

In connection to "The Innocence of Muslims," the media reported four reactions by the *muftī*; on 11 September 2012 in *al-Yawm al-Sābi*,<sup>149</sup> on 18 September 2012 the *Washington Post* published a statement by the *muftī*;<sup>150</sup> on 21 September 2012 *al-Ahrām*, published an

<sup>146</sup> Al-Ahram Hebdo. 17-23 April 2013. Al-Azhar: Le jeu de la politique et de la religion. Number 970. Year 19. Page 3.

<sup>147</sup> Al-Ahram Hebdo. 17-23 April 2013. Al-Azhar: Le jeu de la politique et de la religion. Number 970. Year 19. Page 3.

<sup>148</sup> Al-Ahram. 11 October 2012. مفتى الجمهورية: محاولات نشر التشيع في مصر من تفلح. Number 45965. Year 137. Page 22.

<sup>149</sup> Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 11 September 2012. انتفاضة المؤسسات الدينية ضد الفيلم المسيء للرسول.. "الأزهر": الداعون لإنتاجه هدفهم الفتنه.. "الإفتاء": ليس من الحرية ويمس أقدس رمز للمسلمين.. و"أقباط المهجر": نتبراً من موريس صادق وزقلمة. Doi: [http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/11/%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AA%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%B6%D8%A9\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%B3%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%AA\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%A%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9\\_%D8%B6%D8%AF\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85\\_%8A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%89%D8%A1\\_%D9%84%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B2%D9%87%D8%B1\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF/782099#.VjDa3G5OfVJ](http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/11/%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AA%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%B6%D8%A9_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%B3%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%AA_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%A%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9_%D8%B6%D8%AF_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85_%8A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%89%D8%A1_%D9%84%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B2%D9%87%D8%B1_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF/782099#.VjDa3G5OfVJ) (retrieved May 22, 2016).

<sup>150</sup> Gomaa, Ali. 18 September 2012. Egypt's mufti: To Muslims, prophet Muhammad is 'the mercy to all worlds.' *Washington Post*. Doi: <http://www.faithstreet.com/onfaith/2012/09/18/prophet-muhammad-is-the-mercy-to-all-worldsto-muslims-egypts-mufti/10018> (retrieved May 22, 2016).

interview with the *muftī*,<sup>151</sup> and on September 27 *al-Ahrām* reported that the *muftī* gave an interview to the German newspaper *Sonntagszeitung*.<sup>152</sup>

In the first reaction reported by *al-Yawm al-Sābi* ' on 11 September 2012,<sup>153</sup> the *muftī* is said to have described "The Innocence of Muslims" twice as an 'assault on sacred religious items (*muqaddasāt*)' by 'some extremists amongst Copts in the diaspora.' Interestingly, the *muftī* viewed this act as an assault on human rights and therefore refuted the pretense of freedom of speech, since the video violated 'the feelings of millions of Muslims.' Thus, 'Alī al-Gum' a claimed to speak in the name of Muslims. Consequently, he called on the 'supporters of human rights, on moral and religious institutions, on people of wisdom to act.' In addition, Muhammad was described as the 'holiest human symbol [Muslims have] and he is their prophet Muhammad (PBUH).' Similarly, *al-Ahrām* quoted Ibrāhīm Najm, the press advisor of the *muftī*, who stated that the *dār al-iftā* ' supported peaceful protests, but condemned the violence against embassies 'which leads to the fueling of the hatred of Muslims in the world.'<sup>154</sup>

In his article published in the *Washington Post* on 18 September 2012, 'Alī al-Gum' a put more stress on the idea that official Islamic institutions are needed.<sup>155</sup> In doing so, he first criticized the current state of the Islamic world, which is reportedly leading to a growing discrepancy between the image the world has of Islam and the actual message of Islam:

The world is sorely in need of such lessons which represent the authentic teachings of the Koran and the prophet of Islam. It is important to separate these noble messages from those that are bandied about by those who have no competencies in religious interpretation, Koranic hermeneutics or the history of Islamic thought.

However, the *muftī* continued, these Islamic institutions are so weakened that inflammatory rhetoric has replaced thoughtful analysis as a motivator of action and a guide for religious sentiment. In addition, he emphasized the role played by prophets, amongst them 'Abraham, Moses and Jesus:' 'They are revered teachers who taught us the very nature of reality, the purpose of our existence, and how to connect with God Himself.' Here the *muftī* adopted the Islamic understanding of Jesus as a prophet, thus probably aiming to express his esteem for Christianity. In this article, the *muftī* also put an emphasis on Muhammad. In addition to

---

<sup>151</sup> Al-Ahram. 21 September 2012. مفتي الجمهورية للأهرام: نصره النبي تتحقق باتباع منهجه... والإسلام يرفض العنف وإرهاب. Number 45945. Year 137. Page 40.

<sup>152</sup> Al-Ahram. 27 September 2012. المفتي: أزمة الفيلم المسيء وحدت المصريين ولن يفلح أحد في إثارة الطائفية. Number 45951. Year 137. Page 24.

<sup>153</sup> Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 11 September 2012. انتفاضة المؤسسات الدينية ضد الفيلم المسيء للرسول.. "الأزهر": الداعون لإنتاجه هدفهم إشعال الفتنة.. "الإفتاء": ليس من الحرية ويمس أقدس رمز للمسلمين.. و"أقباط المهجر": نتبرأ من مورييس صادق وزقلمة

<sup>154</sup> Al-Ahram. 14 September 2012. استمرار ردود الفعل الغاضبة على الفيلم المسيء: الأزهر يطالب بالالتزام بضوابط الاحتجاج والبعد عن العنف. Number 45938. Year 137. Page 6.

<sup>155</sup> Gomaa, Ali. 18 September 2012. Egypt's mufti: To Muslims, prophet Muhammad is 'the mercy to all worlds'. Washington Post.

describing him as a teacher, he recounted a story in the life of Muhammad which supposedly established him as a model for emulation.

In his interview with *al-Ahrām* on September 21, the *mufīī* emphasized anew the core role competent Islamic institutions reportedly have to play, and in particular the role he himself and the *dār al-iftā'* had played since the outbreak of the crisis surrounding “The Innocence of Muslims.”<sup>156</sup> He stated several times that the *dār al-iftā'* was the first Islamic institution in Egypt to react to this video. Furthermore, ‘Alī al-Gum‘a stated that the content of this video epitomized the ignorance of the makers of the video. In this regard, interestingly, the *mufīī* did not mention the involvement of Copts in the diaspora, but instead remained very vague concerning the background; ‘the superficiality of [...] of all cultures, if there were any culture in the first place.’ As a result, according to ‘Alī al-Gum‘a, the purpose of this video was to ‘stir sectarian strife (*fitna ṭā’ifiyya*)’ and to destabilize Egypt. However, the issue of the image of Islam seemed to be at the center of the *mufīī*’s attention in this interview. In particular, he expressed his suspicion over the timing, near the anniversary of 9/11; ‘spread the spirit of fear of and accusation against Islam’ as well as ‘accusing Muslims of fanaticism, terrorism, and savagery.’ Therefore, al-Gum‘a called on Muslims to do whatever they could to promote a positive image of Islam and Muhammad; ‘how he founded a state based on the rule of law (*ḥaqq*), justice and equality,’ ‘how he spread Islam in the rest of the world with wisdom,’ ‘how this religion preserved the rights of women, how he [Muhammad] reversed the big and was merciful with the small.’ In addition, *sharī‘a* is said to equate human rights, and democracy, as ‘tending towards equality,’ which is backed by the Quran, according to the *mufīī*. These assertions were aimed at proving the absolute conformity of Islam with liberal values. Again, the *mufīī* underlined the *dār al-iftā'*’s core role in promoting this image of Islam. However, the *mufīī* conceded that there was a certain tension between the freedom of expression and the freedom of ‘creeds of the others.’ All in all, he called on the West to revise its image of Muslims, to concede them same rights and duties, and not to view them as a “fifth column.” Thus, the *mufīī* seemed to be aware of the problems Muslims allegedly face in Western societies as a second-class minority. Finally, ‘Alī al-Gum‘a was asked by *al-Ahrām* about his satisfaction with the Christians’ reactions and positions on “The Innocence of Muslims.” In reaction, he established Egypt as a model:

The brotherly relations between the sons of the united nation (*abnā’ al-waṭan al-wāḥid*), Muslims and Christians, are governed by mutual respect and brotherhood. They grow in

---

<sup>156</sup> Al-Ahram. 21 September 2012. مفتي الجمهورية للأهرام: نصره النبي تتحقق باتباع منهجه... والإسلام يرفض العنف وإرهاب الأمنين. Number 45945. Year 137. Page 40.



firmness and strength generation after generation, and have become a model followed as an example in all states of the world.

Similarly, in his interview with the German newspaper *Sonntagszeitung*, ‘Alī al-Gum‘a again praised the position of ‘the Church in Egypt [underlined by the author] [with regards to the crisis of the film].’ “The Innocence of Muslims” was said not to have threatened the relations between Muslims and Christians in Egypt. On the contrary, according to the *muftī*, the video actually worked to unite ‘all Egyptians, Muslims and Christians.’ As to the background of the video, it was reportedly the product ‘a few extremists.’

### **Summary of Section 2.1.2.1**

In his stances, ‘Alī al-Gum‘a insisted mostly on the role *dār al-iftā*’ and himself played in the context of this video in defending Islam and promoting a “correct,” “true” image of Islam. In addition, he also expressed his esteem for Christians by emphasising Jesus’ importance as a prophet and teacher, and by thanking the “Egyptian Church” for its condemnation, and by underlining the good Christian-Muslim relations in Egypt. These statements, however, reduced the variety of Churches to one national church.

### **2.1.2.2 Al-Azhar**

This section will firstly analyze the reactions of the *shaykh al-Azhar* and secondly those of the institution.

The media reported on several reactions by *shaykh al-Azhar*, Aḥmad al-Ṭayyib; however, it is not always clear in which context he expressed himself. References to reactions by Aḥmad al-Ṭayyib were made by *al-Yawm al-Sābi* ‘ on 11 September 2012;<sup>157</sup> by *al-Ahrām* on 13 September 2012;<sup>158</sup> by *al-Ahrām* on 17 September 2012;<sup>159</sup> by *al-Shurūq* on 19 September 2012;<sup>160</sup> by *al-Ahrām* on 20 September 2012;<sup>161</sup> 27 September 2012;<sup>162</sup> and 28 September

---

<sup>157</sup> Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 11 September 2012. انتفاضة المؤسسات الدينية ضد الفيلم المسيء للرسول.. "الأزهر": الداعون لإنتاجه هدفهم. This source is quoted in this section as “al-Yawm al-Sabi 11 September 2012.”

<sup>158</sup> Al-Ahram. 14 September 2012. استمرار ردود الفعل الغاضبة على الفيلم المسيء: الأزهر يطالب بالالتزام بضوابط الاحتجاج والبعد عن العنف. Number 45938. Year 137. Page 6. This source is quoted in this section as “al-Ahram 14 September 2012.”

<sup>159</sup> Al-Ahram. 17 September 2012. رموز إسلامية ومسيحية تطالب بتجريم ازدراء الأديان. Number 45941. Year 137. Page 5. This source is quoted in this section as “al-Ahram 17 September 2012.”

<sup>160</sup> Al-Shuruq. 19 September 2012. "شيخ الأزهر: الفيلم المسيء يهدف لعرقلة التحول الديمقراطي في دول "الربيع العربي". Number 1327. Year 4. Page 6. This source is quoted in this section as “al-Shuruq 19 September 2012.”

<sup>161</sup> Al-Ahram. 20 September 2012. الأزهر يستنكر إعادة نشر رسوم مسيئة للرسول بصحيفة فرنسية. Number 45944. Year 137. Page 5. This source is quoted in this section as “al-Ahram 20 September 2012.”

<sup>162</sup> Al-Ahram. 27 September 2012. شيخ الأزهر يطالب القوى السياسية بالتوافق والبحث عن حلول حقيقية للأزمات. Number 45951. Year 137. Page 24. This source is quoted in this section as “al-Ahram 27 September 2012.”

2012.<sup>163</sup> Amongst these, on 13 September 2012, *al-Ahrām* referred to a statement published by Al-Azhar and on 20 September 2012, to a statement published by Al-Azhar the previous day (al-Ahram 20 September 2012). In addition, the views reported on September 19 by *al-Shurūq* were expressed in the context of a meeting with the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Laurent Fabius (al-Shuruq 19 September 2012). The statement mentioned by *al-Ahrām* on September 27 was delivered in the context of a meeting with the advisor to Muḥammad Mursī and the leader of the Nur Party, ‘Imād ‘Abd al-Ghafūr (al-Ahram 27 September 2012). The reaction reported by *al-Ahrām* on September 28 was the transmission of a statement made by *shaykh al-Azhar* on television (al-Ahram 28 September 2012).

In order to facilitate the analysis, we will first focus on three reactions – the meeting with the French Minister of Foreign Affairs on September 19, the statement published on September 20 and the meeting with ‘Imād ‘Abd al-Ghafūr –, before investigating three main issues that are referred to both in the reactions analyzed and in the reactions listed above; the mention of Christian reactions, the criticism of the West and the violence in connection to “The Innocence of Muslims.”

Firstly, at the meeting that took place between the *shaykh al-Azhar* and the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Laurent Fabius, on September 19 (the day the French magazine *Charlie Hebdo* published another cartoon of Muhammad), Aḥmad al-Ṭayyib rejected the pretense that freedom of speech could be an excuse for ‘offend[ing] the other. There is no moral justification for this’ (al-Shuruq 19 September 2012). Accordingly, this would just lead to hatred between the people. Interestingly, Laurent Fabius agreed with the *shaykh al-Azhar* on the idea that freedom of speech could not be an excuse to ‘harm religions, its sacred items (*muqaddasāt*) and its symbols/figures’ and asserted that the video offended the West as much as it offended the ‘East.’ In addition, al-Ṭayyib demanded a law ‘criminalizing such actions.’

The following day, al-Azhar published a statement in reaction to the cartoons published by *Charlie Hebdo* (al-Ahram 20 September 2012). The statement viewed the cartoons as another offense against ‘Islam, its Messenger, our Lord Muhammad (PBUH)’ which accordingly poured more oil on the fire started by “The Innocence of Muslims.” However, al-Azhar repeated its condemnation of the violence in connection to this video; ‘refusal and anger must be expressed by peaceful means,’ [by] preserving the *sunna* of the prophet.’ Furthermore, in this statement Al-Azhar formulated an idea that it expressed throughout the issue of “The Innocence of Muslims” and which we will look at more closely below; a criticism of the West.

---

<sup>163</sup> Al-Ahram. 28 September 2012. شيخ الأزهر: الغرب لا يزال يفكر بمنطق عصور الظلام. Number 45952. Year 137. Page 4. This source is quoted in this section as “al-Ahram 28 September 2012.”

Thus, in its statement, al-Azhar recalled that: ‘Islam and its civilization played an important role in the sciences that were translated in the thirteenth century to European languages and formed [one of] the most important foundations of the European Renaissance, and led it out of the ages of darkness.’ This idea of Islam being of importance to all of humanity was also epitomized in the description of Muhammad as the ‘last Messenger of God to all humanity.’ The statement also made a demand based on a recurrent misconception; it demanded Europe criminalize “this,” like it criminalized Anti-Semitism. However, Anti-Semitism as such is not forbidden in Europe. In some countries denying the Holocaust is an offence for which a person can be prosecuted.

Thirdly, during his meeting with ‘Imād ‘Abd al-Ghafūr, the advisor to President Muḥammad Mursī, on September 27, Aḥmad al-Ṭayyib formulated another interpretation of “The Innocence of Muslims,” warning against the ‘existence of some forces that ambush Egypt as well as the Arabic and Islamic *umma* to divide them in the service of worldwide Zionism’ (al-Ahram 27 September 2012). Therefore, he called on all political forces to ‘descend from their salons onto the real earth [...], to re-formulate a social awareness for the *umma* in the light of religious teachings so that the man in the street understands his duties and responsibilities.’ Here, he criticized the ruling class.

Following this, we will look more closely at three main aspects in the reactions of Al-Azhar and of its *shaykh*; the reactions by the Christians in Egypt and the criticism of the West and of the violence in connection to “The Innocence of Muslims.” Interestingly, the first reference made to the position of al-Azhar in *al-Yawm al-Sābi* ‘ on 11 September 2012, focused the issue of the Christian involvement in this video (al-Yawm al-Sabi 11 September 2012). On the one hand Aḥmad al-Ṭayyib seemed to concede the involvement of “Copts in the diaspora,” but on the other hand he asserted that ‘such acts’ did not express the view of ‘Egyptian Christians (*masīḥiyyūn*) who have explained their respect for all religious figures more than once.’ Furthermore, he connected the issue to national unity; such actions accordingly only nurtured ‘the fire for *fiṭna* between the sons of the united nation.’ Similarly, on September 17, *al-Ahrām* quoted Aḥmad al-Ṭayyib praising the position of the ‘Egyptian Churches against the offending film’ (al-Ahram 17 September 2012). Secondly, in addition to the criticism of the West previously mentioned, in a comment on a TV channel, *shaykh al-Azhar* Aḥmad al-Ṭayyib analyzed the West’s alleged uneasiness with Islam; ‘what we see today, the hatred against Islam and its civilization is not a child of the moment’ (al-Ahram 28 September 2012). Rather, according to al-Ṭayyib, this hatred is part of the ‘legacy of European collective consciousness since the Middle Ages’ and is related to the very nature of the West, which does not ‘accept the

belonging to a religion (*tadayyun*).<sup>164</sup> In this regard, he put forward the examples of the Crusades and the fate of the Jews and Muslims in Andalusia. Thirdly, a more recurring issue was the condemnation of the violence in connection to “The Innocence of Muslims.” On September 13, Aḥmad al-Ṭayyib demanded that the reactions remained within the ‘boundaries of Islamic politeness (*adab*).’<sup>165</sup> Similarly, the statement issued by al-Azhar, demanded that these reactions be ‘calm and wise’ and condemned the violence in connection to the embassies (al-Ahram 14 September 2012). A few days later, Al-Azhar again called for people to ‘stop the violence and excesses,’ and reminded that it was a duty to protect diplomatic institutions.<sup>166</sup>

Thus, the reactions of Aḥmad al-Ṭayyib focused mostly on the West and countered “The Innocence of Muslims” with an elaborate analysis of the “West.” His mentioning the Christians in Egypt was secondary.

Besides the numerous reactions of the *shaykh al-Azhar*, two main institutions composing the current Al-Azhar also reacted, i.e. members of the Council of Senior Scholars (*hay’at al-‘ulamā’ al-kubbār*) and the Council for Islamic Research (*mujma‘ al-buḥūth al-islāmiyya*). In addition, we have the reaction of a professor from Al-Azhar, ‘Āṭif ‘Abdallah. These reactions are made up of mentions in the media (‘demand,’ ‘said’) and of a conference on 20 September 2012.

The first two reactions date from 12 September 2012 when Maḥmūd Mahnā, a member of the Council of Senior Scholars,<sup>167</sup> and Muḥammad al-Mukhtār al-Mahdī,<sup>168</sup> a member of the Council for Islamic Research and of the Council of Senior Scholars as well as a professor at al-Azhar,<sup>169</sup> were quoted in the media. Maḥmūd Mahnā was mentioned in *al-Shurūq* on September 12 stating that:

Those Copts in the diaspora who participated in the offense against the prophet Muhammad do neither belong to Christianity nor to Judaism, but they belong to worldwide Zionism which wants to tear down the relations within the Egyptian society (al-Shuruq 12 September 2012).

<sup>164</sup> “الغربيين مرتبطون بالطبيعة الغربية ... وهي طبيعة غير قابلة للتدين أضلا”

<sup>165</sup> Al-Ahram 13 September 2012. مصر تطالب أمريكا باتخاذ الإجراءات القانونية ضد الإساءة إلى الرسول. Number 45937. Year 137. Page 1.

<sup>166</sup> Al-Ahram. 16 September 2012. الأزهر يطالب الأمم المتحدة بتجريم المساس للأديان. Number 45940. Year 137. Page 5.

<sup>167</sup> Al-Shuruq. 12 September 2012. ثورة غضب “إسلامية مسيحية ضد الإساءة للرسول”. Number 1320. Year 4. Page 5. This source is quoted in this section as “al-Shuruq 12 September 2012.”

<sup>168</sup> Al-Ahram. 13 September 2012. الغضب يجتاح مصر احتجاجا على الفيلم المسيء للرسول. Number 45937. Year 137. Page 5. This source is quoted in this section as “al-Ahram 13 September 2012.”

<sup>169</sup> Al-Shareyah. 17 February 2015. الأزهر منارة مصر.. فلا نطفئوها. Doi:

<http://alshareyah.com/%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A7%D9%86/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A/5385-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B2%D9%87%D8%B1-%D9%85%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B1-%D9%81%D9%84%D8%A7-%D8%AA%D8%B7%D9%81%D8%A6%D9%88%D9%87%D8%A7.html> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Interestingly, the Egyptians were not mentioned as “the sons of the one nation,” but Maḥmūd Maḥnā instead used a more neutral designation such as ‘Egyptian society.’ Furthermore, he described Muhammad as ‘the highest human being [...]. This is the courteous prophet who did not offend or harm anyone and who command all Muslims to believe in all messengers and all prophets.’ Thus, Maḥmūd Maḥnā implicitly underlined the good Christian-Muslim relations by resorting to an *imitatio muhammadi*. In contrast, Muḥammad al-Mukhtār al-Mahdī was paraphrased only briefly by *al-Ahrām* and stated that the goal of “The Innocence of Muslims” was to ‘stir Islamic feelings’ (al-Ahram 13 September 2012). The following day, in September 13, *al-Ahrām* reported that the Council of Senior Scholars ‘demand’ all Muslims to react to this ‘offense’ with ‘calm and wisdom’ (al-Ahram 13 September 2012).

In addition, the Council of Senior Scholars, the Council for Islamic Research, and the organization ‘*ulamā*’ *al-dīn* gathered for a conference that was given at length by *al-Ahrām* on 20 September 2012.<sup>170</sup> The article first mentioned that the violence, especially that against Western diplomatic institutions, was widely condemned. For instance, Muḥammad al-Mukhtār al-Mahdī, member of the Council of Senior Scholars and of the Council for Islamic Research, called on Muslims to express their anger without violence. He backed his argument by quoting sura 9:6 in the Quran ‘And if any one of the polytheists seeks your protection, then grant him protection so that he may hear the words of Allah. Then deliver him to his place of safety. That is because they are a people who do not know,’ sura 108:3 ‘Indeed, your enemy is the one cut off,’<sup>171</sup> and a *ḥadīth* ‘If someone promises to protect someone and nevertheless kills him, I am not responsible for the murderer, even if the murdered is an unbeliever.’<sup>172</sup> “The Innocence of Muslims” was described as an ‘offense against the Messenger (PBUH),’ as the ‘offending film’ and as the ‘issue of contempt (*izdirā*) of religions’ with which ‘Zionist countries’ aimed to ‘intervene in the affairs of the Arab states.’ Similarly, Muḥammad al-Shaḥḥāt al-Jundī, a member of the Council for Islamic Research, condemned the violence in connection to this video by quoting 17:33 ‘And do not kill the soul which Allah has forbidden, except by right.’<sup>173</sup> As to the background, he conceded the involvement of ‘four Copts in diaspora,’ but who ‘do not speak for of course the rest of the Copts’ as well as the involvement of an Israeli producer. These four Copts are likely to be Mūrīs Ṣādiq, Jūzif Naṣr Allāh and Zakaryā Buṭrus, and the Israeli producer to be Sam Bacile, i.e. Niqūlā Bāsīlī Niqūlā. Finally, Muḥammad al-Shaḥḥāt al-

<sup>170</sup> Al-Ahram. 20 September 2012. معصومة ... مماء الأجنب المقيمين في البلاد. Number 45944. Year 137. Page 20.

<sup>171</sup> Quran. Doi: <http://quran.com/108> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>172</sup> “من أمن رجلا على دمه فقتله فأنا بريء من القاتل وإن كان المقتول كافرا”

<sup>173</sup> Quran. Doi: <http://quran.com/17/33> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

Jundī demanded the creation of an international law to stop the ‘repeated assault on and offense against Islam and its religious symbols.’ Finally, a professor at Al-Azhar, ‘Āṭif ‘Abdallah condemned the video, and rejected a generalization of all Copts.<sup>174</sup> Instead, he saw “The Innocence of Muslims” as attempting to ‘divide the ranks and spread chaos in our country.’ Moreover, he emphasized that this was already preceded by the ‘Danish cartoons.’

### 2.1.2.3 The Sufi Council in Egypt

Amongst the reactions of official Islamic institutions, we have subsumed the reaction of the president of the Sufi Council in Egypt, ‘Abd al-Hādī al-Qaṣabī. This paragraph will firstly give a brief overview of Sufism in Egypt, and then analyze the reaction of ‘Abd al-Hādī al-Qaṣabī.

Mentioning Sufism in this section is justified by the strict regulation and legal framework of Sufism in Egypt under law 118/1976. This framework is embodied by the High Council of Sufi Orders (*direction du conseil supérieur des confréries soufies*) which gathers sixty-eight officially recognized orders under its umbrella. Besides these orders, there are also non-officially recognized orders. Approximately twelve to fifteen million Muslims in Egypt belong to Sufi orders (Paonessa 2013). These figures contradict earlier European scholarship which had foreseen the end of Sufism as a result of, amongst other things, the emergence of political Islam (ibid). Like other institutions, the Higher Council of Sufi Orders continued to express its support for the regime of Ḥusnī Mubārak during the Revolution of 25 January 2011, while a number of its members participated in the protests (ibid). Following the revolution, there was an attempt to participate in politics by establishing political parties or associations, and it described itself as an “apolitical” force, as a “secular” or “alternative” trend to Islamist and Salafi forces (ibid). However, this attempt failed due to the lack of human and financial resources and lack of know-how (ibid). In addition, even prior to the revolution, the Higher Council of Sufi Orders had been heavily criticized (ibid). It experienced a conflict in 2008 when the Council elected a new president. The regime intervened to promote a new election in which ‘Abd al-Hādī al-Qaṣabī, *shaykh* of the order *qaṣabiyya khalwatiyya*, was elected (ibid). ‘Abd al-Hādī al-Qaṣabī had been a member of this Council for only ten years. In addition, he was also a member of the then ruling National Democratic Party and a member of the Shura Council for the governorate of Ṭaṇṭa.

The reaction from ‘Abd al-Hādī al-Qaṣabī was published on 11 September 2012 in *al-*

---

<sup>174</sup> Watani. 16 September 2012. “المصريون “يدينون” الفيلم المسيء للرسول. Number 2647. Year 54/Number 613. Year 12. Page 9.

*Yawm al-Sābi*.<sup>175</sup> He condemned the production of a film by ‘a number of Copts in the diaspora’ whom he describes as ‘enemies of their [own] religion before being enemies of Islam’ in an attempt to draw Copts and Muslims into a conflict. According to him, the second goal of the video was to ‘violate the sanctities (*ḥirmāt*) of Muslims and accuse Islam of terrorism and blood[shed].’ The term “Copts in the diaspora” is used twice. At the same time, ‘Abd al-Hādī al-Qaṣabī praised the attitude of all religious institutions and Egyptian Copts.

### ***Summary of Section 2.1.2***

Al-Azhar embodies Egypt’s sense of mission in defending Islam and being a bulwark of Sunni Orthodox Islam against deviations. Yet *dār al-iftā*’ and the *mufṭī* also strongly asserted their role in this mission, while al-Azhar focused on a criticism of the “West” and of the violence. With regards to the Copts, all three Islamic institutions expressed their thanks for the Church’s or the Churches’ stances, and underlined the good Christian-Muslim relations. To some extent, however, these statements regarding Copts may have been motivated by the media’s questions.

#### ***2.1.2.4 Niqābat al-Ashrāf***

Finally, this section will end with the reaction of *al-sayyid* Muḥammad al-Sharīf, the leader of the association of the descendants of the prophet Muhammad (*niqābat al-ashrāf*). This is dealt with separately from the official Islamic institutions because no official law regulates this institution apart from a decision issued by *khedive* ‘Abbās in 1895.<sup>176</sup> According to *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, this institution owns endowments worth 70 billion dollars and counts six million *āl bayt* descendants in Egypt. In his reaction published by *al-Yawm al-Sābi* ‘ on 11 September 2012, *al-sayyid* Muḥammad al-Sharīf tried to dissociate Copts from the video, by establishing a vague background of people who did not represent anybody except ‘people who are sick in their hearts’ and ‘these corrupted.’<sup>177</sup> In contrast, he asserted; ‘the Copts in Egypt live with us in peace, love, and brotherhood.’

---

<sup>175</sup> Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 11 September 2012. انتفاضة المؤسسات الدينية ضد الفيلم المسيء للرسول.. "الأزهر": الداعون لإنتاجه هدفهم إشعال الفتنة.. "الإفتاء": ليس من الحرية ويمس أقدس رمز للمسلمين.. و"أقباط المهجر": نتبرأ من مورييس صادق وزقلمة

<sup>176</sup> Al-Sharq al-Awsat. 19 September 2002. دعوى ضد نقابة «الأشراف» في مصر بسبب خلافات حول «نسب» النقيب الحالي. Doi: <http://archive.aawsat.com/details.asp?issueno=8435&article=125407#.Vq9Fo3nFbIV> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>177</sup> Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 11 September 2012. انتفاضة المؤسسات الدينية ضد الفيلم المسيء للرسول.. "الأزهر": الداعون لإنتاجه هدفهم إشعال الفتنة.. "الإفتاء": ليس من الحرية ويمس أقدس رمز للمسلمين.. و"أقباط المهجر": نتبرأ من مورييس صادق وزقلمة

## 2.2 The State

As the previous section on the reactions of official Islamic institutions (see Section 2.1.2) suggested, there was a sense of Egypt having a role to play, a mission in defending Islam. As of September 2012, this sense rested on two pillars; on the role of al-Azhar as the most important institution in Sunni Islam, and on the recent election of a “truly Muslim” president, Muḥammad Mursī. A key question therefore is whether Muḥammad Mursī lived up to these expectations. Another question we will try to answer in this section and the following one (Section 2.3.1) is who had the lead in “defending Islam”? Was this role assumed by the president himself, by his government, or other groups? In particular, this issue questions the connection between the presidency and the government on one the hand, and the Muslim Brotherhood on the other. However, there is the question in the first place of whether Muḥammad Mursī and his government had *any role* to play in countering “The Innocence of Muslims.”

Thus this chapter will first deal with the state’s reaction to this video and the subsequent section (2.3.1) deals with the Islamist movements’ and parties’ reactions. This section will first look at Muḥammad Mursī’s reaction (2.2.1), secondly at the government’s reactions, i.e. Prime Minister Hishām Qandīl, the minister of Islamic endowments, Ṭal‘at ‘Afīfī, and the ministry of culture (2.3.2), and thirdly at the reaction of the Shura Council (2.3.3).

### 2.2.1 President Mursī: A Silent “Muslim” President

*Al-Ahram Hebdo* described President Muḥammad Mursī’s position in the controversy over “The Innocence of Muslims” as torn between his ideology, termed by *Al-Ahram Hebdo* as ‘populist rhetoric,’ and political requirements.<sup>178</sup> As a consequence, according to *al-Ahram Hebdo*, this tension also affected the Muslim Brotherhood, as will be shown further below. The first statement issued in the name of Muḥammad Mursī was published on 12 September 2012 by the spokesman of the presidency, Yāsir ‘Alī, that is, one day after the failed storming of the US embassy in Cairo.<sup>179</sup> Yet, *al-Ahrām* mentioned the condemnation of “The Innocence of Muslims” first and only then the issue of the violence. In particular, the presidency condemned the ‘attempts by a small sinful (*āthim*) group to attack the position of the Messenger of God.’ Thus the issue of the background and the video itself remain vague. Similarly, Muḥammad Mursī attempted to present himself as the president of all Egyptians by speaking in their name: ‘the Egyptian people, [in] its Muslims and Christians, have already rejected this attack on sacred

---

<sup>178</sup> Al-Ahram Hebdo. 19-25 September 2012. Morsi ne sait pas sur quel pied danser. Number 940. Year 18. Page 6.

<sup>179</sup> Al-Ahram. 13 September 2012. الغضب يجتاح مصر احتجاجا على الفيلم المسيء للرسول. Number 45937. Year 137. Page 5.



items (*muqaddasāt*).’ At the same time, however, he did divide the Egyptian people in religious terms, thus confirming the sectarian dimension of this video. Finally, *al-Ahrām* referred to the presidency’s condemnation of the violence connected to “The Innocence of Muslims” and quoted Spokesman Yāsir ‘Alī as alluding to the Egyptian state’s responsibility in protecting public and private property, especially embassies. This statement can hardly be qualified as a condemnation. As a result of the issue of this video, the relationship between Egypt and the United States became strained and greatly affected Muḥammad Mursī’s reputation as a political leader. US President Barack Obama said on 13 September 2012: ‘I don't think we would consider them an ally but we don't consider them an enemy.’<sup>180</sup> In this regard, *al-Ahram Hebdo* even asserted that the condemnation of the violence by President Mursī only took place after he had a telephone call with Barack Obama.<sup>181</sup> According to *al-Ahram English* this condemnation was expressed two days after the attempted assault on the US embassy.<sup>182</sup>

Thus, Mursī’s reaction was limited to a statement from his spokesman. Both his condemnation of the video and of the violence were rather lukewarm. He tried to present himself as the president of all Egyptians, yet he introduced the binomial “Muslim-Copt.”

### 2.2.2 The Government

In contrast, the Egyptian government, and especially Prime Minister Hishām Qandīl,<sup>183</sup> were more vocal in their condemnation of “The Innocence of Muslims.” The reactions by Hishām Qandīl were composed of a condemnation from the council of ministers and his participation in two conferences. The first reaction issued by Hishām Qandīl was mentioned by *al-Ahrām* on 12 September 2012.<sup>184</sup> The article reported that the Council of Ministers, under the leadership of Prime Minister Qandīl, condemned the ‘film’ offending ‘Islam, its prophets and the religious sacred items (*muqaddasāt*).’ This comment “Islamicizes” all “prophets,” amongst them Jesus Christ and Moses. Besides this brief statement, Prime Minister Qandīl also participated in two conferences. *Al-Ahrām* reported on 18 September 2012 on the organization

<sup>180</sup> BBC. 13 September 2012. Obama: Egypt is not US ally, nor an enemy. Doi. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-19584265> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>181</sup> Al-Ahram Hebdo. 19-25 September 2012. Morsi ne sait pas sur quel pied danser. Number 940. Year 18. Page 6.

<sup>182</sup> Ahram Online. 14 September 2012. In letter to New York Times, Egypt Brotherhood's Shater voices sorrow for slain US diplomats. Doi: <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContentPrint/1/0/52873/Egypt/0/In-letter-to-NYTimes, Egypt-Brotherhoods-Shater-vo.aspx> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>183</sup> The nomination of Hishām Qandīl as prime minister in July 2012 came as a surprise, as his field of expertise was irrigation. In July 2011 he was appointed minister of irrigation in the government of ‘Iṣām Sharaf. Hishām Qandīl denied any membership of the Muslim Brotherhood. In Al-Ahram Hebdo. 1-7 September 2012. Un premier ministre qui suscite la méfiance. Number 933. Year 18. Page 4.

<sup>184</sup> Al-Ahram. 13 September 2012. الغضب يجتاح مصر احتجاجا على الفيلم المسيء للرسول. Number 45937. Year 137. Page 5.

of a conference “The World is Gathering for the Support of the Prophet (PBUH)” by the League of Islamic Universities (*rābiṭat al-jāmi‘āt al-islāmiyya*) under the leadership of the prime minister in cooperation with the Egyptian-Saudi Association for Brotherhood and Continuity (*al-jam‘iyya al-miṣriyya al-su‘ūdiyya li l-ta’akhhī wa l-tawāṣul*) at Al-Azhar University (Center for Islamic Economy).<sup>185</sup> The participants in the conference stated that the best reaction was not to use violence but to fight a thought with a thought. Lastly, Hishām Qandīl also led the conference “Offending Islam and Destroying Homelands (*awṭān*)” which was organized by the International Organization of African and Asian Writers and in which the minister of Islamic Endowments and a member of the Guidance Bureau of the Muslim Brotherhood participated (see Section 2.4.3).<sup>186</sup> However, the prime minister seemed not to have delivered a speech at this conference.

In contrast, the minister of Islamic Endowments, Ṭal‘at ‘Afīfī, expressed himself more often and more in detail on “The Innocence of Muslims.” We have counted four reactions, among them three statements and a speech at the conference mentioned above (see Section 2.4.3), as well as a comment by an agent of the ministry of Endowments in Suez. Ṭal‘at ‘Afīfī is described by *Al-Ahram Hebdo* as ‘a sixty year-old Azhari also very close to the Salafist stream,’<sup>187</sup> and as ‘a pro Muslim Brotherhood Salafist.’<sup>188</sup> In 2001, he became dean of the Faculty of preaching (*da‘wa*),<sup>189</sup> and helped to create the “Organization of the Sharia for Rights and Reform” (*Organisme de la charia pour les droits et la réforme*).<sup>190</sup> His nomination was seen as an attempt to increase the Muslim Brotherhood’s influence in the state and Islamic institutions (*ibid*), especially since the Ministry of Islamic Endowments oversees the mosques, delivers permissions to imams and manages Islamic endowments (*awqāf*).<sup>191</sup>

The reactions from Minister Ṭal‘at ‘Afīfī reflect a certain progression, becoming more and more cautious. On 11 September 2012, *al-Yawm al-Sābi‘* published a statement in which the minister discussed the responsibility of Copts in the making of such an ‘offense,’ ‘such affairs (*umūr*) at the hands of the enemies of Islam are not unusual.’<sup>192</sup> More precisely, Ṭal‘at

<sup>185</sup> Al-Ahram. 18 October 2012. المواجهة الفكرية أفضل سبل الرد على الإساءة إلى الإسلام ورموزه. Number 45942. Year 137. Page 25.

<sup>186</sup> Al-Ahram. 26 September 2012. نصرة النبي باتباع منهجه والإسلام يرفض ترويع الأمنين. Number 45950. Year 137. Page 20.

<sup>187</sup> Al-Ahram Hebdo. 8-14 August 2012. Les demandes des salafistes ignorées. Number 934. Year 18. Page 5.

<sup>188</sup> Al-Ahram Hebdo. 27 February-5 March 2013. Les Waqfs se politisent en faveur des Frères. Number 963. Year 19. Page 4.

<sup>189</sup> Al-Ahram Hebdo. 8-14 August 2012. Les demandes des salafistes ignorées. Number 934. Year 18. Page 5.

<sup>190</sup> Al-Ahram Hebdo. 27 February-5 March 2013. Les Waqfs se politisent en faveur des Frères. Number 963. Year 19. Page 4.

<sup>191</sup> Al-Ahram Hebdo. 8-14 August 2012. Les demandes des salafistes ignorées. Number 934. Year 18. Page 5.

<sup>192</sup> Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 11 September 2012. انتفاضة المؤسسات الدينية ضد الفيلم المسيء للرسول.. "الأزهر": الداعون لإنتاجه هدفهم إشعال الفتنة.. "الإفتاء": ليس من الحرية ويمس أقدس رمز للمسلمين.. و"أقباط المهجر": نتبراً من مورييس صادق وزقلمة

‘Afifī distinguished between two types of Copts, the “bad ones” who were involved in the production of “The Innocence of Muslims” and the “good ones,” i.e. ‘the Copts of Egypt condemned this and they live with us in harmony and love.’ There is not only no doubt that Coptic Egyptians were involved in this video: ‘the intention of a number of Copts in the diaspora to produce a film offending the Messenger (PBUH) in cooperation with the priest Terry Jones,’ but these Copts are serving “Zionism;” ‘those who attempt to divide us [underlined by the author] or to disperse us, they follow the force (*ḥayl*) of Zionism.’ Behind all this “Zionist propaganda,” there are ‘some Copts in the diaspora who depict Islam as a terrorist religion to the world.’ This assumption is supported by a long quotation of the Quran 8:36-38:

Indeed, those who disbelieve spend their wealth to avert [people] from the way of Allah. So they will spend it; then it will be for them a [source of] regret; then they will be overcome. And those who have disbelieved - unto Hell they will be gathered. / [This is] so that Allah may distinguish the wicked from the good and place the wicked some of them upon others and heap them all together and put them into Hell. It is those who are the losers. / Say to those who have disbelieved [that] if they cease, what has previously occurred will be forgiven for them. But if they return [to hostility] - then the precedent of the former [rebellious] peoples has already taken place.<sup>193</sup>

As a result, the Copts involved in the production of the video were ascribed to the “unbelievers” Islam fought at its beginnings. In addition, Ṭal‘at ‘Afifī asserted that these Copts only offended themselves and that early Islam had already had to deal with such animosity. This contextualization of “The Innocence of Muslims” in an Islamic setting is quite striking; for instance, Islam is merely described as: ‘the religion of God is the dearest and most noble of his attainments.’

In contrast, the two subsequent reactions from the minister were much more cautious, especially when it came to discussing the “Coptic involvement.” On 12 September 2012 *al-Ahrām* quoted him as saying ‘creative freedom must never violate religious creeds and warning against nurturing feelings of hate and provoking the feelings of Muslims.’<sup>194</sup> Similarly, in his statement on September 20 or 21, he did not mention the background of the cartoons published by *Charlie Hebdo* on 19 September 2012.<sup>195</sup> *Al-Ahrām* merely mentioned a group of ‘people who hate.’ Minister ‘Afifī recalled that these ‘series of offenses’ would not be the last ones. Accordingly, these “offenses” aimed to provoked the ‘feelings of Muslims and stir sectarian

---

<sup>193</sup> Quran 8,36-38. Doi: <http://quran.com/8> (retrieved May 20, 2016).

<sup>194</sup> Al-Ahram. 12 September 2012. غضب شعبي من الإساءة للرسول. Number 45936. Year 137. Pages 1 and 5.

<sup>195</sup> Al-Ahram. 21 September 2012. وزير الأوقاف يطالب بتغليب صوت العقل في التعامل مع إزدراء الأديان. Number 45945. Year 137. Page 5.

strife in Islamic countries.’ Thus, Egypt was defined as a “Muslim” country. In addition, instead of openly condemning the violence in reaction to this video, ‘Afifi called on all Muslims to raise a ‘voice of reason.’ Finally, we shall examine the reaction of an agent of the ministry of Islamic endowments in Suez, Kamāl Barbarī, who demanded the suspension of relations with the United States to express the ‘anger of the Islamic *umma*.’<sup>196</sup> This reflects the preference of ideological principles over political concerns.

The reactions given by Ṭal‘at ‘Afifi display a progression in terms of distinguishing between “good” Copts, who show solidarity with Muslims, and the “bad” Copts behind this video, whom he associated with early Islam “disbelief,” and finally speaking of a vague background.

Besides those emanating from the prime minister and the ministry of Islamic endowments, the media also mentioned two reactions by the Ministry of Culture. In both reactions, on September 17 and in a statement issued on September 18, the ministry expressed its ‘total rejection of all practices leading to any form of offense of religions and creeds, messengers and prophets.’<sup>197</sup> In the statement issued on September 18, Minister Muḥammad Ṣābir ‘Arab, ascribed the responsibility of “The Innocence of Muslims” to a ‘group of suspicious [people]’ aiming to stir up ‘strife’ and serve the ‘interests of international groups calling for extremism and terrorism.’<sup>198</sup>

### 2.2.3 The Shura Council

On 12 September 2012, the Shura Council in the Egyptian parliament discussed a statement drafted by MP Aḥmad Fahmī of the Freedom and Justice Party, the political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>199</sup> In addition to this statement, *al-Ahrām* also quoted four MPs from both the Freedom and Justice Party and the Salafi Nur Party. All in all, these statements mainly put pressure on President Muḥammad Mursī to taking a firmer stance towards the United States, which were viewed as being responsible for “The Innocence of Muslims.” For instance, the statement by the Shura Council called on the US Administration and American civil organizations to take necessary measures and on Muḥammad Mursī to suspend all relations with the United States until its Administration had apologized for the video, thus considering the government to be responsible.

In contrast, the Shura Council took an interesting position towards the Christians in

---

<sup>196</sup> Al-Shuruq. 12 September 2012. ثورة غضب “إسلامية مسيحية ضد الإساءة للرسول. Number 1320. Year 4. Page 5.

<sup>197</sup> Al-Ahram. 17 September 2012. رموز إسلامية ومسيحية تطالب بتجريم ازدراء الأديان. Number 45941. Year 137. Page 5.

<sup>198</sup> Al-Ahram. 19 September 2012. عرب يرفض الإساءة للأديان والمعتقدات. Number 45943. Year 137. Page 4.

<sup>199</sup> Al-Ahram. 13 September 2012. النواب يطالبون أمريكا لاعتذار احتراماً لمشاعر مليار ونصف مسلم. Number 45937. Year 137. Page 4.

Egypt. On the one hand, it did not mention the involvement of Copts but remained vague; the ‘irresponsible behavior of a group which issued a film offending Islam and its noble prophet.’ On the other hand, however, the Shura Council positioned itself to some extent as an Islamic parliament, as it praised the ‘position of some rational voices from amongst the sons of the other [underlined by the author] revealed religions in and outside of the country.’ In contrast, MP Sa‘d ‘Imāra, of the Freedom and Justice Party, did mention the involvement of ‘unfortunately, a priest’ in this ‘attack on Islam and the prophet.’ Yet according to Sa‘d ‘Imāra, “The Innocence of Muslims” was entitled “The Day of the Trial of the Messenger Muhammad” and accordingly aimed to produce ‘strife between Muslims and Christians, [and] spread a spirit of religious and sectarian racism.’ In contrast, MP Ṭāriq Sahrī, of the Nur Party, explicitly mentioned the ‘Copts in the diaspora,’ especially those who ‘demand the intervention of Israel and the United States and its division [of Egypt].’ The two other MPs quoted by *al-Ahrām* mainly questioned the defense of Islam in Egypt. MP ‘Azz al-Dīn al-Kawmī of the Freedom and Justice Party, criticized the stance of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the reaction from by Al-Azhar and *dār al-iftā* of only protesting the video. Furthermore, the first speaker of the parliament, ‘Abdullah Badrān of the Nur Party, emphasized the statement’s demand to stop all relations with the United States, especially since ‘we now have a Muslim president.’ Yet he conceded that such ‘attacks’ have not hindered the spread of Islam. In addition, the statement from the Shura Council considered “The Innocence of Muslims” counter to the efforts to create cultural dialogue, a ‘racist and extremist call’ and an ‘attack on Islam and its Messenger.’

These reactions show a certain degree of pressure being put on the president.

### ***Summary of Section 2.2***

The various reactions subsumed under the category of “the state” show a variety of positions; on the one hand, the rather silent and passive president and on the other hand, an eagerness in “defending Islam,” especially by Minister Ṭal‘at ‘Afīfī and the Shura Council. With regards to the Copts, the distinction between “good” and “bad” Copts as well as the distinction between Muslims and Copts is made.

#### **2.3.1 Islamist and Salafi Reactions: Preventing Backlashes Against Christians**

This section will analyse the reactions by the Muslim Brotherhood, its political arm, the Freedom and Justice Party (*ḥizb al-‘adāla wa l-ḥurriyya*), *al-da‘wa al-salafiyya* and its political

arm, the Nur Party (*ḥizb al-nūr*), *al-gamā'a al-islāmiyya*<sup>200</sup> and its political arm, the Building and Development Party (*ḥizb al-binā' wa l-tanmiya*). As these parties were competing on a political level, the section will focus among other issues on the question as to which party tried to take on the lead in “defending Islam” and about how they referred to the Coptic background of this video.

### 2.3.1.1 The Muslim Brotherhood and the Freedom and Justice Party

In the first place, the Muslim Brotherhood did not play a leading role in beginning the Revolution of 25 January 2011. Following the revolution, in February 2011 the movement established a political party, the Freedom and Justice Party (*ḥizb al-'adāla wa l-ḥurriyya*, FJP). In doing so, the Muslim Brotherhood was said to aiming to show a clear separation between the movement and the political party.<sup>201</sup> Thus 'Iṣām al-'Aryān became vice chairman of the Freedom and Justice Party after resigning his position as member of the Guidance Bureau and as spokesman for the Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>202</sup> In addition, the new party tried to present itself as a broad based political party which allegedly comprised one hundred Copts and whose vice-general secretary was the Protestant intellectual Rafīq Ḥabīb.<sup>203</sup>

Yet, the party's reactions are few compared to the Muslim Brotherhood, and Rafīq Ḥabīb is not known to have given a reaction to “The Innocence of Muslims.” In its first statement, published in the evening of September 11 – just when the assault on the US embassy took place –, the Freedom and Justice Party described “The Innocence of Muslims” as a ‘racist crime,’ a ‘blatant attack on the religious sacred items (*muqaddasāt*)’ which was ‘morally and religiously wrong’ and aimed to ‘fuel internal conflict.’<sup>204</sup> Thus, the party did not seriously address the background of this video, but took a very cautious and de-escalating stance. For instance, the statement invoked national unity and again differentiated between Muslims and Copts; ‘the Egyptian people in its two components, Muslims and Copts, was, continues, and will remain united against these mean attempts.’<sup>205</sup> Furthermore, the statement praised the reason of the ‘sons of this nation (*waṭan*),’ especially the clerics of the institutions Al-Azhar

---

<sup>200</sup> To avoid any confusion with the Lebanese *al-jamā'a al-islāmiyya*, the transcription of the Egyptian *al-gamā'a al-islāmiyya* uses a “g.”

<sup>201</sup> Carnegie Endowment. 11 October 2011. Muslim Brotherhood. Doi: <http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/10/11/muslim-brotherhood/h3hf> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>202</sup> Ahram Online. 3 December 2011. Freedom and Justice Party. Doi: <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/33/104/24939/Elections-/Political-Parties/Freedom-and-Justice-Party.aspx> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>203</sup> Ahram Online. 3 December 2011. Freedom and Justice Party.

<sup>204</sup> Al-Masry al-Yawm. 11 September 2012. «محاولة دنيئة لإثارة الطائفية». Doi: <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/163110> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>205</sup> “الشعب مصري في عنصره، مسلمين وأقباط، كان ولا يزال وسيظل يبدأ واحداً في مواجهة تلك المحاولات الدنيئة”،

and the Church and as well the people of the media.’ By then, however, only *al-Yawm al-Sābi* had published a comment by the *shaykh al-Azhar* and *al-Ahrām* mentioned the publication of an official statement on September 13. Furthermore, the churches in Egypt are reduced to *one Church*. Surprisingly, the statement praised the media for its sensitive approach, which was in fact quite the contrary, as will be shown in Section 2.5.1. In contrast, the second statement published on September 20, in reaction to the cartoons published by *Charlie Hebdo*, referred explicitly to their background as it demanded the French government take measures<sup>206</sup> and French justice deal with the issue of these cartoons as they dealt with the pictures of the Duchess of Cambridge, Kate Middleton.<sup>207</sup> These demands were justified by the fact that ‘the cartoons offended the people as a whole. It is a duty to respect the creeds of others.’<sup>208</sup>

Overall, it seemed that the Freedom and Justice Party was cautious to dissociate Christian Egyptians from “The Innocence of Muslims.” On September 13, *al-Ahrām* wrote: “The Muslim Brotherhood considers” the video ‘a racist crime and an attempt to stir up sectarian strife between the components of the *umma* and the symbols of the sons of the nation.’<sup>209</sup> In addition, the movement recalled the Christians’ condemnation of this video. Thus on September 14, the party’s section in Gharbiyya published a statement in which it considered the video a ‘racist crime and [...] failed attempts to stir up sectarian strife (*fitna tā’ifiyya*) between the two elements of the nation, Muslims and Christians.’<sup>210</sup> Similarly, a high-ranking member of the Freedom and Justice Party, Muḥammad ‘Imād al-Dīn, was quoted by *al-Yawm al-Sābi* on 8 September 2012 as denying the representativity of those who produced the video; ‘they do not express the tolerant Christianity we know.’<sup>211</sup> Even though this declaration may have been motivated by the newspaper’s questions, as we argue (see Section 2.5.1), the content

<sup>206</sup> Al-Ahram. 21 September 2012. الحرية والعدالة يطالب فرنسا بإجراءات رادعة.. والإخوان تقاضى المجلة. Number 45945. Year 137. Page 7.

<sup>207</sup> Al-Sharq al-Awsat. 20 September 2012. «ردود فعل ضد الرسوم: مطالب للتعامل مع الإساءة للإسلام مثل «إنكار محارق النازي». Doi: <http://archive.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&issueno=12350&article=696104&search=%25C8%25D1%25C7%2C1%25C9%2520%25C7%25E1%25E3%25D3%25E1%25E3%25ED%25E4&state=true#.VkB7T15OfI V> (retrieved May 23, 2016). In September 2012, the French Magazine Closer published pictures of a topless Duchess of Cambridge and was later prosecuted for violation of privacy.

<sup>208</sup> Al-Sharq al-Awsat. 20 September 2012. «ردود فعل ضد الرسوم: مطالب للتعامل مع الإساءة للإسلام مثل «إنكار محارق النازي».

<sup>209</sup> Al-Ahram. 13 September 2012. الغضب يجتاح مصر احتجاجا على الفيلم المسيء للرسول. Number 45937. Year 137. Page 5.

<sup>210</sup> Al-Ahram. 14 September 2012. استمرار ردود الفعل الغاضبة على الفيلم المسيء: الأزهر يطالب بالالتزام بضوابط الاحتجاج والبعده عن العنف. Number 45938. Year 137. Page 6.

<sup>211</sup> Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 8 September 2012. سياسيون ينتقدون صناعات الفيلم المسيء للرسول ويهاجمون القس المتطرف تيرى جونز. Doi: [http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/8/%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%86\\_%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%86\\_%D8%B5%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%B9\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%89%D8%A1\\_%D9%84%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84\\_%D9%88%D9%8A%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AC%D9%85%D9%88%D9%86\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%B3\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AA/779069#.VjHXf25OfVJ](http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/8/%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%86_%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%86_%D8%B5%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%B9_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%89%D8%A1_%D9%84%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84_%D9%88%D9%8A%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AC%D9%85%D9%88%D9%86_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%B3_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AA/779069#.VjHXf25OfVJ) (retrieved May 23, 2016).

of this declaration nevertheless suggests the party's serious and sustained attempt to prevent any backlash against Christians in Egypt. In addition, the party also condemned the violence in connection with "The Innocence of Muslims," albeit in a very light way. On September 12, for instance, *al-Ahrām* quoted 'Iṣām al-'Aryān as demanding protests to express the Muslims' feelings.<sup>212</sup> The statement published on September 20 reiterated al-'Aryān's condemnation of the violence.<sup>213</sup>

In contrast, the Muslim Brotherhood reacted more frequently. These reactions are divided into two types; firstly, general declarations (this section, 2.3.1.1) and secondly, participation in protests and conferences. The latter will be analysed in the subsequent chapter (Chapter 2, 4.). This chapter will first focus on the declaration issued on September 13, secondly on the condemnation of the violence, thirdly on the letter from Khayrat al-Shāṭir to *The New York Times* and, finally, on the various statements by the Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood, Muḥammad Badī'.

Like the Freedom and Justice Party, the first statements made by the Muslim Brotherhood seemed to aim to prevent backlashes against Christians. Like Muḥammad 'Imād al-Dīn, a member of the FJP, *al-Yawm al-Sābi'* also asked a high-ranking member of the Muslim Brotherhood for his opinion (see Section 2.5.1).<sup>214</sup> This member, Kārim Raḍwān, defined the video as an offense against 'the Messenger of humankind, Muhammad' and therefore asserted that the Muslims 'will not allow anyone – whether the Copts in the diaspora or others' to repeat this. Yet he asserted that these Copts offended the Copts in Egypt in the first place before they offended Muslims and recalled that Christianity did not allow such offenses. Although Kārim Raḍwān did not defend Christians and Christianity as fiercely as Muḥammad 'Imād al-Dīn did, he did indeed try to dissociate them from the video. This declaration will be analysed further in Section 2.5.1.

In addition to these declarations in the name of the Muslim Brotherhood, there are five instances known in which the movement condemned the violence, albeit in a very peculiar way. Overall, the Muslim Brotherhood seemingly wanted to downplay the gravity of the assault on the US embassy. For instance, Ḥamdī Ḥassan, described as a 'leader' in the movement, spoke of 'a number of protesters' who attempted to storm the embassy.<sup>215</sup> A few days later, on September 17, another leading member, Muḥmūd Khalīl, stated that the reactions in the areas

<sup>212</sup> Al-Ahram. 12 September 2012. غضب شعبي من الإساءة للرسول. Number 45936. Year 137. Pages 1 and 5.

<sup>213</sup> Al-Sharq al-Awsat. 20 September 2012. «ردود فعل ضد الرسوم: مطالب للتعامل مع الإساءة للإسلام مثل «إنكار محارق النازي».

<sup>214</sup> Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 8 September 2012. سياسيون ينتقدون صناع الفيلم المسيء للرسول ويهاجمون القس المتطرف نيري جونز. وزقلمة وموريس صادق.. رضوان: لن نسمح لهم بإهانة الدين.. باسل عادل: الأديان السماوية خط أحمر.. السادات: هؤلاء دعاة فتنة وتقسيم

<sup>215</sup> Al-Shuruq. 12 September 2012. قوى سياسية إسلامية تستنكر اقتحام السفارة الأمريكية. Number 1320. Year 4. Page 5.



of the US embassy were not ‘disciplined.’<sup>216</sup> The immunity of embassies, which did not seem to be obvious, was justified by the fact that foreigners in Egypt are ‘under our protection (*dhimma*),’ as ‘Abd al-Raḥman al-Birr recalled, also condemning the murder of the US ambassador to Libya.<sup>217</sup> Similarly, at a conference with Bishop Bisantī, Muḥammad Badī‘ emphasized the need to protect embassies.<sup>218</sup> In addition, there was an instance where Muḥammad Ḥabīb, a former deputy leader of Muslim Brotherhood expressed the need for the reaction to “The Innocence of Muslims” to reflect the *sunna* of Muhammad.<sup>219</sup>

Khayrat al-Shāṭir, the deputy Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood,<sup>220</sup> sent a letter to the *New York Times* that was published on 13 September 2012. In his letter, he emphasized that ‘we do not hold the American government or its citizens responsible for the acts of a few who abuse the laws protecting freedom of speech.’<sup>221</sup> Still, he believed that Egyptians did have a right to demonstrate in the new, democratic Egypt. He expressed his wishes for continued good relations between the two countries, since ‘our nations have much to learn from each other as we embark on building [a] new Egypt.’ This is a very accommodating letter, adapted to a Western audience.

Finally, Muḥammad Badī‘ reacted three times to “The Innocence of Muslims.” In two of his weekly letters he dealt with this issue; on September 21 and on September 28. In addition, he delivered a speech at the conference “Together for the Support of the Messenger” in which Bishop Bisantī also participated. In all of these reactions, there were recurrent themes, such as the video itself and its background, and the involvement of Copts. Even though the question of Coptic involvement was not the main focus of his reactions, at the conference he expressed his gratitude for ‘our Christian (*masīḥiyyūn*) brothers in Egypt and beyond’<sup>222</sup> and asserted in his weekly letter that this ‘event’ ‘united the Egyptians and it is not fair to make our Christian (*masīḥiyyūn*) brothers bear the sinful burden of a group of idiots in foreign countries.’<sup>223</sup> In

<sup>216</sup> Al-Ahram. 17 September 2012. رموز إسلامية ومسيحية تطالب بتجريم ازدراء الأديان. Number 45941. Year 137. Page 5.

<sup>217</sup> Al-Shuruq. 14 September 2012. تواصل الاشتباكات والعنف بين المتظاهرين وقوات الأمن بمحيط السفارة الأمريكية. Number 1322. Year 4. Page 5.

<sup>218</sup> Al-Zaman. 21 September 2012. أقباط مصر بين معركة حقوقهم ونداءات الفيلم المسيء.

<sup>219</sup> Al-Shuruq. 12 September 2012. قوى سياسية إسلامية تستنكر اقتحام السفارة الأمريكية. Number 1320. Year 4. Page 5.

<sup>220</sup> Khayrat al-Shāṭir was first a former member of the “Socialist Union” under the leadership of Gamāl ‘Abd al-Nāṣir, before joining the Muslim Brotherhood in 1980. He was several times imprisoned under the presidency of Ḥusnī Mubārak and finally released in March 2011, following the revolution. Nicknamed “al-muhandis” (“the engineer”), Al-Ahram Hebdo considers Khayra al-Shāṭir highly powerful and influential within the organization and describes him as a millionaire. In Al-Ahram Hebdo. 4-10 April 2012. Al-Chater, un homme d’affaires millionaire. Number 916. Year 18. Page 5.

<sup>221</sup> El-Shater, Khairat. 13 September 2012. ‘Our Condolences,’ the Muslim Brotherhood Says. The New York Times. Doi: [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/14/opinion/our-condolences-the-muslim-brotherhood-says.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/14/opinion/our-condolences-the-muslim-brotherhood-says.html?_r=1) (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>222</sup> Al-Zaman. 21 September 2012. أقباط مصر بين معركة حقوقهم ونداءات الفيلم المسيء.

<sup>223</sup> “إلا نحمل إخواننا المسيحيين و زر مجموعة من السفهاء في الخارج.”

contrast, Badī‘ remained very vague when it came to “The Innocence of Muslims” itself and its background; those behind it were ‘soldiers of the devil,’<sup>224</sup> ‘the offense against the Messenger of God’ produced by a group in foreign countries, which was reportedly ‘moved by hidden hands’ (al-Ahram 21 September 2012) ‘the repeated offenses against the Messenger of God (PBUH) are issued by people whose hearts are filled with hatred against the revival [...]’.<sup>225</sup> In this regard, Muḥammad Badī‘’s main focus was on Islam. Firstly, he explained that it was a duty for every Muslim to practice *da‘wa*, i.e. explain who Muhammad was and bear the ‘values of justice, freedom, dignity and tolerance’ by embodying these values (al-Ahram 21 September 2012). Accordingly, Muslims should express their anger at “The Innocence of Muslims” by emulating Muhammad (ibid). Moreover, Badī‘ explained the occurrence of this video by the ‘hate against the revival of humanity, spiritual vigilance, and the emergence of the Arab Spring which again calls for the return of Islam; a model for life and a message of light’ (ibid).<sup>226</sup> He underlined humankind’s need for Islam; ‘for someone who retrieves it from material tyranny, moral decay, spiritual hollowness, social darkness, racial discrimination, the violation of human rights, and the abuse of their dignity’ (al-Ahram 21 September 2012).<sup>227</sup> To some extent, these comments implied that a new age of Islamic revival under the leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood had arrived.

### **Summary of Section 2.3.1.1**

The Freedom and Justice Party and the Muslim Brotherhood came under pressure because of the violent reactions to “The Innocence of Muslims.” They employed different strategies to counter both the video and this violence: downplaying the violence, invoking an Islamic revival under their lead and dissociating Christians from this. In this regard, the Muslim Brotherhood was more vocal when “defending Islam” compared to the presidency.

### **2.3.1.2 The Nur Party and *al-Da‘wa al-Salafiyya***

The Nur Party (*ḥizb al-nūr*, Light Party) was founded in May 2011<sup>228</sup> and, from its establishment on, it was torn between its ideological stances and political requirements. In

---

Al-Ahram. 21 September 2012. الإساءة للرسول وحدث المصريين. ولا نحمل المسيحيين وزر سفهاء الخارج. Number 45945. Year 137. Page 7. This source is quoted in this paragraph as “al-Ahram 21 September 2012.”

<sup>224</sup> Al-Zaman. 21 September 2012. أقباط مصر بين معركة حقوقهم وتداعيات الفيلم المسيء.

<sup>225</sup> Al-Ahram. 29 September 2012. المرشد: الإساءة للرسول صدرت من قلوب يملؤها الحقد. Number 45952. Year 137. Page 4.

<sup>226</sup> “الحقد ضد الصحة الانسانية واليقظة الروحية وبزوغ الربيع العربي الذي يؤذن بعودة الاسلام من جديد منهاج حياة ورسالة نور”

<sup>227</sup> الحاجة لمن ينقذ البشرية كلها من طغيان المادية الجارفة والانحلال الأخلاقي والخواء الروحي والظلم الاجتماعي والتمييز العنصري وانتهاك حقوق الانسان وامتته كرامته

<sup>228</sup> Al-Ahram Hebdo. 10-16 October 2012. Le succès des islamistes se poursuit malgré leurs différends internes. Number 943. Year 19. Page 3.

particular, the former leader of the Nur Party, ‘Imād ‘Abd al-Ghafūr, has shown extensive political pragmatism; ‘as the secretary of the Nur Party, I have strong relations with all political parties and different streams, in addition we have now relations with all the communities (*tawā’if*) and Islamist streams as well as the non-Islamist streams.’<sup>229</sup> Additionally, he formed a group of experts to draft a political program, many of whom were not Salafists (Lacroix 2012, 3). However, as there was no clear divide between the political party and the proselyting organization – *al-da‘wa al-salafiyya* –, tensions increased over time and were very perceptible in September 2012. *Al-Shurūq* quoted one anonymous source, which said that ‘Imād ‘Abd al-Ghafūr and *al-da‘wa al-salafiyya* had contracted an agreement guaranteeing the former full autonomy in managing the party.<sup>230</sup> However, the source added that *al-da‘wa al-salafiyya* had begun to interfere in political matters (ibid). Concerning Christians, the positions of both Nur Party and *al-da‘wa al-salafiyya* were conflicting. The Nur Party’s program stated that ‘Sharia guarantees religious freedom to Copts’ (Lacroix 2012, 5). On the one hand, radicals within the Nur Party criticized the Muslim Brotherhood for participating in the Christmas mass in January 2012, describing it as a place where ‘three gods are worshipped.’<sup>231</sup> On the other hand, however, ‘Imād ‘Abd al-Ghafūr expressed his hope that Christians would run for the party. However, Yāsir al-Burhāmī, the leader of *al-da‘wa al-salafiyya*, reaffirmed that only Muslims should ‘occupy positions “linked to the objectives (*maqasid*) of the state”’ (Lacroix 2012, 6).

This section will discuss the reactions by the Nur Party and then *al-da‘wa al-salafiyya*, all of which only represent a part of the overall reactions from this stream. In addition to these reactions, the participation in and organization of protests (Section 2.4) and the reaction to Anti-Christian reactions (Section 2.5.2) also shape the position of the Nur Party and *al-da‘wa al-salafiyya* in the context of “The Innocence of Muslims.” In particular, we will look at whether the reactions of the political party and of the preaching organization differed in their content and what the core issues were. More specifically, the paragraph will first focus on three statements; the first one by the media spokesman of the Nur Party, Nādir Bakkār; the second by the official spokesman of the party, Yasrī Ḥamād; and the sermon by the secretary general ‘Imād ‘Abd al-Ghafūr. We will then look at how both the party and the organization viewed the issue of violence and secondly at the various demands they expressed. Finally, the paragraph will closely analyse the long statement issued by *al-da‘wa al-salafiyya*.

Looking at the first tweet posted on his Twitter account by media Spokesman Nādir

<sup>229</sup> Al-Ahram. 12 September 2012. عماد عبد الغفور مساعد رئيس الجمهورية. Number 45939. Year 137. Page 4.

<sup>230</sup> Al-Shuruq. 28 September 2012. ... رفاق على طريق الله فرقتهم السياسة. شركاء, النور. Number 1336. Year 4. Page 5.

<sup>231</sup> Al-Ahram Hebdo. 11-17 January 2012. Prêtres, généraux et barbus. Number 904. Year 18. Page 7.

Bakkār on 9 September 2012, it seems that there was initially some confusion over the exact background of “The Innocence of Muslims.”<sup>232</sup> In this tweet, he expressed the need not to ignore the ‘Dutch film’ that needed an ‘appropriate answer.’ In addition, Nādir Bakkār condemned the decision by the Dutch parliament to grant Copts political asylum, considering this to be interference in Egypt’s internal affairs. A few days later, the party’s spokesman, Yasrī Ḥamād, was quoted in *al-Shurūq* as having given two messages.<sup>233</sup> In his first message, addressed to ‘those who pretend to be sad about the plight of Non-Muslim minorities,’ he asked: ‘Where is your defense of your prophet and his law (*sharī‘a*) against those who dare [offend] the prophet under the pretence of freedom?’<sup>234</sup> Yasrī Ḥamād addressed his second message to those who ‘accuse the sons of Islam of wanting to fragment society in the name of religion;’

Where are your voices now? You are now silent like the dead and you remain quiet [when faced with] Copts in the diaspora (*aqbāṭ al-mahjar*) who were announcing that God is love; and when they left your country, they declared enmity for you and abuse your religion and your prophet.<sup>235</sup>

These two ‘messages’ are first and foremost criticisms directed towards Muslims in Egypt denouncing their alleged passivity. Thus, defending the prophet is defined as an individual duty incumbent upon every Muslim. Interestingly, however, “*aqbāṭ al-mahjar*” are no longer viewed as Egyptians, as they ‘left your country [underlined by the author],’ thus suggesting that Egypt was not their country or, at least, not any longer. In this regard, it is not clear when this alienation supposedly took place; before leaving Egypt, when leaving Egypt, or when the so-called attacks on Islam and Muslims began? In contrast, the sermon by ‘Imād ‘Abd al-Ghafūr on Friday 14 September 2012 in a mosque in Alexandria did not criticize the lack of reaction but the wrongness of these reactions.<sup>236</sup> In his sermon, the then secretary general of the Nur Party and advisor to President Muḥammad Mursī for Social Affairs strongly criticized the murder of ‘ambassadors or diplomats,’ rejecting countering an ‘error in the truth (*ḥaqq*) of the Messenger

<sup>232</sup> Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 9 September 2012. Doi: نادر بكار: قرار البرلمان الهولندي تدخل غير مقبول في الشأن المصري. <http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/9/%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%A8%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%B1--%D9%82%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%B1%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%87%D9%88%D9%84%D9%86%D8%AF%D9%89-%D8%AA%D8%AF%D8%AE%D9%84-%D8%BA%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D9%85%D9%82%D8%A8%D9%88%D9%84-%D9%81%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%A3%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84/779989#.VkGos15OfVJ> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>233</sup> Al-Shuruq. 12 September 2012. ثورة غضب “إسلامية مسيحية ضد الإساءة للرسول. Number 1320. Year 4. Page 5.

<sup>234</sup> إلى الذين يتباكون على الأقليات غير المسلمة، قائلاً لهم: “أين أنتم من الذب عن نبيكم والدفاع عن شريعته ضد أولئك الذين يتجرأون على ..”  
“مقامه الأسمى تحت زعم الريات

<sup>235</sup> أين أصواتكم العالية الآن، صمتم كأهل القبور وستكم عن أقباط المهجر الذين كانوا يدعون الله محبة، فلما خرجوا من بلادكم حاهروكم ..”  
بالعداوة، وسبوا دينكم ونبيكم

<sup>236</sup> Arab West Report. 15 September 2012. عبد الغفور في خطبة الجمعة بالاسكندرية : حرق البعض للإنجيل تصرف غير محسوب. <http://arabwestreport.info/ar/lsn-2012/lbw-37/76-bd-lgfwr-f-khtb-ljm-blskndry-hrq-lbd-llnjyl-tsrf-gyr-mhswb-wmhrm> (retrieved January 29, 2016).

with an [other] error,' and instead insisted that 'the true support of God and his Messenger must be at the height of the book of God, by reviving the *sunna* of the Messenger and spreading both of them in the world' (ibid). In addition, 'Imād 'Abd al-Ghafūr condemned the burning of a Bible, reminding his audience that 'God and his Messenger forbade the offense of the other religions,' and he expressed the 'need not to punish the Christians of Egypt (*masīhiyyī miṣr*) for the crime of the producer of the film' (ibid). This mention of the "Christians of Egypt" contrasts to some extent with the mention made previously by Yasrī Ḥamād. The designation "Christians of Egypt" is much more neutral than "Copts in the diaspora," because it does not question the belonging of these Christians to Egypt and does not discuss their involvement in "The Innocence of Muslims" whatsoever.

Despite these conciliatory stances which aimed to avoid any backlash against Christians, it seems that the Nur Party was criticized for its stance towards Christians, as on September 19 Nādir Bakkār was quoted as rejecting any allegation of Salafists having agitated against Copts, instead insisting that the Salafists had protested with 'liberals and Copts.'<sup>237</sup> This defence may be understood in the context of Father Fīlūbātīr Gamīl 'Azīz's criticism (Section 2.3.3.3) and the controversy between the Coptic Orthodox Church and the Salafi Front (Section 2.5.2).

So far, the reactions from 'Imād 'Abd al-Ghafūr and Nādir Bakkār in particular have shown that the Nur Party was put under pressure by the violent reactions and the stances of some radical elements in the party. It is in this context that the efforts to dissociate Copts from this video are to be understood.

Now we will focus on the issue of violence and the demands expressed by both the Nur Party and *al-da'wa al-salafiyya*; these two aspects ought to shed light on how they tried to use the event of "The Innocence of Muslims" for their political benefit. Firstly, the Nur Party seemed to have unequivocally condemned the violence in reaction to this video. This condemnation was expressed by condemning the violence itself. For instance Nādir Bakkār harshly condemned the killing of the US ambassador to Libya, Chris Stevens, as 'a criminal and barbarian act that has no relation to the ethics of Islam.'<sup>238</sup> The following day, he insisted on his Twitter account that the clashes in the area of the US embassy were 'far away from the

<sup>237</sup> Al-Hurra. 19 September 2012. الفيلم المسيء للإسلام.. الأقباط في دائرة الاتهام. Doi: <http://www.alhurra.com/content/video-islam-copts-situation-egypt/212035.html> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>238</sup> Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 12 September 2012. بكار: قتل السفير الأمريكي بـ"بنى غازى" عمل إجرامى وبربرى. Doi: <http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/12/%D8%A8%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%B1--%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%83%D9%89-%D8%A8%D9%80%D8%A8%D9%86%D9%89-%D8%BA%D8%A7%D8%B2%D9%89-%D8%B9%D9%85%D9%84-%D8%A5%D8%AC%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%89-%D9%88%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%A8%D8%B1%D9%89/784088#.VkGv-15OfVJ> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

goal of peaceful protests.<sup>239</sup> In particular, as the assault on the US embassy was linked to a Salafi involvement, especially in Western media (see Section 2.4.1), the Nur Party was careful not to lose its political credentials. In this regard, Nādir Bakkār denied any responsibility in the clashes at the US embassy, instead accusing ‘some sides’ of having an interest in stirring up ‘strife (*futun*).’<sup>240</sup> Interestingly, a leading member of the party, Galāl Marra, called on the reactions to remain ‘within the boundaries of the law and the constitution.’<sup>241</sup>

Similarly, the various demands expressed by the party revealed this objective. In particular, throughout the “crisis” of this video, the Nur Party pressured the government significantly and, through the government, it questioned the Muslim Brotherhood’s ability to defend Islam. Firstly, both the Nur Party and *al-da‘wa al-salafiyya* put pressure on President Muḥammad Mursī to take a firm stance towards and to suspend relations with the United States.<sup>242</sup> In addition, the Nur Party demanded that the Ministry of Interior strip the producers of the film of their Egyptian citizenship.<sup>243</sup> This demand had already been expressed by Nādir Bakkār in a tweet on September 10.<sup>244</sup> Furthermore, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was accused of using the same methods as the regime of Ḥusnī Mubārak.<sup>245</sup> Similarly, the spokesman of *al-da‘wa al-salafiyya*, ‘Abd al-Mun‘im al-Shiḥḥāt, delivered a speech at the conference “Answer to them” on September 22 in which he said he had reviewed the reactions of President Mursī, the ministry of Foreign Affairs, the ministry of culture, the ministry of Islamic endowments, the ministry of the Media, and concluded that their reactions were below that which was

<sup>239</sup> Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 13 September 2012. بكار: قيادات سلفية تتوجه لاحتواء أحداث السفارة الأمريكية. Doi: <http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/13/%D8%A8%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%B1--%D9%82%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%B3%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%AC%D9%87-%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%A3%D8%AD%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AB-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%83%D9%8A%D8%A9/785142#.VkGwGF50fVJ> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>240</sup> Al-Hurra. 19 September 2012. الفيلم المسيء للإسلام.. الأقباط في دائرة الاتهام.

<sup>241</sup> Al-Shuruq. 12 September 2012. قوى سياسية إسلامية تستنكر اقتحام السفارة الأمريكية. Number 1320. Year 4. Page 5.

<sup>242</sup> Al-Ahram. 13 September 2012. الغضب يجتاح مصر احتجاجا على الفيلم المسيء للرسول. Number 45937. Year 137. Page 5; Al-Ahram. 14 September 2012. استمرار ردود الفعل الغاضبة على الفيلم المسيء: الأزهر يطالب بالالتزام بضوابط الاحتجاج والبعد عن العنف. Number 45938. Year 137. Page 6.

<sup>243</sup> Al-Ahram. 13 September 2012. الغضب يجتاح مصر احتجاجا على الفيلم المسيء للرسول. Number 45937. Year 137. Page 5.

<sup>244</sup> Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 10 September 2012. " يطالب بإسقاط الجنسية عن المتورطين بالفيلم المسيء للرسول". Doi: <http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/10/%D8%A8%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D9%8A%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8-%D8%A8%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%B7-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%86%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%B9%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%B7%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%89%D8%A1-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84/781967#.VkGpWV5OfVJ> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>245</sup> Al-Shuruq. 14 September 2012. تواصل الاشتباكات والعنف بين المتظاهرين وقوات الأمن بمحيط السفارة الأمريكية. Number 1322. Year 4. Page 5.

‘expected.’<sup>246</sup> ‘Yet our political reactions are far better than [in the past],’ ‘Abd al-Mun‘im al-Shihhāt added, since the youth, among them some hooligans, had shown that the issue of offense concerned all Muslims, not only ‘Islamists.’ Finally, the Nur Party was also very vocal in demanding an end to such ‘offenses’ by legal means. For instance, Yasrī Ḥamād called on President Mursī to enshrine the protection of Muhammad in the new constitution.<sup>247</sup> Similarly, in a speech delivered at the conference “The Egyptian Constitution between Reality and Hope” on September 10, Nādir Bakkār expressed the need to enshrine the criminalization of blasphemy in the new constitution. Such an article would reportedly not threaten the freedom of speech.<sup>248</sup> Bakkār’s demand also comprised blasphemy against Christianity, as ‘for example, if a Muslims exposes the Lord Christ (*al-sayyid al-masīh*) to foulness,’ this is defined as a crime, as under Islamic rule it is not ‘permissible to offend any of the prophets sent by God.’ This article of criminalization is justified, according to Nādir Bakkār, by the very nature of Egypt, as the country of ‘noble al-Azhar and of the Egyptian Church.’

Eventually, another hint pointing to the political use of this event is the tweet by Nādir Bakkār following the thwarted assault on the US embassy, asserting that he did not make the US government or the US people responsible for the film,<sup>249</sup> perhaps inspired by the letter from Shāṭir Khayraṭ to *The New York Times*.

All these statements emphasize the Nur Party’s intention to be recognized as a political leader and powerful political contender. This intention was displayed by two strategies: pressuring President Mursī into taking a firmer stance and employing the discourse of national unity, thus seemingly acknowledging that Christian Egyptians and the Church are part of the Egyptian nation.

In comparison, *al-da‘wa al-salafiyya* published a long statement on 11 September 2012 in which it condemned “The Innocence of Muslims.”<sup>250</sup> In this statement, however, the video

<sup>246</sup> Al-Shuruq. 22 September 2012. الشحات: الرد السياسي على الفيلم المسيء أفضل من السابق لكنه دون المطلوب. Doi: [http://www.shorouknews.com/news/view.aspx?cdate=22092012&id=92bd0af0-bd3f-4cfb-9f68-694050713061&fb\\_comment\\_id=342930759131357\\_11601678#f316156a38d8306](http://www.shorouknews.com/news/view.aspx?cdate=22092012&id=92bd0af0-bd3f-4cfb-9f68-694050713061&fb_comment_id=342930759131357_11601678#f316156a38d8306) (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>247</sup> Al-Shuruq. 12 September 2012. ثورة غضب “إسلامية مسيحية ضد الإساءة للرسول. Number 1320. Year 4. Page 5.

<sup>248</sup> Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 10 September 2012. التعرض للأنبياء والصحابة لا يمت لحرية الرأي بأية صلة. Doi: <http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/10/%D8%A8%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%B1--%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%B6-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%86%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B5%D8%AD%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%A7-%D9%8A%D9%85%D8%AA-%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%A3%D9%89-%D8%A8%D8%A3%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%B5%D9%84%D8%A9/781106#.VkGvMF5OfVJ> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>249</sup> Copts Today. 17 September 2012. نادر بكار: اتصلنا بالسفارة الأمريكية قبل التظاهر أمامها لمناهضة الفيلم المسيء ووافقوا على ذلك. Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Egypt-News/Detail.php?Id=33286> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>250</sup> Al-Dawa al-Salafiyya. 11 September 2012. بيان من "الدعوة السلفية" بشأن الفيلم المسيء "الرسول الله" - صلى الله عليه وسلم. Doi: <http://www.anasalfy.com/play.php?catsmktba=35834> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

was not mentioned by its title, but rather described as ‘the production of a film about the life of the prophet (PBUH),’ full of ‘lies and naked scenes,’ ‘these comedies,’ and ‘this attack is not the first one,’ ‘this futility.’ Interestingly, in this statement *al-da‘wa al-salafiyya* displayed a good knowledge of the content of the film. For instance, it rejected the allegations made in the video concerning the persecution of Copts in Egypt, insisting instead that the Copts in Egypt ‘live in security and peace, unlike that which the film depicted in its lies.’ In addition, the organization seemed to be aware of the accusations levelled against Muhammad himself, as it views Muhammad’s order in the video to kill the men, women and children as a ‘comparison between *jihād* in Islam and the holy wars by the Jews,’ during which God allegedly ‘ordered them to kill men, women, children and to disembowel pregnant women.’ In this quotation, *al-da‘wa al-salafiyya* adds more cruelty to the war ethics, because the video did not mention the fate of imprisoned pregnant women. As a result, the background ascribed to “The Innocence of Muslims” is interesting, since *al-da‘wa al-salafiyya* does state that ‘some idiots among the Copts in the diaspora (*aqbāt al-mahjar*) acted, and behind them one of the American Churches, and behind all of them, the Jews.’ Thus, the organization did concede the involvement of the Coptic network in the United States and is careful not to generalize about all Copts living abroad, but it ascribes complete responsibility to “the Jews.” However, in asserting this, *al-da‘wa al-salafiyya* does not rely on the alleged report of Sam Bacile which confused Western media for a few days. Rather, the statement seems to provide evidence by referring to the content of the video, for instance, in the reference to the holy wars in Judaism mentioned above. These ‘biases’ towards Judaism – as termed by *al-da‘wa al-salafiyya* – are said to be additional proof of the fact that ‘organizations of Copts in the diaspora’ have become ‘the loot of worldwide Zionism’ and are misguided into believing ‘they defend the cause of the sons of their religion.’ All in all, therefore, the struggle with those behind this video, and alleged “worldwide Zionism” is understood in the framework of early Islam fighting “unbelievers.” Thus the statement makes use of many quotations from the Quran (3:118<sup>251</sup> and 8:36-37<sup>252</sup>) which define the “other” not as Christian or Jewish Non-Muslims but as merely the “other” or, in some

---

<sup>251</sup> “O you who have believed, do not take as intimates those other than yourselves, for they will not spare you [any] ruin. They wish you would have hardship. Hatred has already appeared from their mouths, and what their breasts conceal is greater. We have certainly made clear to you the signs, if you will use reason.” Quran. Doi: <http://quran.com/3/118> retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>252</sup> “Indeed, those who disbelieve spend their wealth to avert [people] from the way of Allah. So they will spend it; then it will be for them a [source of] regret; then they will be overcome. And those who have disbelieved - unto Hell they will be gathered. [This is] so that Allah may distinguish the wicked from the good and place the wicked some of them upon others and heap them all together and put them into Hell. It is those who are the losers. Say to those who have disbelieved [that] if they cease, what has previously occurred will be forgiven for them. But if they return [to hostility] - then the precedent of the former [rebellious] peoples has already taken place.” Quran. Doi: <http://quran.com/8/36> (retrieved May 23, 2016).



instances, the “unbeliever” who challenges the Muslim in his faith. Thus, these quotations are used to back *al-da‘wa al-salafiyya*’s understanding of this video’s purpose; stopping the spread of Islam. In this regard, *al-da‘wa al-salafiyya* is especially suspicious about the timing of this video, as it coincides with ‘the Islamic peoples’ siding with the Islamic project in the first true choice.’ Yet the organization is certain that the spread of Islam actually increases every time such ‘attacks’ take place. However, according to the organization, this certainty does not free Muslims from their duty to defend Islam as stated in the suras 48:9, 9:40 and 22:40.

Moreover, *al-da‘wa al-salafiyya* pressurized President Mursī and the whole government into taking a firm stance in connection to this video. According to the organization, the duty of the president was to protect the identity of the *umma*. In addition, the organization defined tasks for every ministry, including the ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Interior, the ministry of Information and the ministry of Islamic endowments.

Lastly, we will focus on how the statement of 11 September 2012 dealt with the issue of Coptic involvement. The statement oscillates between a balanced outlook and *al-da‘wa al-salafiyya*’s usual stance towards Copts. For instance, its leader, Yāsir al-Burhāmī, concluded in 2011 that ‘the Nazarenes (*al-naṣārā*) do not recognize (*kafara*) the Quran,’ and accused them of being responsible for the massacre of Maspero on 9 October 2011.<sup>253</sup> The statement in reaction to “The Innocence of Muslims” used both the terms “Nazarenes” (*‘al-naṣrāniyya,’* *‘miṣrī naṣrānī’*) and “Copt” (*‘many of the church and political and popular Coptic leaders’*), but it did not use once the word “Christian” i.e. *‘masīḥī,’* a more neutral term. *‘Al-naṣrānī’* refers to the word used in the Quran, whereas the word “Copts” designates these Christians as belonging to Egypt. Besides this, the statement was very careful indeed when mentioning the Coptic involvement in this video; it suggests the involvement of ‘idiots among the Copts in the diaspora’ who ‘without doubt do not represent all Nazarene Egyptians’ and praises the condemnations issued by key actors and Churches in Egypt. Interestingly, *al-da‘wa al-salafiyya* denies the existence of interreligious conflicts and instead emphasizes the peaceful coexistence.

### ***Summary of Section 2.3.1.2***

Overall, this statement is very surprising because it presents an elaborate analysis of the content and background of the video. It admitted the involvement of ‘some’ Copts but established a Jewish responsibility within the framework of early Islam’s struggle against disbelief. It shows an unusually accommodating stance towards Christians while displaying a

---

<sup>253</sup> Copts Today. No date. *النصارى كفره بشهادة القرآن هل تكذب القرآن لنرضيهم لعنة الله عليهم* Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Archive/Detail.php?Id=12091> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

tension between a religious outlook on the one hand and the political and social reality on the other.

### 2.3.1.3 *Al-Gamā'a al-Islāmiyya* and the Building and Development Party

Of all the Islamist movements and parties that reacted to “The Innocence of Muslims,” the stance of *ḥizb al-binā' wa l-tanmiya*, Building and Development Party, the political arm of *al-gamā'a al-islāmiyya*, is the most surprising, as this movement had a long history of violence and animosity towards Copts. In the 1980s *al-gamā'a al-islāmiyya* was responsible for a number of attacks on Copts in Upper Egypt. Several leaders were imprisoned, among them Ṭāriq al-Zumur and 'Abbūd al-Zumur, for plotting to assassinate President Anwar al-Sādāt. While in prison, the leadership of *al-gamā'a al-islāmiyya* announced an end to all violence in 1999 (Rashwan 2007, 314-318). According to Diaa Rashwan, however, the movement continued to consider Christians and Jews “unbelievers” who must be treated well (Rashwan 2007, 356). Following the revolution of 25 January 2011, the leaders of *al-gamā'a al-islāmiyya* were released and founded a political party. There are, however, conflicting indications as to when this party, *ḥizb al-binā' wa l-tanmiya* (Building and Development Party), was created. According to *Al-Ahram Hebdo*, the party was established in March 2011.<sup>254</sup> According to the Carnegie Endowment the party was founded in June 2011.<sup>255</sup> During the parliamentary elections in 2011/2012 the party formed an alliance with other Salafi parties, among them the Nur Party, and won thirteen seats (Lacroix 2012, 1).

The most interesting aspect about the reactions to “The Innocence of Muslims” is the both ambivalent and surprising stance towards Copts. On the one hand, Copts were heavily criticized for their alleged financial support by the West to allow them to spread a “persecution discourse” about the Copts in Egypt. On the other hand, the party attempted to completely dissociate Coptic Egyptians from this video. For instance, the head of the political office of the Building and Development Party, Ṣafwat 'Abd al-Ghanī, described the producers of the video as working for ‘suspicious sides, which neither represent the Copts in Egypt nor Christianity (*masḥiyya*) nor Copts in the diaspora.’<sup>256</sup> This idea is repeated again when referring to the alleged funding of Copts in the US by the US.<sup>257</sup> Similarly, Ṭāriq al-Zumur expressed the need to differentiate between “internal” and “external” Copts, accusing Copts in the diaspora of

<sup>254</sup> Al-Ahram Hebdo. 17-23 July 2013. 5 partis religieux, vers une dissolution? Number 983. Year 19. Page 5.

<sup>255</sup> Carnegie Endowment. 20 September 2012. Building and Development Party. Doi: <http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/09/20/building-and-development-party/h3ct> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>256</sup> Al-Ahram. 12 September 2012. غضب شعبي من الإساءة للرسول. Number 45936. Year 137. Pages 1 and 5.

<sup>257</sup> Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 9 September 2012. أقباط المهجر يشعلون الفتنة بإنتاج فيلم مسيء للرسول .. سياسيون يهاجمون القس الأمريكي. رضوان: المسيحيون المصريون قبل المسلمين ضد الفيلم تيرى جونز و«صادق» و«زقلمة» ويطالبون بالملاحقة القانونية للفيلم.. رضوان: المسيحيون المصريون قبل المسلمين ضد الفيلم

‘igniting strife (*fitna*).’<sup>258</sup> These statements contrast sharply with the previous history of *al-gamā‘a al-islāmiyya*. In addition, “The Innocence of Muslims” was also mistaken for a ‘Dutch film’ by the general secretary of the party in Sūhāg,<sup>259</sup> who viewed Muhammad as a red line Muslims would not allow to be crossed and again expressed the demand for a reaction by the Egyptian government. He denied that the video was an expression of freedom of speech (*ibid*). Furthermore, Ṭāriq al-Zumur criticized the violence, underlining the importance of appearing ‘civilized and bearing the spirit of the January 25 Revolution.’<sup>260</sup>

### **Summary of Section 2.3.1.3**

These reactions suggest that the Building and Development Party tried to enter the political game following the Arab Spring and intended, like the Nur Party, to establish itself as a serious political contender. Thus, defending Christians against potential backlashes was part of this “game.”

### **2.3.1.4 Salafi-Jihadi Reactions**

Finally, this chapter will close with the reaction of two Salafi-Jihadi leaders who quite interestingly directed their criticism mainly towards the majority Muslim countries in general and Egypt in particular. In a special declaration to *al-Maṣrī al-Yawm*, the leader of the Jihad Organization (*tanẓīm al-jihād*), *shaykh* Nabīl Na‘īm, stated that President Muḥammad Mursī failed to meet the expectations of the people – meaning himself – and that he had expected him to take a firm stance.<sup>261</sup> Similarly, Hishām Abāza, founder of the Safety and Development Party (*ḥizb al-salāma wa l-tanmiya*), the political arm of the Jihad Organization,<sup>262</sup> viewed this ‘offense’ as a symptom of the *umma*’s current state of weakness.<sup>263</sup>

### **Summary of Section 2.3.1**

Overall, these reactions from various political Islamist actors and organizations, whose positions all differed greatly, showed the competition there was in the newly democratic Egypt. All of them displayed the intention to act and be recognized as serious political contenders,

<sup>258</sup> Al-Hurra. 19 September 2012. الفيلم المسيء للإسلام.. الأقباط في دائرة الاتهام.

<sup>259</sup> Copts Today. 11 September 2012. مطالبات بطرد السفير الهولندي بسبب الفيلم المسيء للرسول بسوهاج. Al-Shuruq. Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Egypt-News/Detail.php?Id=32354> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>260</sup> Al-Shuruq. 14 September 2012. تواصل الاشتباكات والعنف بين المتظاهرين وقوات الأمن بمحيط السفارة الأمريكية. Number 1322. Year 4. Page 5.

<sup>261</sup> Al-Masry al-Youm. 11 September 2012. ليس على مستوى الحدث. Doi: <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/163211> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>262</sup> Masress. 27 August 2012. مصير حزب "السلامة والتنمية" يفجر الخلافات بين الجهاديين. Doi: <http://www.masress.com/almesryoon/132618> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>263</sup> Al-Masry al-Youm. 11 September 2012. ليس على مستوى الحدث. Doi: <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/163211> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

especially when putting pressure on President Mursī. Moreover, even the mother organizations displayed an effort to prevent backlashes against Christians by dissociating them from the video or not mentioning them.

### 2.3.2 Islamic Preachers

This short section comprises the reactions of those “Islamic preachers” who did not have leading positions in Salafī organizations such as Yāsir al-Burhāmī in *al-da‘wa al-salafīyya*, or on Salafī channels, like Wisām ‘Abd al-Warāth. Thus, this section will dwell on the reactions of al-Ḥabīb ‘Alī al-Jafarī, Abū Yaḥyā, Ṣafwat Hijāzī and Mabruk ‘Aṭīya. In addition, the reactions of two other Islamic preachers, Sha‘bān Darwīsh and Ashraf Muḥammad Muḥmūd, given during a joint Christian-Muslim conference will be analysed in Chapter 2.4.

Al-Ḥabīb ‘Alī al-Jafarī was born in 1971 in Jeddah and is of Yemeni extraction. In 2006 he was a signatory of the open letter “A Common Word” under the leadership of King Abdallah II of Jordan (see Chapter 5). In the context of the ongoing discussion in Egypt on the permissibility of offering Christians Christmas greetings, al-Ḥabīb ‘Alī al-Jafarī asserted that he did offer them his greetings, stating that the *fatwā* forbidding this was based neither on the Quran nor on the *sunna*.<sup>264</sup> On 10 September 2012, *Copts Today* quoted the preacher’s reaction to “The Innocence of Muslims,” describing it as a ‘film offending our Lord Muhammad (PBUH),’ produced by some extremists amongst the ‘Copts in the diaspora’ to stir up ‘sectarian strife in Egypt,’ and, from there on, in the whole region.<sup>265</sup> In addition, he praised the position of the ‘eminent Coptic Orthodox Church’ and the raising of this issue by a Coptic lawyer. Furthermore, al-Ḥabīb ‘Alī al-Jafarī defined the best reaction as follows ‘that the world sees in us the practical realization of his [Muhammad’s] ethics, and that the untruth of what has been produced appears.’ He also called on President Barack Obama to issue a law forbidding ‘racism and incitement to hate.’

Similarly, on 10 September 2012, *al-Maṣrī al-Yawm* reported the reaction from the Islamic preacher *shaykh* Abū Yaḥyā, presented here as a member of the executive committee of *i’tilāf ṣawt al-ḥikma* (Coalition of the Voice of Wisdom) which was established in connection with this video.<sup>266</sup> In this declaration, Abū Yaḥyā expressed the need for several actors to take a firm stance on “The Innocence of Muslims;” he especially called on President Mursī to take

<sup>264</sup> Hurriyat Sudan. 4 January 2015. الداعية الحبيب على الجفري : نعم، أهنئ المسيحيين في عيد ميلاد السيد المسيح عليه السلام. Doi: <http://www.hurriyatsudan.com/?p=171683> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>265</sup> Copts Today. 10 September 2012. "على الجفري": الفيلم المسيء للرسول ورائه أيادي صهيونية لإثارة الفتنة في مصر". Al-Moheet. Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Egypt-News/Detail.php?Id=32282> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>266</sup> Al-Masry al-Youm. 10 September 2012. «الجبهة السلفية» ينضمون لوقفه أمام السفارة الأمريكية ضد الفيلم المسيء. «النور» و«الجبهة السلفية». Doi: <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/162864> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

a firm official stance. Equally, Abū Yaḥyā called on the highest ‘*ulamā*’ of Al-Azhar to issue a statement condemning the video and a *fatwā*. Abū Yaḥyā also requested that ‘the church distance herself from the producers and the promoters of the film’ and support the calls to strip the producers of their citizenship in order to prevent ‘strife between Muslim and Coptic Egyptians.’ Finally, he emphasized that the protest at the US embassy would be peaceful.

Şafwat Hijāzī is said to have been close to *al-gamā‘a al-islāmiyya* and was elected a member of the National Council of Human Rights (*al-majlis al-qawmī li-ḥuqūq al-insān*).<sup>267</sup> In his appearance on a TV show reported in *al-Yawm al-Sābi* ‘ on 15 September 2012, Şafwat Hijāzī placed the issue of “The Innocence of Muslims” in the context of the efforts to crush the Revolution of 25 January 2011.<sup>268</sup> He stated that given these ‘enemies’ inability to target the revolution directly, ‘they hate the revolution, and therefore they undertake to distort the image of Islamic symbols.’ Interestingly, Şafwat Hijāzī completely reframed the revolution as an Islamic and republican overthrow of which he is a symbol. He stated that he was proud to ‘represent the Islamic project and the revolution of January.’ He also recalled that Muḥammad Mursī would implement Sharia Law as he had promised but that this needed some time. He defended Mursī’s alleged passivity during the issue of this video and directed his own accusations against the kings of Morocco, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan. In addition, he formulated an implicit call to kill Mūrīs Şādiq, ‘I do not issue a fatwa allowing the killing of Mūrīs Şādiq, but my emotion leads me to murder him.’

Lastly, *Waṭanī* reported the stance of the preacher Mabruk ‘Aṭiya.<sup>269</sup> He was born in al-Minūffiya, went to an al-Azhar school, graduated from the faculty of Arabic language and started a show on television.<sup>270</sup> With regards to the background of the video, ‘Aṭiya seemed to concede a Coptic involvement; the video was reportedly produced by ‘a group of humankind, be it from within the Copts in the diaspora (*aqbāṭ al-mahjar*) or others,’ but mostly he described the producers as ‘enemies of the nation (*waṭan*).’ Like other reactions, he viewed the video’s aim as seeking to produce ‘strife’ and ‘spread chaos in society.’ In addition, he stated that ‘Islam

---

<sup>267</sup> Moheet. 28 December 2012. «صفت حجازي» يُصالح «المسيحيين» ويطلبهم بإسقاط «مرسي» Doi: <http://www.moheet.com/2012/12/28/1706787/%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%87%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%B5%D9%81%D9%88%D8%AA-%D8%AD%D8%AC%D8%A7%D8%B2%D9%8A-%D9%8A-%D8%B5%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%AD%D9%8A.html#.Vq86hXnFbIV> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>268</sup> Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 15 September 2012. صفوت حجازي لـ "حصاد الأسبوع": مرسى سيطبق الشريعة الإسلامية.. شرف للمجلس القومي لحقوق الإنسان أن أكون عضوا به.. عاطفتي تدفعني لقتل مورييس صادق Doi. <http://www.youm7.com/story/0000/0/0/-/786326#.VjIzK25OfVI> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>269</sup> Watani. 16 September 2012. صناعة خارجية لتقسيم الوطن.. الفيلم المسيء للرسول. Number 2647. Year 54/Number 613. Year 12. Page 8.

<sup>270</sup> Masress. 12 December 2012. Doi: <http://www.masress.com/elakhbar/58599> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

and the Messenger are higher than th[is] pettiness.’

### 2.3.3 Coptic Organizations

Since a number of Coptic organizations reacted to “The Innocence of Muslims,” this paragraph will start by looking first at the Coptic activism that gradually emerged in the final years of Mubarak’s regime and was institutionalized following the revolution of 25 January 2011.

#### 2.3.3.1 The Emergence of Coptic Activism

As the opposition to Ḥusnī Mubārak gradually increased, two phenomena took place at the same time. A number of Christian politicians and activists joined movements opposing Mubārak such as the Kefaya movement (*ḥarakat kifāya*) and April 6 Movement (*ḥarakat 6 abrīl*). At the same time, a Coptic activism gradually emerged that questioned both the Church’s tutelage and the state’s dealings with Coptic Egyptians. Among the Christians who joined the Kefaya movement were, for instance, (Coptic Catholic) George Iṣḥāq who then co-founded the Dustour Party, Jamāl As‘ad who would reject the appellation ‘Egyptian Christian,’<sup>271</sup> and Hānī al-Gazirī (Casper 2014). In 2009 Hānī al-Gazirī founded the Coptic organization *aqbāt min ajl miṣr* (Copts for Egypt) with the aim of attracting the attention of the state and formulated two demands: the establishment of a single law and the suppression of the reconciliation gatherings.<sup>272</sup> In the meantime, several events illustrated the gradual emancipation of the Coptic youth from the tutelage of the Church, in particular from Pope Shinūda III. These events began with the attack in Naj‘ Ḥammadī at Christmas in January 2010 when the Copts subsequently protested for the first time outside the walls of the church. In reaction to this attack Hānī al-Gazirī staged a protest on Tahrir Square on 14 February 2010. Al-Gazirī emphasized the importance of the protest taking place outside the church, as its echoes would carry further; ‘I am Egyptian. I have a right to do that [protest]’ (al-Gaziri 23 January 2015). The second core event was the violent clash between Coptic protesters and the police in al-‘Umrāniyya in November 2010, after which Copts reportedly stormed the headquarters of the governorate of Gizeh.<sup>273</sup> The bombing in Alexandria on 6 January 2011 killed twenty people and marked a new level of turnout, as youths interrupted a church leader who wanted to thank Ḥusnī Mubārak (Sedra 2012b). Furthermore, young Copts threw stones at the cars of the *shaykh al-Azhar*, the

---

<sup>271</sup> Al-Ahram. ?? . جمال أسعد المواطن مصرى . Doi:

<http://digital.ahram.org.eg/articles.aspx?Serial=1429884&eid=429>. (retrieved January 31, 2015).

<sup>272</sup> Al-Gaziri, Hani. 23 January 2015. Personal Interview. Cairo. This source is quoted in this chapter as “al-Gaziri 23 January 2015.”

<sup>273</sup> Al-Ahram Hebdo. 22-28 December 2010. Encourager l’esprit de citoyenneté. Number 850. Year 17. Pages 3-4.

*mufīī*, and the minister of Islamic endowments following a press conference with Pope Shinūda.<sup>274</sup> Despite the Pope's calls to the contrary, young Copts participated in the protests of the revolution in January 2011. This participation reflected the will to take part as Egyptians and as Copts.

However, the attacks on Copts and churches did not cease after the revolution, so Coptic activism was gradually institutionalized and a number of Coptic organizations emerged; in particular, the Coalition of Egypt's Copts (*i`tilāf aqbāṭ miṣr*), the Maspero Youth Union (*ittiḥād shabāb Maspero*), the Movement of Copts Without Restrictions (*ḥarakat aqbāṭ bilā quyūd*), and the Christian Brothers. The Coalition of Egypt's Copts was reportedly founded on 25 February 2011 and, according to its secretary general, Fādī Yusif, is the only Coptic organization that includes Muslims, in particular those from al-Azhar and the Cairo University.<sup>275</sup> The Maspero Youth Union (*ittiḥād shabāb Maspero*) was reportedly founded following the events of 'Afīfī, 80 kilometers from Cairo, where a love affair between a Christian man and a Muslim woman led to the expulsion of the Christians.<sup>276</sup> According to Mīnā Magdī, general coordinator of the Union, these expelled Christian inhabitants staged a sit-in in Maspero Square – which became a parallel protest place to Tahrir Square for specific Christian demands – that ended on 25 March 2011 and it was then that the Maspero Youth Union was created (*ibid*). After the Maspero massacre on 9 October 2011, the union was heavily criticized by the families of the victims and was accused of being 'corrupt and suspicious.'<sup>277</sup> The movement was also reportedly a merger of different groups, amongst them the group associated with the magazine *al-katība al-ṭibīyya*, whose chief editor was Father Fīlūbātīr (Casper 2011). The priest Fīlūbātīr Gamīl 'Azīz founded the journal *al-katība al-ṭibīyya* in 2004 together with another priest, Father Mityās. The magazine was distributed in churches and called on Copts to preserve their Coptic Egyptian identity in the face of Arabization and Islamization (Casper 2013, 5). The organization Copts Without Restrictions (*ḥarakat aqbāṭ bilā quyūd*) was also founded following the revolution of 25 January 2011 (Casper 2013). In August 2012, several Coptic movements merged into the Coptic Community Council (*al-majlis al-mustashārī al-qibṭī*) to present a united Coptic front (Casper 2013, 7) under the leadership of Hānī al-Gazirī.

---

<sup>274</sup> BBC Arabic. 2 January 2011. ., مصر: متظاهرون أقباط يهاجمون سيارات وفد شيخ الأزهر“، Doi: [http://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2011/01/110102\\_egypt\\_alex\\_church\\_attack.shtml](http://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2011/01/110102_egypt_alex_church_attack.shtml) (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>275</sup> Fadi, Yussef. 20. January 2015. Personal Interview. Cairo.

<sup>276</sup> Magdi, Mina. 21 January 2015. Personal Interview. Cairo. This source is quoted in this section as “Magdi 21 January 2015.”

<sup>277</sup> Daily News Egypt. 6 October 2012. Families of Maspero victims attack Maspero Youth Union. Doi: <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2012/10/06/families-of-maspero-victims-attack-maspero-youth-union/> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

These organizations' calls ranged from demands for full citizenship to more sectarian demands. All movements shared the same goal of reducing the Church's political role and limiting it to religious matters.<sup>278</sup> Another main issue was the sectarian dimension. For instance, the creation of the Christian Brothers (*al-ikhwān al-masīhiyyūn*) in July 2012 as a reaction to the presidency of Muḥammad Mursī was seen as a significant and dangerous step towards sectarianism in Egypt. Gamāl As'ad expressed his worries:

Une telle association n'est sûrement pas dans l'intérêt des coptes, au contraire elle fait l'affaire des islamistes radicaux qui prônent un Etat religieux [...] si les coptes aspirent à un Etat civil basé sur la citoyenneté, il faut qu'ils se considèrent comme Egyptiens non comme une minorité chrétienne.<sup>279</sup>

Yet the movement's leader, Mīkhā'il Fahmī asserted that the movement's aim was precisely to ground and revive the concept of citizenship. Overall, all activists shared the will to preserve a specific Coptic identity while still being Egyptians. As Hānī al-Gazirī explained: 'We, Copts, were here before the Christians [...],' and differentiated Christian religious belonging from Coptic nationality, concluding that, in fact, all Egyptians are Copts and not Arabs (al-Gazeri 23 January 2015).

However, the aftermath of the "Revolution of 30 June 2013" dealt a severe blow to these organizations. In June 2014, Hānī al-Gazirī announced the dissolution of his movement, and urged Copts to 'dissolve back into society' (Casper 2014). He put particular faith in President al-Sīsī, with whom he was 'of one mind' and considered Coptic activism as becoming harmful to some extent; 'the ideas of "Christian" and "Muslim" must absolutely be erased in the minds of the people: there will only remain an Egyptian. I am Egyptian. Am I a minority in Egypt? No' (al-Gazeri 23 January 2015). This decision was criticized by other Coptic activists (Casper 2014). As to the other organizations, Copts Without Restrictions might have dissolved since the revolution of 30 June 2013 (Magdi 21 January 2015), while the Maspero Youth Union is reportedly riven by internal divisions and has lost importance.<sup>280</sup> According to Jayson Casper, the Coalition of Egypt's Copts has remained more important as it is more pro-church and pro-regime compared to the other groups (Casper 17 January 2015).

---

<sup>278</sup> Al-Ahram Hebdo. Fadi Youssef. Frères Chrétiens „il ne s'agit pas de se séparer de l'Eglise, mais seulement de s'y soumettre au niveau spirituel et religieux." In al-Ahram Hebdo. 18-24 July 2012. Une démarche symbolique. Number 931. Year 18. Page 8.

<sup>279</sup> Al-Ahram Hebdo. 18-24 July 2012. Une démarche symbolique. Number 931. Year 18. Page 8.

<sup>280</sup> Casper, Jayson. 17 January 2015. Personal Interview. Cairo. This source is quoted in this chapter as "Casper 17 January 2015."



### 2.3.3.2 Reactions of the Coptic Activists

This section will analyse the reaction of four movements and one person; Copts Without Restrictions (*ḥarakat aqbāt bilā quyūd*), the Maspero Youth Union (*ittiḥād shabāb Maspero*), the coalition of Egypt's Copts (*i'tilāf aqbāt miṣr*), the Coptic Community Council (*al-majlis al-mustashārī al-qibṭī*), and Hānī al-Gazirī.

On 10 September, *al-Balad* mentioned a statement made by the organization Copts Without Restrictions.<sup>281</sup> This statement was published before the protest at the US embassy on 11 September 2012. The coordinator of the movement, Shārif Ramzī, who did not participate in the protests at the US embassy, began by condemning 'all forms of attacks on sacred items as well as insulting sacred symbols and offending the feelings of our Muslim brothers.' However, the statement then proceeded to denounce what it called the 'double standards' of Egyptian society, of the state, and the media. Copts Without Restrictions asked: 'Why are these voices not raised to condemn more extremist positions of institutions and the media in Egypt against the Christians and their sacred items and symbols?'<sup>282</sup> The statement particularly criticized the silence of society, the state, and the media when Christians are accused of being 'unbelievers' and their properties and lives are attacked. Interestingly, to back its argument, the organization employed the discourse of national unity: Shārif Ramzī considered this hypocrisy a threat to national unity. This reaction might have been motivated by accusations from the media directed at the Copts. Overall, Copts Without Restrictions did not discuss the background of the video or the involvement of Copts.

In contrast, the positions of the Maspero Youth Union seem to be much more accommodating. On 11 September 2012, *al-Balad* published a statement by the movement and on 12 September 2012, *al-Ahrām* quoted its spokesman. In its first statement, the movement, which participated in the protest at the US embassy on the evening of September 11 2012, discussed the background of "The Innocence of Muslims"<sup>283</sup> extensively. Like that of Copts Without Restrictions, the statement started by condemning the video, 'the offense against any revealed religion.' Subsequently, Magdī Šābir, who is presented here as the group's official spokesman, questioned the background and the identity of those involved in the video; an 'irresponsible group,' a 'paid group,' 'we do not know where the funding comes from for this offending film or the group funding them.' The Maspero Youth Union questioned the very

<sup>281</sup> Al-Balad. 10 September 2012. ونطالب بوضع حد للإساءات لرموزنا المسيحية. Doi: <http://www.el-balad.com/261182> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>282</sup> لماذا لاتتعالى هذه الاصوات لإدانة مواقف أكثر تطرفا تصدر عن مؤسسات و ابواق اعلامية داخل مصر ضد المسيحيين و ضد مقدساتهم ,, وموزهم؟

<sup>283</sup> Al-Balad. 11 September 2012. Doi: <http://www.el-balad.com/261674> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

possibility of the producers' being Egyptians, since the Copts living abroad are 'true Egyptians' and therefore it is not possible for them to 'offend Islam and the Messenger.' Accordingly, the producers only expressed 'their personal views and not the views of all Copts in Egypt and outside of Egypt.' In particular, the statement focused on a possible outcome of the video, an 'attempt to stir sectarian strife (*fitna ṭā'ifiyya*).' Similarly, in an interview with the author, Mīnā Magdī asserted that the condemnation was not directed at the principle of freedom of speech itself but at the likely results of this 'film' (Magdi 21 January 2015). This fear was also displayed in the stance reported by *al-Ahrām* on 12 September 2012.<sup>284</sup> In this article, Nādir Shukrī is presented as the spokesman of the movement and quoted as accusing "The Innocence of Muslims" of 'threaten[ing] social peace and increase[s] tension between the sons of the united nation.'<sup>285</sup>

In comparison, the two stances taken by the Coalition of Egypt's Copts were much more accommodating than that of the Maspero Youth Union and even than that of the Copts Without Restrictions. On 12 September 2012, *al-Balad* published a statement by the Coalition and on that same day *Copts Today* evoked the intervention by Fādī Yūsif on television. *Al-Balad* wrote that *i'tilāf aqbāṭ miṣr* published a statement condemning the video on Tuesday 11 September 2012,<sup>286</sup> the same day the movement officially participated in the protest at the US embassy. In addition, *al-Maṣrī al-Yawm* also mentions this statement.<sup>287</sup> According to *al-Balad*, "The Innocence of Muslims" was described as 'an American production,' as 'intellectual terror' whose background is uncertain and which aims to 'stir discord between all believers of religions.' Therefore, the organization called for the punishment of those involved (al-Masry al-Youm 11 September 2012), an internationalization of laws criminalizing blasphemy, and also request that the Egyptian government strip the makers of this video of their Egyptian citizenship (al-Balad 12 September 2012). However, the Coalition condemned the violence in connection to this video, stating 'it is a right to defend one's creed but in a peaceful, legal way.' Similarly, it demanded that the offenses against Christianity should also be punished (al-Masry al-Youm 11 September 2012). In an interview on a television channel, Fādī Yūsif first tried to dissociate "The Innocence of Muslims" from its Coptic content and background.<sup>288</sup> Thus the film was,

<sup>284</sup> Al-Ahram. 12 September 2012. غضب شعبي من الإساءة للرسول. Number 45936. Year 137. Pages 1 and 5.

<sup>285</sup> "يهدد السلام الاجتماعي ويزيد الاحتقان بين أبناء الوطن الواحد"

<sup>286</sup> Al-Balad. 12 September 2012. "انتلاف أقباط مصر" يدين الفيلم المسيء للنبي الكريم.. ويطالب بأحكام دولية تعاقب ازدراء الأديان. :Doi<http://www.el-balad.com/261883> (retrieved May 23, 2016). This source is quoted in this paragraph as "al-Balad 12 September 2012."

<sup>287</sup> Al-Masry al-Youm. 11 September 2012. انتلاف «أقباط مصر» يرفض الفيلم المسيء للرسول.. ويطالب بمحاكمة دولية لصانعيه. :Doi<http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/162944> (retrieved May 23, 2016). This source is quoted in this paragraph as "al-Masry al-Youm 11 September 2012."

<sup>288</sup> Copts Today. 12 September 2012. فادى يوسف : أيادي يهودية وراء الفيلم المسيء.. وموريس وزلقمة في حجم النمل. :Doi<http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=32495> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

according to Fādī Yūsif, an American and Dutch production dating back to July 2012 to which the sequence about the Coptic doctor had been added later, in order to connect the video with contemporary Egypt and prove the persecution of Copts (ibid). Moreover, Yūsif asserted that the reference to the Jews on the Arabian Peninsula in the video was a clear hint at its “Jewish background” (ibid). Secondly, speaking in the name of Christians in Egypt, he pointed to their condemnation of this video, and the fact that they had condemned the video before Muslims did. Interestingly, Fādī Yūsif again directed the blame towards Copts in the diaspora who have a long history of ‘stirring discord.’

In a very brief statement published on 12 September 2012, the Coptic Community Council (*al-majlis al-mustashārī al-qibī*) condemned “The Innocence of Muslims” as aiming to ignite a ‘battle between the sons of the united nation.’<sup>289</sup> Its president, Hānī al-Gazirī, participated in the rather low-ranking Christian-Muslim conference “Only the Messenger of God” on 19 September in Zamalek which was organized in cooperation with the *hay’at qidāyāt al-dawla*.<sup>290</sup> In his speech, Hānī al-Gazirī insisted that “The Innocence of Muslims” harmed all Egyptians. Firstly, he stated: ‘all of us Egyptians, Muslims and Christians, witness difficult conditions’ and “the Copts of Egypt condemned the offense against the noble Messenger.’ He stated that Mūrīs Šādiq has been harming Copts for years and, since ‘he is not one of us,’ ‘I will not apologize in the name of the Copts of Egypt.’ Instead, al-Gazirī asserted that the video aimed to divide Egypt, therefore ‘a vision of prudence and national outlook’ are allegedly needed. Moreover, he recalled that Christianity commanded Christians to love their enemies, as if he were criticizing the violent reactions.

### 2.3.3.3 Father Fīlūbātīr Gamīl ‘Azīz

On 12 September 2011, *Copts Today* published a long statement by Father Fīlūbātīr Gamīl ‘Azīz discussing the issue of “The Innocence of Muslims.”<sup>291</sup> In his statement, Fīlūbātīr Gamīl ‘Azīz wrote that the main drive for writing this statement were people asking him for his opinion. However, the priest asserted that he systematically referred to the Coptic Orthodox

<sup>289</sup> Al-Shuruq. 13 September 2012. أسقف الكنيسة القبطية في "الوس أنجلز": صامعو الفيليم المسيء للرسول خرجوا عن التعاليم المسيحية. Number 1321. Year 4. Page 5.

<sup>290</sup> Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 17 September 2012. في مؤتمر "الإرسول الله" .. عضو تأسيسية الدستور: الإساءة لن تكون الأخيرة.. رئيس Doi: حركة أقباط من أجل مصر: موريس صادق يبسء لنا.. نائب رئيس هيئة قضايا الدولة: الغضبة لنصرة النبي لا تكون بالتعدى على الأمن [http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/19/%D9%81%D9%89\\_%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B1\\_%D8%A5%D9%84%D8%A7\\_%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%87\\_%D8%B9%D8%B6%D9%88\\_%D8%AA%D8%A3%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A9\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%B1\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%A1%D8%A9\\_%D9%84%D9%86\\_%D8%AA%D9%83%D9%88%D9%86\\_/790366#.Vkrh-15OfVJ](http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/19/%D9%81%D9%89_%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B1_%D8%A5%D9%84%D8%A7_%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%87_%D8%B9%D8%B6%D9%88_%D8%AA%D8%A3%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A9_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%B1_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%A1%D8%A9_%D9%84%D9%86_%D8%AA%D9%83%D9%88%D9%86_/790366#.Vkrh-15OfVJ) (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>291</sup> Copts Today. 12 September 2012. مؤامرة شيطانية .. الفيليم المسيء للرسول .. بقلم القس فيلوباتير جميل عزيز. Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=32517> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Church's official statement. Although he condemned the video as a 'suspicious work' and an 'evil conspiracy,' he initially denied the Coptic involvement in it. Instead he asserted that the producer of *The Da Vinci Code* was the same person who produced "The Innocence of Muslims." Therefore, the priest asked: 'Why it is said that the film was made by Copts in the diaspora? Why did Mūrīs Ṣādiq let himself get involved in this?' He also questioned the timing of this controversy, since the video had been on YouTube for two months. Secondly, Fīlūbātir Gamāl 'Azīz criticized several Islamic actors; he criticized the *shaykh al-Azhar* and the *muftī* for getting involved by issuing *fatwā*. Furthermore, he accused the Muslim Brotherhood and President Mursī of 'play[ing] with fire, and they will be the first ones to get burnt' as well as of using 'extremist *shuyūkh* and some extremist Christians outside of Egypt.' In addition, he also criticized a number of Islamic preachers, including Yāsir al-Burhāmī, for their recent attacks on Christianity. Thus, as the so-called Abu Islam burnt a bible on that same day, he concluded by asking 'Are we to expect a terrorist act against the church in Egypt, especially on the coming Friday?'

#### 2.3.3.4 Gamāl As'ad: Countering the Conspiracy against the Copts

For Gamāl As'ad "The Innocence of Muslims" seemed to have been an opportunity to promote his views on the 'Coptic issue.' In his conversation on 11 September 2012 with Khālīd Ṣalāḥ on al-Nahar TV, he stated that the 'film' served 'Zionist plans' to divide the Arab countries as had previously happened in Iraq, Sudan, Syria and Lebanon.<sup>292</sup> He seemed to acknowledge the involvement of Mūrīs Ṣādiq, since he explained Ṣādiq's view that Egypt was colonized by Islam and needed to be freed because Copts are persecuted. Gamāl As'ad therefore denied any connection between the 'film' and the Church. More generally, he asserted that the problems of the Christians in Egypt had nothing to do with religion but are linked to 'social relations with Muslims' meaning that the 'Islamic stream rules the majority in the street' and would therefore not be solved by the new constitution. In addition, he expressed a need for the appellation "Copts in the diaspora (*aqbāṭ al-mahjar*)" to be regulated.

Moreover, Gamāl As'ad also participated in the conference entitled "No to Stirring Strife ... Yes, to Supporting the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)" which was organized by the Association of Lawyers, alongside Bishop Mārtūrūs; a delegate of the Faculty of Law of the University of Banī Swīf, Dr. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Zāhir; and a member of the Association of

<sup>292</sup> انتفاضة المؤسسات الدينية ضد الفيلم المسيء للرسول.. "الأزهر": الداعون لإنتاجه هدفهم. Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 11 September 2012. إشعال الفتنة.. "الإفتاء": ليس من الحرية ويمس أقدس رمز للمسلمين.. و"أقباط المهجر": نتبراً من مورييس صادق وزقلمة

Lawyers, Ibrāhīm Īliyās.<sup>293</sup> For Gamāl As‘ad, this conference again offered an opportunity to dwell on his views about Copts. In particular, he explained in his speech how the West ‘played by [using] the Coptic card’ during the Crusades and during the French and British colonization. In this context, he asserted that the ‘concept of minority’ was used as a propaganda tool to bring about submission and to ‘interfere in the affairs of the state’ with the goal of ‘emptying Egypt of its Copts.’ Furthermore, he stated that both Muslims and Copts emigrate to improve their economic situation. He conceded that ‘Copts have a right to defend themselves but in a political framework and not a sectarian one.’ In addition, he called on the Muslim Brotherhood, given that they now rule Egypt, to solve the problems of the Copts quickly. With regards to “The Innocence of Muslims,” As‘ad said that it was an ‘evil’ and not an ‘offense,’ since, as he sees it, religious symbols and creeds cannot possibly be offended.

Similarly, in his telephone call to the program “*Studio al-Balad*,” he repeated his view of “The Innocence of Muslims” as part of the clash of civilizations brought about the United States by means of the issue of religious minorities in the Muslim world.<sup>294</sup> Interestingly, As‘ad considered the film to be aiming to draw *Copts* (and not Muslims) into ‘strife, but fortunately this did not work out,’ ‘we must not give this opportunity to Mūrīs Šādiq.’

### 2.3.3.5 The Coptic Lay Council of Asyūt

On 12 September 2012, *al-Sharq al-‘Arabī* mentioned the statement by the Coptic Lay Council (*al-majlis al-millī*) of Asyūt.<sup>295</sup> In addition to its condemnation of this ‘offense and contempt of religions,’ the statement referred to many aspects of the statement made by the Coptic Orthodox Church, whose position it mentioned in the declaration, in particular its disowning of the video. The Lay Council also underlined the timing of this crisis and pointed out that the “film” had been shown only once in an empty cinema.

### 2.3.3.6 Other Coptic Organizations’ Reactions

In this last section, we will describe the reactions of different Coptic organizations

<sup>293</sup> Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 13 September 2012. مطالب بشطب موريس صادق من نقابة المحامين.. مؤتمر "لا لإثارة الفتنة" يطرح وثيقة. Doi: [http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/13/%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B1\\_%D9%84%D8%A7\\_%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%AB%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%A9\\_%D9%8A%D8%B7%D8%B1%D8%AD\\_%D9%88%D8%AB%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%A9\\_%D9%84%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%AF%D9%89\\_%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B2%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A1\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%A7%D9%86/784864#.VjszJF5OfVJ](http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/13/%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B1_%D9%84%D8%A7_%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%AB%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%A9_%D9%8A%D8%B7%D8%B1%D8%AD_%D9%88%D8%AB%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%A9_%D9%84%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%AF%D9%89_%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B2%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A1_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%A7%D9%86/784864#.VjszJF5OfVJ) (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>294</sup> Copts Today. 17 September 2012. جمال أسعد : صناع "الفيلم المسيء" لم يفلحوا في توريث أقباط مصر بالفتنة. Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=33398> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>295</sup> Al-Sharq al-Arabi. 12 September 2012. ردود فعل شعبية وعربية ودولية على فيلم الاساءة للنبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أعضاء المجلس الملي بأسسوط: الفيلم المسيء للرسول ذريعة للفتنة الطائفية..

whose focuses range from charity to human rights. These organizations are the Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services, the Central Committee for National Awareness, the Coptic Association for Reconciliation and Stability, and the Movement for Civil Rights for Christians.

On 14 September 2012, *al-Ahrām* mentioned the reaction issued by the Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services (*hay'at al-qibṭiyya al-injīliyya li l-khadamāt al-ijtimā'iyya*)<sup>296</sup> whose president, Andrea Zakī, is the reverend of the Episcopal Church in Heliopolis and wrote a book *The Copts and the Revolution*.<sup>297</sup> This Organization is one of the largest charity organizations in Egypt and was founded by Samuel Ḥabīb, the late father of Rafīq Ḥabīb (Casper 2012), then vice secretary general of the Freedom and Justice Party. The organization expresses its 'total rejection of any attempt to violate the prophets and the revealed (*samāwiyya*) creeds,' it also stated that 'freedom does not mean affecting the other.'

On 12 September 2012, *al-Shurūq* published the reaction from the Central Committee for the National Awareness of Copts, in Alexandria (*al-lajna al-markaziyya li l-taw'iyya al-waṭaniyya*)<sup>298</sup> which is an organization gathering lay people from all political streams.<sup>299</sup> This organization aims to separating religious institutions from politics and to draw Copts into political activism.<sup>300</sup> The statement from this movement was particularly critical of the alleged background; i.e. the statement by the "High Authority of the Coptic State" and Mūrīs Ṣādiq, a 'thumpingly sectarian person,' of whom 'all know that he is an Israeli agent aiming to offend Copts in Egypt and outside of Egypt.' Therefore, the organization asked: 'How after this history, can the Copts in the diaspora bear [responsibility] for his acts of thumping?' However, the organization conceded that such an act was expected to 'inflare strife inside and outside of the country' in this climate. Therefore, the condemnation of the 'three Christian communities' is natural as it 'offends Christianity before it offends Islam.'

Similarly, *al-Shurūq* quoted the reaction by Imīl Dariyās, a member of the Coptic Association for Reconciliation and Stability (*jam'iyyat al-tawfīq wa l-thabāt*), a charitable organization,<sup>301</sup> also in Alexandria, emphasizing that 'Iṣmat Zuqlama and Mūrīs Ṣādiq 'do not

---

<sup>296</sup> Al-Ahram. 14 September 2012. الأزره يطالب بالالتزام بضوابط الاحتجاج والبعد عن العنف. Number 45938. Year 137. Page 6.

<sup>297</sup> Egypt Independent. 25 February 2015. Book covers Copts and the Revolution. Doi: <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/book-covers-copts-and-revolution> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>298</sup> Al-Shuruq. 12 September 2012. ثورة غضب "إسلامية مسيحية ضد الإساءة للرسول". Number 1320. Year 4. Page 5.

<sup>299</sup> Copts United. 14 April 2012. اللجنة المركزية للتوعية الوطنية بـ"الإسكندرية": هناك محاولات لجر الأقباط إلى معارك لا أساس لها من الصحة. Doi: <http://www.copts-united.com/Article.php?I=1141&A=56850> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>300</sup> Facebook. اللجنة المركزية للتوعية الوطنية لأقباط الإسكندرية. Doi: [https://ar-ar.facebook.com/mowatna/info/?tab=page\\_info](https://ar-ar.facebook.com/mowatna/info/?tab=page_info) (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>301</sup> Watani. 3 October 2015. بالصور أجرا انتخابات الجمعية العمومية بجمعية التوفيق والثبات القبطية. Doi: <http://www.wataninet.com/%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1->

represent Copts and they do not have any connection to the Coptic people,' and 'we are not responsible for any person offending the Copts, he only represents himself.'<sup>302</sup> Like the preceding statement, this argumentation takes the offenses of Copts as a starting point to irrefutably prove that Copts had no connection whatsoever to this.

Finally, the movement of Civil Rights for Christians (*ḥarakat li ḥuqūq al-madaniyya li l-masīhiyyīn*) stated that it had learnt through the media of the existence of a 'film offending Islam and his prophet and accusing the so-called Copts in the diaspora.'<sup>303</sup> It recalled that the film had already been uploaded onto YouTube in July and that in the US, Europe, and other 'developed' countries, Western governments did not interfere in cinema productions. The organization viewed the goal as seeking to draw international attention to Egypt and show that it was an 'Islamist and terrorist state and connect Egypt to terrorism and Islamophobia.' Interestingly, the fears of backlashes against Copts are made explicit here, unlike in other statements; Civil Rights for Christians rejected the 'insults and threats directed towards Christian Egyptians who did not participate, either directly or indirectly, in the production of this offending film.' This reaction has a non-sectarian tone. This organization was established in 2011 and it is a youth organization for human rights promoting a civil state. It states that there is discrimination against and marginalization of Copts.<sup>304</sup>

### **Summary of Section 2.3.3**

The content of these reactions varies greatly. Yet some Coptic organizations and actors tended to be much more critical than other actors (the churches and political parties) with regards to different issues; Egyptian society's stance on "offense," the violence in reaction to the video, and the possibility of backlashes against Christians.

### **2.3.4 Political Parties and Organizations**

This section focuses on the reactions of parties and organizations which are not the Muslim Brotherhood, the *al-da'wa al-salafiyya*, *al-gamā'a al-islāmiyya* or their political arms.

---

%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%B8%D8%A7%D8%AA/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%83%D9%86%D8%AF%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9/%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B5%D9%88%D8%B1-%D8%A3%D8%AC%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%A3%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%AE%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%85%D9%88%D9%85/365229/ (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>302</sup> Al-Shuruq. 12 September 2012. ثورة غضب "إسلامية مسيحية ضد الإساءة للرسول". Number 1320. Year 4. Page 5.

<sup>303</sup> Masress. 12 September 2012. اخر الاخبار المصرية اليوم : الحقوق المدنية للمسيحيين : نرفض الإساءة للأديان ونطالب بعمل فيلم. Doi: <http://www.masress.com/akhbartoday/36211> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>304</sup> Facebook. حركة الحقوق المدنية للمسيحيين في مصر. ([https://ar-ar.facebook.com/cecrm/info/?tab=page\\_info](https://ar-ar.facebook.com/cecrm/info/?tab=page_info) (retrieved May 23, 2016)).

Thus, while some of the parties and organizations analysed in this chapter do have an Islamic focus, some are secular.

#### 2.3.4.1 Political Parties

First we will look at the political parties. These parties are organized according to the date of their formation, that is to say, prior to or in the aftermath of revolution of 25 January 2011. This is motivated by the question of whether this had an impact. Another focus of interest is whether members of a Christian party reacted more extensively.

Overall, these parties were politically rather insignificant after the revolution when compared to the Freedom and Justice Party and the Nur Party; the New Wafd Party reached 7.6% (38 seats), the Egyptian Bloc, an alliance composed of several parties, 6.8% (34 seats) and Wasat party 2% (10 seats).<sup>305</sup>

First of all, we will look at the Wafd Party (*ḥizb al-wafd*), the Reform and Development Party (*ḥizb al-iṣlāḥ wa l-tanmya*), the Communist Party (*ḥizb al-shīyū'ī*), the Wasat Party (*ḥizb al-wasaṭ*) and at 'Amr Mūsā.

With regards to “The Innocence of Muslims,” the Wafd Party<sup>306</sup> was merely mentioned by *al-Ahrām* on 13 September 2012 as ‘insisting (*akkada*)’ that the purpose of the film was to destabilize the region and ‘harm its national interests.’<sup>307</sup>

The reaction from the Reform and Development Party’s<sup>308</sup> general secretary, Muḥammad Anwar Ismā'īl, was also brief; he ‘insisted (*akkada*)’ that ‘creative and artistic freedom does not mean offending sacred items (*muqaddasāt*) and religious creeds,’ and therefore demanded the punishment of the producers and an end to screening of this video (assuming that the film was shown in American cinemas).<sup>309</sup>

Similarly, *al-Ahrām* mentioned the Communist Party’s reaction on 14 September as ‘insisting (*akkada*) on its complete respect for religions’ and rejecting ‘religious and sectarian rivalry.’ Furthermore, the party demanded those behind the video be countered in order to ‘preserve the

---

<sup>305</sup> BBC. 21 January 2012. Egypt's Islamist parties win elections to parliament. Doi: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-16665748> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>306</sup> The Wafd Party was re-established in 1978 in the context of President Sadat’s political liberalization. However, the party was unable to recover its past success. In Carnegie Endowment. 20 September 2011. Wafd Party Doi: <http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/09/20/wafd-party/h2n2> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>307</sup> Al-Ahram. 13 September 2012. الغضب يجتاح مصر احتجاجا على الفيلم المسيء للرسول. Number 45937. Year 137. Page 5.

<sup>308</sup> The Reform and Development Party was formed in 2009 by a nephew of Anwar al-Sādāt, 'Iṣmat al-Sādāt, but it was only officially recognized in May 2011. In Al-Ahram English. 28 December 2011. Reform and Development. Doi: <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/33/104/30395/Elections-/Political-Parties/Reform-and-Development.aspx> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>309</sup> Al-Ahram. 12 September 2012. غضب شعبي من الإساءة للرسول. Number 45936. Year 137. Pages 1 and 5.



nation.’<sup>310</sup>

The Wasat Party’s<sup>311</sup> reaction consisted of an announcement on 17 September of its drafting of a law aimed at ‘forbidding incitement against religions.’<sup>312</sup>

In contrast ‘Amr Mūsā’s reaction,<sup>313</sup> which was published on 12 September in *al-Maṣrī al-Yawm*, was more elaborate.<sup>314</sup> *Al-Maṣrī al-Yawm* mentions Mūsā’s description of “The Innocence of Muslims” as ‘the production of a huge cinematographic work exposing the life of the noble Messenger as well as the civilizational and cultural message of Islam,’ ‘the attempts to offend the prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and the film offending the noble Messenger,’ ‘these behaviors’ and ‘its racist position and calls for religious fragmentation.’ Interestingly, ‘Amr Mūsā viewed Islam not only as a religion but also as a civilization. In addition, he rejected the pretense of freedom of speech justifying the production of such a ‘film,’ but instead criticized it for spreading ‘chaos, fragmentation and [...] feelings of hatred and strife,’ ‘inflaming a racist, religious and sectarian spirit’ and threatening the stability of societies. In doing so, he rejected the genuine legitimization of freedom of speech and rather underlined the negative impact of such actions. Furthermore, ‘Amr Mūsā called on ‘all intellectuals and followers of different religions to take a clear position.’ That this demand for solidarity and show of loyalty is directed implicitly towards Christians is interesting.

We will now analyse the reactions of those parties that were founded in the aftermath of the revolution, even though some of their leading members may have been active prior to 2011 and can to some extent be considered as “*filūl*,” remnants of the former regime. These parties are Ḥamdīn Ṣabbāḥī, *ḥizb miṣr al-qawmī*, the Free Egyptian Party (*ḥizb miṣr al-aḥrār*), the Egyptian Social Democratic Party (*ḥizb al-miṣrī al-dīmūqrāṭī al-ijtimā’ī*), the Democratic Front (*ḥizb al-jabha al-dīmūqrāṭīyya*), the Dustour Party (*ḥizb al-dustūr*), the National Association for Change (*al-jam’iyya al-waṭaniyya li l-tagḥūr*), and the Egypt Party (*ḥizb miṣr*).

The first to react to “The Innocence of Muslims,” even before the assault on the US

---

<sup>310</sup> Al-Ahram. 14 September 2012. استمرار ردود الفعل الغاضبة على الفيلم المسيء: الأزهر يطالب بالالتزام بضوابط الاحتجاج والبعد عن العنف. Number 45938. Year 137. Page 6.

<sup>311</sup> The Wasat Party defined itself as a dissident party of the Muslim Brotherhood and was formed in 1996 with a ‘moderate’ outlook. Yet like the Wafd Party, it has been heavily affected by internal divisions and defections. Al-Ahram Hebdo. 17-23 July 2013. 5 partis religieux, vers une dissolution? Number 983. Year 19. Page 5.

<sup>312</sup> Al-Ahram. 17 September 2012. رموز إسلامية ومسيحية تطالب بتجريم ازدراء الأديان. Number 45941. Year 137. Page 5.

<sup>313</sup> ‘Amr Mūsā was Foreign Minister, and from 2001 to 2011 secretary general of the Arab League.

<sup>314</sup> Al-Masry al-Youm. 12 September 2012. فنّة حاقدة وباغية ومريضة. عمرو موسى: من أعد «الفيلم المسيء». Doi: <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/163163> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

embassy in Cairo, was Ḥamdīn Ṣabbāhī<sup>315</sup> on his Twitter account on 10 September 2012.<sup>316</sup> In a tweet, he stated: ‘The film offending our noble Messenger is a crime,’ but conceded that Islam and Muhammad are ‘greater’ than ‘those who offend them.’ Interestingly, though, Ṣabbāhī asserted that ‘the freedom of creativity and expression are bounded to social constants and the respect of its sacred items (*muqaddasāt*),’ and thus established a difference in the concept of freedom between Egypt and the place where this video was produced, the ‘West.’

In contrast, the deputy secretary general of the *ḥizb miṣr al-qawmī*, Rafā’īl Bulūs, was the first of those in this section to mention the background of this video. Rafā’īl Bulūs reportedly rejected ‘the support of some Copts in the diaspora and the extremist priest Terry Jones for the production of the film.’<sup>317</sup> Given the ‘Egyptian Church’s condemnation of it, Bulūs pleaded against the generalisation of all Copts. All in all, he condemned “The Innocence of Muslims” as a ‘foolish act’ but mainly focussed on the negative impact it may have on Egypt; national unity is therefore a ‘red line that must not be exceeded.’ In addition, when asked his opinion by *al-Yawm al-Sābi*’ on 8 September 2012, the secretary general of *ḥizb miṣr al-qawmī*, ‘Iffat al-Sādāt, also referred to the background of this video when he ‘condemned what the Copts in the diaspora (*aqbāṭ al-mahgar*) caused to circulate.’<sup>318</sup> However, this reaction will be further analysed in Section 2.5.1 on the media coverage in Egypt, as it can be suggested that this reaction was formulated at the request of *al-Yawm al-Sābi*’. Interestingly, however, ‘Iffat al-Sādāt called on both al-Azhar and the ‘Egyptian Church’ to counter this video as the two counterparts in the Egyptian nation. To some extent this displays a nationalization of the Church and Al-Azhar.

Much more concise are the two official reactions by the Free Egyptian Party.<sup>319</sup> *Al-Ahrām* wrote on 12 September: ‘the Free Egyptians Party condemned the film’ and quoted its spokesman as saying that this kind of film represented ‘creative degeneration.’<sup>320</sup> Furthermore, the Free

---

<sup>315</sup> Ḥamdīn Ṣabbāhī, a former candidate for the presidential elections in June 2012, defined himself as ‘Nasserist, progressist, left wing, nationalist, Muslim, and patriotic.’ He founded several clubs in the 1970s which promoted the ideas of Gamāl ‘Abd al-Nāṣir and got into conflict with president Anwar al-Sādāt on the issue of economic liberalization. In *Al-Ahram Hebdo*. 18-24 July 2012. Garder le positif, oublier le négatif. Number 931. Year 18. Page 5.

<sup>316</sup> *Al-Masry al-Yawm*. 10 September 2012. « صباحي»: الفيلم المسيء للرسول «جريمة»... وحرية الإبداع مرتبطة باحترام المقدرات.

<sup>317</sup> *Al-Shuruq*. 11 September 2012. وبولس يقاضى أقباط المهجر... وحرية الإبداع مرتبطة باحترام المقدرات. الكنييسة المصرية تنتقد الفيلم المسيء الأمريكي للرسول... وحرية الإبداع مرتبطة باحترام المقدرات. Number 1319. Year 4. Page 3.

<sup>318</sup> *Al-Yawm al-Sabi*. 8 September 2012. سياسيون ينتقدون صناعات الفيلم المسيء للرسول ويهاجمون القس المتطرف تيري جونز. وزقلمة وموريس صادق.. رضوان: لن نسمح لهم بإهانة الدين.. باسل عادل: الأديان السماوية خط أحمر.. السادات: هؤلاء دعاة فتنة وتقسيم.

<sup>319</sup> The Free Egyptian Party emerged as the most powerful secular party after the Revolution. It was founded by the business man and millionaire Nagīb Sāwīris in cooperation with former MP Bāsīl ‘Ādil. This pro-business liberal party displayed a high level of financial and organizational capability and was said to have 100,000 registered members. In Carnegie Endowment. 21 September 2011. Free Egyptians Party. Doi: <http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/09/21/free-egyptians-party/h2r2> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>320</sup> *Al-Ahram*. 12 September 2012. غضب شعبي من الإساءة للرسول. Number 45936. Year 137. Pages 1 and 5.

Egyptian Party in the governorate of Kafr al-Shaykh published a statement in which it condemned ‘any offense against the religions, the sacred things (*muqaddasāt*) or religious symbols.’<sup>321</sup> As in the case of *ḥizb miṣr al-qawmī*, we will analyse another reaction by the Free Egyptian Party later on in the context of media coverage in Egypt; that is the reaction by Bāsīl ‘Ādil on 8 September 2012, on *al-Yawm al-Sābi*, in which he was presented as former MP.<sup>322</sup> The reaction from the Egyptian Social Democratic Party was similarly cautious and short;<sup>323</sup> given in *al-Ahrām* on 12 September, it described the video as ‘provoking religious feelings and stirring up strife.’<sup>324</sup> Its deputy secretary general, Farīd Zahrān, called for ‘mutual respect between all creeds and religions.’

In contrast, the Democratic Front’s reaction reflected a greater concern, as it appealed to Egyptians not to give in to ‘those who want to inflame strife between Muslims and Copts,’ defining the makers of this video as a ‘group [which] sold its conscience to the devil and call themselves “*aqbāṭ al-mahjar*” [but] they are known for their enmity to every Egyptian.’<sup>325</sup>

Both the Dustour Party (*ḥizb al-dustūr*) and the National Association for Change (*al-jam‘iyya al-waṭaniyya li l-taghīr*) were founded on the initiative of the former secretary general of the IAEA, Muḥammad al-Barādā‘ī. In 2010 he founded the National Association for Change in cooperation with other political actors to put political pressure on Ḥusnī Mubārak.<sup>326</sup> In addition, together with George Iṣḥāq, Muḥammad al-Barādā‘ī founded the Dustour Party in September 2012. By then, George Iṣḥāq was already a famous politician and activist as he had co-founded the *kifāya*/Kefaya protest movement in 2005,<sup>327</sup> which called for the non-extension of Ḥusnī Mubārak’s presidency and rejected the take-over by his son, Gamāl (Tadros 2012, 27). Now coming to the Dustour party, Muḥammad al-Barādā‘ī, was the only secular politician who condemned the violence in connection to “The Innocence of Muslims” and the murder of the US ambassador, stating: ‘This has no connection to Islam, but rather it offends ourselves and

<sup>321</sup> Al-Ahram. 14 September 2012. الأزرهر يطالب باللتزام بضوابط الاحتجاج والبعد عن العنف. Number 45938. Year 137. Page 6.

<sup>322</sup> Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 8 September 2012. سياسيون ينتقدون صناعات الفيلم المسيء للرسول ويهاجمون القس المتطرف نيري جونز. وزقلمة وموريس صادق.. رضوان: لن نسمح لهم بإهانة الدين.. باسل عادل: الأديان السماوية خط أحمر.. السادات: هؤلاء دعاة فتنة وتقسيم

<sup>323</sup> The Egyptian Social Democratic Party promotes a more socially oriented policy. It was founded in March 2011 and included amongst its most prominent members Farīd Zahrān, who was mentioned in the introduction to this chapter. In al-Ahram English. 18 November 2011. Egyptian Social Democratic Party. Doi: <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/33/104/26700/Elections-/Political-Parties/Egyptian-Social-Democratic-Party.aspx> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>324</sup> Al-Ahram. 12 September 2012. غضب شعبي من الإساءة للرسول. Number 45936. Year 137. Pages 1 and 5.

<sup>325</sup> Al-Ahram. 13 September 2012. الغضب يجتاح مصر احتجاجاً على الفيلم المسيء للرسول. Number 45937. Year 137. Page 5.

<sup>326</sup> Masress. 25 February 2010. البرادعي يعلن تأسيس «الجمعية الوطنية للتغيير».. ويعقد مؤتمراً مغلقاً مع القوى السياسية. Doi: <http://www.masress.com/almasryalyoum/85142> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>327</sup> Al-Ahram Hebdo. 17-23 October 2012. Georges Ishaq: “une fois que les Egyptiens auront appris l’exercice démocratique, les choses iront pour le mieux.” Number 944. Year 19. Page 8.

our creeds.<sup>328</sup> Furthermore, al-Barādā'ī expressed his strong condemnation of 'any offense against the noble Messenger (PBUH) and this (is) in the context of the film.' "The Innocence of Muslims" was also one of the issues discussed by George Īṣḥāq at the founding conference of the Dustour Party in Kafr al-Shaykh on 13 September.<sup>329</sup> In the name of the party, he demanded the United States punish the producers of the video and stop its spread. Implicitly referring to the potential threat this video represented for Egypt, he stated 'Egypt is undamaged in its strong Coptic and Muslim woven fabric.'<sup>330</sup> In contrast, the statement by the National Association for Change, which was published on 12 September 2012, went into more detail on the discourse of national unity. First of all, "The Innocence of Muslims" was described as 'the production of this film charged with racism, contempt of religions and the insult of sacred items (*muqaddasāt*).'<sup>331</sup> Moreover, the association regarded the video's purpose as 'stirring up strife between Egyptian Muslims and Christians [and] crushing the unity of the Egyptian national woven fabric (*nasīj*).' As a result, the organization praised the 'position of the Egyptian churches and Egyptian Christians (*masīhiyyūn*) in Egypt and outside of Egypt who condemned the film and its producers and insisted on their high esteem for Islam and the noble prophet.' This sentence suggests an expectation towards Christians to show solidarity. This is emphasized by the expression of concern for the decision of Dutch government to give political asylum to Copts, 'Copts are attached to them remaining in the country forever.' Finally, there is the reaction from the Egypt Party,<sup>332</sup> whose secretary general, 'Amrū Muḥammad Ḥilmī Khālīd, defined "The Innocence of Muslims" as an 'offense to every Muslim and to humanity as a whole.' He particularly criticized Europe for not being able to implement a 'balance between freedom of expression and the respect of sacred things (*muqaddasāt*),'<sup>333</sup> even though this video was actually produced in the United States and had no connection with Europe.

Apart from the reactions from 'Amrū Mūsā, Ḥamdīn Ṣabbāḥī, and the National Association for Change, all the reactions were rather short and limited to a condemnation of the video. Muḥammad al-Barādā'ī is the only one who condemned the violence in reaction to the

<sup>328</sup> Al-Ahram. 14 September 2012. البرادعي يدين الفيلم المسيء للرسول. Number 45938. Year 137. Page 3.

<sup>329</sup> Al-Masry al-Youm. 14 September 2012. مصر سالمة بنسجها القوي. ويؤكد: مصر سالمة بنسجها القوي. Doi: <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/163642> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>330</sup> "مصر سالمة بنسجها القوي القبطي والمسلم"

<sup>331</sup> Al-Shuruq. 13 September 2012. "الوطنية للتغيير" تطالب بمحاكمة منتجي الفيلم و تطالب مرسي بإعادة تشكيل,, تأسيسية الدستور,,. Number 1321. Year 4. Page 5.

<sup>332</sup> The Egypt Party was first founded as the "Party of Egypt's Future" by the activist and television preacher 'Amrū Muḥammad Ḥilmī Khālīd, but he resigned as secretary general of this party following the overthrow of Muḥammad Mursī in July 2013. In Amr Mohamed Helmi Khaled. Doi: <https://ar-ar.facebook.com/MisrParty> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>333</sup> Al-Ahram. 17 September 2012. رموز إسلامية ومسيحية تطالب بتجريم ازدراء الأديان. Number 45941. Year 137. Page 5.

video. Few reactions discussed the background of the video and instead employed the discourse of national unity.

#### 2.3.4.2 Organizations

This section will analyse the reactions of a few human rights organizations and of the Union of Arab Writers. These human rights organizations are the Egyptian Union for Human Rights (*munazamat al-ittihād al-miṣrī li ḥuqūq al-insān*), the National Council of Human Rights (*al-majlis al-qawmī li-ḥuqūq al-insān*), the Sawasya Center for Human Rights and Against Discrimination (*markaz sawāsiyya li-ḥuqūq al-insān wa munāhaḍa al-tamīz*), and the Arabic Network for Human Rights (*al-shabka al-‘arabiyya li-ḥuqūq al-insān*).

Firstly, with regards to the Egyptian Union of Human Rights, the media mentioned three reactions. On 12 September 2012 *al-Ahrām* quoted the organization’s president Nagīb Gabriel ‘saying’ that ‘the offense against religions or its religious symbols contradicts the teachings of the revealed religions,’ and stating that the support of ‘a number of Copts in the diaspora’ for this video showed there was a ‘big conspiracy to divide Egypt.’<sup>334</sup> Two days later, the organization repeated its condemnation but also rejected the violence which occurred during the assault on the US embassy.<sup>335</sup> Finally, a few days later, Nagīb Gabriel announced the establishment of a group of Coptic and Muslim lawyers to deal with the ‘phenomenon of attack on religions and their symbols.’<sup>336</sup>

Similarly, the director of the Arab Network of Human Rights, Gamāl ‘Ayd, tried to dissociate Christians in Egypt from this video, stating that the latter must not be made responsible for the doings of Mūrīs Ṣādiq, whom he described as the ‘author of the offending film,’ an ‘extremist and preacher of hatred,’ who ‘offends Christians before [he] offends Muslims.’<sup>337</sup> All in all, Gamāl ‘Ayd regarded the video as a ‘sermon of hate against the two elements of the united nation, whether Muslim or Christian.’

In comparison, the reaction by the National Council of Human Rights<sup>338</sup> was much shorter; it condemned the ‘showing of the film offending the noble Messenger’ and viewed it as a ‘clear

<sup>334</sup> Al-Ahram. 12 September 2012. غضب شعبي من الإساءة للرسول. Number 45936. Year 137. Pages 1 and 5.

<sup>335</sup> Al-Ahram. 14 September 2012. استمرار ردود الفعل الغاضبة على الفيلم المسيء: الأزهر يطالب بالالتزام بضوابط الاحتجاج والبعد عن العنف. Number 45938. Year 137. Page 6.

<sup>336</sup> Al-Ahram. 17 September 2012. رموز إسلامية ومسيحية تطالب بتجريم ازدراء الأديان. Number 45941. Year 137. Page 5.

<sup>337</sup> Watani. 16 September 2012. “يدينون” الفيلم المسيء للرسول. Number 2647. Year 54/Number 613. Year 12. Page 9.

<sup>338</sup> The National Council for Human Rights was founded in 2003 and is one of the most important human rights organizations in Egypt. However, it had close links to the Mubārak regime. In Jonas Rye Nielsen and Sandy Neubert. May 2009. Human rights organizations in Egypt. Arab West Report. Doi: <http://arabwestreport.info/sites/default/files/pdfs/AWRpapers/paper20.pdf> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

assault on human rights and one form of contempt of religions.<sup>339</sup>

In contrast, the Sawasiya Center<sup>340</sup> silenced the involvement of any Copt, and firstly condemned the film as an ‘attempt to create a battle (*waqī‘a*) between the two elements of the united nation,’ and, secondly, condemned the issue of the German magazine *Titanic* as an ‘attack by Western media to wilfully offend the most sacred religious symbol.’<sup>341</sup> In particular, it views its purpose at igniting Muslim hatred towards Christians in Western societies (ibid).

On 14 September 2012, the Union of Arab Writers published a statement in the name of ‘literates and writers of the Arab nation (*waṭān*) dealing with the production of a film ‘offending the Messenger Muhammad (PBUH) and spread on YouTube.’ As to its background, the union stated that it was produced by ‘some Copts in the diaspora who cooperated with the American extremist “Terry Jones.”’<sup>342</sup> On the one hand it established freedom of creed as one of the most important freedoms. But the union warned in particular against the potential threats caused by the film; ‘stir up strife between Muslims and Christians’, it “threatens world peace which is very much needed now.’

#### 2.3.4.3 The April 6 Movement and the Loyalty of Egypt’s Copts

This movement emerged in April 2008 in connection with the protests by the textile workers in Mahalla, in the Delta.<sup>343</sup> According to *Al-Ahram Hebdo*, this organization was mainly composed of young people.

The reactions of the April 6 Movement (*ḥarakat 6 abrīl*) are analysed separately because the organization seemed to speak in the name of Christians and to display a serious concern regarding potential backlashes on Christians. In connection to “The Innocence of Muslims,” there are one statement, two reactions from members, and a protest organized in Banī Swīf. On 12 September 2012, *al-Ahrām* mentioned a brief statement issued by the April 6 Movement condemning the film whose purpose is said to be to ‘stir discord (*fitna*) between the sons of the united nation.’ The statement emphasised that the video contradicted ‘the teachings of the tolerant religions.’<sup>344</sup> In addition, the newspaper quoted Angie Ḥamdī stating that the makers of this video ‘do not represent all Copts in the diaspora.’ Furthermore, *Waṭānī* reported that the April 6 Movement of Banī Swīf organized a protest in this city and used banners such as ‘Only

<sup>339</sup> Al-Ahram. 14 September 2012. استمرار ردود الفعل الغاضبة على الفيلم المسيء: الأزهر يطالب بالالتزام بضوابط الاحتجاج والبعد عن العنف. Number 45938. Year 137. Page 6.

<sup>340</sup> The Sawasiya Center was originally set up by the Muslim Brotherhood.

<sup>341</sup> Al-Ahram. 25 September 2012. ... حملة ممنهضة ضد الإسلام. و. «سواسية». Number 45949. Year 137. Page 5.

<sup>342</sup> Al-Masry al-Youm. 14 September 2012. اتحادات الكتاب العربية تدين «الفيلم المسيء» وتصفه بـ«محاولات مموجة» لإثارة الفتن. Doi: <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/163698> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>343</sup> Al-Ahram Hebdo. 11-17 January 2012. Procès en suspense. Number 904. Year 18. Page 8.

<sup>344</sup> Al-Ahram. 12 September 2012. غضب شعبي من الإساءة للرسول. Number 45936. Year 137. Pages 1 and 5.

the Messenger of God’ and ‘Beware of strife (*fitna*).’<sup>345</sup> Interestingly, according to the local coordinator of the movement, Īhāb Khāṭir, this protest aimed to ‘emphasize the patriotism of the Christian brothers in Egypt, their loyalty and love for the nation (*waṭan*).’ In addition, he demanded the makers be stripped of their citizenship and that relations with the ‘countries involved in this film for a certain amount of time’ be temporarily suspended.

## 2.4 Protests and Joint Christian-Muslim Reactions

This section comprised another range of possible reactions to “The Innocence of Muslims”; protests, conferences, and visits, both purely “Muslim” and “Christian-Muslim.” The section most clearly sheds light on the potential threat this video represented for Christians in Egypt, as was epitomized in the assault on the US embassy. It also raises, again, the question of it was who had the political lead in this whole issue? We will first look at the storming of the US embassy (2.4.1) and the issue of Coptic participation (2.4.1.1), then we will analyse the protests (2.4.2), the conferences (2.4.3), and visits by Christian actors to Islamic leaders (2.4.4). Finally, the section will analyse the statement of the *bayt al- ‘ā’ila* as another means of joint Christian-Muslim reaction (2.4.5).

### 2.4.1 The Storming of the US Embassy

The attempted storming of the US embassy in Cairo was one of the most spectacular moments of the controversy surrounding “The Innocence of Muslims” and symbolized the “Muslim anger.” All in all, the protest at the US embassy on the evening of 11 September 2012 shed light on a deeper dilemma: the claim to defend Islam and to be a nation encompassing all its “elements,” i.e. the question of the involvement of the Copts.

Following the thwarted assault, *The Guardian* asserted that the protest was ‘largely dominated by ultraconservative Islamists.’<sup>346</sup> A closer look, however, revealed a more diverse composition. Salafi movements indeed announced their organization of or participation in protests on 11 September 2012 at the US embassy. Wisām ‘Abd al-Warāth, the former president of the TV channel *al-ḥikma* and a famous TV Islamist preacher, reported that the Nur Party and

---

<sup>345</sup> Watani. 14 September 2012. ابريل بني سويف تؤكد علي وطنية المسيحيين وإخلاصهم وحبهم للوطن. Doi: <http://www.wataninet.com/%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%B8%D8%A7%D8%AA/6-%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%84-%D8%A8%D9%86%D9%8A-%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%8A%D9%81-%D8%AA%D8%A4%D9%83%D8%AF-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%8A-%D9%88%D8%B7%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%AD%D9%8A%D9%8A/142641/> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>346</sup> The Guardian. 11 September 2012. Protests in Cairo and Benghazi over American film. Doi: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/sep/11/egypt-protest> (retrieved May 23, 2016). This source is quoted in this section as “Guardian 11 September 2012.”

*al-da‘wa al-salafiyya* announced their joining of the Coalition of the Voice of Wisdom (*i‘tilāf ṣawt al-ḥikma*) in its protest. This Coalition was set up by Wisām ‘Abd al-Warāth in the wake of the “The Innocence of Muslims”<sup>347</sup>. On 11 September, however, organizations such as “the Revolutionary Front for the Protection of the Revolution” (*al-jabha al-thawriyya li-ḥimāyat al-thawra*), the “General Coalition for the Revolution of 25 January” (*al-i‘tilāf al-‘āmm li-thawrat 25 yanāyir*), the “Rally for the Arab Spring” (*tagammu‘ al-rabī‘ al-‘arabī*) and some Coptic organizations also participated in the protest.<sup>348</sup> In addition to these political movements, the soccer clubs Zamalek and Ahli joined the protest,<sup>349</sup> and the former are said to have worn t-shirts with ‘By my father and my mother, oh Messenger of God’ written on them.<sup>350</sup> The soccer clubs’ prestige improved during the Revolution of 25 January 2011, as they fiercely opposed the regime of Ḥusnī Mubārak, especially during the so-called battle of the camel.<sup>351</sup> In the aftermath of the revolution, however, their reputation was tarnished by reports of violence, such as acts of sabotage against infrastructure, and especially by the violent clash in Port Said at a match between the Ahli and Masri soccer clubs which caused the death of more than seventy people.

All in all, *Waṭanī* reported that less than 3,000 people participated, amongst them some “Christians” and members of the revolutionary youth.<sup>352</sup> Similarly, *al-Shurūq* counted ‘several thousand’ protesters from different Islamist streams (*al-Shuruq* 12 September 2012). Yet, Cornelis Hulsman, the director of the *Arab West Foundation*, noticed that this number was small compared to the turnouts at the revolution.<sup>353</sup>

Both the banners carried during the protests and the slogans chanted revealed a mainly

<sup>347</sup> YouTube. 9 September 2012. مناظرة وسام عبد الوارث وجمال أسعد الفيلم المسيء للرسول. Doi: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sqhRj3ArQRQ> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>348</sup> Copts Today. 11 September 2012. اقباط وسلفيين في مظاهرة واحدة امام السفارة الامريكية احتجاجا علي الفيلم المسئ للرسول. Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=32345> (retrieved March 3, 2014).

The debate among Coptic organizations over whether they should participate in this protest at the US embassy will be discussed, further below in Section 2.4.1.2.

<sup>349</sup> *Al-Shuruq*. 12 September 2012. السفارة الأمريكية تحت الحصار. Number 1320. Year 4. Page 1. This source is quoted in this section as “*al-Shuruq* 12 September 2012.”

<sup>350</sup> فيدك أبي وأمي يا رسول الله،

*Al-Masry al-Youm*. 16 September 2012. «نصرة الرسول» تعبيرًا عن غضبهم تجاه الفيلم المسيء. Doi: <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/164148> (retrieved March 3, 2014).

<sup>351</sup> *Al-Ahram Hebdo*. 13-19 March 2012. Ultras: la révolution dans la peau. Number 965. Year 19. Pages 18-19.

<sup>352</sup> *Watani*. 11 September 2012. تظاهرات أمام السفارة الامريكية لإدانة الفيلم المسيء للرسول. Doi:

<http://www.wataninet.com/%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D9%85%D8%AA%D9%86%D9%88%D8%B9%D8%A9/%D8%AA%D8%B8%D8%A7%D9%87%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A3%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%83%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86/142794/> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

This source is quoted in this section as “*Watani* 11 September 2012.”

<sup>353</sup> *Arab West Report*. 12 September 2012. Hatemongers, deliberately inciting hate and misinformed politicians.



Islamist outlook. With regards to the banners, *al-Shurūq* mentioned the ‘black banner’ (al-Shuruq 12 September 2012), that is, the banner sometimes referred to as the “Al-Qaida banner.” Similarly, the slogans showed an evident Islamist influence, even a jihadi influence, as *al-Shurūq* reported on the slogan ‘We are all Osama bin Laden’ (al-Shuruq 12 September 2012). This slogan was also reported by *Waṭanī*, which added ‘We are all Abu Yahya al-Libī’ (Watani 11 September 2012).<sup>354</sup> Similarly, the slogans also revealed a strong opposition to the United States: ‘Oh damned America, we don’t want your aid,’<sup>355</sup> and ‘We will crush America.’<sup>356</sup> In contrast, some slogans displayed a more neutral defence of Islam, in particular of Muhammad, such as the creed, ‘By my spirit and my blood, I am at your service, Messenger of God’ (Watani 11 September 2012), ‘At your service, Messenger of God’ and ‘My soul is at your service, oh Messenger of God’ (al-Safir 12 September 2012). In addition, a number of slogans also targeted the producers of “The Innocence of Muslims,” such as Mūrīs Ṣādiq; ‘Oh Mūrīs Ṣādiq, you coward and agent of America’<sup>357</sup> and ‘You are a useless dog’ (al-Safir 12 September 2012).<sup>358</sup> Moreover, *al-Safīr* reported that on some banners, the producers of the video were depicted as pigs. As a result, this means that for the protesters at the US embassy it was clear who was involved in the production of this video; they did mistake Mūrīs Ṣādiq for the producer of the video but rightly did not mention “Sam Bacile” or at least a “Jewish/Zionist/Israeli involvement,” as the Western media later suggested for a brief time. In addition, some banners emphasized Christian-Muslim coexistence in colloquial Arabic; such as ‘Muslims and Christians say “no” to Americans and to offending Islam’ (Watani 11 September 2012)<sup>359</sup> and “Muslim and Christian are strongly united.”<sup>360</sup> Interestingly, it may be suggested that those banners dealing with the Egyptian context – whether criticizing Mūrīs Ṣādiq or underlining the Christian-Muslim unity – were written in colloquial Arabic, whereas the banners or slogans referring to Islam in a broad sense – be it to the prophet or even to Salafi-Jihadi support – were conveyed in Modern Standard Arabic. So far, the slogans and protests suggest a certain tension between a broad Egyptian protest and a specific Islamist, even radical and violent Islamist protest.

<sup>354</sup> Abu Yahya al-Liby was the Al-Qaida number 2 and was killed by American drones in Pakistan in June 2012

<sup>355</sup> “يا أمريكا يا ملعونة مش عايزين المعونة”

<sup>356</sup> “بالطول والعرض حنجيب أمريكا الأرض” . Anti-Americanism: “تسقط يا أمريكا” . in Al-Safir. 12 September 2012. القاهرة  
 فيلم يفجر غضباً اقتحام السفارة الأمريكية Number 12281. Year 39. Pages 1 and 17. This source is quoted in this section as “al-Safir 12 September 2012.”

<sup>357</sup> “يا موريس يا جبان يا عميل الأمريكان”

<sup>358</sup> “انتو كلاب و لا ليكم لزمة”

<sup>359</sup> “مسلمين ومسيحيين بتقول لا للأمريكان ولا للإساءة للإسلام”

<sup>360</sup> “مسلم مسيحي ايد واحدة”

وصول مسيرة قبطية الي السفارة الامريكية وهتافات. مسلم مسيحي ايد واحدة . Doi .  
 Copts Today. 12 September 2012. <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=32628> (retrieved March 3, 2015).

The analysis will now focus on the course of the protest which resulted in worldwide headlines concerning a violent assault on the US embassy. Again, the British *Guardian* underlined the violence in connection to this protest and reported that “Islamists” in particular climbed the walls of the embassy and replaced the US flag with the so-called Islamist flag:

Egyptian protesters, largely ultraconservative Islamists, climbed the walls of the US embassy in Cairo on Tuesday, made their way into the courtyard and brought down the flag, replacing it with a black flag with an Islamic inscription to protest a film attacking Islam's prophet, Muhammad (Guardian 11 September 2012).

In contrast, some media and witnesses reported a more balanced view. For instance, Jayson Casper, a researcher at the *Arab West Foundation*, witnessed the protest on 11 September 2012 and reported that it was in fact soccer hooligans who attempted to climb the walls of the embassy and that the police seemed to rely on the Salafī protesters to de-escalate the situation (Casper 2012b). Similarly, the Lebanese newspaper *al-Safīr* reported that the police negotiated with the protesters who eventually descended from the US embassy (al-Safīr 12 September 2012). However, when recalling these events in January 2015, Jayson Casper expressed his impression that the protest seemed to be to some extent manufactured and actually lacked anger, which was mainly directed at “Copts in the diaspora” (Casper 17 January 2015).

The following day, on 12 September 2012, some leading organizers of the protest, Wisām ‘Abd al-Warāth, Mamdūḥ Ismā’īl al-Muḥāmī, and Ayman Amīr published a statement in which they apologized for the violence of the protest, especially the attempted assault on the US embassy.<sup>361</sup> However, they pledged to repeat this protest by a *milyūniyya* (a large popular gathering) on Thursday 13 September 2012 if their demands were not met; i.e. an apology by the US Administration and the end to the showing of the ‘film.’ Interestingly, strong expectations and demands were again, as in similar reactions, directed at the Egyptian presidency itself, demanding that Muḥammad Mursī take a stance that ‘preserves the identity and the status of Egypt.’ Equally, the statement expressed its concerns for at the ‘silence’ of the presidency. Yet, the statement also showed the making of an effort to define itself and the protest as a broad and genuine Egyptian protest against ‘this war on Islam [which] has drawn the whole Egyptian people onto the street’ against the ‘plan of the Copts in the diaspora and US secret services.’ Furthermore, the signatories thanked ‘the Copts who participated and reject the offense,’ without specifying who these “Copts” were. Thus, this statement differentiated between “good” and “bad” Copts, i.e. between those who expressed their solidarity with

---

<sup>361</sup> Copts Today. 12 September 2012. بيان من المتظاهرين أمام السفارة الأمريكية يشكر الأقباط المشاركين في وقفة ضد الفيلم المسيء. al-Balad. Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=32501> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Muslims and live in Egypt and those, outside of Egypt, who allegedly supported the production of this video. This statement also showed the need for Copts to support this protest, and especially for Copts to be visible in this protest via banners, for instance, because their presence backed the legitimacy of this protest. The images of this protest and the assault on the US embassy increased the fears of backlashes against Copts.

The heavy clashes in the area of the US embassy in Cairo on subsequent days showed how much the presidential authority was questioned. 224 demonstrators and 24 policemen were injured; 24 people were imprisoned during these clashes.<sup>362</sup> The clashes continued on Friday, 14 September and through the night of 15 September to 16 September.<sup>363</sup> On 16 September, the security forces reportedly regained control over Tahrir Square.<sup>364</sup>

#### **2.4.1.2 The Issue of Coptic Participation in the Protest on 11 September**

As several organizations announced their participation in a protest at the US embassy in Cairo in the evening of 11 September 2012, a discussion broke out amongst Coptic organizations over whether they should participate in it or not. Activist Ibrahim Louis, the Christian Brothers, and Hānī al-Gazirī announced that they would not participate, while the Maspero Youth Union and the Coalition of Egypt's Copts reportedly did participate.<sup>365</sup> The latter's secretary general, Fādī Yūsif, justified the participation through the need to counter the video with a 'true national unity between the sons of the Egyptian people, Muslims and Christians,' otherwise it would divide the two religions (ibid). In contrast, the organizations who did not participate put forward the question of them not being prepared (Hānī al-Gazirī) and the loose organization of this protest (Christian Brothers) (ibid). The Christian Brothers referred to the churches' and the movement's condemnation and therefore did not see a need for Copts 'to go out and protest on the streets to dissociate' themselves from something they were accordingly not responsible for (ibid).

---

<sup>362</sup> Al-Ahram. 14 September 2012. منات المصابين في حرب شوارع بمحيط السفارة الأمريكية. Number 45938. Year 137. Page 3.

<sup>363</sup> Al-Ahram. 16 September 2012. هدوء حذر يسود محيط السفارة بعد اشتباكات عنيفة. Number 45940. Year 137. Page 5.

<sup>364</sup> Al-Ahram. 16 September 2012. قوات الأمن تحكم سيطرتها على ميدان التحرير. Number 45940. Year 137. Page 5.

<sup>365</sup> Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 11 September 2012. "الإخوان المسيحيين": لسنا مطالبين بالتظاهر لتبرئة ساحتنا.. و"أقباط مصر وماسبيرو": نرفض شق الصف ونطالب بمحاكمة دولية للمسيبيين  
[http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/11/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%AA\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%A8%D8%B7%D9%8A%D8%A9\\_%D8%AA%D9%86%D9%82%D8%B3%D9%85\\_%D8%A8%D8%B4%D8%A3%D9%86\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A9\\_%D9%81%D9%89\\_%D8%AA%D8%B8%D8%A7%D9%87%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%89%D8%A1/782863#.Vjx7ZV5OfVJ](http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/11/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%AA_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%A8%D8%B7%D9%8A%D8%A9_%D8%AA%D9%86%D9%82%D8%B3%D9%85_%D8%A8%D8%B4%D8%A3%D9%86_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A9_%D9%81%D9%89_%D8%AA%D8%B8%D8%A7%D9%87%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%89%D8%A1/782863#.Vjx7ZV5OfVJ) (retrieved May 23, 2016).

### 2.4.2 The Protests of Friday 14 September and Friday 21 September

This section will focus on protests against “The Innocence of Muslims” on Friday 14 and Friday 21, 2011. Firstly, we will look at the mainly “Muslim” protests and secondly at joint “Christian-Muslim” protests. In both cases, one key question concerns the political lead in these protests.

With regards to the Muslim protests on Friday 14 and Friday 21, 2011 (where Christian participation was not mentioned), the overall question concerns the political lead, if any. In this regard, the violent clashes in the area of the US embassy in Cairo significantly impacted the reaction of the ruling Muslim Brotherhood. On 13 September, the organization called for a peaceful protest in all of Egypt for Friday 14, 2011, after the Friday prayer.<sup>366</sup> However, because of the violent clashes, the Muslim Brotherhood decided that its participation in Tahrir Square would be merely symbolic.<sup>367</sup> In other governorates, the movement or its political arm, the Freedom and Justice Party, did lead some protests or participated in them such as in Luxor,<sup>368</sup> in al-Qaliyūbiyya Governorate, and in Maṭrūḥ.<sup>369</sup> In some other cases, the Muslim Brotherhood marched in cooperation with other political forces; in Suez reportedly with ‘Salafi movements’ and ‘liberals,’ in Damiette (Dumyāt) and al-Fayyūm with *al-da‘wa al-salafiyya* and other political forces (al-Ahram 15 September 2012).

In contrast, in Alexandria, *al-gamā‘a al-islāmiyya* and its political arm, the Building and Development Party, seemed to have the lead, as on 14 September *al-Ahrām* announced that they would organize a conference in Alexandria (al-Ahram 14 September 2012). On Friday 14, thousands reportedly participated in a protest where a tribune was erected for the Muslim Brotherhood, the Freedom and Justice Party, *al-gamā‘a al-islāmiyya*, and its political arm, the Building and Development Party.<sup>370</sup> Leading members of *al-gamā‘a al-islāmiyya* reportedly delivered a speech or participated, including Ṭāriq al-Zumur, ‘Iṣām ‘Abd al-Mājid, Maḥmūd Muḥḥib Allah, and Ṣafwat ‘Abd al-Ghanī (ibid). Similarly, *al-gamā‘a al-islāmiyya* participated in protests in Southern Sinai on 14 September (al-Ahram 15 September 2012) and 21

---

<sup>366</sup> Al-Ahram. 14 September 2012. استمرار ردود الفعل الغاضبة على الفيلم المسيء: الأزهر يطالب باللتزام بضوابط الاحتجاج والبعد عن العنف. Number 45938. Year 137. Page 6.

<sup>367</sup> Al-Ahram Hebdo. 19-25 September 2012. Morsi ne sait pas sur quel pied danser. Number 940. Year 18. Page 6.

<sup>368</sup> Al-Ahram. 14 September 2012. استمرار ردود الفعل الغاضبة على الفيلم المسيء: الأزهر يطالب باللتزام بضوابط الاحتجاج والبعد عن العنف. Number 45938. Year 137. Page 6. This source is quoted in this section as “al-Ahram 14 September 2012.”

<sup>369</sup> Al-Ahram. 15 September 2012. ومسيرات عارمة لنصرة الرسول في المحافظات. Number 45939. Year 137. Page 4. This source is quoted in this section as “al-Ahram 15 September 2012.”

<sup>370</sup> Al-Ahram. 15 September 2012. مظاهرة حاشدة أمام مسجد القائد ابراهيم والمحلاوي يطالب بالقصاص. Number 45939. Year 137. Page 4.

September.<sup>371</sup>

In addition, protests took place in other areas with no leading political force mentioned; as in Alexandria, where Ultras participated and an American flag was burnt,<sup>372</sup> in al-Baḥayra, in Northern Sinai, in the Red Sea Governorate (al-Ahram 15 September 2012) and on Friday 21 in Cairo and in Alexandria (al-Ahram 22 September 2012). In a very few instances, secular parties participated, like in Dumiyāt, where members of the Wafd Party formed a human chain.<sup>373</sup> All in all, according to the media, the participation ranged from a few hundred in the Red Sea Governorate, in Suez, in Southern Sinai on Friday 14 (al-Ahram 15 September 2012) and Friday 21 (al-Ahram 22 September 2012) to thousands in Dumiyāt (al-Ahram 15 September 2012). This number is small.

This overview shows the absence of a leading political force in Muslim protests, as the Muslim Brotherhood seemed to retreat and *al-gamā'a al-islāmiyya* seemed to take the lead.

In addition to these protests, a number of joint Christian-Muslim protests also took place in reaction to “The Innocence of Muslims.” Therefore, we will first look at the protests that took place in Cairo and its surrounding area and then at those that took place in the governorates.

The first noteworthy event was the reported establishment of a mobile hospital in the Evangelical church of Qaṣr al-Dawbāra near Tahrir Square to help the injured.<sup>374</sup> Besides this, the protests in Cairo seemed to have been organized by both lay Christians as well as high and lower-ranking Christian clerics. For instance, on 12 September 2012, *Copts Today* reported that a certain Imīl Wagiyya announced the organization of a protest starting at St Mark’s Cathedral in al-‘Abāssiya neighbourhood (Cairo).<sup>375</sup> Through this protest, Imīl Wagiyya expressed his will to emphasize the statement of the Coptic Orthodox Church and the fact that ‘Copts in the diaspora (*aqbāṭ al-mahjar*)’ harmed Copts in Egypt with their behavior. Thus, he concluded: ‘It is necessary to hold fast to the Christian principles of love, tolerance, and coexistence with the Muslim Brothers and not to hurt their feelings.’<sup>376</sup> In contrast, the protest that started at the mosque Muṣṭafā Muḥmūd in al-Muhandisīn on Friday 14 September 2012 was joined by nearly

---

<sup>371</sup> Al-Ahram. 22 September 2012. (تصاعد الغضب الشعبي تجاه الرسوم المسيئة للرسول (ص). Number 45946. Year 137. Page 4. This source is quoted in this section as “al-Ahram 22 September 2012.”

<sup>372</sup> Al-Masry al-Youm. 14 September 2012. «الفيلم المسيء» بالقسطنطينية بالإسكندرية احتجاجاً على «الفيلم المسيء» Doi: <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/163708> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>373</sup> Al-Masry al-Youm. 15 September 2012. «الفيلم المسيء» بأنحاء مصر.. ومحافظ المنيا أبرز تواصل الاحتجاجات ضد «الفيلم المسيء» Doi: <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/163947> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>374</sup> Al-Shuruq. 14 September 2012. تواصل الاشتباكات والعنف بين المتظاهرين وقوات الأمن بمحيط السفارة الأمريكية. Number 1322. Year 4. Page 5.

<sup>375</sup> Copts Today. 12 September 2012. وقفة احتجاجية للأقباط أمام الكاتدرائية لإدانة الفيلم المسيء للرسول .. الجمعة. El-Fagr. Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=32596> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>376</sup> “ضرورة التمسك بمبادئ المسيحية بالمحبة والتسامح والتعايش المشترك مع الإشقاء المسلمين وعدم إيذاء مشاعرهم.”

one hundred Coptic demonstrators who were sent by the Bishop of Gizeh, Theodosius.<sup>377</sup> At this protest, banners were raised: ‘Muslims and Christians are strongly united,’<sup>378</sup> and ‘We reject the offense against the Messenger.’ As Imīl Wagiyya mentioned above, *al-Shurūq* referred to the priest Blīāns’s criticism of “Copts in the diaspora,” albeit implicitly, stating that those who produced this film did not read the Gospel and did not know the ‘true Christian creed.’ In addition, Bishop Theodosius sent three delegations to the same or another protest organized by the Muslim Brotherhood; Salafi youths and members of *al-gamā‘a al-islāmiyya* also participated in this protest.<sup>379</sup> In connection to this protest, the priest Slwāns Dhikrī<sup>380</sup> told *al-Maṣrī al-Yawm* of his condemnation of ‘some Copts in the diaspora’ whose actions contradicted ‘true Christianity.’ In addition, he underlined that ‘Christians belong with all their rights to this country.’ In this protest the banners emphasized again national unity; ‘Muslims and Christians are one hand,’<sup>381</sup> and ‘What happened supported Coptic-Muslim relations and not the other way round.’ So far, the protests in Cairo more clearly and openly criticized the background of the video as the action of a few ‘Copts in the diaspora.’ These few examples seem to reflect a stronger urgency to dissociate Christians in Egypt from those outside. This sense can be supported by the condemnation by the priest of the church Mār Mīnā in Imbābā, Father Abānūb Gād Karīm, of ‘any behavior, book, film that offends the Islamic religion.’<sup>382</sup> Furthermore, he expressed his solidarity with Muslims but also insisted on the need for the protests to be peaceful. However, this condemnation may have also been motivated by the fact that the church Mār Mīnā in Imbābā was one of the churches that were attacked following the Arab Spring.<sup>383</sup> Ironically, this assault at the hands of the Salafists took place without an attempt by the police to stop it.<sup>384</sup>

In the governorates, joint Christian-Muslim protests took place in Port Said, in Banī Swīf, in Suez, in Mīnyā, in Asyūt, and in Wādī al-Gadīd. In Port Said, the secretary of Bishop Tādrus called on Copts to participate in the protests on Friday 14 September 2012.<sup>385</sup> Subsequently, the church of Port Said sent a high-ranking delegation of monks and clerics to a

<sup>377</sup> Al-Shuruq. 15 September 2012. مسلمون وأقباط “إيد واحدة” في مظاهرات محدودة أمام مساجد القاهرة. Number 1323. Year 4. Page 5.

<sup>378</sup> “مسلم ومسيحي إيد واحدة”.

<sup>379</sup> Al-Masry al-Youm. 14 September 2012. «مصطفى محمود. أمام «الفيلم المسيء» وقفتهم رفضًا لـ«الفيلم المسيء»» Doi: <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/163696> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>380</sup> “سلوانس ذكري”.

<sup>381</sup> “مسلم ومسيحي إيد واحدة”.

<sup>382</sup> Watani. 16 September 2012. «المصريون “يدينون” الفيلم المسيء للرسول». Number 2647. Year 54/Number 613. Year 12. Page 9.

<sup>383</sup> Watani. 15 May 2011. Surrounded and attacked. Number 2577. Year 53/Number 543. Year 11. Page 3.

<sup>384</sup> See Introduction.

<sup>385</sup> Copts Today. 13 September. قساوسة بورسعيد يدعون لوقف احتجاجية غدا لرفض الفيلم المسيء. Moheet Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=32752> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

protest organized by the Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>386</sup> In Banī Swīf, two different protests took place. On 16 September 2012, *Waṭanī* reported that five priests and a number of Copts participated in a protest.<sup>387</sup> In this same edition, *Waṭanī* also reported that the April 6 Movement of Banī Swīf would stage a protest to emphasize the ‘loyalty and connection of Copts to Egypt.’<sup>388</sup> Similarly, in Suez, the Maspero Youth Union staged a protest, but underlined national unity; ‘the national Egyptian woven fabric is Muslim and Christian,’ ‘I am an Egyptian against strife.’ In the case of Minyā, *al-Shurūq al-Jadīd* merely reported on the call by ‘Coptic activists’ and the diocese to participate in a protest on Friday 14.<sup>389</sup> At this protest, the “Coalition of the Youth of January 25” (*i’tilāf shabāb 25 yanāyir*), the “Free Egyptian Youth” (*al-shabāb al-miṣrī al-ḥurr*), the “We are all Free” movement (*ḥarakat kullunā aḥrār*), as well as political parties like the Freedom and Justice Party, the Wafd Party, the Nur Party, the Salafī *ḥizb al-aṣāla* (Party of Authenticity), and the Building and Development Party reportedly participated.<sup>390</sup> Perhaps in this connection, *al-Maṣrī al-Yawm* reported that roughly 500 people and 100 Copts (as if Copts were not people) marched from the diocese see on to the mosque with banners ‘No to the offense of Muslim brothers.’<sup>391</sup> Similarly, in Asyūṭ there were reports of two joint Christian-Muslim actions. In the first case, *al-Maṣrī al-Yawm* reported that on Saturday, 15 September 2012, thousands of Muslims and Copts participated in a conference in the city of al-Qawṣiyya in the Asyūṭ Governorate.<sup>392</sup> A Coptic lawyer told the newspaper that he would lodge a complaint against Mūrīs Ṣādiq (*ibid*). Lastly, hundreds are said to have protested in Wādī al-Gadīd and the local Muslim Brotherhood, the Free Egyptian Party, and the church of Virgin issued a statement (*ibid*).

#### **Summary of Section 2.4.2**

These protests were mostly the result of what the media were willing to report. Overall, they showed that joint Christian-Muslim protests were more strongly dominated by the Muslim Brotherhood than merely “Muslim” protests. Some dioceses that did not react officially sent

<sup>386</sup> Al-Nahar Egypt. 14 September 2012. *بالصور.. بورسعيد تستنكر إساءة الإسلام ومسيرات بمشاركة الكنيسة*. Doi: <http://www.alnaharegypt.com/t~86089> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>387</sup> Watani. 16 September 2012. *مشاركة قبطية واسعة في مظاهرات رفض الفيلم المسيء للرسول بالمحافظة*. Number 2647. Year 54/Number 613. Year 12. Page 1.

<sup>388</sup> Watani. 16 September 2012. *ابريل بني سويف تؤكد علي وطنية المسيحيين وإخلاصهم وحبهم للوطن*.

<sup>389</sup> Arab West Report. 17 September 2012. *أسقف بني مزار يعتذر للمسلمين عن الإساءة مؤكدا مخالفتها لسماحة المسيحية*. Al-Shuruq al-Jadid. Doi: <http://www.arabwestreport.info/ar/lbn-2012/lbw-37/73-sqf-bn-mzr-ytdhr-llmslmyn-n-ls-mwkd-mkhlft-h-lsmh-lmsyhy> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>390</sup> Al-Shuruq al-Jadid. 17 September 2012. *أسقف بني مزار يعتذر للمسلمين عن الإساءة مؤكدا مخالفتها لسماحة المسيحية*.

<sup>391</sup> Al-Masry al-Youm. 15 September 2012. *تواصل الاحتجاجات ضد «الفيلم المسيء» بأثناء مصر.. ومحافظ المنيا أبرز المتظاهرين*.

<sup>392</sup> Al-Masry al-Youm. 15 September 2012. *تواصل الاحتجاجات ضد «الفيلم المسيء» بأثناء مصر.. ومحافظ المنيا أبرز المتظاهرين*.

delegations to these protests; the dioceses of Gizeh and al-Minyā. The reactions, the banners and slogans referred more strongly to the discourse of national unity and to dissociation by denouncing the diaspora.

### 2.4.3 Conferences

Another means of joint Christian-Muslim reactions were conferences. This section will first focus on the conferences that have already been mentioned, then on other joint conferences, and finally on conferences with only “Muslim” participants.

In Chapter 2.1.1, we already mentioned six Coptic Orthodox Bishops who expressed their reactions to “The Innocence of Muslims” in conferences. These bishops were: Bishop Mārtīrūs (general bishop and delegate of the Coptic Orthodox Church), Bishop Kīrillus (Naj‘ Ḥammadī), Bishop Būlā (Ṭanṭa), Bishop Murquṣ (Shubrā al-Khayma, a northern suburb of Cairo) and Bishop Bisantī (Hilwān wa l-Ma‘ṣara). On 13 September 2012, Bishop Mārtīrūs participated in a conference entitled “No to Stirring Strife ... Yes to Supporting the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)” which was organized by the professional Association of Lawyers.<sup>393</sup> Besides him, several other personalities also participated, including the Coptic intellectual Gamāl As‘ad<sup>394</sup> as well as a delegate of the Faculty of Law of the University of Banī Swīf, Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Zāhir, and a member of the Association of Lawyers, Ībrāhīm Īlyās. Under the leadership of Bishop Kīrillus, the diocese of Naj‘ Ḥammadī organized its eleventh festival.<sup>395</sup> Besides the bishop, a member of the Christian-Muslim *bayt al-‘ā’ila* in Naj‘ Ḥammadī, *shaykh* ‘Abd al-Ghifār ‘Abd al-‘Āl, gave a speech in which he ascribed the background of “The Innocence of Muslims” to the “Zionists,” since the video displayed ‘Zionist goals’ and reflected the alleged plan of the “Zionists” in *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*: ‘We are the lords of the world and we [will] destroy it.’ In so speaking, the representative of the *bayt al-‘ā’ila* made a concerted effort to divert the anger of the Muslims from the Copts to an outside enemy, the “Zionists.” As already mentioned, Bishop Būlā made a similar effort to divert attention in the speech he gave at the conference he organized in Ṭanṭa. The governor of the Gharbiyya Governorate, Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Qādir, participated in this conference as did members of the Freedom and Justice Party and several other political actors.<sup>396</sup> In this context, the governor of the governorate made a speech, in which he considered the makers of the video

<sup>393</sup> Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 13 September 2012. مطالب بشطب موريس صادق من نقابة المحامين.. مؤتمر "لا لإثارة الفتنة" يطرح وثيقة. للتصدى لآزدراء الأديان

<sup>394</sup> See Chapter 2, 4. Protests and Joint Christian-Muslim Reactions; and 2.3.2. Coptic Organizations

<sup>395</sup> Copts United. 14 September 2012. بالفيديو والصور الانبا كيرلس اسقف نجع حمادى : لا لآزدراء الأديان ... واحترسوا من التعاليم الصغيرة.

<sup>396</sup> Gate al-Ahram. 15 September 2012. الأنبا بولا: الفيلم المسيء فكرة شيطانية صهيونية لضرب الأديان.. وبطله عميلا للموساد.



‘evils of the people and the heretics of the time,’<sup>397</sup> and an attack on human rights and international agreement. Surprisingly, he went on to assert that the ‘freedom of a person is bound to the general conditions of ethics and rights.’ Similarly, members of the Freedom and Justice Party participated in the same conference as Bishop Murquṣ, Shubrā al-Khayma, on 15 September 2012 in Cairo. In addition to representatives of the political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood, priests from a Catholic Church also participated. This conference was organized by the Public Coptic Association (*hay’at al-aqbā’ al-‘āmm*) and the newspaper *al-Muhāshīr* on Saturday 15.<sup>398</sup> The president of the Public Coptic Association, Sharīf Dūs, indicated that “The Innocence of Muslims” was produced six months ago and shown only once.<sup>399</sup> Sharīf Dūs insisted on stripping the producers of their nationality because people should not rely on Western justice in a place where, as he saw it, freedom of speech allowed offense and religion had become a private matter after World War Two. In addition, the Coptic intellectual and then advisor to President Muḥammad Mursī, Samīr Murquṣ, also gave a speech, but he did not mention the video and instead spoke of the crisis of the Coptic middle class. Lastly, the sixth bishop to participate in a joint Christian-Muslim conference was Bishop Bisantī of Hilwān wa l-Maṣ’ara and was at the conference “Together for the Support of the Messenger.”<sup>400</sup> Aside from Bishop Bisantī, high-ranking actors such as the Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood, Muḥammad Badī’; the Islamic intellectual and Muslim Brother, Muḥammad ‘Imāra; the vice-minister of Islamic endowments, Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Qādir, and the priest Father Tādrus Ḥabīb participated in this conference.<sup>401</sup> According to Father Tādrus Ḥabīb, the video aimed to ignite civil war in Egypt and hinder its democratization.

Three other conferences that have not been mentioned so far are the meeting between al-Azhar and the Coptic Orthodox Church on 24 September 2012; the conference organized under the leadership of the Building and Development party on 18 September “Muslims and Copts ... Together Against Offending the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (PBUH)”; and the conference “Only the Messenger of God” on 19 September in Zamalek, in Cairo.

On 24 September, representatives of Al-Azhar and a delegation of the Coptic Orthodox Church led by Bishop Bākhūmyūs agreed on the need for the United Nations to issue a law criminalizing the offense against ‘revealed’ religions and agreed on the current state of the draft

<sup>397</sup> “شياطين الإنس وملحدين العصر.”

<sup>398</sup> Copts Today. 16 September 2012. الأنبا مرقص يطالب الأمم المتحدة بسن قوانين ضد الإساءة للأديان.

<sup>399</sup> Al-Shuruq. 15 September 2012. الأنبا مرقص: على الأمم المتحدة سن قوانين تجرم الإساءة للأديان. Number 1323. Year 4. Page 7.

<sup>400</sup> Moheet. 20 September 2012. الأنبا بسنتي: المنتجون للفيلم المسيء للرسول لا يمثلون أقباط المهجر.

<sup>401</sup> Al-Zaman. 21 September 2012. أقباط مصر بين معركة حقوقهم وتداعيات الفيلم المسيء.

Egyptian constitution.<sup>402</sup>

The Building and Development Party made a sustained effort to appear a moderate political force. The conference “Muslims and Copts ... Together Against the Offending the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (PBUH)” was organized in co-operation with the Forum of Moderation for Thought and Culture (*muntadā al-wasaṭiyya li l-fikr wa l-thaqāfa*) and brought together two leading members of the party and the movement, Ṣafwat ‘Abd al-Ghanī, and ‘Abbūd al-Zumur, who was imprisoned for years and was then a member of the Shura Council of *al-gamā‘a al-islāmiyya*.<sup>403</sup> In addition, the president of the forum, Khālīd al-Sharīf, and Magdī Aḥmad al-Ḥussayn, leader of *ḥizb al-‘amal al-jadīd*, also participated. However, this conference succeeded in attracting only a low-ranking Christian cleric, the priest of the Episcopal church in Gizeh, Father Mīshīl Mīlād. The priest spoke of the long history of ‘true unity between the Egyptians,’ and defined “The Innocence of Muslims” as an ‘offense’ against any Muslim, which he rejected, as it represented an ‘offense for every Egyptian in the land of Egypt.’ In comparison, ‘Abbūd al-Zumur conceded the responsibility of ‘a small group of Copts in the diaspora’ for this video,<sup>404</sup> but mainly viewed it as a ‘result of Western culture,’ which reportedly cultivates the hate of Islam,<sup>405</sup> and aims to ‘stir up sectarian strife in Egypt.’ Again, *al-gamā‘a al-islāmiyya* made a considerable effort to dissociate Christians in Egypt from this video and rejected any generalization.

A further, rather low-ranking Christian-Muslim conference was the conference “Only the Messenger of God” on 19 September in Zamalek, which was organized in cooperation with the Authority of State Affairs (*hay‘at qiḍāyāt al-dawla*).<sup>406</sup> Shaykh Sha‘bān Darwīsh,<sup>407</sup> an Islamic preacher and member of the constituent assembly; Ashraf Muḥammad Muḥmūd, an Islamic preacher; Ṣalāḥ ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, chancellor and deputy president of the Authority of State Affairs; the Coptic activist Hānī al-Gazirī; and the journalist and president of the International Organization for Development and Human Rights (*al-munazama al-duwaliyya li l-tanmiya wa ḥuqūq al-insān*), Nūr al-Dīn, participated in this conference. In this section we will only briefly mention the statements of a few actors, while the speech of Hānī al-Gazirī has already been analysed in a previous section (see Section 2.3.3.2). All speeches remained silent on the Coptic

<sup>402</sup> Al-Ahram. 25 September 2012. الأزهر والكنيسة بقرار دولي لتجريم الإساءة للأديان. Number 45949. Year 137. Page 1.

<sup>403</sup> Al-Ahram. 19 September 2012. البناء والتنمية يحذر من مخطط لإثارة فتنة طائفية. Number 45943. Year 137. Page 4.

<sup>404</sup> Al-Ahram. 19 September 2012. البناء والتنمية يحذر من مخطط لإثارة فتنة طائفية. Number 45943. Year 137. Page 4.

<sup>405</sup> Watani. 23 September 2012. حزب البناء والتنمية. Number 2648. Year 54/Number 614. Year 12. Page 9.

<sup>406</sup> Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 17 September 2012. عضو تأسيسية الدستور: الإساءة لن تكون الأخيرة.. رئيس حركة أقباط من أجل مصر: مورييس صادق يسىء لنا.. نائب رئيس هيئة قضايا الدولة: الغضب لنصرة النبي لا تكون بالتعدى على الأمن.

<sup>407</sup> According to his Facebook-account, Sha‘bān Darwīsh is a member of the Council of *shuyūkh* of the Nur Party and is said to have first joined *gamā‘at anṣār al-sunna al-muḥamadiyya* where he learnt the ‘true’ Salafi creed. Facebook. الشيخ شعبان درويش. Doi: [https://ar-ar.facebook.com/shaaban.darwish/info/?tab=page\\_info](https://ar-ar.facebook.com/shaaban.darwish/info/?tab=page_info) (retrieved May 23, 2016).

involvement and spoke instead of ‘the offenders who hate Islam and Muslims’ (Ṣalāḥ ‘Abd al-‘Azīz), or of producers who ‘belonged neither to the Arabs nor to the Egyptian Copts’ (Nūr al-Dīn), making it necessary to punish them. However, a reference to the Copts did occur, as Sha‘bān Darwīsh quoted Pope Shinūda III ‘I am a Coptic by religion and a Muslim by civilization,’ in reference to ‘some [who] spread a negative image in foreign countries’ and to the current state of the Islamic community, which accordingly facilitated such ‘offenses.’ This assertion of the *umma*’s state as the core problem was interesting. Sha‘bān Darwīsh added: ‘the Arabic *umma* has currently erased its identity.’ Furthermore, he reminded his audience of the prophet who had to face similar offenses. All in all, the Islamic preacher mixed Arab, Coptic and Islamic identities, even ascribing an Islamic identity to Copts in Egypt, at least in “civilizational” terms, as this argument is backed by the Pope Shinūda’s quotation. Similarly, Ashraf Muḥammad Muḥmūd framed the issue of “The Innocence of Muslims” not in the context of Egypt, but instead in the context of a Western fight against the Arab “*gins*” and the ‘unity of the Arabs,’ who are ‘united despite the difference of creeds.’ They are allegedly the ‘sons of one people,’ united by ‘one *qawmiyya*’ and are targeted by the West because ‘they are the grandchildren of the noble Messenger.’ Yet, the West is said to be ‘divided and dispersed.’ Thus, even non-Muslim Christian and Jewish Arabs are to be traced back to Muhammad. Like Sha‘bān Darwīsh, Ashraf Muḥammad Muḥmūd mixed Arab, Coptic and Islamic identities and belongings.

Moreover, Ṣalāḥ ‘Abd al-‘Azīz condemned the violence in connection to this video.

Lastly, the seminar “Offending Islam and Destroying Nations” under the leadership of Prime Minister Hishām Qandīl is analysed in this section as other key Islamic actors participated in it and emphasized Christian-Muslim unity. This seminar took place on 25 September and was organized by the International Organization of African and Asian Writers.<sup>408</sup> It gathered together the Prime Minister, the Minister of Islamic Endowments, Ṭal‘at ‘Afifi; a member of the Muslim Brotherhood Guidance Bureau, ‘Abd al-Raḥman al-Birr (al-Ahram 26 September 2012); as well as the president of the International Organization for Press and Media, (*al-munazama al-duwaliyya li l-ṣiḥāfa wa l-ilām*) Magdī Margān; an advisor to President Mursī, Muḥammad Fu‘ād Gādallah; the advisor to *shaykh al-Azhar*, Muḥammad ‘Azzab; a representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador al-Shādhī; as well as a member of the constituent assembly, Muḥammad ‘Imāra.<sup>409</sup> At this conference, Ṭal‘at ‘Afifi and ‘Abd

<sup>408</sup> Al-Ahram. 26 September 2012. وزير الأوقاف: نصره النبي باتباع منهجه والإسلام يرفض ترويع الأمنيين. Number 45950. Year 137. Page 20. This source is quoted in this section as “al-Ahram 26 September 2012.”

<sup>409</sup> Al-Ahram. 29 September 2012. مؤتمر لمناقشة جريمة إزدراء الأديان وتشديد عقوبتها. Number 45953. Year 137. Page 4.

al-Raḥman al-Birr praised the solidarity of the ‘Christian brothers’ (al-Ahram 26 September 2012) even refuting a Coptic responsibility, as ‘the Copts are people (*ahl*) of Egypt’ (‘Abd al-Raḥman al-Birr) (ibid). This video or ‘strife’ aimed, according to ‘Abd al-Raḥman al-Birr, to ‘spread strife in Egypt by reporting that Copts in the diaspora’ were behind this video. In contrast, the minister of Islamic endowments, implicitly condemned the violence in connection to this video by asserting ‘the support of the Messenger (PBUH) is expressed by the depth of faith in the heart of the Muslims.’

### **Summary of Section 2.4.3**

Joint Christian-Muslim conferences and the solely Muslim conference emphasized national unity. Some were organized by the bishops themselves. Interestingly, the Muslim Brotherhood was more strongly represented in this context than in the protests. *Al-gamā‘a al-islāmiyya* and its political arm, the Building and Construction Party, also tried to further their effort to appear to be a political contender and continued with the accommodating attitude towards Christians but they were not able to attracting high-ranking clerics.

### **2.4.4 Visits**

Besides protesting together and participating in joint conferences, visits by Christian actors to Islamic key actors can be regarded as another way of reacting to “The Innocence of Muslims” and of showing solidarity with Muslims. The research revealed three visits. The first visit took place on 13 September 2012, when a Coptic delegation – simply referred to by *al-Maṣrī al-Yawm* as made up of ‘a number of figures and leaders of the Coptic church’ – visited the headquarters of the Muslim Brotherhood in al-Ismā‘īliya to express their solidarity and state that those behind this ‘film’ do not represent the ‘Copts, whether in Egypt or outside of Egypt.’<sup>410</sup> This delegation was received by the local Muslim Brotherhood representative, a representative of the Nur Party, a representative of the Building and Development Party and of *al-gamā‘a al-islāmiyya*. This reaction gives the impression of being a tributary visit. In the meantime, banners which said ‘Muslims and Copts are strongly united’<sup>411</sup> were raised. The second visit took place on approximately 17 September, when a delegation of Coptic lay figures visited *shaykh al-Azhar* Aḥmad al-Ṭayyib.<sup>412</sup> This delegation was led by Samīr Murquṣ,<sup>413</sup> and

<sup>410</sup> Al-Masry al-Youm. 13 September 2012. «الفيلم المسيء» للتضامن ضد «الإخوان» مقر «الإخوان» للإسماعيلية يزور مقر «وفد من أقباط الإسماعيلية يزور مقر «الإخوان» للتضامن ضد «الفيلم المسيء» Doi: <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/163581> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>411</sup> «مسلم ومسيحي إيد واحدة»

<sup>412</sup> Al-Shuruq. 18 September 2012. شيخ الأزهر: المسيحيون يهاجرون لتحسين أحوالهم الاقتصادية وليس هرباً من اضطهاد ديني. Number 1326. Year 4. Page 4.

<sup>413</sup> Samīr Murquṣ, was advisor to President Mursī and played a key role in the dialogue between the Muslim Brotherhood and the Copts before the Revolution of January 25 2011 (Guirguis 2012, 227).

was composed of George Iṣḥāq; the former president of the committee for foreign affairs of the People's Assembly, Layla Taklā; Nabīl Murqūṣ; Sāmīḥ Fawzī;<sup>414</sup> and Marguerite 'Āzīr.<sup>415</sup> This delegation was quoted as having condemned the video which offends Christianity. During this meeting, the reaction of Aḥmad al-Ṭayyib significantly differed from other reactions, as he viewed "The Innocence of Muslims" as the proof of a 'conspiracy against Egypt, targeting [its] unity, security and stability by playing an evil game against the national woven fabric.'<sup>416</sup> In addition, he asserted that Coptic emigration was caused by the economic situation and not by persecution. Other issues were also mentioned.

The third visit took place on 4 October 2012, when a Catholic delegation visited the governor of Suez, Samīr 'Aglān.<sup>417</sup> This delegation was made up of the Coptic Catholic Bishop Iṣḥāq and two Latin priests, Father Ḥanna and Father Anṭūnyūs. The delegation reportedly asserted Christians and Muslims' unity and asked the governor for sustained contact. In comparison, the governor employed the discourse of national unity; 'The Egyptians, Muslims and Christians, are one woven fabric and they share the same goal, which is to improve the Egyptian people and for Egypt to remain the mother of the world. No one can divide its people, Muslim and Christian.'<sup>418</sup>

#### 2.4.5 *Bayt al- 'Ā'ila*

A last means of joint Christian-Muslim reaction was the statement which was probably issued on 16 September 2011 by Maḥmūd 'Azzab in the name of the *bayt al- 'ā'ila* (House of the Family).<sup>419</sup> In this statement, *bayt al- 'ā'ila* is described as an institution representing Muslims and Christians in Egypt, that is, al-Azhar and the 'big Egyptian Churches.' Firstly, the statement offered its own view of "The Innocence of Muslims," referring to it as the 'criminal event that took place in the United States of America' and triggered the anger of 'the Egyptian

<sup>414</sup> Sāmīḥ Fawzī is a writer, scholar and former independent MP. In Al-Sharq al-Awsat. مقالات الكتّاب. د. سامح فوزي. Doi: <http://aawsat.com/home/writer/Dr.Samih-Fawzi> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>415</sup> Marguerite 'Āzīr was secretary general of the Democratic Front (*ḥizb al-gabha al-dīmūqrāṭiyya*). In Masress. 31 July 2009. المرأة أقدر من الرجال في حل المشكلات. د. مارجريت عازر. Doi: <http://www.masress.com/misrelgdida/1650> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>416</sup> "هناك مؤامرة على مصر، تستهدف وحدتها وأمنها وانقرارها من خلال العبث بالنسيج الوطني،"

<sup>417</sup> Watani. 4 October 2012. محافظ السويس : المسلمون والمسيحيون نسيج واحد هدفهم الارتقاء بمصر. Doi: <http://www.wataninet.com/%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%B8%D8%A7%D8%AA/%D9%85%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%B8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%AD%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%86%D8%B3%D9%8A/141208/> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>418</sup> المصريين مسلمين ومسيحيين نسيج واحد وهدفهم واحد هو الارتقاء بشعب مصر وان مصر ستبقى أم الدنيا ولن يستطيع أحد أن يفرق بين ,, "شعبها مسلم ومسيحي"

<sup>419</sup> Bayt al-Aila. 16 September 2012. بيان بيت العائلة المصرية بخصوص الفيلم المسيء للنبي الكريم. Doi: [http://aymanamerprees.blogspot.co.at/2012/09/blog-post\\_16.html](http://aymanamerprees.blogspot.co.at/2012/09/blog-post_16.html) (retrieved May 23, 2016).

churches, the Egyptian Christians like their Muslim brothers.’ Still, the statement offered slight criticism of the violent reactions which are defined as ‘sometimes it exceeded the boundaries of reason and psychological control.’ Secondly, the statement paraphrases some key issues from the statements by al-Azhar and by the Coptic Orthodox Church. The statement by Al-Azhar was reported to have been issued by the Council of Senior Scholars under the direction of Aḥmad al-Ṭayyib. It also quoted al-Azhar’s vague description of the video’s background, ascribing it to ‘controlling, colonial institutions,’ which are ‘Zionism.’ However, the statement repeated al-Azhar’s condemnation of the violence, recalling Muhammad’s own struggle with ‘offenses,’ quoting 25:31: ‘And thus have We made for every prophet an enemy from among the criminals. But sufficient is your Lord as a guide and a helper.’ In light of this event, al-Azhar demanded the preservation of Egypt’s unity. With regards to the statement by the Holy Synod of the Coptic Orthodox Church, *bayt al-‘ā’ila* mentioned the argument that this video also offended Jesus Christ and ‘contradicts Christian teachings and values,’ as well as its purpose of spreading division. *Bayt al-‘ā’ila* agreed with both statements and supported the demand of the *shaykh al-Azhar* for the UN to issue a law criminalizing these offenses and the necessity of dealing with this ‘crime called “Islamophobia” in a similar way to Anti-Semitism.’

#### ***Summary of Section 2.4***

The assault on the US embassy illustrated the failure of the state to provide security and the potentially serious consequences for Copts. The subsequent joint protests, conferences, and visits showed the intention to prevent such dire consequences. These actions also highlighted a competition amongst Islamist political forces for the political lead. In these contexts, the discourse of national unity was more strongly invoked. Overall, they showed the need for Christian participation and visibility in order to enhance and back the anger against “The Innocence of Muslims.”

### **5. Creating a Sectarian Conflict**

This section will discuss four issues that put a strain on Christian-Muslim relations in Egypt; the media coverage (2.5.1), the controversy between the Salafi Front and the Coptic Orthodox Church (2.5.2), the controversy over the Coptic diaspora (2.5.3) and the anti-Christian reactions (2.5.4).

#### **2.5.1 The Media Coverage: Manufacturing a Crisis**

The crisis of “The Innocence of Muslims” raised questions about the responsibility of the media, especially Egyptian Salafi channels, in drawing attention to this video. The

anchorman on the channel *al-Nās*, Khālid ‘Abd Allāh, played a significant role in creating the crisis of “The Innocence of Muslims” when this video was discussed on his program on 9 September 2012. However, the way in which other, non-Salafi, Egyptian media covered this event revealed that even these media bore some responsibility for creating this crisis and even played a role in producing “sectarian strife.”

This section will first give a brief overview of the media in Egypt and then analyze a sample of a few examples of media coverage; Khālid ‘Abdallah’s show, the stance of the Islamic preacher Wisām ‘Abd al-Warāth, two examples of *al-Yawm al-Sābi*’, as well as one example of *al-Ahrām* and *Waṭanī*.

Throughout the last twenty years, even before the Revolution of 25 January 2011, the media landscape has significantly changed in Egypt, affecting both the written press and television. As a result, the coverage of the “Copts” has also changed. Since the 1990s, religious satellite channels have proliferated and have received generous funding from the Gulf region.<sup>420</sup> *Al-Ahram Hebdo* criticizes these channels, especially *al-Ḥāfiẓ*, *al-Nās* and *al-Raḥma*, for having abandoned their initial purpose – religious teaching –, and turned to promoting political interests instead, becoming increasingly aggressive and intolerant (ibid). In this regard, the stance towards Copts has become more and more intolerant, clearly associating them with “*kufr*” (disbelief). For instance, after Shinūda III died, a Salafi preacher reportedly rejoiced over the death of ‘the head of disbelief and corruption,’ and the Gospel is often described as a ‘falsified book.’<sup>421</sup> Similarly, the liberalization of the media in 2005 resulted in a more open discussion of inter-religious relations and clashes. As Elizabeth Iskander showed, this became a ‘hot topic’ that increased sales, while still covering the issue in the context of national unity (Iskander 2012, 32-33). Yet, ‘traditional’ media also ‘marginalise’ the Copts, as Hānī al-Jazirī described it. In particular, he criticizes them for promoting some Coptic actors as representatives of “the Copts” as a whole, whereas these people actually have a peculiar stance towards the Church or are not capable of speaking in the media and thus tarnish the image of the Copts (al-Gaziri 23 January 2015). Probably following the clash in al-‘Umrāniyya between Coptic protesters and the police over the building of a church, *al-Ahrām* wrote ‘le fait pour les Coptes d’être chouchoutés par l’État a donné un résultat inverse. Ils se sont sentis renforcés par l’étranger et ont eu la sensation d’être au-dessus de la loi parce qu’ils sont de la religion de

---

<sup>420</sup> Al-Ahram Hebdo. 9-15 January 2012. Chaînes islamiques: un outil de propagande politique. Number 956. Year 19. Pages 30-31.

<sup>421</sup> Al-Shuruq. 10 September 2012. القنوات والمواقع القبطية.. منابر خاصة جدًا. Number 1318. Year 4. Page 17. This article is quoted in this section as “al-Shuruq 10 September 2012.”

l'Amérique' (POC 2011, 167). This clearly contradicts journalistic deontology and implied that Copts are a fifth column of the United States in Egypt. Another issue surrounding media coverage of the Copts is the low average (which in fact affects all "minorities") (al-Shuruq 10 September 2012) and the silence surrounding some events. For instance, following the Arab Spring, a clash in a village in al-Minyā Governorate causing the death of eleven Copts did not attract any media coverage (al-Shuruq 10 September 2012). In reaction, in recent years specific Coptic media have appeared, such as newspapers (*al-katība al-ṭibiyya*, already mentioned) or Coptic channels, such as OTV (al-Shuruq 10 September 2012).

The discussion of the "The Innocence of Muslims" on Khālid 'Abd Allāh's show on 9 September 2012 questions the journalistic deontology used or shows the absence of it.<sup>422</sup> However, the issue was mainly discussed by a researcher called Muḥammad Ḥamdī who was asked several questions by Khālid 'Abd Allāh. Firstly, they discussed the general issue of a number of "*aqbāṭ al-mahjar*" repeatedly offending Islam. Thus, Muḥammad Ḥamdī mentioned various names, like Father Yuta, 'Iṣmat Zuqlama, Mūrīs Ṣādiq, Murquṣ 'Azīz, Michael Munir, who have all offended Islam. For instance, "Father Yuta", who actually does not exist (Elsässer 2014, 204), was said to have written a book and produced a film entitled "The Ass of Muhammad." Yet, throughout the discussion, it becomes increasingly evident that the denomination "*aqbāṭ al-mahjar*" also referred to Christians in Egypt, whose reported hypocrisy and double standards were denounced. For instance, Muḥammad Ḥamdī criticized the fact that he could not grow a beard without having to face accusations of terrorism, whereas when a Copt does so he is referred to as a 'cleric.' In addition, he used subtle rhetorical devices such as stating that it did not make sense to discuss theological issues with the Christians, referred to as "*masīḥiyyūn*" and "*aqbāṭ*," but actually asserts that Jesus Christ was crucified totally naked, asserting that he has the proof for that. Interestingly, although "The Innocence of Muslims" is viewed as yet another offense, which was the first part of a film soon coming released, the show screens several scenes lasting three minutes. Both state that Muslims do not stop being insulted and do not react.

In contrast, the comments of Wisām 'Abd al-Warāth, preacher on the channel *al-Hikma*, were more moderate. On 7 September 2012, in a special declaration to *al-Yawm al-Sābi* ' he called on 'the Egyptian Church to make its position clear, either she distances herself from those individuals who produced this film or she remains silent, and this means her assent on this.'<sup>423</sup>

<sup>422</sup> The video was downloaded by the author.

<sup>423</sup> Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 7 September 2012. عبد الوارث: الفيلم المسيء للرسول تحرش نصراني بتيار الإسلام السياسي. Doi. <http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/7/%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%AF->



The video was described as a ‘Nazarene (*naṣrānī*) provocation against the stream of political Islam’ that was produced by ‘*aqbāṭ al-mahjar*,’ Terry Jones, and the Dutch government. He insisted: ‘we must not relieve the accession to the presidency of Egypt by Dr. Muḥammad Mursī – and he is an Islamic president who carries the banners of Islam – from the Nazarene provocation of Islamists.’<sup>424</sup> In addition, he called on Muslims not to appear any longer on the ‘Nazarene TV channel’ *al-ḥaqīqa* (the truth). In contrast, the stances expressed in his discussion with Gamāl As‘ad on *al-Nahar TV* on September 11 were much more moderate.<sup>425</sup> However, he continued to call for the ‘Egyptian Church’ to dissociate from this video. Yet, he explained it was: ‘out of respect for the Muslim brothers, partners in this nation,’ stating that he would do the same. Interestingly, on the one hand, Wisām ‘Abd al-Warāth seems to have good knowledge of how the Coptic Orthodox Church works, as he defined ‘Bishop Bākhūmyūs as the temporary patriarch (*qā’im al-‘amal*)’ but on the other hand he seemingly refused to use the word “*masīḥiyyūn*” or Copt and only used “Nazarene,” something he did in a seemingly non-derogatory sense.

One of the first reports on “The Innocence of Muslims” was published by *al-Yawm al-Sābi* ‘ on 8 September 2012, i.e. before Khālīd ‘Abdallah’s show. These two reports related the reactions of church leaders and political leaders; however, it can be assumed that these reactions were actually the result of *al-Yawm al-Sābi* ‘s attention. The first article, entitled “The Egyptian Churches reject a film offending Islam and the Messenger and attack its production [...]” first explains the background of the condemnations and then quotes the reactions of three church leaders, the Coptic Orthodox Bishop Murquṣ, the Protestant Ṣafwat al-Biyādī, and the official spokesman of the Coptic Orthodox Church, Rafīq Garīsh.<sup>426</sup> *Al-Yawm al-Sābi* ‘ wrote: ‘Reports on a number of Copts in the diaspora (*aqbāṭ al-mahjar*) producing a film offending Islam and the Messenger Muhammad (PBUH) [...] has raised the resentment of the Evangelical, the Catholic and the Orthodox Egyptian Churches.’ According to the article, the video was

---

%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%AB--  
%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85-  
%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%89%D8%A1-  
%D9%84%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84-%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%B4-  
%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%89-%D8%A8%D8%AA%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B1-  
%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%A7/778969#.VjI\_Nm5OfVJ  
(retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>424</sup> “يجب ألا نفصل بين تولى الدكتور محمد مرسى رئاسة مصر وهو رئيس إسلامي يعلى من شعائر الإسلام والتحرش النصراني للإسلاميين..”

<sup>425</sup> You Tube. 9 September 2012. مناظرة وسام عبد الوارث وجمال أسعد الفيلم المسيء للرسول.

<sup>426</sup> Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 8 September 2012. الكنائس المصرية ترفض فيلمًا يسيء للإسلام والرسول ويهاجمون صناعه.. الأتبا مرقص: "نرفض الإساءة لأى رمز ديني.. البياضى: "ناس على حل شعرها". رفیق جريش: "هؤلاء لا يتمتعون بأدب أو أخلاق".

produced by ‘Iṣmat Zuqlama, Mūrīs Ṣādiq and Terry Jones, who – the article recalls – burnt the Quran ‘more than once.’

The second article published by *al-Yawm al-Sābi* ‘ on the same day, 8 September 2012, seemed to have asked a representative sample of Egyptian politicians for their opinion.<sup>427</sup> This sample comprises Kārim Raḍwān, member of the Muslim Brotherhood; Muḥammad ‘Imād al-Dīn, member of the Freedom and Justice Party; Bāsīl ‘Ādil, presented as a former MP and actually co-founder of the Free Egyptian Party, and ‘Iffat al-Sādāt, secretary of *ḥizb miṣr al-qawmī*. Thus, this sample comprised two representatives of moderate political Islam, a Coptic politician and a member of the former regime, a “*filūl*.” As was previously shown, it seemed that they were asked similar questions, since they dealt with the same issues such as their views on Christianity and Christian Egyptians living abroad. The representatives of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Freedom and Justice Party share especially similar views. All in all, if it were not for the title, it would not be clear what the reactions were about. Subsequently, the article explains that:

A number of Copts in the diaspora [*aqbaṭ al-mahjar*] [underlined by the author], and at their head, ‘Iṣmat Zuqlama, who called for the partition of Egypt and president of the so-called Coptic state, and Mūrīs Ṣādiq, who can’t stop attacking Egypt in all international forums and turning foreign countries against her, and with them, the extremist priest Terry Jones, who has burnt copies of the Quran more than once, the production of a film about Muhammad (PBUH) which contains high offenses and great imputation against the noble Messenger, underlining the great hatred that animates the producers of the film of Islam and the great Messenger.

Thus, the article does not only comprise an analysis but also a judgment. It implies that the producers involved in this video are not limited to these three people but also comprise an unknown number of Copts. Then, the article adds:

At the same time, a number of Coptic Egyptian leaders [underlined by the author] condemned the film [...] refusing any offense against the noble Messenger and condemning the production of a film which offends one of the prophets of God, as it offends Islam.

It can be suggested that in this stance, Jesus Christ is viewed as a prophet and thus “Islamized.” More importantly, the use of ‘a number of Copts in the diaspora’ on the one hand and of ‘a number of Coptic Egyptian leaders’ raises the question: What did the majority of Copts in Egypt

---

<sup>427</sup> Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 8 September 2012. سياسيون ينتقدون صنّاع الفيلم المسيء للرسول ويهاجمون القس المتطرف تيري جونز. وزقلمة وموريس صادق.. رضوان: لن نسمح لهم بإهانة الدين.. باسل عادل: الأديان السماوية خط أحمر.. السادات: هؤلاء دعاة فتنة وتقسيم

think? The article establishes a dichotomy between “good” Copts showing their solidarity with Muslims and “bad” Copts participating in this “offense.”

A similar implicit suggestion is made by *al-Ahrām* in an article published on 12 September 2012.<sup>428</sup> It introduced its article on the various reactions to “The Innocence of Muslims” by defining the video as “the film offending the prophet (PBUH)’ produced by ‘some Copts in the diaspora (*aqbāṭ al-mahjar*) in the United States of America.’ Furthermore, the article overstates the protest at the US embassy both in terms of numbers and quality: ‘Thousands of Muslims and Christians participated, who showed their solidarity with their brothers against the insult of the noble Messenger.’ Thus, *al-Ahrām* not only employed the discourse of national unity but also used a systematic distinction between “Muslims” and “Christians.” Even more, it suggests the Christian as “the other” by underlining the show of solidarity ‘with their Muslim brothers.’

In sharp contrast, *Waṭanī* emphasized the Egyptian belonging first and foremost; ‘the Egyptians condemned the film offending the Messenger.’ Again, trespassing on journalistic deontology, the newspaper speaks in the name of Coptic Egyptians: ‘The Copts were the first to demand a stand against the attempts to offend the Messenger (PBUH) and the Egyptians went out to protest in front of the US embassy,’ ‘this act was condemned by the three Churches and all Copts inside and outside.’<sup>429</sup> Yet it also criticizes the violence and attitude of the government as well as the generalization of all Copts, especially Copts living abroad, because of the action of two individuals.

All these examples show to varying degree the lack of journalistic deontology, either by explicitly accusing a certain group – the Copts –, or by using linguistic devices leading the reader to question this group’s real intentions, or speaking in the name of that group.

### **2.5.2 The Controversy between the Church and the Salafi Front**

Despite efforts to display a moderate attitude towards Copts, as shown previously, some accusations were leveled by the Salafi stream against a few people. In particular, the Salafi Front (*al-jabha al-salafiyya*) became involved in a controversy with the Coptic Orthodox Church. This issue displayed a potential for escalation. The Salafi Front was established in 2010 and defines itself as a ‘league comprising a number of independent Salafi and Islamist

---

<sup>428</sup> Al-Ahram. 12 September 2012. غضب شعبي من الإساءة للرسول. Number 45936. Year 137. Pages 1 and 5.

<sup>429</sup> Watani. 16 September 2012. صناعة خارجية لتقسيم الوطن. الفيلم المسيء للرسول. Number 2647. Year 54/Number 613. Year 12. Page 8.

figures.”<sup>430</sup> In October 2012, it established a Salafī political party the “People’s party,”<sup>431</sup> probably in reaction to the ongoing tensions in the Nur Party.

This controversy started with Salafī accusations ascribing the responsibility for the video to “Father Yuta.” This “*ab Yūtā*” is a Coptic cyber-activist who garnered fame in 2008 when he wrote a response to the novel *Azazeel* by Yusef Ziedan (Elsässer 2014, 204). According to Sebastian Elsässer, however, “Father Yuta” does not exist. Following the thwarted assault on the US embassy in Cairo, Father Murquṣ ‘Azīz expressed his anger over his name being mentioned in a list by the general prosecutor forbidding nine people from entering Egypt.<sup>432</sup> He denied that he was “Father Yuta.” Murquṣ ‘Azīz was seemingly sent away to Australia (Casper 2011). Similarly, on September 13, *al-Yawm al-Sābi* ‘ reported on a telephone call from Ṣalīb Matā Sāwīrs to Nādir Bakkār about the Salafī Front having described him on their Facebook page as “Ab Yuta,” something which he denied.<sup>433</sup> Eventually, the controversy reached the higher-ranking church leadership.

Around 19 September 2012, the Salafī Front and the National Center for the Protection of Freedom (*al-markaz al-waṭanī li l-difā* ‘ *an al-ḥurriyāt*) sent a report to the general prosecutor comprising a list of three clerics – Bishop Serapion (Sirābiyūn) of Los Angeles,<sup>434</sup> Father Zakaryā Buṭrus, and Father Murquṣ ‘Azīz – as well as six other persons, allegedly involved in the making of “The Innocence of Muslims” – among them Jūzīf Naṣr Allah, Niqūlā Bāsīlī Niqūlā, Muṣ‘ab Ḥasan Yusif and Cindy Lee Garcia.<sup>435</sup> In reaction, the Holy Synod met for an urgent meeting on Friday 21 September 2012. This meeting reportedly lasted four hours

<sup>430</sup> الصفحة الرسمية للجبهة السلفية بمصر. Facebook. Doi: [https://ar-ar.facebook.com/gabhasalafia/info/?tab=page\\_info](https://ar-ar.facebook.com/gabhasalafia/info/?tab=page_info) (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>431</sup> Ahram Online. 20 October 2012. Egypt's Salafist Front launches 'People Party'. Doi: <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/56087/Egypt/Politics-/Egypts-Salafist-Front-launches-People-Party.aspx> (retrieved May 23, 2016). At the founding conference of this party, the Coptic organization “Copts of 38” expressed its desire to be governed by Islamic sharia to prevent increased divisions between Christians and Muslims as a result of the new Egyptian constitution. Source.

<sup>432</sup> Copts Today. 13 September 2012. القمص مرقس عزيز : لسئ الأب يوتا ولا علاقة لى بالفيلم المسيء .. وأرفض هذا العمل الذي يسبب الفتنة. Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=32754> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>433</sup> Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 13 September 2012. القمص "ساويرس" يتصل بنادر بكار لحذف ما نشرته مواقع سلفية ضده. Doi: <http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/13/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D9%85%D8%B5-%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%B3-%D9%8A%D8%AA%D8%B5%D9%84-%D8%A8%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%A8%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%B0%D9%81-%D9%85%D8%A7-%D9%86%D8%B4%D8%B1%D8%AA%D9%87-%D9%85%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%B9-%D8%B3%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%B6%D8%AF%D9%87/784996#.VjDYa25OfVJ> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>434</sup> Bishop Sirābiyūn was previously bishop of Aswān.

<sup>435</sup> Copts Today. 20 September 2012. السلفية" تتهم 3 قساوسة بالتورط فى الفيلم المسيء .. وتطالب النائب العام بسماع أقوال الانبا " . Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=33811> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

and gathered Bishop Mūsā, Bishop Murquṣ and Bishop Tūmās,<sup>436</sup> as well as Bishop Bākhūmyūs, members of the Lay Council, the Coptic Endowments and the legal authority of the Church.<sup>437</sup> At the subsequent press conference, the spokesman for the Coptic Orthodox Church, Bishop Būlā, rejected all accusations against the three clerics, especially against Bishop Sirābiyūn (al-Ahram 22 September 2012). In response, the Salafi Front reacted by rejecting the ‘language of threat’ reportedly used by Bishop Būlā; ‘the Egyptian Church is not above the law and the state is not above the law, it is one of the institutions of the state’ (al-Shuruq 23 September 2012). These formulations are very telling, as the Coptic Orthodox Church is clearly defined on the one hand as a national, Egyptian institution, and on the other hand as a state institution, perhaps similar to the *dār al-iftā’*. To some extent, this can be seen as accusing the church of being too independent and the Christians of not complying with the laws. The Salafi Front continued: ‘We demand the implementation of the rule of law (*dawlat al-qānūn*) on the “biggs” before the “smalls,” and the implementation of the principles of justice and equality’ (ibid). This statement showed an acceptance of the law, even though it is not Sharia law and seems to suggest a recognition of the principle of equality. In response, eight Coptic Orthodox Bishops from Europe and the United States wrote a letter to President Mursī, as well as the priests of the diocese of Los Angeles (al-Shuruq 23 September 2012), Bishop Hadrā of Aswān,<sup>438</sup> and the priests of the diocese Aswān<sup>439</sup> issued a statement. Eventually, Bishop Sirābiyūn rejected the accusations in an interview with *al-Hurra*, emphasizing his inability to know what Niqūlā Bāsīlī Niqūlā and Jūzīf Naṣr Allāh did, since they did not attend his church.<sup>440</sup>

All these statements and reactions by the Christian clerics are interesting because they made extensive use of the discourse of national unity in order to counter the accusations of the Salafi Front. For instance, Ṣalīb Matā Sāwīrs rejected the accusations as ‘lies, calumny, and attempts to spread strife and destabilization in Egypt.’<sup>441</sup> Similarly, Bishop Būlā accused the Salafi Front of being enemies of the Egyptian nation; ‘we completely reject the attempts at slander between the sons of the united nation and the spread of discord [...] they are the enemies

<sup>436</sup> Al-Shuruq. 23 September 2012. حرب البيانات بين الكنيسة والجهة السلفية. Number 1331. Year 4. Page 3. This source is quoted in this section “al-Shuruq 23 September 2012.”

<sup>437</sup> Al-Ahram. 22 September. باخوميوس: التعدي على الأديان يحتاج لموقف حازم. Number 45946. Year 137. Page 3. This source is quoted in this section “al-Ahram 22 September 2012.”

<sup>438</sup> Copts Today. 25 September 2012. الانبا هدرأ: من غير المعقول أن يُسئل الأنبا سراييون عن تصرفات فرد من إبيارثيته. MCN Broadcast. Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=34699> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>439</sup> Copts Today. 26 September 2012. الانبا هدرأ: الانبا سراييون عاشق لمصر وشعبها ومشهود له بوطنيته وليس له اي علاقة بالفيلم. Watani. Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=34773> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>440</sup> Al-Hurra. 19 September 2012. الفيلم المسيء للإسلام. الأقباط في دائرة الاتهام.

<sup>441</sup> Al-Ahram. 19 September 2012. متظاهر يحاصرون منزل أحد منتجي الفيلم المسيء للرسول الكريم 200. Doi: <http://www.ahram.org.eg/archive/The-First/News/171900.aspx> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

of our nation in which we have lived for 14 centuries, crushing the most conscious example of unity.’<sup>442</sup> The bishops of the southern US, Germany, England, US, Ireland, Turin and Rome, Virginia, and Scandinavia likewise accused the movement of threatening national unity; ‘these notifications offend national unity and stoke the fire of discord. [For this reason] we call on your Excellence [President Mursī] to protect the nation and to defend the innocents.’ Similarly, Bishop Sirābiyūn’s defense is undertaken by referring to his patriotism. He was known in Aswān for ‘his intense love for Egypt. [...] he was bearing Egypt and its concerns in his heart and mind wherever he went.’<sup>443</sup>

### ***Summary of Section 2.5.2***

The controversy between the Coptic Orthodox Church and the Salafi Front is interesting because they used different strategies to back their criticism. On the one hand, the Salafi Front viewed the church as an Egyptian national and state institution that reportedly had too much autonomy. On the other hand, various actors of the church employed the discourse of national unity to counter and delegitimize any criticism.

### **2.5.3 The Case of the Coptic Diaspora**

During the crisis of “The Innocence of Muslims,” responsibility for the video was often ascribed to the “Copts in the diaspora” or “some Copts in the diaspora” (*aqbāṭ al-mahjar*). In an article in *al-Ṣalāḥ*, the Coptic Catholic church recalled that the “Coptic diaspora” is a very young phenomenon compared to the Christian Lebanese, Syrian, or Palestinian diasporas; it came into being after the Revolution of 1952 when wealthy Copts began to emigrate due to nationalization.<sup>444</sup> More specifically, the article criticized the reports of an increase in Coptic migration following the Revolution of 25 January 2011 because it would provoke a breakdown of the Egyptian economy, of which one third is reliant on Coptic investments (*ibid*). Moreover, Bishop Gabriel of Austria remarked that Muslim Egyptian emigration was much higher (Gabriel, Bishop 11 September 2015). Coptic Egyptians in the diaspora are very diverse; some being close to the Church<sup>445</sup> and lacking a centralized organization, as *al-Shurūq* suggested; some are not close to the church at all, as the background of “The Innocence of Muslims”

<sup>442</sup> Al-Ahram. 22 September. باخوميوس: التعدي على الأديان يحتاج لموقف حازم. Number 45946. Year 137. Page 3.

<sup>443</sup> Copts Today. 26 September 2012. الانبا هديا: الانبا سراييون عاشق لمصر وشعبها ومشهود له بوطنيته وليس له اي علاقة بالفيلم المسي. Watani. Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=34773> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>444</sup> Al-Salah. 2012. لماذا يهاجم الأقباط. Number 6-7. Year 9. Pages 39-41.

<sup>445</sup> Al-Shuruq. 25 September 2012. «ترسم خريطة المعارضة المصرية في الولايات المتحدة» الشروق. Number 1333. Year 4. Page 5.

showed. Therefore, Bishop Gabriel suggested that in the West ‘anyone can say what he wants’ (Gabriel, Bishop 11 September 2015).

To some extent, the Coptic organizations and actors, especially in the United States, have been very vocal and even virulent in their support for Coptic rights in Egypt, sometimes attacking the Egyptian state and the Church for their silence and passivity (POC 2009, 165). *Proche-Orient Chrétien* states that so far, the Coptic Orthodox Church has always distanced herself from this criticism (ibid). However, it was thanks to the Coptic diaspora that the dismissal of Shinūda III by Anwar al-Sādāt in the 1970s reached the international consciousness and the pope was recognized by Amnesty International as a ‘prisoner of conscience’ (Reiss 1998, 232). Furthermore, it was in the diaspora that the idea of the Copts being the ‘true and pure Egyptians. The others are invaders’ first emerged and was particularly promoted by Shawky Karas and Mūrīs Ṣādiq (Guirguis 2012, 69-70). According to Laure Guirguis, it subsequently influenced the discourse of the Coptic Orthodox clergy and finally led Bishop Bishūy to praise the hospitality of Copts who welcomed Muslims (ibid). The video “The Innocence of Muslims” was also an occasion for *al-Yawm al-Sābi* to report on and, in fact, to criticize the so-called Copts in the diaspora. Entitling the article “From Emigration to Conspiracy,” the newspaper accused the Christian Egyptians living abroad of receiving American and Israeli funding in order to create “sectarian strife’ in Egypt and thus fulfill the goals of ‘worldwide Zionism.’<sup>446</sup> All those efforts are undermined by *al-Yawm al-Sābi*’s quoting of Bishop Mūsā who allegedly stated that anyone who ‘seeks refuge in international support is a traitor.’

In the context of “The Innocence of Muslims,” Egyptian newspapers evoked the reactions of a number of Coptic organizations in the diaspora. However, the content of the reactions varied according to the newspaper. Non-religious newspapers reported only the condemnations, whereas the Coptic newspaper *Waṭanī* reported a more balanced view. The statement by 120 Coptic organizations,<sup>447</sup> the statement by the Union of Coptic Organizations

---

<sup>446</sup> Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 15 September 2012. ننشر أكبر ملف عنهم ونكشف مصادر تمويلهم.. رحلة أقباط المهجر من الرحيل إلى .. "الموامرة.. عقدوا ستة مؤتمرات وخططوا للتقسيم.. وانتهوا بالفيلم المسيء.. و"زقلمة وموريس.. الرئيس المزعوم والشيطان Doi: [http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/15/%D9%86%D9%86%D8%B4%D8%B1\\_%D8%A3%D9%83%D8%A8%D8%B1\\_%D9%85%D9%84%D9%81\\_%D8%B9%D9%86%D9%87%D9%85\\_%D9%88%D9%86%D9%83%D8%B4%D9%81\\_%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1\\_%D8%AA%D9%85%D9%88%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%87%D9%85\\_%D8%B1%D8%AD%D9%84%D8%A9\\_%D8%A3%D9%82%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B7\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%87%D8%AC%D8%B1\\_%D9%85%D9%86\\_/786353#.VjJGxG5OfVJ](http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/15/%D9%86%D9%86%D8%B4%D8%B1_%D8%A3%D9%83%D8%A8%D8%B1_%D9%85%D9%84%D9%81_%D8%B9%D9%86%D9%87%D9%85_%D9%88%D9%86%D9%83%D8%B4%D9%81_%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1_%D8%AA%D9%85%D9%88%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%87%D9%85_%D8%B1%D8%AD%D9%84%D8%A9_%D8%A3%D9%82%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B7_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%87%D8%AC%D8%B1_%D9%85%D9%86_/786353#.VjJGxG5OfVJ) (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>447</sup> Al-Ahram. 13 September 2012. الغضب يجتاح مصر احتجاجا على الفيلم المسيء للرسول. Number 45937. Year 137. Page 5.

in Europe,<sup>448</sup> the United Copts in Switzerland,<sup>449</sup> the Coptic-Dutch Organization and Geneva (al-Yawm al-Sabi 11 September 2012) were reported as condemning the video. Interestingly, some of these organizations made use of the discourse of national unity to back their condemnation. The Union of United Copts in Switzerland accused the producers of the video of receiving foreign funding and aiming to stir sectarian strife in Egypt. It called on the Church, the Copts, and all who have an official position to ‘take a stand against those who want to destabilize Egypt, [both] Muslims and Copts’ (al-Yawm al-Sabi 11 September 2012). Similarly, as ‘Coptic Egyptians,’ the Coptic-Dutch Organization expressed its ‘respect for all revealed religions’ and insisted on its dissociation from this video which allegedly seeks to stir up ‘a fight between the sons of the united nation’ (al-Yawm al-Sabi 11 September 2012). Likewise, ‘Awḍ Shafīq, president of the legal office of Copts in the diaspora in Geneva, denied that Mūrīs Šādiq and ‘Ismat Zuqlama had any national consciousness (al-Yawm al-Sabi 11 September 2012). In contrast, *Waṭanī* reported more balanced views on this issue. The Coptic Organization of California insisted on not making Copts living abroad and, even less, Copts living in Egypt responsible for ‘the acts of two persons or of a group!’ and recalled that in the United States, the ‘country of freedom,’ even Jesus Christ is made fun of.<sup>450</sup> In a harsher way, Hānī Ḥabīb, chief editor of Nayel News in California asked ‘Why all these attacks and accusations on all Copts in the diaspora [...]. Do millions of Egyptians reduce the Copts in the diaspora to one extremist, Mūrīs Šādiq?’ and ‘How can we ask others to respect our dogmas and then ridicule their dogmas?’ (ibid).

Eventually, the Coptic activist Michael Munīr, mostly resident abroad, mentioned a more negative scenario, stating that like the Jews, the Copts would soon leave Egypt.<sup>451</sup> He rejected any generalization of all Copts.

This section showed the selective reporting by the Egyptian media. Non-religious media mostly reported Coptic organizations’ in the West condemnation and pledge of loyalty, whereas *Waṭanī* also quoted stances that were more critical of the reactions in Egypt.

<sup>448</sup> Al-Ahram. 12 September 2012. غضب شعبي من الإساءة للرسول. Number 45936. Year 137. Pages 1 and 5.

<sup>449</sup> Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 11 September 2012. انتفاضة المؤسسات الدينية ضد الفيلم المسيء للرسول.. "الأزهر": الداعون لإنتاجه هدفهم. This source is quoted in this section as “al-Yawm al-Sabi 11 September 2012.”

<sup>450</sup> Watani. 16 September 2012. صناعة خارجية لتقسيم الوطن.. الفيلم المسيء للرسول. Number 2647. Year 54/Number 613. Year 12. Page 8.

<sup>451</sup> Al-Sharq al-Awsat. 18 September 2012. منير: تعميم اتهام أقباط المهجر بالمسؤولية عن الفيلم المسيء للإسلام خطأ مقصود. Doi: <http://archive.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&issueno=12348&article=695789&search=%25C7%25E1%25D%25ED%25E1%25E3%2520%25C7%25E1%25E3%25D3%25ED%25C1&state=true#.VjIeMW5OfIV> (retrieved May 23, 2016).



#### 2.5.4 Anti -Christian Reactions

The journalist and chief editor of the newspaper *Waṭānī*, Yusif Sīdhum (Youssef Sidhom), concluded that the crisis of “The Innocence of Muslims” had not caused backlashes against Christians in Egypt.<sup>452</sup> Indeed, compared to the recurrent clashes between Christians and Muslims in Egypt, which are often triggered by personal or economic matters, the backlashes were limited. However, a few events in connection to this video can be described as “Anti-Christian reactions.” These events are the anti-Christian slogans at the protest at the US embassy in Cairo and in particular the burning of a Bible by “Abū Islām,” the *fatwā* issued by a Salafi imam, the arrest of an inhabitant of the slum of Ezbet el-Nakhl (‘Izbat al-Nakhl) in Cairo, and the attacks on the houses of the network behind this video.

The most spectacular anti-Christian reaction in connection to “The Innocence of Muslims” was the burning of a Bible by the Salafi and director of the TV channel *al-Raḥma*, Aḥmad ‘Abdullah, nicknamed “Abū Islām” (father of Islam). Previously, *Copts Today* reported that calls were made to burn down churches during the protests at the US embassy.<sup>453</sup> On September 15, at a similar protest, Abū Islām burnt a copy of a bible and called for people to urinate on bibles.<sup>454</sup> Interestingly, this event seemed not to have been reported in the media until the prosecution of Abū Islām. For instance, *al-Ahrām* only mentioned it on 30 September 2012<sup>455</sup> and *al-Shurūq* on 26 September 2012<sup>456</sup> when his trial started. In addition, this act was also condemned by several Islamist actors. Thirty-five notifications were sent to the general prosecutor, amongst them one by *al-gamā‘a al-islāmiyya*.<sup>457</sup> A lawsuit was instigated against Aḥmad ‘Abdullah and his son and journalist Hānī Yāsīn,<sup>458</sup> and in January 2013 Abū Islām was condemned to eleven years of prison<sup>459</sup> for ‘crimes of despising the Christian religion,’ and

<sup>452</sup> Al-Hurra. 19 September 2012. الفيلم المسيء للإسلام.. الأفياط في دائرة الاتهام

<sup>453</sup> Copts Today. 13 September 2012. عناصر وسط متظاهرين السفارة تدعو لحرق الكنائس في مصر ردا علي الفيلم المسيء للرسول. Moheet. Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=32751> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>454</sup> Copts Today. 22 September 2012. “”أمن الدولة” تحقق في واقعة تمزيق الإنجيل أثناء أحداث السفارة الأمريكية”. Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=34184> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>455</sup> Al-Ahram. 30 September 2012. اليوم أولى جلسات محاكمة “لأبو إسلام” المتهم بحرق الإنجيل أمام السفارة الأمريكية. Number 45954. Year 137. Page 22.

<sup>456</sup> Al-Shuruq. 26 September 2012. إحالة “أبى إسلام” وابنه للجنح بتهمة تمزيق الإنجيل. Number 1334. Year 4. Page 1.

<sup>457</sup> Al-Shuruq. 25 September 2012. “أمن الدولة” تستدعي “أبو إسلام” المتهم بتمزيق الإنجيل. Number 1333. Year 4. Page 6.

<sup>458</sup> Al-Hayat. 1 October 2012. اشتباكات بين إسلاميين وأفياط في محاكمة سلفي أحرق الإنجيل. Number 18077. Page 6.

<sup>459</sup> Watani. 12 June 2013. الحكم بالسجن لآبو إسلام 11 سنة ولابنه ثمان سنوات . Doi:

<http://www.wataninet.com/%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D9%85%D8%AA%D9%86%D9%88%D8%B9%D8%A9/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%85-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%AC%D9%86-%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%88-%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85-11-%D8%B3%D9%86%D8%A9-%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%86%D9%87-%D8%AB%D9%85/121024/> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

‘desecrating its religious symbol, the Gospel,’ and his son to eight years of prison.<sup>460</sup> In addition, the action had drawn broad condemnation from leading political and Salafi actors. ‘Imād ‘Abd al-Ghafūr condemned it in a Friday sermon he gave on 14 September 2012 as ‘uncalculated and forbidden behavior.’<sup>461</sup> Similarly, Yāsir al-Burhāmī, deputy secretary of *al-da‘wa al-salafiyya*, issued a *fatwā* condemning the burning of the bible, for ‘it is never permissible.’<sup>462</sup> He conceded, however, that ‘it is correct that the gospel contains paragraphs and parts of the revealed Gospel, and there is monotheism and proof of the prophecies which assert the correctness of its meaning.’<sup>463</sup> Yāsir al-Burhāmī also questioned the correctness of the Torah, falsified with ‘distortions and changes.’ Thus it is not the Torah that was revealed to Moses. In addition, the member of the Shura Council of the Muslim Brotherhood, ‘Ashūr al-Hilwānī, focused more on the potential impact of this act which ‘calls for discord (*fitna*),’ and had the following to say about Christians: ‘They are our brothers in the nations and we live with them in affection and mutual respect.’<sup>464</sup> However, these condemnations did not seem to be unanimous, as a Salafi imam called Aḥmad Fu’ād al-Qāshūsh issued a *fatwā* in which he called on Muslim youths in the United States to kill the producers of the video, whom he described as ‘unbelievers.’<sup>465</sup>

With regards to the assaults on the houses of three of the people involved in the video, i.e. on their family, there is some confusion. On September 19, *al-Ahrām* reported that roughly two hundred ‘people’ attacked the house of Niqūlā Bāsīlī Niqūlā’s mother and that the police had to intervene to protect her.<sup>466</sup> However, as *al-Ahrām* mentioned that Niqūlā Bāsīlī Niqūlā had emigrated to the United States ten years ago – which is not correct –, it is not certain that this was really Niqūlā Bāsīlī Niqūlā. *Copts Today* reported a similar event on 18 September 2012 in which the house of Jūzīf Naṣr Allāh was attacked in Gizeh by ‘Salafis.’<sup>467</sup> The house of Mūrīs Ṣādiq was also reportedly attacked and the police did not interfere.<sup>468</sup> Interestingly,

<sup>460</sup> Al-Ahram 30. September 2012. اليوم أولى جلسات محاكمة “أبو إسلام” المهتم بحرق الإنجيل أمام السفارة الأمريكية. Number 45954. Year 137. Page 22.

<sup>461</sup> Al-Shuruq. 15 September 2012. حرق البعض للإنجيل تصرف غير محسوب ومحرم. Number 1323. Year 4. Page 8.

<sup>462</sup> Copts Today. 14 September 2012. برهامي : لا يجوز حرق "الإنجيل الحالي" ولو كان محرّفاً.. وتمزيقه إهانة لشيء فيه ذكر الله. Al-Yawm al-Sabi. Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=32915> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>463</sup> “الصحيح أنه يتضمن فقرات وأجزاء من الإنجيل المنزل، وفيه من التوحيد وإثبات النبوات ما يقطع بصحة معناه.”

<sup>464</sup> Copts Today. 14 September 2012. الإخوان : لا يمكن أن ننجز إلى حرق الإنجيل. Al-Tahrir. Doi:

<http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=32807> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>465</sup> Lebanon Files. 18 September 2012. امام سلفي مصري يصدر فتوى لقتل فريق الفيلم المسيء للإسلام. Doi:

<http://www.lebanonfiles.com/news/439079> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>466</sup> Al-Ahram. 19 September 2012. متظاهر يحاصرون منزل أحد منتجي الفيلم المسيء للرسول الكريم 200.

<sup>467</sup> Copts Today. 18 September 2012. السلفيون يتجمعون أمام منزل " جوزيف نصر الله " صاحب قناة الطريق“. Doi:

<http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=33564> (retrieved March 3, 2014).

<sup>468</sup> Copts Today. 13 September 2012. فيديو .. حرق منزل مورييس صادق بالقاهرة في وجود الشرطة المصرية“. Doi:

<http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=32652> (retrieved March 3, 2014).

however, the article by *al-Ahrām* provoked many reactions by readers who criticized this attack on ‘innocent people’ and emphasized the message of mercy and love of Muhammad<sup>469</sup>.

Lastly, the police arrested an inhabitant of the slum ‘Izbat al-Nakhl in Cairo because he had posted a link to the video and had thus reportedly provoked the anger of his neighbors.<sup>470</sup> According to *Le Monde*, the police arrested him in order to protect him.

Very few media investigated the impact of “The Innocence of Muslims” on Copts in Egypt. *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* reportedly investigated the impact and concluded that it was limited to the area around the US embassy in Cairo and that, in general, the Copts were more anxious since the Muslim Brotherhood had acceded to power.<sup>471</sup> Similarly, Rāmī Kāmil, a member of the Maspero Youth Union, underlined that this fear would remain as long as the state ‘remains silent on the violations of our rights.’<sup>472</sup> Former MP Muna Mukkaram, asserted that the Church played a key role in ‘diverting the anger against the Christians in the country’ (ibid). Interestingly, editor Caroline Kamil (Kārūlīn Kāmil) reported in *al-Shurūq* on her experience on Ramses Street in downtown Cairo, when she asked herself ‘Why does an angry street demand that I excuse myself for something I did not do?’ and wrote about a man who shouted at her: ‘unbelievers of the haters of the monkeys and the pigs.’<sup>473</sup>

#### ***Summary of Section 2.5.4***

This section has shown both Anti-Christian events and the efforts by the Muslim Brotherhood, the Nur Party, *al-da‘wa al-salafiyya*, and *al-gamā‘a al-islāmiyya* to counter these. Interestingly, while *al-da‘wa al-salafiyya* issued a fatwa, *al-gamā‘a al-islāmiyya* took legal measures.

#### ***Conclusion to Chapter 2***

The production and promotion of a video by a small Coptic extremist network could have had dangerous consequences for Copts in Egypt.

Besides the very negative depiction of Muhammad, these dire consequences could have resulted from the role the media played in this context. Salafi media drew attention to this video.

---

<sup>469</sup> Al-Ahram. 19 September 2012. متظاهر يحاصرون منزل أحد منتجي الفيلم المسيء للرسول الكريم 200.

<sup>470</sup> Le Monde. 20 September 2012. Dans la diaspora copte, des extrémistes minoritaires mais très actifs.

<sup>471</sup> Al-Sharq al-Awsat. 17 September 2012. :Doi . مسلمون ومسيحيون مصريون يحاولون تجاوز حقل ألغام الفيلم المسيء . <http://archive.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&issue=12347&article=695645&search=%25C7%25E1%25D%25ED%25E1%25E3%2520%25C7%25E1%25E3%25D3%25ED%25C1&state=true#.VjIaI25OfIV> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

<sup>472</sup> Al-Safir. 22 September 2012. أقباط مصر متضامنون ... لكنهم قلقون. Number 12290. Year 37. Page 13.

<sup>473</sup> “كفرة من أحقاد القردة والخنازير”

Al-Shuruq. 13 September 2012. أن أكون فتاة مسيحية في شارع مسلم غاضب. Number 1321. Year 4. Page 5.

Yet, in a similar and a more disguised way, general media in Egypt also played an escalating role, as they discussed the video before the assault on the US embassy took place. Similarly, the reports on the reactions from the Islamist and secular parties, al-Azhar and the *muftī* seem to suggest that it was actually the media that connected this video with the Copts in Egypt. Another potential cause for violent backlashes against Christians in Egypt was the seemingly complete failure of the state to provide security for embassies and assert control over downtown Cairo.

A very broad range of actors in Egypt reacted to the video and tried to mobilise against it. First of all, the churches were very vocal in voicing their condemnation of the video. The Coptic Orthodox Church in particular reacted many times as part of a collective effort. Similarly, a number of Coptic Christian organizations and Christian actors issued comments on “The Innocence of Muslims” and tried to contribute to the dissociation of Christians in Egypt from it. Besides this, the official Islamic institutions, Islamist and Salafī parties and organizations voiced their condemnation and tried to mobilise. In contrast, the attitude of President Muḥammad Mursī was seen as rather passive and as failing to meet the alleged expectations of the people. Overall, the various actors seemed to have seen the video as an opportunity to exploit for their personal interests. For instance, the *muftī* was able to fashion himself as the very embodiment of Sunni Islam, although this role is usually attributed to al-Azhar (see further below). For Islamist and Salafī actors, this “crisis” was also an opportunity to appear as moderate and serious political contenders. In addition, a number of secular and moderate Islamic political parties condemned the video but their level of mobilization was low. Besides this, a mobilization also took place without any leadership or a minimum level of organization.

Overall, the video was rarely mentioned by its title and in every case it was understood as a film. In many instances, “The Innocence of Muslims” was simply referred to as an “offense,” as “despising religions,” an “attack,” “an insult” to Islam, Muhammad, *muqaddasāt*, Muslims, to provoke their feelings. It seemed that no actor, except for *al-da‘wa al-salafīyya* and the Coalition of Egypt’s Copts had actually seen the video. A few other Christian organizations discussed the history of the video to point out the manufactured crisis. In addition, the video was also seen as an “assault” on human rights and a distortion of the image of Islam. In many reactions the video was denounced for allegedly aiming to provoke sectarian strife and divisions in Egypt. The Coptic intellectual Gamāl As‘ad connected the video to the alleged plan of emptying Egypt of its Copts.

To some extent, the counter-argumentation to “The Innocence of Muslims” as an “offense” to Islam (and not denouncing the violence against Copts in Egypt) was very elaborate in some instances. For instance, the *mufī* tried to promote a positive image of Islam, while the *shaykh al-Azhar* developed a long analysis of the West. Some Islamist actors connected the video to the alleged Western fear of the spread of Islam and an Islamic awakening. In a number of reactions, the video was seen as an example of the alleged double standards of the West when it comes to this very freedom of speech which, according to the actors in Egypt, is quite often a pretence to offend religious contents and feelings. As a result, many actors called for international laws to prohibit such acts. Interestingly, a few Christian organizations and actors demanded the Egyptian government strip the producers of the video of their Egyptian citizenship. Other, mostly Islamist, actors called on Muḥammad Mursī to temporarily suspend diplomatic relations with the United States.

The discussions of the video’s background by the various actors suggest a strategy to dissociate the Christians in Egypt from the video. In this regard a certain progression seemed to have taken place, from discussing the involvement of “a number of Copts in the diaspora” in the video towards a vague background, sometimes connected to the US or “Zionism.” While the protest at the US embassy on 11 September 2012 clearly designated Mūrīs Šādiq the producer of the video, and the media widely discussed Coptic involvement, the various Islamic actors increasingly turned vague when mentioning this issue. At first the Nur Party even misunderstood the video as a “Dutch film.” Overall, all Islamist parties and organizations increasingly ascribed a very vague background to the video. For instance, *al-da‘wa al-salafiyya* conceded the Coptic background but insisted on the need not to extend the generalization to all Copts in Egypt and instead made Zionism responsible. Similarly, the churches either remained silent on the involvement of Copts in the diaspora or implicitly acknowledged it by dissociating Christians in Egypt from the video.

Avoiding a clear background to the video can be understood as a strategy by Islamic actors to dissociate Christians in Egypt from it. In particular, the attitudes of Islamist parties and organizations were very telling and surprising as they consistently tried to prevent backlashes against Christians. Usually intolerant actors like *al-da‘wa al-salafiyya* and its political arm the Nur Party, *al-gamā‘a al-islāmiyya* and the Building and Construction Party all displayed great efforts in this direction and insisted on the Copts being part of the Egyptian nation. Another strategy was to distinguish between “bad” Copts who had participated in the video, and “good” Copts who condemned the video. On the one hand, these stances were

defined by the requirements of a new competitive and democratic environment and also by radical elements within the streams that compelled them to appear moderate. On the other hand, these stances also showed a consistent effort to protect Christians, as the burning of the Gospel by Abu Islam were condemned and attracted counter-measures (legal prosecution, issuing a *fatwā*). At the same time, however, the Islamist stream in general – preachers, organizations, media, politics – seemed to expect “the Christians” and their institutions to condemn this film, and basically to show solidarity *and loyalty*. In this regard, the Christian Egyptians were designated by these actors mostly as “Christians,” and “Copts.” In a few cases, *al-da‘wa al-salafiyya* and preacher Wisām ‘Abd al-Warāth also used the Quranic term “Nazarenes.” Particularly interesting were the unintended acknowledgments of the Copts being part of Egypt. For instance, although the Salafī Front engaged in a harsh controversy with the Coptic Orthodox Church, it implicitly acknowledged the church as a national, state institution. Similarly, in many instances, like that of the *muftī*, Christian diversity was reduced to “one Egyptian Church.” At the same time, however, the various Christian-Muslim reactions displayed the need for Coptic visibility and participation to legitimize the protests against the video. The extent to which various Islamist actors and parties participated in or organized protests, conferences and visits suggests that these were another means to increase their political credentials. The protests and conferences were more strongly dominated by the Muslim Brotherhood, while, for instance *al-gamā‘a al-islāmiyya* failed to attract high-ranking Christian actors.

On the other hand, the Christian reactions to “The Innocence of Muslims” were interesting in terms of motivations, strategies used, and criticisms directed at the reactions in Egypt to the video. As previously underlined, the crisis of the “The Innocence of Muslims” was a very dangerous moment for the Christians in Egypt. The fear of backlashes against Copts was expressed in some instances, especially by the April 6 Movement and Father Fīlūbātīr Gamīl ‘Azīz. In most reactions, however, this fear was not expressed at all but was evident in the number of reactions and the diversity of actors who reacted. In particular, the fact that the Holy Synod of the Coptic Orthodox Church met three times to discuss this issue clearly hints at the danger. Yet, the tone and the content of the reactions of the Coptic Catholic Church suggest that the feeling of fear was not widely present. In addition, other factors served to motivate the Christian reactions. The content of the reactions and previous reactions to similar events (books, films) demonstrated that the Coptic Orthodox Church often resorts to censorship.

The Christian reactions showed that various strategies were used to dissociate Christians in Egypt from this video. First of all, all Christian reactions condemned “The Innocence of

Muslims.” Secondly, the Coptic Orthodox Church in particular established itself as the sole legitimate representative of the Christians in Egypt (and abroad). Similarly, a number of Christian actors claimed to speak in the name of Christians. Thirdly, various Christian actors and institutions, such as the churches and some Coptic organizations were very proactive not only in participating in joint Christian-Muslim reactions but also in taking the initiative for inclusive protests, conferences, and visits. A fourth strategy was to discuss and question the background of the video; either by minimising the involvement of Copts in the diaspora (not mentioning them, or emphasising the Egyptian identity of the producers instead of the Coptic identity, or defining it as an individual act). Some Christian actors ascribed the video to Zionism. In this regard, some Christian actors and organizations (especially those discussed in Section 2.3.2) reduced the background to the involvement of Mūrīs Šādiq – and thus recognized the involvement of “a Copt in the diaspora” – but pointed to the history of controversy over this person within the Coptic community in Egypt. A fifth strategy which was especially used by the churches was the counter-argument that the “offenses” displayed in the video contradicted Christianity and the teachings of Jesus Christ. Finally, a key strategy was the use of the discourse of national unity. Yet this discourse was not only used to express complete solidarity with Muslims but also to counter criticisms directed against Christians in September 2012 (this issue will be discussed below).

In contrast, there was very little criticism uttered by Christian actors and institutions during the crisis. For instance, the violent reactions and the storming of the US embassy were only criticised by a minor cleric in al-Minūfiyya. Besides this, only a very few Coptic organizations and some more in the diaspora criticised some issues, like the alleged double standards in Egypt when it comes to offensive religious content. Interestingly, Fīlūbātir Gamīl ‘Azīz is the only Coptic actor who openly criticised the very fact that the presidency, the official Islamic institutions and Islamist actors had contributed to creating the “crisis” of “The Innocence of Muslims.” Overall, it seemed that the criticism was formulated by “minor” actors, i.e. the Coptic Catholic Church and the non-recognized Evangelical churches because Islamist actors tended to consider the Coptic Orthodox Church the sole representative and spokesman of the Copts.

Given all these results, the crisis of “The Innocence of Muslims” was also interesting as it raised the question of Christian-Muslim coexistence in Egypt. In this regard, the reactions to the video displayed a very high level of denial both by Christian and Muslim actors who simply did not discuss the accusations uttered in the first part of the video and instead consistently

underlined national unity. Although this unity was consistently emphasised, there were no elaborate discussions about what this unity consisted of. Muslim actors in particular reduced Christian-Muslim coexistence to a brotherhood and the systematic distinction between Christians and Muslims when formulating unity. In contrast, representatives of the Coptic Orthodox Church formulated a coexistence that rested on shared values, the same monotheism, the same history and an almost biological unity (“woven fabric”). Overall, both Christian and Muslim actors mainly framed religious coexistence in the context of national unity. This discourse of national unity with its structured slogans was pervasive. It was a means used by Christian actors to divert attention for something that was produced in the United States. It was an approach that pervaded the attitude of the media (connecting a video produced abroad with an expected solidarity by Christians), the state, and the Islamist parties and organizations. Yet, to some extent, it was within this framework of national unity that a partnership, equality, and coexistence with the “Nazarenes” was possible and thinkable, although it contradicted the increasingly intolerant stance of the Salafī stream towards Copts. Thus, the discourse of “*al-waṭan al-wāḥid*” was also a means to appear more moderate and more pragmatic.

Finally, a key issue was the political benefit many Muslim actors could draw from “The Innocence of Muslims.” Firstly, many Islamist political actors put pressure on Muḥammad Mursī to take a firm position to expose him as a “Muslim” president who reportedly failed the expectations of the people in Egypt. Secondly, many actors tried to take the lead in this issue and to mobilise via protests and conferences. As previously mentioned, expressing support for the Christians and protecting them against backlashes was another way to appear to be a moderate and serious actor. Yet, those very actors – the Nur Party for instance – were also pressured by the course of events, especially by the extremist and violent reactions in the own ranks. In addition, the fact that on the one hand, “the street” seemingly expected a strong Muslim reaction against the video and that, on the other hand, members of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Nur Party adapted their positions (for instance exonerating the US nationals) forecasts a likely break between the leadership and the base.



## **Chapter 3 Lebanon: Resisting Zionism**

### **Introduction**

#### **Chapter Content and Sources**

The chapter will start with a description of the protests to highlight the discrepancy between Hezbollah's peaceful protests against the video and the clashes and lack of leadership which characterised reactions in Sunni areas (3.1). The chapter aims to show how Hezbollah and its partner, the Amal Movement, basically "created" the event of "The Innocence of Muslims." The chapter will then analyse the different reactions displayed by political partners (3.2), official Islamic institutions and churches (3.3), the state (3.4), and non-political Islamic, Islamist, Christian, and other actors (3.5). Finally, a long section is dedicated to the broad range of joint Christian-Muslim relations at various levels (3.6).

This analysis is mainly based on reports in Lebanese newspapers and church media. Moreover, *al-Tawhīd*, the website of the Islamist organization *ḥarakat al-tawḥīd al-islāmī*, (see Section 5.3.15) was especially valuable as it cited many reactions.

Lebanon is a unique case in the Middle East, as on the one hand it is the country where "sectarianism" is politically most deeply rooted and implemented, yet it is this political system of confessionalism which guarantees a Christian (Maronite) hold over the state. However, the state does not have one official religion. Lebanon recognizes eighteen communities. In addition, four churches have their see in Lebanon; the Maronite Church, the Armenian Apostolic Church of Cilicia, the Armenian Catholic Church, and the Syriac Catholic Church (Pucini 1997, 354-355). Moreover, the Greek Orthodox Church, the Greek Catholic Melkite Church, the Syriac Orthodox Church, the Chaldean Church, the Latin Church (Roman Catholic Church), and the Assyrian Church also have one or several dioceses there (ibid). Besides, the Greek Catholic Patriarchate, the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, and the Syriac Orthodox have several sees; Damascus, Ain Traz (Lebanon) and Rabieh (Lebanon); Damascus, Balamand (Lebanon); Damascus and Atchana (Lebanon) respectively. The seminar of the Syriac Orthodox Church was located for some time in Atchana.

#### **An Ongoing Demographic Conflict**

The number of Christians in Lebanon is estimated at 36%, i.e. roughly one million of the 4.2 million inhabitants of Lebanon (Heyberger 2013, 17). However, the political system

does not reflect this new reality but is based on a census carried out in 1932 (Heyberger 2013, 15). Since then, the proportion of Christians has decreased due to lower birth rates and a high level of emigration.

To some extent, there has been an ongoing silent war over demographics. In the 1920s, displaced Armenians who had survived the genocide and had been relocated to Lebanon were granted Lebanese citizenship (Migliorino 2008, 54). Similarly, Christian Palestinians who fled to Lebanon in 1948 and 1967 were granted easier access to citizenship (Mikdashi 2011). Therefore, Maya Makdashi concludes that the issue of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon is actually a problem of ‘poor Sunni Muslims’ (ibid). Recently, the former Maronite Bishop of Baalbek and Dayr al-Aḥmar, Sam‘ān ‘Aṭā’ Allāh (whose reaction to the video will be mentioned further below), expressed his concerns over the presence of Syrian refugees in Lebanon:

We have two million Syrians in the country as refugees. [...] Many will return to their homeland when the war is over. But many refugees will remain and apply for Lebanese citizenship in ten years. [...] What will become of us Christians then? ... They defile crosses, statues of the Virgin Mary.<sup>474</sup>

While there is competition over demographics, the various political forces on both Muslim and Christian sides have made accommodations and benefited from this confessional system. However, among these communities, only a few control the most important positions: The president is a Maronite, the prime minister a Sunni Muslim, the speaker of the parliament a Shia Muslim, and the vice speaker of parliament a Greek Orthodox Christian.

### **The Question of Sectarianism**

Lebanon is often regarded in the Arab world as counter-model because of the politicisation and institutionalisation of communities, i.e. *tā'ifiyya* (“confessionalism” or “sectarianism”). However, there has been much scholarly discussion in recent years about the essentializing approach to sectarianism in Lebanon. Ussama Makdisi stated that sectarianism ‘is the modern story’ (Makdisi 2000, 2) whose institutionalisation started in 1860 with the civil war in Mount Lebanon. However, Makdisi insists on the economic, demographic, and social background of this war rather than on its religious dimension. Prior to the nineteenth century, the Druze constituted the dominant class in Mount Lebanon, and in the nineteenth century poor Maronites settled to cultivate of silk, agriculture, and practise crafts, repopulating areas left

---

<sup>474</sup> Byzantine Catholic Church in America. 22 August 2015. Prelate: Muslim refugees place future of Lebanon’s Christians in jeopardy. Doi: <http://byzcath.org/index.php/news-mainmenu-49/4841-prelate-muslim-refugees-place-future-of-lebanon-s-christians-in-jeopardy> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

behind by Shias (De Clerck 2008, 60-61). Factors including economic hardship, land scarcity, the demographic explosion of Maronites, the Ottoman reforms, and the Egyptian occupation in 1840, upset this equilibrium (see Makdisi 2000, 98). When Muḥammad ‘Alī’s army occupied Mount Lebanon in 1840, it imposed conscription and provoked a revolt by both Druze and Maronites. When the Maronites began revolting against the Druze landlords, the Druze massacred Maronites in 1860 in an effort to “cleanse” the area and re-assert their presence (Makdisi 2000, 139). It up-rooted thousands and, more importantly, resulted in a memory of animosity (Makdisi 2000, 98). Subsequently, Mount Lebanon was divided between an area dominated politically by Christians and an area dominated politically by Druze. Under the French Mandate, the sectarian system was further developed and opposed by Sunni Muslim leaders: ‘tandis que le pays est uni, on essaie de découper la communauté musulmane en sectes ... alors que Sunnites, Chiïtes, Druzes, Alaouites forment un seul peuple et viennent d’une même source’ (Rondot 1947, 68).

Interestingly, the sectarian system has resulted in several outcomes. It has increased the importance of so called sectarian leaders (*al-zu‘amā’ ṭā’ifiyyūn*) upon whom entire communities depend for their economic and social welfare (see Mikdashi 2012). In addition, the creation of religious institutions for the Muslim communities (the “clericalisation” of Islam) has led to attempts by political leaders to encroach on and influence these religious leaders, in particular the Sunni and Druze communities (see Section 3.3.1). Furthermore, the survival of the sectarian system – initially justified as a temporary evil (Mikdashi 2011) - has led smaller communities to establish their own sectarian institutions in order to compensate for their lack of representation within the state. This “sectarianization” of communities has affected the Alawi, the Syriac Orthodox, the Greek Orthodox, and the Greek Catholic communities to varying degrees.<sup>475</sup>

When looking more closely at the pre-civil war situation in Lebanon, it becomes clear that the cleavages were not so much along religious lines – as the Christian militias later claimed – but rather along socio-economic default lines. Georges Corm notes that these main default lines were between Mount Lebanon and the cities along the coast (Corm 1992, 149). Thus, in Beirut, where Sunni Muslims and the Greek Orthodox have historically dominated, the Maronites were considered recent migrants (Heyberger 2013, 87). During the Civil War, socio-economically marginalised communities, such as the Maronites and the Shia, used militias to overthrow the elite (Corm 1992, 77). For some time, the Christian Maronite Kataeb (*ḥizb al-katā’ib al-lubnāniyya*) even demanded an end to the sectarian system (Rondot 1947, 99).

---

<sup>475</sup> See Sections 3.3.1; 3.5.2; 3.3.2 and 3.5.2; 3.5.2

Furthermore, Georges Corm qualifies the idea of a passive, non-interventionist state, and refers to the political economy of President Fu'ād Shihāb (Corm 1992, 151), which was similar to Gamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir's policy.

All in all, the actors of the Civil War followed both a sectarian logic and an aim at social upheaval. For instance, the Christian militias were involved in the religious cleansing of what would become an embryonic Christian state in Eastern Beirut. While under the Druze leader Walid Joumblatt (Walīd Junbalāt), the Christians living in the Shūf were displaced in a similar way to the war of 1860. As will be shown in this chapter, different regions of Lebanon were affected to varying degrees by cleansing during the Civil War. Alongside those in eastern Beirut and the Shūf, the population was also displaced in the South (see section 3.6) but less affected in the Beqaa valley (Biqā') and the North. Another factor that severely disrupted religious coexistence was the Israeli occupation of the southern part of the country from the late 1970s until 2000. During this time, the (Christian) Lebanese Forces killed another, competing Maronite leader, Tony Frangié, who had aligned himself with Syria. However, throughout the Civil War, there were examples of local resistance to this sectarian logic.<sup>476</sup>

In 1989, the Taef Agreement finally put an end to the Civil War. It maintained the confessional system and the Christian Maronite hold over the state, albeit decreasing the power of the president. In addition, it ordered the disarmament of all militias except for Hezbollah (Knudsen; Kerr 2012, 27), which was considered part of the "national resistance" against the Israeli occupation in the South. The subsequent period until 2000 was known as a period of "frustration" for the Christians (Fleyfel 2013, 55).

### **Increasing Polarization**

The introduction of UN Resolution 1559 in September 2004 which demanded the disarmament of all militias<sup>477</sup> together with the assassination of Prime Minister Rafīq al-Ḥarīrī on 14 February 2005 both reshuffled and deeply polarised the Lebanese political landscape. The withdrawal of Syria after twenty-nine years of occupation compelled Hezbollah to join the government of Fu'ād al-Sinyūra in order to preserve its interests (Knudsen; Kerr 2012, 6). The war against Israel in July 2006 caused the death of thousands of civilians and displaced almost one million people (Mikdashi 2011) but temporarily lessened this polarization. Yet Hezbollah

---

<sup>476</sup> For instance, the mainly Shia quarter of Nab'a in Eastern Beirut was encircled by Christian militias, except for its northern part next to the Armenian quarter. The Armenian forces remained neutral and continued to supply the Shia quarter with food, medicine and arms (Sankari 2005, 158-159).

<sup>477</sup> UN Resolution 1559, dated 2 September 2004, demanded the retrieval of all foreign armies from Lebanon and the de-militarization of all militias (including Hezbollah). It introduced another destabilising factor (Knudsen; Kerr 2012, 10).

seemed invincible and was at the climax of its national and regional popularity. In May 2008, following a decision by the government to uproot Hezbollah's secret communication networks, the latter deployed in Beirut (Knudsen; Kerr 2012, 7). A small-scale civil war took place between the pro-Hezbollah alliance and its political contenders, killing over one hundred people in Beirut and the mountains (Mikdashi 2011).

In the aftermath of the assassination of Rafīq al-Ḥarīrī, the March 14 Alliance and the March 8 Alliance emerged with competing strategic outlooks and alliances. The more Western-orientated, pro-Saudi, and increasingly anti-Hezbollah March 14 Alliance is made up of the al-Ḥarīrī family's Future Movement, the Christian Lebanese Forces, the Christian *ḥizb al-katā'ib al-lubnāniyya*, and the Lebanese branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, *al-jamā'a al-islāmiyya*. Following his release from prison Samīr Ja'ja', the leader of the Lebanese Forces and former warlord, became one of the main figures in the March 14 Alliance (Fleyfel 2013, 67). The March 8 Alliance comprises Hezbollah, the Shia Amal Movement, the Christian Free Patriotic Movement, the Christian Marada Movement, the cross-sectarian Syrian Social National Party, and smaller Alawi and Druze parties. What unites this very heterogeneous party is an anti-Israeli, pro-Syrian, and pro-Iranian outlook. In addition, the Druze leader Walīd Junbalāt has been known for his alliance switching.

In the mid-2000s, the Future Movement began to display a growing anti-Hezbollah stance. It increasingly questioned Hezbollah's legitimacy to bear arms, although the Future Movement had previously considered them part of the national defense (Knudsen; Kerr 2012, 8). In addition, Rafīq al-Ḥarīrī had previously established his monopoly over the political and religious representation of the Sunni community but this monopoly was increasingly questioned (see Sections 3.3.1; 3.5.1) and when his son, Sa'd al-Ḥarīrī, left Lebanon following the collapse of his government in 2011, the community faced a leadership gap. This crisis is very clear in the context of "The Innocence of Muslims."

In 2011 (until 2014) a new government was installed under the leadership of Najīb Mīqātī. The latter became prime minister with the support of Hezbollah, but he had significant autonomy (Knudsen; Kerr 2012, 141). The March 8 Alliance detained two thirds of the portfolio in the government. Yet it had to rely on its partnership with Walīd Junbalāt, the Druze leader of the Socialist Progressive party.

## The Syrian War

By 2012, the war in Syria was already having an effect on Lebanon. Several political forces were heavily involved in the conflict, either on the side of the Syrian regime or on the side of the opposition. The Syrian opposition was supported by the Future Movement<sup>478</sup> and several Salafi leaders in Lebanon, who provided it with food, weapon supplies, and medical aid.<sup>479</sup> In addition, weapons were shipped to Syria via Lebanon.<sup>480</sup> Furthermore, several areas in Lebanon served as areas for the rebels in Syria to retreat to: the central Beqaa around Barr Ilyās and ‘Arsāl Ersal in al-Biqā‘ valley.<sup>481</sup> Another hint of that overlap was provided by violent clashes in February 2012 between the two neighbourhoods of Tripoli, which saw the mainly Sunni inhabited neighbourhood of Bab al-Tabbaneh (Bāb al-Tabānna) pitted against the mainly Alawi dominated neighbourhood of Jabal Mohsen (Jabal Muḥsin).<sup>482</sup> Both areas are very poor. However, these violent clashes were not only a consequence of the war in Syria; they also reflected wounds dating back to the Lebanese Civil War (ibid). In the context of “The Innocence of Muslims,” Hezbollah’s rivals denounced the party for its involvement in the war, an accusation it consistently denied or silenced. Hezbollah’s siding with the Syrian regime finally became evident during the battle of al-Qūṣayr in May 2013.<sup>483</sup>

### 3.1 The Competition for the Defence of Islam

This chapter will start by looking at the various levels of mobilization in Lebanese Muslim communities (the Christian-Muslim reactions will be analysed in another section below). It will show the sharp contrast in the mobilization between the Sunni forces on the one hand and Hezbollah and the Amal Movement on the other hand. Section 3.1.3 will show that the protests in Palestinian refugee camps constituted an important part of the (Sunni) mobilization against “The Innocence of Muslims.” Interestingly, however, the Palestinian camps did not mobilise at all for the Hezbollah/Amal series of protests (see Section 3.1.2). In

---

<sup>478</sup> Al-Akhbar English. 16 May 2012. A Sunni Emirate in the North. Doi: <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/sunni-emirate-north> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>479</sup> Al-Akhbar English. 9 October 2012. A Shadow State in Lebanon for the Syrian Opposition. Doi: <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/shadow-state-lebanon-syrian-opposition> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>480</sup> Al-Akhbar English. 5 May 2012. Lebanon-Syria Border: A Weapons Market Boom. Doi: <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/lebanon-syria-border-weapons-market-boom> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>481</sup> Al-Akhbar English. 9 October 2012. A Shadow State in Lebanon for the Syrian Opposition.

<sup>482</sup> Al-Akhbar English. 14 February 2012. Tripoli Clashes: Keeping Conflict Alive. Doi: <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/tripoli-clashes-keeping-conflict-alive> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>483</sup> New York Times. 19 May 2013. Hezbollah Aids Syrian Military in a Key Battle. Doi: [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/20/world/middleeast/syrian-army-moves-to-rebel-held-qusayr.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/20/world/middleeast/syrian-army-moves-to-rebel-held-qusayr.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0) (retrieved May 17, 2016).

contrast, the aspiring Sunni Islamist leader Aḥmad al-Asīr did turn to young Palestinians as part of his protest (Section 3.5.1). Both this section and Section 3.5.1 on Islamist Actors and Organizations show the level of Islamic mobilization against “The Innocence of Muslims.”

### 3.1.1 Tripoli: An Abandoned City

During the Civil War, the Christians living in Tripoli left and the city was cut off from the rest of the country (Rougier 2001). Besides important Sunni and Alawi communities, the city also comprised Greek Catholic Melkite and Maronite communities (Pall 2013, 31). After the Civil War, the city continued to face many problems. It is, for instance, divided into a western part, where the middle class lives, and a poorer eastern, part, where the two Sunni and Alawi neighbourhoods of Bāb al-Tabānna and Jabal Muḥsin are located (Rougier 2011, 11). The Sunni community’s official Islamic institution, the *dār al-fatwā*, faces a serious lack of authority and power there, concerning in a city as strongly Sunni populated as Tripoli. For instance, it controls only forty of the city’s approximately 110 mosques (Pall 2013, 32). As a result, marginal Islamist and Salafī movements have tended to fill this gap, such as purist and *ḥarakī* Salafī streams, *al-Aḥbāsh*, originally from Ethiopia, *al-jamā‘a al-islāmiyya*, and Tablighi Jamaat (*Tablīgh-i Jamā‘at*), originally from South Asia (Pall 2013, 31). In recent years, the Salafists have increasingly come to consider themselves the vanguard against the ‘Shia plot’ and ‘imported Khomeinism’ (Pall 2013, 42). Purist Salafism promotes a quietist attitude and obedience to the ruler, whereas *ḥarakī* Salafism promotes political activism (Pall 2013, 11).

Seemingly in reaction to “The Innocence of Muslims,” violent reactions took place on Friday 14 September 2012 in Tripoli. A branch of Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) and Hardees were attacked and burnt, while pictures of Benedict XVI, who was arriving that same day in Lebanon, were reportedly also burnt.<sup>484</sup> KFC had already been attacked in 2003 during the Iraq war.<sup>485</sup> In addition, *al-Safīr* reported that there were attempts to storm the Serail, the seat of government in the city (ibid). The exact background to these events is unclear. Yet it became a powerful means of pressure used by the March 8 Alliance, especially by Hezbollah and the Amal Movement.

The previous day, on September 13, several hundred youths protested in Tripoli, the protest was reportedly primarily directed against ‘worldwide Zionism, Israel and the United

---

<sup>484</sup> Al-Akhbar. 15 September 2012. غضب طرابلس على أميركا: قتل وهجوم على البابا. Doi: <https://www.al-akhbar.com/node/167257> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>485</sup> Al-Safir. 15 September 2012. “هارديز” يوقع قتيلاً و 25 جريحا. Number 12284. Year 39. Page 6.

States.<sup>486</sup> Following Friday prayers, the Hizb ut-Tahrir (*hizb al-tahrīr*) and other organizations continued to protest outside the mosques, while, according to the media, Islamist, Salafi and other organizations did not participate.<sup>487</sup> On 20 September 2012 *shaykh* Nabīl Raḥīm issued a public statement regarding the events. Nabīl Raḥīm is a leader of the Fatah al-Islam group (*fath al-islām*) and was long accused of being a member of Al-Qaida.<sup>488</sup> He was born in 1971 and first joined the *al-Aḥbāsh* movement, before reportedly co-founding Fatah al-Islam (ibid). In *al-Nashra*'s article, Nabīl Raḥīm denied any connection between the Islamist movement and the violence which took place.<sup>489</sup> Instead, he reported that the “*shuyūkh*” had intended to stay in the mosques on that Friday, but that some three hundred young men with no connection to the ‘Islamic streams and no connections to the prominent figures of *shuyūkh*, ‘*ulamā*’ and the preachers’ left the mosque. He concluded that these riots only ‘benefit the plan of Asad’ to enter Tripoli militarily. Similarly, the Hizb ut-Tahrir denied its youth’s involvement in the clashes.<sup>490</sup>

As a result, the targets of these violent clashes – KFC, Hardees, the Serail, and reportedly pictures of Pope Benedict XVI – showed that the anger went beyond outrage over the video, and seemed to be directed at the United States, the West, and the government. The reported targeting of Benedict XVI can be viewed either as the pope serving as an *ersatz* symbol of the West or as general anger towards Christians. These riots put tremendous pressure not only on the Salafi stream in Tripoli but also on the Future Movement and the March 14 Alliance in general. Thus, the peaceful and highly mobilized protests organized by Hezbollah and the Amal Movement can be viewed in sharp contrast to the violent “events of Tripoli” and thus as a means of putting pressure on the March 14 Alliance. As a result, the newspaper *al-Safīr* questioned the positions of both the Future Movement and *al-jamā‘a al-islāmiyya*: ‘Why did the neither “Future Movement,” “*al-jamā‘a al-islāmiyya*” nor any of the organized Salafi streams take the initiative and call for protests?’<sup>491</sup> However, during his protest in Beirut,

<sup>486</sup> Al-Nahar. 14 September 2012. اعتصام ومسيرة في طرابلس واجراءات احترازية. Number 24848. Year 80. Page 5.

<sup>487</sup> Al-Safir. 15 September 2012. طرابلس: إحراق “كنتاكي” و “هارديز” يوقع قتيلاً و 25 جريحاً. Number 12284. Year 39. Page 6.

<sup>488</sup> Al-Akhbar. 11 December 2008. حقائق عن الشيخ نبيل رحيم ومجموعته. Doi: <http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/125819> (retrieved May 17, 2016)

<sup>489</sup> Al-Nashra. 20 September 2012. من احرقوا مطعم كي أف سي ليسوا من الاسلاميين في طرابلس. Doi: [www.elnashra.com/news/show/525274/%D9%86%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%84-%D8%B1%D8%AD%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%82%D9%88%D8%A7-%D9%85%D8%B7%D8%B9%D9%85-KFC-%D8%B7%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%84%D8%B3-%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%A7-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A%D9%8A%D9%86](http://www.elnashra.com/news/show/525274/%D9%86%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%84-%D8%B1%D8%AD%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%82%D9%88%D8%A7-%D9%85%D8%B7%D8%B9%D9%85-KFC-%D8%B7%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%84%D8%B3-%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%A7-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A%D9%8A%D9%86) (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>490</sup> Al-Nahar. 16 September 2012. تدابير أمنية في طرابلس إثر حرق ال”كي اف سي” ... الجسر: ما حدث اساء الى المدينة و الاسلام. Number 24850. Year 80. Page 5.

<sup>491</sup> Al-Safir. 18 September. أين “المستقبل” و “الجماعة” من الإساءة للنبي محمد؟. Number 12286. Year 39. Page 4.

Note the quotation marks used to designate the organizations. *Al-Safīr* leans more towards the March 8 Alliance. *Al-Nahār* newspaper makes use of similar quotation marks when mentioning Hezbollah.



Aḥmad al-Asīr did mention the attack on a branch of KFC in Nabatieh, a Hezbollah/Amal stronghold in southern Lebanon. A firebomb was thrown at the KFC restaurant in Nabatieh on 19 September 2012.<sup>492</sup> Yet this article did not mention whether this firebomb had any connection to “The Innocence of Muslims.” The protest by Aḥmad al-Asīr in Beirut on 21 September 2012 was an attempt to break the monopoly Hezbollah and the Amal Movement had on peaceful and “civilized” protests and on the defence of Islam (see Section 3.5.1.1).

On 19 September 2012, professional associations, administrative officials, and representatives of several other institutions gathered together in Tripoli’s *dār al-fatwā* together with the *mufī* of Tripoli, Mālik al-Shi‘ār.<sup>493</sup> Besides condemning “The Innocence of Muslims,” the gathering also discussed several issues relating to the city. To some extent though, the condemnation of the video also represented a condemnation of the role of the media; ‘harshly condemned the film offending the right (*ḥaqq*) of Islam that was lately conveyed by the media’ and produced one year ago. It referred to the law criminalizing anti-Semitism and the denial of the Holocaust, stating that the pretence of freedom of speech was not acceptable in the case of this video. The statement asserted that the video only benefited ‘Zionist-American thought.’ The participants regarded the video as the cause for a new wave of violence in the city. Thus, the final statement made by this broad gathering was mostly concerned with the current situation in Tripoli; the economic situation and especially the violence, in particular that displayed against the ‘noble Alawi community’ (see Section 3.3.1.4). It stated that “sectarian violence” was ‘something Tripoli has not known in its history.’ Yet it asserted that the burning of the KFC and the Hardees was the act of ‘people under a certain security cover.’ In particular, the statement is also a criticism directed at the media, for its role in tarnishing Tripoli’s image, and against the city’s political leadership. The gathering states that it took place at such a late date because it wanted to give the ‘Tripoli politicians, ministers, and MPs the opportunity to carry out their duty and condemn this sinful act and remove its traces [?].’ The statement ended with an appeal: ‘In all its diversity, Tripoli insists that it is not outside the state. It is upon the state in all its devices to embrace this national, believing, and patient city.’

Thus, the gathering was an expression of a deep feeling of having being politically and economically abandoned, falling back on what seemed to be the last remaining leader, the *mufī* of Tripoli, a representative of a highly criticized and weak institution.

---

<sup>492</sup> Al-Watan al-Arabi. 20 September 2012. إطلاق نار على مطعم "كي اف سي" في النبطية. Doi: <http://www.alwatanalarabi.com/index.php?url=news/display/article/11681> (retrieved March 4, 2016).

<sup>493</sup> Al-Anwar. 19 September 2012. اجتماع لفعاليات طرابلس برئاسة المفتي الشعار. اجتماع لفعاليات طرابلس برئاسة المفتي الشعار. Dan الفيلم المسيء للإسلام وردات الفعل. Number 18145. Year 53. Doi: <http://www.archive.alanwar.com/article.php?articleID=172659&issuedate=20120919> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

### 3.1.2 Hezbollah: Leading the Resistance

Overall, Hezbollah, especially its secretary general, Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh, framed “The Innocence of Muslims” in the context of sectarian strife between Christians and Muslims in the region and thus saw it as requiring a joint reaction and counter-response. Although the video was understood primarily as an offense targeting Islam, speeches by Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh and the way the Hezbollah’s protests in Lebanon unfolded all suggest that Christians were understood to be part of this struggle, too. Before analysing Hezbollah’s reactions, we will first examine the history of this organization, particularly its relationship to Christians.

Since its establishment, Hezbollah has oscillated between an Islamist, modern Iranian Shia outlook and a Lebanese national outlook. According to its vice secretary general, Na‘īm Qāsim, the Israeli occupation of Lebanon was the main ‘impetus’ for its formation but not its ‘*raison d’être*’ (Saad-Ghorayeb 2012). Amal Saad-Ghorayeb quotes Na‘īm Qāsim who recalls that a delegation from Hezbollah’s forerunner visited *imām* Rūḥ Allāh Khomeinī to seek his benediction for the establishment of such an organization (ibid). According to several members of the Revolutionary Guard interviewed by the BBC, however, it was Khomeinī who sent the Revolutionary Guard to Lebanon to train and arm a group against the Israeli occupation.<sup>494</sup> Since then, Hezbollah has continued to identify with the *velāyat-e faqīh*, the official doctrine of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and recognized the religious reference (*marja’*) of ‘Alī Khāmene’ī in 1995, unlike other leading Shia figures in Lebanon (Mervin 2008, 83). At the same time, Hezbollah announced in the 2000s that it was autonomous and financially independent (ibid). In addition, its rhetoric has changed. In 1992, the movement defined itself as a ‘jihadī movement’ (Noe 2007, 57). Since then, Hezbollah has increasingly identified with Lebanon and its pluralism. In 2000, following the withdrawal of the Israeli army from South Lebanon, Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh stated in his “victory speech:” ‘It fought for Lebanese territory, it defended Lebanese citizens and confronted an enemy behaving aggressively against the Lebanese people’ (Noe 2007, 69). Two years earlier, Naṣr Allāh had asserted: ‘We are a non-sectarian Islamic party, and we are a Lebanese party that is not isolated within the borders of this country’ (Noe 2007, 183). In 2009 Hezbollah issued a new manifesto in which it reduced its Islamist rhetoric and emphasized the dangers of “US hegemony” (El-Husseini 2012, 73). In this regard, the liberation of southern Lebanon and the absence of any acts of revenge against Christians (see

---

<sup>494</sup> YouTube. Up-loaded 29 January 2012. Part 2 - BBC Iran and the West 2/3 The Man who Changed the World - ایران و غرب - . Doi: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=91xuueQ7RmI> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Section 3.1.2.2) increased Hezbollah's popularity in Lebanon. In particular, its secretary general, Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh, has come to embody the party and is considered the engineer of the Israeli military failures of 1993 and 1996 (Mervin 2008, 295). In addition, he is one of the two *wakīl*, agents, of Khāmene'ī in Lebanon.

Besides being deeply rooted in a modern, anti-colonial, politicised form of Twelver Shia, Hezbollah has shown much pragmatism and struck alliances with Syria, the Amal Movement, and Christian parties. The relations between Hezbollah and the Syrian regime experienced tensions between 1982 and 1993, and a strategic understanding was reached in 2000 (Mervin 2008, 94). With the outbreak of the war in Syria, however, Hezbollah became heavily involved in the conflict and has supported the regime. Similarly, prior to 2005, the Amal movement was a rival of Hezbollah, but since then, Nabih Berri, the leader of the Amal Movement, has sometimes expressed views coinciding with the positions of Hezbollah (Mervin 2008, 103). In addition, Hezbollah has struck an alliance with the former anti-Syrian and mainly Christian Free Patriotic Movement. This alliance was sealed with a document of mutual understanding (*wathīqat al-tafāhum*) that was solemnly made public in a room of the church Mar Mikhail in Haret Hreik (Mervin 2008, 295), a former Christian majority, but now and now heavily Shia, neighbourhood in Beirut.

One of Hezbollah's greatest successes is perhaps the growing assertion and self-confidence of a former weak and marginalised Shia Lebanese community, the "*déshérités*," which was previously embodied by the Amal Movement. As Sabrina Mervin puts it:

il change ces éternels perdants de l'histoire en vainqueurs et, avec lui, il ne s'agit plus d'une victoire spirituelle ou symbolique (*ma' nawî*), mais d'une victoire réelle (*haqîqî*), par les armes, remportée par le Hezbollah (en 2000 et en 2006) grâce à l'endurance de ses partisans (Mervin 2012, 343).

Furthermore, Hezbollah has succeeded in connecting two different types of Shia communities; those of the Beqaa valley organized in tribes, and those of the Jabal 'Āmil, more scholarly (Mervin 2008, 17).

Hezbollah's relations with Christians demonstrate very vividly how "the Christians" have become important political assets in post-civil war Lebanon. Besides building electoral alliances, having Christian political allies and Christian religious connections as well as expressing support for the Christian presence in the Middle East all serve to increase a group's political and ideological credibility. In the case of Hezbollah, the Christian asset plays an additional role in the purported cultural and anti-colonial fight against the West and Israel; 'The Jews have long hoped for a war that pits a Jewish-Christian alliance against Muslims,' stated

Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh during the Iraq war in 2003 (Noe 2007, 286). Hezbollah’s strategy is multi-faceted. Firstly, it has concluded high-ranking political alliances with Michel Aoun (Mīshāl A’wn), leader of the Free Patriotic Movement, and with the Maronite party, Marada. Similarly, Hezbollah has cultivated connections with the churches, even with smaller churches. For instance, for Christmas 2012, it sent a delegation to the Chaldean bishop of Lebanon.<sup>495</sup> Thirdly, the visibility of these gestures is very important. This was already powerfully displayed by Mūsā al-Ṣadr when he preached in a church under Christ on the cross (Mervin 2012, 336). For instance, when Benedict XVI arrived in Lebanon in September 2012, Hezbollah sent a delegation of young scouts, and it also sent a high-ranking delegation to the mass held by Benedict XVI in downtown Beirut on Sunday 16 September 2012.<sup>496</sup> Similarly, MP Nawāf al-Mūsawī, a member of the Coalition of Resistance led by Hezbollah, stated: ‘We are side by side with the Christians in the preservation of their roots in this East’ (ibid). To what extent these reactions are sincere or merely symbolic will be analysed in the context of the reactions to “The Innocence of Muslims.”<sup>497</sup>

### 3.1.2.1 Hezbollah’s Official Reactions

Hezbollah’s reactions are divided into two sections; the declarations and the protests staged in cooperation with the Amal Movement in several Lebanese cities. The category “declarations” subsumes four declarations; one general declaration published on 13 September 2012 in *al-Nahār*, the declaration by MP Ḥusayn al-Mūsawī, member of the Bloc “Loyalty to the Resistance”; the declaration by MP Nawār al-Sāḥilī as well as the speech by Hezbollah’s secretary general, Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh on 17 September 2012 which initiated a series of protests throughout the country. In addition, the minister of agriculture, Ḥusayn al-Ḥājj al-Ḥasan, a member of Hezbollah, also reacted and promoted Lebanon as a model (see section 3.4).

On 13 September 2012, *al-Nahār* published a comment by Hezbollah whose exact context is unclear. The newspaper wrote ““Hezbollah” views<sup>498</sup> the video as a ‘suspicious (piece of) work,’ an ‘immoral [piece of] work,’ ‘denouncing [...] the person of the

<sup>495</sup> Al-Nahar. 30 December 2010. “وفد من “حزب الله” زار لحام والمطرانين قصارجي ومنصور. Number 24262. Year 78. Page 4.

<sup>496</sup> Al-Hayat. 17 September 2012. “حزب الله: كلمات البابا التقت مع تطلعتنا. Number 18063. Page 7.

<sup>497</sup> However, the Shia community is much diverse than the monopolisation by Hezbollah would suggest. Over the last decades, a number of figures emerged, who managed to reach claim beyond Lebanon. For instance, Muḥammad Ḥusain Faḍl Allāh (1935-2010), who used to be Hezbollah’s spiritual leader, later turned to a moderate, modernising Islam that reflected the emergence of a Shia middle class. In contrast, the long term president of the Higher Islamic Shia Council (about this council, see Section 3.3.1.2), Muḥammad Mahdī Shams al-Dīn (1936-2001) reassessed his ideas about the *velāyat-e faqīh* and promoted a civil state, where religion would be separated from politics, but not from personal matters (see Mervin 2012).

<sup>498</sup> Note the quotation marks *al-Nahār* uses here when referring to Hezbollah.

Messenger.’<sup>499</sup> With regard to its background, the organization mentioned ‘extremist Egyptian Copts and Jewish figures’ as well as ‘the Zionist-American oath’ seeking to ignite the ‘fire of hatred,’ especially between Muslims and Copts in Egypt. Furthermore, Hezbollah reportedly asserted that this video was not an isolated act, as was often stated, but it ‘reflects the real position of the Zionist-American oath.’ Thus the organization did concede a Coptic involvement and referred to Western media reports concerning a “Sam Bacile,” but actual responsibility for the video is ascribed to the eternal enemy: the “Zionist-American alliance.”

On September 14, *Lebanon Files* quoted MP Ḥusayn al-Mūsawī who condemned “The Innocence of Muslims” saying, ‘The film offending Islam is an attack on the prophets and on all of us.’<sup>500</sup> Interestingly, he referred to Hezbollah’s official reaction as mentioned above, when he underlined that ‘the Copts are good people and so is the pope of the Copts,’ as if he were defending the Copts against generalizations. In addition, he criticized Obama for his double standards and quoted Rūḥ Allāh Khomeinī: ‘Whatever America says or speaks, do not believe her. [America] is in a perpetual state of attack on you.’

On 20 September 2012, *al-Tawḥīd* quoted MP Nawār al-Sāḥilī’s condemnation of the video and of the cartoons published by *Charlie Hebdo*.<sup>501</sup> His criticism was two-fold. Firstly, he used an ethical approach by stating that freedom of thought and speech are not absolute but stop where the freedom of the other begins. This definition is very broad as it even encompasses ‘freedom of thought.’ Secondly, he again alluded to the idea that the video is a ‘conspiracy’ to produce sectarian strife. As a result, he envisioned a reaction based on the solidarity between Christians and Muslims in Lebanon, calling on them to unite since ‘the exposure of any prophet affects everyone.’

These three reactions show an awareness of Coptic involvement, while ascribing the actual responsibility for the video to “Zionism” and the United States. They also all presented the idea of the video as aiming to stir up “strife.”

Finally, among the most important events of the crisis of “The Innocence of Muslims” were the two speeches given by Secretary General Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh. The first was delivered

---

<sup>499</sup> Al-Nahar. 13 September 2012. „جذب الله“: الفيلم عن الرسول يهدف إلى الفتنة و الفريق العربي للحوار يدعو لتجاهله, Number 24847. Year 80. Page 27.

<sup>500</sup> Lebanon Files. 14 September. حسين الموسوي ندد بالفيلم المسيء الى الاسلام Doi: <http://www.lebanonfiles.com/news/437729> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>501</sup> Al-Tawhid. 20 September 2012. سلسلة واسعة من المواقف لنواب ووزراء وسفراء وشخصيات وهيئات وأحزاب في لبنان تندد بالفيلم والرسومات المسيئة للرسول: Doi: <http://www.altawhid.org/2012/09/20/%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%82%D9%81-%D9%84%D9%86%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D9%88%D9%88%D8%B2%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D9%88%D8%B3/> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

on television and the second was made during his appearance at the protest in Beirut. As will be shown below, his critics accused him of playing a key role in manufacturing this crisis in Lebanon. On 16 September 2012, just one hour after Benedict XVI had left Lebanon, Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh delivered a long speech on *al-Manār*, Hezbollah's official channel.<sup>502</sup> The video shows Naṣr Allāh speaking for roughly forty minutes and both a long analysis and an effort to explain this allegedly complex issue in an understandable way.<sup>503</sup> Therefore, the speech is very structured. It starts with Naṣr Allāh stating his main thesis then moves on to "The Innocence of Muslims," which is subsequently placed in a broader context – the series of "Zionist attacks" on Islam. Then, Naṣr Allāh elaborates his thoughts on the goals of this video before finally formulating several criticisms and outlining a procedure to counter this video.

Naṣr Allāh also uses several rhetorical devices and thus proving his skill as a charismatic leader (Mervin 2012, 343). He delivers his speech in Modern Standard Arabic but sometimes switches to colloquial Arabic to show his connection with the people. Some words are pronounced with the usual Syro-Palestinian inclusion of a schwa ("ə") between two consonants at the end of a word, for instance *shikəl* instead of *shikl*. Once he uses the "b-" at the beginning of a verb and uses colloquial expressions like *izā beddnā*. In addition, he also switches between "I" and "we." For instance, 'I believe,' 'the Islamic community demands' and 'we don't know.' His use of the sentence 'the Islamic community demands' is an alliteration. Thus, Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh establishes himself as the spokesman of the Muslim community, a fact which is underlined by his reference to it in the first person plural ('We are a community (*umma*)') and third person singular ('The great Islamic community (*umma*),' 'The Muslims are a community (*umma*) of 1.4 billion Muslims, the followers of the great revealed religion, the followers of the great prophet'). As Sabrina Mervin has argued, from the 1980s onwards, Hezbollah has hijacked the discourse of Islamic resistance and political Shia (Mervin 2012, 343).

Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh's efforts to establish himself as the Muslims' spokesman and leader are peculiarly evident in this speech, as he emphasizes the relevance of this video for Muslims. He starts his speech by stating that the video is more dangerous than the burning of al-Aqṣā mosque in 1969 because that led to the foundation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation; an '*umma* that remains silent' sends 'a dangerous message to the Israelis' (YouTube 17 September 2012). Using this thesis, he establishes himself as being the vanguard of the Islamic

---

<sup>502</sup> Al-Nahar. 17 September 2012. دعا إلى مسيرات في المناطق تبدأ في الضاحية ... نصر الله: الفيلم المسيء عدوان أميركي يستحق. قيمة إسلامية. Number 24851. Year 80. Page 3.

<sup>503</sup> YouTube. 17 September 2012a. (ص). كلمة نصر الله عن الفيلم المسيء للرسول (ص). Doi: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EjG1C1LbZHE> (retrieved May 17, 2016). The analysis of this speech is based on this source; i.e. quoted as "Youtube 17 September 2012."

community worldwide. However, he then goes on to frame “The Innocence of Muslims” as also being relevant to Christians: ‘The defence of the Messenger of God (PBUH) is the defence of all holy things (*muqaddasāt*), of the al-Aqṣā mosque as well as the defence of all the prophets, of Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, and ‘Īsā al-Masīḥ, of all revealed religions and of the revealed books.’ This statement establishes a common ground for Islam, Judaism, and Christianity, by applying the classical Islamic view of Abraham, Moses and Jesus Christ as recognized and venerated prophets. In particular, the designation “‘Īsā al-Masīḥ” is interesting, because it shows a certain limited accommodation towards Christians and their view of Jesus Christ. This designation combines the Islamic word for “Jesus,” “‘Īsā” with the Christian idea of Jesus being the anointed, “*al-masīḥ*.” The complete Christian Arab designation would be “Yasū‘ al-Masīḥ.” Other references to Christians are made later on in the speech.

Subsequently, Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh describes the video as an “*isā‘a*” (“offense”) in various forms; as an adjective ‘the offending film,’ as a noun ‘this offense against Islam, the prophet of Islam, and against the Islamic community,’ as a verb anyone ‘who offends the revealed religions,’ ‘the constant aggression,’ ‘the future aggression.’ He also mentions the cartoons published in European newspapers. Before commenting on the video’s background, he explains his strategy for countering a ‘military, political, intellectual’ enemy: One has to know his goals and prevent the enemy from beginning again. As far as the background is concerned, the secretary general states: ‘We can speak of the Zionist movement,’ ‘some Jewish organizations in Israel.’ Yet he does mention the Coptic background to the video, according to ‘the media,’ ‘Egyptian Copts’ are behind it. Yet, he puts this information in the broader context of the “Zionist movement” using ‘apostate Muslims like Salman Rushdie or a Christian, as in the case of the burning of the Quran by the Christian cleric Jones.’ With regards to the reaction to the *Satanic Verses*, Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh praises implicitly the *fatwā* then issued by Khomaynī because it had the effect of stopping “offenses” for a long time. For “The Innocence of Muslims,” a ‘Coptic priest’ in the United States was reportedly used; this is probably a reference to Zakaryā Buṭrus. This leads him to discuss the several potential threats and goals connected to this video. Firstly, Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh sees the video as aiming to produce ‘strife between Muslims and Christians’ and push them into a ‘a bloody religious, sectarian conflict.’ He explains that Muslims would be expected to attack churches and Christian *muqaddasāt*, but thanks to ‘the great awareness both Muslims and Christians’ have, this was avoided. Secondly, Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh asserts that the video attempts to ‘distort the Islamic thought, distort the Islamic biography (*al-sīra al-islāmiyya*).’ Interestingly, he does not mention the content of the video at all.

The second part of the speech is dedicated to framing a broad response. One of his key demands is that the spread of the video be stopped and that a law be issued criminalizing such “offenses.” Interestingly, Naṣr Allāh does not mention the United Nations and other international organizations, but instead demands that the US Congress issue a law modelled on the law issued in 2004 by George W. Bush prohibiting Anti-Semitism all over the world. This law allegedly prohibited Anti-Semitic ‘declarations, actions, images, or cartoons, or, or, or, writing’ and ‘equates Jews with Israel and Zionism.’ In fact, the law established a separate office within the State Department that monitored Anti-Semitism worldwide but did not prosecute it.<sup>504</sup> He begins by criticizing the rulers in the Muslim world at length for their defence of the United States in this matter and for their silence. Had this video offended ‘the kings, the princes, the presidents and the leaders in the region,’ they would reportedly have reacted differently; he calls on them ‘This is your Islam! This is your religion! This is your community!’ As a result, he addresses all Muslims in general, and in doing so, he tries to overcome the divisions between Muslims, stating that the it is not on one ‘confession (*madhhab*),’ or on the March 8 Alliance or the March 14 Alliance to react. He also addresses Christians: The ‘historical responsibility [...] for the Islamic *umma* [...] and, with them, even every honourable Christian [and] believer in coexistence and religious tolerance.’ Thus he ascribes a responsibility to Christians to show solidarity and, basically, to participate with Muslims in the war against “Zionism.” In this regard, he praises the condemnation of Christian key actors and leaders in Lebanon but seems to misspeak ‘especially the patriarchs of ... the big patriarchs of the Christian communities in the East.’ He also mentions that the role Lebanon has to play is ‘bigger than its size and Lebanon is always bigger than its size in issues of civilization.’ Since Lebanon had the presidency of the Arab League at that time, Naṣr Allāh implores the government to use this opportunity. Furthermore, he alludes to the visit by Benedict XVI as a means of emphasizing the Lebanese “counter-model” to the “Zionist attack:” ‘On the contrary, Lebanon has presented us with a model [...] of coexistence of Muslims and Christians.’ Eventually, he reminds his audience of the importance of a reaction; it is not enough to ‘protest our anger and then go home.’ Therefore, he announces a series of protests starting the following day in Beirut.

---

<sup>504</sup> Washington Post. 14 October 2004. Anti-Semitism office planned at State Department. Doi: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2004/oct/14/20041014-121528-8981r/> (retrieved May 17, 2016).



### **Summary of Section 3.1.2.1**

In this long speech, Naṣr Allāh did not mention the content of the video but only condemned it as being an “offense.” Instead, he dwelt at length on the goals of the alleged “Zionist” enemy and on the appropriate counter-reactions. In doing so, he places himself in various competing frameworks: as the leader of a resistance movement, as an aspiring leader of the whole Islamic community, as promoter of Christian-Muslim coexistence, and as a Lebanese leader.

### **3.1.2.2 The Hezbollah Protests**

In the context of “The Innocence of Muslims,” Hezbollah organized a series of protests in cooperation with the Amal Movement and other political forces; In Beirut on September 17, in Tyre (Ṣūr) on September 19, in Baalbek (Ba‘labakk) on September 21, in Bint Jbail on September 22, and in Hermel (al-Hirmil) on 23 September 2012. These protests seemed to be important for Hezbollah, as its secretary general, Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh, appeared in one of them to deliver a speech, something he had not done for years. Thus, a key question arises concerning the reasons and motivations for these protests and the high level of popular and political mobilization.

#### **Beirut, September 17**

In particular, it was the protest in Beirut on 17 September 2012 which displayed Hezbollah’s powerful capability to mobilize its supporters, more so since Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh had officially announced this protest only one day earlier in his speech on *al-Manār* TV. Yet on September 19, *al-Nahār* revealed that the leaders of Hezbollah and Amal had agreed that there would be no protests as long as Benedict XVI was in Lebanon.<sup>505</sup> Thus on September 17 – barely twenty-four hours after the pope had left the country –, a huge protest in a southern suburb of Beirut, al-Ḍāhiyya, started at 5pm. 10,000s of followers of both Hezbollah and the Amal Movement were said to have joined the protest.<sup>506</sup> According to RT, the women marched separately from the men during the protest,<sup>507</sup> some of them wore scarves and some of them wore t-shirts.<sup>508</sup> The protesters mostly carried the flags of Hezbollah and the Amal Movement,

<sup>505</sup> Al-Nahar. 19 September. بري يرفع رأسه ب”التظاهرات الحضارية” في الضاحية. منصور غرد و لم يتفرد، و لماذا هذا الغياء. الأيركي. Number 24853. Year 80. Page 5.

<sup>506</sup> Al-Nahar. 18 September 2012. من زيارة البابا إلى تصاعد الاتجاجات تظاهرة الضاحية تتردد في السفارة الأميركية. Number 24852. Year 80. Pages 1 and 12.

<sup>507</sup> Russia Today. 21 September 2012. Muslim fury: LIVE anti-US protest timeline (PHOTOS). Doi: <https://www.rt.com/news/anti-american-protests-live-updates-053/> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>508</sup> Al-Akhbar. 18 September 2012. «KFC» حزب الله (سلمياً) على أبواب ال. Doi. <http://al-akhbar.com/node/167412> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

as well as the Lebanese flag and the official Syrian flag.<sup>509</sup> In addition, *al-Ḥayāt* reported that some flags bore the picture of the Syrian President Bashshār al-Asad.<sup>510</sup>

The main event in this protest was the live appearance of Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh in his first public appearance since his speech for Ashura (‘*āšūrā*’) on 12 December 2011 and only his sixth public appearance since the war in 2006.<sup>511</sup> In a speech that lasted roughly thirteen minutes, Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh repeated much of what he had mentioned in his longer speech on *al-Manār*; he demanded a prohibition of the spread of the video as well as a law criminalizing offenses against ‘all revealed religions, all prophets of God, against Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, ‘Īsā al-Masīḥ and Muḥammad bin ‘Abd Allāh’ and voiced his criticism of the silence of the rulers. Interestingly, Naṣr Allāh warned against the fatal consequences the release of the entire film by the US would have, as if this screaming crowd cheering him backed his statements. He insisted on the need to make such “offenses” impossible and this protest in Beirut was defined as the first step in a worldwide movement.

Of significant importance are the rhetoric skills Naṣr Allāh displays. He is able to electrify the audience, which then repeats some of his claims, for instance:

Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh: Oh Messenger of God (*yā rasūl allāh*)!

The audience: Oh Messenger of God!

Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh: At your service, Messenger of God (*fidāk yā rasūl allāh*)!

The audience: At your service, Messenger of God (*fidāk yā rasūl allāh*)!

Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh: My soul and my blood!

The audience: My soul and my blood!

Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh: My father and my mother!

The audience: My father and my mother!

Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh: My family and my children!

The audience: My family and my children!

Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh: And all my wealth!

The audience: And all my wealth!

He constantly switches between “you” when addressing the crowd and “we” when including the masses. In his speech he addresses the crowd ‘Oh brothers and sisters’ and the high-ranking participants ‘I thank the ‘*ulamā*’, whether Sunni or Shia, the representatives of the

<sup>509</sup> Youtube. 17 September 2012. (السيد حسن نصرالله: مسيرة الولاء للنبي محمد (ص)). Doi: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Tv8YGVZycY> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>510</sup> Al-Hayat. 18 September 2012. .. و نصرالله يظهر علنا ... داعيا إلى غضبة شاملة سليمان يطلب توضيح تصريحات جعفري. Number 18064. Pages 1 and 6.

<sup>511</sup> Al-Sharq al-Awsat. 18 September 2012. نصر الله في ظهور علني نادر يدعو إلى مواصلة الاحتجاج حول الفيلم المسيء. Doi: <http://archive.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&issueno=12348&article=695788&search=%25C7%25E1%25D%25ED%25E1%25E3%2520%25C7%25E1%25E3%25D3%25ED%25C1&state=true#>. VulBWEfFbIV (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Christian leaders and of the Lebanese and national parties, and I feel grateful for our brothers, the leaders in the Amal Movement.’ This constant alternation between “we” and “you” is like a mirror that was widely used by Mūsā al-Ṣadr (Mervin 2012, 343). In addition, he makes reference to Christian-Muslim unity; ‘What has happened these days has to emphasize the great awareness Muslims and Christians have.’ In his long speech on *al-Manār*, the secretary general placed had himself in an inclusive, united, Islamic, Christian-Muslim framework, whereas this speech in Beirut established an exclusive Shia framework: ‘We are all Ḥusayn.’ To some extent, this speech indicates that the struggle against “The Innocence of Muslims” is a repetition of the battle of Kerbala.

Naṣr Allāh’s totally unexpected appearance and speech actually served to occlude the presence, if any, of other religious and political leaders. Since he thanked them, it can be assumed that some other actors were present, but the media did not mention any of them except Antoine Ḍaw, the leader of the Maronite Bishopric Committee for Christian-Muslim Dialogue. However, the latter did not deliver a speech, instead making a declaration to *al-Safīr* in which he repeated his condemnation of the ‘offense’ given to the ‘messenger’ and to all religions.<sup>512</sup> He added: ‘We do not accuse the United States but they are protecting a racist and anti-Islamic movement’ and repeated his demand for a UN law criminalizing such acts (ibid).

### **Tyre, September 19**

Barely any information could be found concerning the protest in Tyre (Ṣūr) on 19 September 2012. *Al-Anwar* merely reported that Hezbollah, the Amal Movement, ‘Islamic people’ as well as clerics from ‘different communities’ participated in a protest there.<sup>513</sup> In addition, the leader of the southern region of the Amal Movement, Muḥammad Ghazāl, and the president of the executive committee of Hezbollah, *shaykh* Nabīl Qāwūq, both gave a speech in which they condemned the United States.

### **Baalbek, September 21**

More is known about the protest that took place on Friday, 21 September 2012, in the city of Baalbek (Ba‘labakk), in which high-ranking actors participated such as *al-sayyid* Ḥusayn al-Mūsawī, *shaykh* Muḥammad Yazbik and the MPs of the electoral constitution of Baalbek-Hermel: MP Ghāzī Za‘ītar, MP Kāmil al-Rifā‘ī, MP ‘Alī Miqdād, MP Imīl Raḥma, MP Marwān Fāris; Ibrāhīm Amīn al-Sayyid, a high-ranking member of Hezbollah, and Bishop Sam‘ān ‘Aṭā’

<sup>512</sup> Al-Safir. 18 September 2012. والمشاركة المميزة... الأب ضو. Number 12286. Year 39. Page 4.

<sup>513</sup> Al-Anwar. 20 September 2012. تظاهرة حاشدة في صور استنكارا للفيلم المسيء الى الاسلام. Number 18146. Year 53. Doi: <http://www.archive.alanwar.com/article.php?articleID=172811&issuedate=20120920> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Allāh.<sup>514</sup> Ghāzī Za‘ītar is a Shia MP and member of the Amal Movement, Kāmil al-Rifā‘ī is a Sunni MP for the Islamic Action Front (see Section 3.5.1.5), ‘Alī Miqdād is a Sunni MP for Hezbollah, and Imīl Raḥma is a Maronite MP for the Solidarity Party. Kāmil al-Rifā‘ī is a member of the al-Rifā‘ī family, a powerful Sunni family from Baalbek which has allied herself with the Yāghī family (Daher 2012, 425). The old city of Baalbek is mainly Sunni (Daher 2012, 424). Marwān Fāris is an MP representing the Greek Catholic community, and is vice secretary general of the Syrian Socialist National Party as well as a professor at the Lebanese University.<sup>515</sup> Sam‘ān ‘Aṭā’ Allāh was elected bishop of the Maronite diocese of Ba‘labakk-Dayr al-Aḥmar in 2005.<sup>516</sup> In addition, *shaykh* Muḥammad Yazbik is one of the two representatives (*wakil*) of the Iranian supreme leader ‘Alī Khāmene’ī in Lebanon; the other is Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh (Mervin 2008, 210-211).

The media reported that Muḥammad Yazbik and Bishop ‘Aṭā’ Allāh delivered a speech. Muḥammad Yazbik criticized the ‘American attack’ and ‘the offending film [which] is a distortion of the pure image of Islam, the Islam of Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, ‘Īsā and Muḥammad, the Islam of all the prophets’ that aimed at ‘planting strife (*fiṭna*) among Muslims and Christians’ (Al-Nahar 22 September 2012). Yet, he asserted that this goal had failed because ‘all believers in God are in one trench.’ The protest in Baalbek was described as a rally by all Lebanon to express ‘*labayka yā rasūl allāh*’ (ibid). Bishop ‘Aṭā’ Allāh explained he was participating in this protest as the representative of his parish, so that ‘Lebanon remains a light for human civilization.’<sup>517</sup>

### **Bint Jbail, September 22**

The city of Bint Jbail (Bint Jubayl), and southern Lebanon in general, were particularly affected by the Civil War and the war against Israel in 2006. Although southern Lebanon is a mainly Shia area, it also comprises a high number of Sunni and various Christian communities. The latter were deported in 1983 and 1985 (Corm 1992, 164). Prior to the Israeli invasion in 1982, Israel had taken three Christian villages at the border in the turmoil of the Civil War in the 1970s and formed and trained militias; among these was the village of Rumaysh (Kassir 1994, 262). From these Christian villages, the Israeli army and the militias put pressure on Bint Jbail (Kassir 1994, 316). The Israeli invasion of Bint Jbail eventually led to a massive exodus of the population and the city was completely destroyed (Kassir 1994, 316). This area remained

<sup>514</sup> Al-Nahar. 22 September 2012. مسيرات احتجاج تحت شعار “لبيك يا رسول الله.” في بعلبك وكفركلا وصور و عكار و العاصمة. Number 24856. Year 80. Page 5. This source is quoted in this section as “Al-Nahar 22 September 2012.”

<sup>515</sup> Who’s who 2007-2008; Fares, Marwan.

<sup>516</sup> Who’s who 2007-2008; Atallah, Semaan, Tanios Mgr.

<sup>517</sup> Al-Safir. 22 September 2012. مسيرات في بعلبك وصور وصيدا وبرالبياس ضد الإساءة. Number 12290. Year 39. Page 4.

under occupation by Israel and by the Southern Lebanese army until 2000. As Israel retreated from Lebanon completely – except for the Shebaa farms (Mazāri‘ Shib‘ā) still claimed by Lebanon –, the Christians in this region feared backlashes by Hezbollah. Antoine Daw asserts that not a single Christian was harmed (Mokrani 2009, 532). He also quotes Nabih Berri who stated that the South Lebanese Army was mostly Shia; 10% were Druze and Sunni, and only 25% Christians (Mokrani 2009, 532). During the war between Hezbollah and Israel in 2006, Bint Jbail and southern Lebanon once again faced significant destruction; much of Bint Jbail was destroyed (Noe 2007, 385).

The protest in Bint Jbail on 22 September 2012 gathered lower ranking Christian clerics; Father Bāsīl Nāṣif, the head of the Maronite monastery of the Lady of the Annunciation, Father Shukr Allāh Shūfānī, the dean of Kaslik University, section Rumaysh; and Father Maryūs Khayr Allāh, the priest of the Greek Catholic parish in ‘Ayn Ibl.<sup>518</sup> These two villages, Rmeich and ‘Ayn Ibl played a peculiar role during the Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon, as will be shown below. In addition, MP ‘Alī Bazzī of the Amal Movement and MP Nawwāf al- Mūsawī of Hezbollah gave speeches.

The participation of Christian representatives of the villages Rumaysh and ‘Ayn Ibl in this protest is extremely significant, as the University of Kaslik played a leading role in formulating militant (and violent) Maronitism during the Civil War (Henley 2008, 356-357). As a result, unsurprisingly, the two MPs emphasized the unity of this area in their speeches. ‘Alī Bazzī stated that this area was ‘One village in unity, faith and love, in the power and defence of the pride of Lebanon, of its dignity, and sovereignty.’ To some extent, his speech expressed a sense of expectation towards Christians to show solidarity, not only with the Muslims, but with this protest commended by ‘our leader, his Excellence *al-sayyid* Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh.’ Given that the day before that protest, ‘we’ were at a Christian mass the day they were defending Islam; ‘this Christian-Muslim [protest] is a united and directed reaction.’ Interestingly, this solidarity is based on a common theological foundation that encompasses Judaism and Christianity, as Muhammad is ‘the last of the prophets, his message, and the message of Mūsā, ‘Īsā, of all prophets, of all imams and of all religions.’ Finally, ‘Alī Bazzī directed his criticism primarily towards the United States since it had known about this video (Al-Nahar 23 September 2012). Nawwāf al-Mūsawī likewise ascribed responsibility for the video to the United States, as part of ‘American policy’ and denied it was an individual

---

<sup>518</sup> Al-Nahar. 23 September 2012. الموسوي وبزي في مسيرة بنت جبيل: الائتلاف الإسلامي - المسيحي رد مباشر. Number 24856. Year 80. Page 5. This source is quoted in this section as “al-Nahar 23 September 2012.”

action.<sup>519</sup> In a video showing the protest, the protesters shout ‘Israel, Israel enemy of the Muslims.’

### **Hermel, September 23**

The series of protests ended in Hermel on 23 September 2012. MP Marwān Fāris and MP Nawār al-Sāhīlī of Hezbollah and Muḥammad Yāghī, the Hezbollah representative for the Beqaa region, led this protest.<sup>520</sup> Yet *al-Nahār* only mentioned the speech given by Muḥammad Yāghī who criticized the silence of ‘some kings, princes, organizations and rulers.’ Subsequently, American and Israeli flags were burnt and the crowd screamed ‘Death to America and Israel.’

Lastly, the small conference organized by members of the parliamentary “Bloc of Resistance” should also be mentioned here. The gathering was organized in Hermel by members of the Bloc, among them al-Walīd Sukriyya, and Hezbollah’s cultural representative in the Beqaa, *al-sayyid* Fayṣal Shukr.<sup>521</sup> This conference can be understood as the conclusion to the series of protests because Fayṣal Shukr called for the continuation of these Lebanese protests on an international level, which to him offered proof of an ‘original *muhammedian* Islamic civilization and an Islamic-Christian partnership in the refusal of strife and exposure of the prophet.’ He strongly insisted on the “civilized” and non-violent nature of these protests; ‘the civilised protest (which) the secretary general of Hezbollah, his Excellence *al-sayyid* Hassan Nasr Allāh called for, in a way that colonialism and Zionism cannot not exploit [...]’ Zionism is also referred to as the ‘Zionist cancer.’ The protests are also considered a present to the world about the ‘Truth of Islam’ and an opportunity to ‘return to a community (*umma*), free in its creed, in its culture and its politics, ruling over its land.’

### **Summary of Section 3.1.2**

To some extent, the series of protests in Beirut, Tyr, Baalbek, Bint Jbail and Hermel can be described as joint Christian-Muslim and cross-sectarian reactions. They took place in the context of a post-civil war Lebanon, especially in the case of Bint Jbail. Yet the presence of Christian actors does seem to have been merely symbolic, as only the Bishop of Baalbek

---

<sup>519</sup> Al-Liwa. 24 September 2012. مهرجان في صيدا ومسيرة في صور دفاعاً عن النبي الأكرم. Doi: <http://aliwaa.com/Article.aspx?ArticleId=138322> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>520</sup> Al-Nahar. 24 September 2012. ختام مسيرات الاحتجاج على الفيلم المسيء. Number 24857. Year 80. Page 6.

<sup>521</sup> Al-Tawhid. 29 September 2012. السنيورة: “لا شيء يبرر قتل السفير الأميركي في ليبيا”... ندوة في الهرمل تنديداً بالاساءة للنبي. محمد (ص) وكلمة للنائب سكرية. Doi: <http://www.altawhid.org/2012/09/29/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%86%D9%8A%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%A7-%D8%B4%D9%8A%D8%A1-%D9%8A%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%B1-%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A/> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

delivered a speech. This shows there was a certain expectation towards Christians to show solidarity and loyalty. In addition, representatives of Hezbollah and the Amal Movement did not show the same level of religious accommodation as Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh. This section must be compared with the section about Christian-Muslim protests (see Section 3.6).

### 3.1.3 Other Muslim Protests

Besides the series of protests staged by Hezbollah and the Amal Movement, there were also smaller protests, with either low-ranking leadership or none at all. These protests were mainly concentrated around the Palestinian refugee camps and in other parts of Lebanon.

The Amal Movement organized a march in the village al-Kharāyib in southern Lebanon, with the *‘ulamā’* and local activists to protest against the video and the cartoons.<sup>522</sup> The march criticized the silence of the Lebanese authorities and the double standards of Western societies; ‘How can this be freedom of speech [when] in France they forbid girls to enter schools wearing the veil?’ Two leading members of the Amal Movement in the region gave speeches in which they expressed their dissatisfaction with ‘worldwide Zionism.’

A significant part of the Islamic mobilization against the video took place in Palestinian refugee camps, although only in the southern part of the country. Protests took place in Ayn Helweh (‘Ayn al-Ḥilwa) in Sidon as well as in al-Rashīdiyya and el-Bass (al-Buṣṣ) in Tyre. ‘Ayn al-Ḥilwa has 35,000 inhabitants, the highest number of Palestinians in Lebanon (Rougier 2007, 2). According to Bernard Rougier, al-Rashīdiyya is completely controlled by Fatah (Rougier 2007, 18), which has cultivated connections with the actors of Iranian Islam since the 1960s (Rougier 2007, 27).

On September 14, several hundreds of Palestinians from ‘Ayn al-Ḥilwa refugee camp in Sidon protested; ‘Oh Obama we are all *shaykh* Usama,’ ‘Your most famous weapon is a Muslim,’ ‘Down with the American embassy!’<sup>523</sup> On Friday 22 2012 several marches starting in Palestinian refugee camps took place; in al-Rashīdiyya and al-Buṣṣ in Tyre<sup>524</sup> and, on

<sup>522</sup> Al-Tawhid. 20 September 2012. سلسلة واسعة من المواقف لنواب ووزراء وسفراء وشخصيات وهيئات وأحزاب في لبنان تندد بالفيلم والرسومات المسيئة للرسول.

<sup>523</sup> Al-Nahar. 15 September 2012. طرابلس: قتل و25 جريحاً بعد حرق ال"كي.أف.سي". .. تظاهرات في عين الحلوة وتعليقاً نددت بأمركا وفيلم "براءة المسلمين". Number 24849. Year 80. Page 7.

<sup>524</sup> Al-Hayat. 22 September 2012. إجراءات أمنية كثيفة لحماية المؤسسات الفرنسية والأميركية والأوروبية في لبنان. غضب من بيروت وصيدا إلى بعلبك نصره للرسول Doi:

[http://daharchives.alhayat.com/issue\\_archive/Hayat%20INT/2012/9/22/%D8%A7%D9%95%D8%AC%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A1%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%94%D9%85%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%83%D8%AB%D9%8A%D9%81%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D9%94%D8%B3%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D8%B1%D9%86%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%94%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%83%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%94%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A9-](http://daharchives.alhayat.com/issue_archive/Hayat%20INT/2012/9/22/%D8%A7%D9%95%D8%AC%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A1%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%94%D9%85%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%83%D8%AB%D9%8A%D9%81%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D9%94%D8%B3%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D8%B1%D9%86%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%94%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%83%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%94%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A9-)

September 18, in ‘Ayn al-Ḥilwa in Sidon.<sup>525</sup> The protest in al-Buṣṣ seems to have been led by two competing Palestinian forces; while Hamas led the march on the road next to the camp on Friday 22 September,<sup>526</sup> Fatah, the PLO, Hezbollah and several other activists from Sidon staged a sit-in within the camp on September 18.<sup>527</sup> This sit-in called for the boycott of American products, the removal of the American ambassador, and the unity of ‘the Arabic, Islamic and Christian forces against the American and the Israeli’ plan. ‘Ayn al-Ḥilwa refugee camp joined the imams of the mosques of Sidon for Friday prayers and stated that the video was a conspiracy to ‘stir up confessional tensions in the region.’<sup>528</sup> It was reported that criticism was directed at the Future Movement, which reportedly welcomed the film, and at clerics in the city who had allegedly been agitating against the March 8 Alliance.

This shows that although Islamist, nay, Salafi-Jihadi forces have increasingly infiltrated Palestinian refugee camps (Rougier 2007), they were not visible during the “crisis” of “The Innocence of Muslims.” Protests in Palestinian camps were dominated by secular forces like the OLP and Fatah, and by Hamas. Interestingly, the protest in al-Buṣṣ, Tyre, was seemingly supported by Hezbollah and one of the protests of ‘Ayn al-Ḥilwa was used to criticise the March 8 Alliance.

In addition, two protests took place in Beirut. On 17 September 2012, *al-Tawḥīd* reported that the “Committee of the Youth of Aisha bint Bikkar” had staged a protest in cooperation with the *shuyūkh*, the imams of the mosques of Beirut and representatives of educational and charitable organizations.<sup>529</sup> The various speeches that were delivered

---

%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%BA%D8%B6%D8%A8-  
%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%AA-  
%D9%88%D8%B5%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%A7-%D8%A7%D9%95%D9%84%D9%89-  
%D8%A8%D8%B9%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%83-%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%B1.html (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>525</sup> Al-Tawhid. 22 September 2012. تواصل المواقف المستنكرة للاساءة الغربية للاسلام في لبنان: أئمة المساجد وقوى واحزاب و مرجعيات دينية. Doi: <http://www.altawhid.org/2012/09/22/%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B5%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%82%D9%81-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%86%D9%83%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%A1%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%BA%D8%B1/> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>526</sup> Al-Hayat. 22 September 2012. إجراءات أمنية كثيفة لحماية المؤسسات الفرنسية والأميركية والأوروبية في لبنان. غضب من بيروت. وصيدا إلى بعلبك نصرة للرسول.

<sup>527</sup> Al-Tawhid. 18 September 2012. تواصل المواقف المنددة والغضب في المجتمع المدني والسياسي في لبنان جراء بث الفيلم المسيء للاسلام. Doi: <http://www.altawhid.org/2012/09/18/%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B5%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%82%D9%81-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%86%D8%AF%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A1/> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>528</sup> Al-Tawhid. 22 September 2012. تواصل المواقف المستنكرة للاساءة الغربية للاسلام في لبنان: أئمة المساجد وقوى واحزاب و مرجعيات دينية.

<sup>529</sup> Al-Tawhid. 17 September 2012. مواقف لعلماء ولجان وجمعيات واحزاب في لبنان منددة بالفيلم المسيء للاسلام. Doi: <http://www.altawhid.org/2012/09/17/%D9%85%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%82%D9%81-%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D9%88%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%88%D8%AC%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA->



emphasized the importance of national unity in Lebanon and the ‘holy creeds of all communities and sects (*madhāhib*).’ On 22 September 2012, *al-Ḥayāt* reported that youth organizations staged a sit-in in the mainly Sunni neighbourhood of Ras al-Nabih (Rā’s al-Naba’).<sup>530</sup>

Furthermore, on Friday 14 September after prayers, a march took place in the village Ta‘alabāyā in the Beqaa province, in the district of Zahlé.<sup>531</sup> The Islamic flags of the Hizb ut-Tahrir, *al-jamā‘a al-islāmiyya* and the Syrian revolution were all carried during this protest. Other protests took place in the village Barr Ilyās in al-Biqā’ and in Tyre.<sup>532</sup>

Finally, on September 24 *al-Liwā’* reported that *al-jamā‘a al-islāmiyya* had organized a festival in Sidon under the motto “The Corrupted will fall and the Country will remain.”<sup>533</sup> Former Prime Minister Fu‘ād al-Sinyūra, a representative of MP Bahiya al-Ḥarīrī, as well as representatives of the *mufīṭ* of Sidon, the Future Movement, the (Druze) Progressive Socialist Party, the Hizb ut-Tahrir, the Salafī stream, the “Union of Associations for the Relief of Displaced Syrians,” the Ulema Gathering of Sidon, and the League of Ulema of Palestine all participated in this event. *Al-jamā‘a al-islāmiyya*’s representative in the South, Bissām Ḥammūd, gave a speech in which he described the video as ‘these offenses by the American Administration, the French government or the Zionist enemy.’ Yet he also targeted the ‘fools, liars submerged in corruption and political harlotry, the followers of dark history.’

So far, these reactions, which took the form of protests, display the complete lack of mobilization by official religious and political Sunni leaders, be they the *dār al-fatwā* or the Future Movement.

### 3.2 Political Reactions

This section focuses on official reactions by political actors. These were framed not only in reaction to “The Innocence of Muslims” but also as a response to the violent reactions in Tripoli and the protests organized by Hezbollah and the Amal Movement. The section will first look at the reactions of the March 8 Alliance, then at those of the March 14 Alliance, and finally at those of other political parties and actors.

---

%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%84/ (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>530</sup> Al-Hayat. 22 September 2012. غضب من بيروت. غضب من بيروت في لبنان. والأوروبية في لبنان. غضب من بيروت. وصيدا إلى بعلبك نصره للرسول.

<sup>531</sup> Al-Nahar. 15 September 2012. تظاهرات في عين الحلوة وتعلبايا نددت. طرابلس: قنبل و25 جريحاً بعد حرق ال"كي.أف.سي". .. تظاهرات في عين الحلوة وتعلبايا نددت. Number 24849. Year 80. Page 7.

<sup>532</sup> Al-Nahar. 22 September 2012. مسيرات احتجاج تحت شعار “إبيك يا رسول الله”. في بعلبك وكفر كلا و صور و عكار و العاصمة. Number 24856, Year 80, Page 5

<sup>533</sup> Al-Liwa. 24 September 2012. أين حلفاء عون من الرد على «مهرجان في صيدا ومسيرة في صور دفاعاً عن النبي الأكرم». الجماعة: أين حلفاء عون من الرد على «مهرجان في صيدا ومسيرة في صور دفاعاً عن النبي الأكرم». إساءته لظهور الإسلام؟

### 3.2.1 The March 8 Alliance

This first sub-section will analyse the reactions of the Amal Movement, the Syrian Socialist National Party, Michel Aoun, Ṭalāl Arslān, the Arab Democratic Party, and the Baath Party. The Marada Movement also participated in a joint Christian-Muslim protest (see Section 3.6.2)

#### The Amal Movement

The Amal Movement was established by Mūsā al-Ṣadr who had to acknowledge in 1975 that he had established this militia (Sankari 2005, 170). The organization was trained by the PLO (ibid), yet it only had a peripheral role at the beginning of the Civil War (Sankari 2005, 154). Amal was reportedly founded to attract young Shia away from leftist secular parties (Sankari 2005, 153).

The official declarations made by the Amal Movement comprise four separate reactions. The first, issued by the movement's political office on 13 September 2012 on *al-Tawḥīd*, described the video as 'the film of strife (*al-film al-fitnawī*) [which] violates Islam and the prophet Muhammad,' 'the attack on the most noble prophet and on Christ the Lord (*al-sayyid al-masīḥ*).'<sup>534</sup> The party mentioned reports on the video's funding and about the Israeli-American producer; all this allegedly constituted proof that 'Zionist-American powers' and the United States were responsible. The video allegedly aimed to ignite the 'fire of religious conflicts which translates the thesis of the clash of civilization' and the 'fire of the war on Islam and to distort the image of the prophet Muhammad.'

The second reaction was mentioned by *al-Tawḥīd* on September 18 and was another harsh condemnation by the Amal Movement's political office and a demand for an international law prohibiting such blasphemy.<sup>535</sup>

The third reaction was the comment by the speaker of the parliament and leader of the movement, Nabih Berri (Nabīh Birrī) that was published on September 19 in *al-Nahār*.<sup>536</sup> He considered the video not only an offense against Muslims but also an offense against 'Christians, Jews and all (the) prophets' aiming to create 'Islamic-Christian strife.' In addition,

<sup>534</sup> Al-Tawhid. 13. September 2012. لبنان: سلسلة واسعة من المواقف المنندة من الأحزاب والجمعيات والشخصيات الإسلامية. Doi: والمسيحية والوطنية بالإساءة للنبي محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم:

<http://www.altawhid.org/2012/09/13/%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%82%D9%81-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%86%D8%AF%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D9%85/> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>535</sup> Al-Nahar. 18 September 2012. مزید من الردود على "براءة المسلمين" قبلان: اعتقال المسيئين ومحاکمتهم. Number 24852. Year 80. Page 4.

<sup>536</sup> Al-Nahar. 19 September. بري يرفع رأسه ب"التظاهرات الحضارية" في الضاحية. منصور غزّو ولم يتقرّد "ولماذا هذا الغباء. Number 24853. Year 80. Page 5.

he expressed his satisfaction with the Christian solidarity displayed; in particular, with the Christian clerics' participation in the Hezbollah-Amal protest and, surprisingly, with the position of the Palestinian bishop Ḥanna 'Aṭā' Allāh. On the other hand, he criticized the silence of 'Islamic sides.' Both this latter quotation and his insistence on the peaceful and 'civilized' nature of the Hezbollah/Amal protests throughout Lebanon are to be understood as means of exerting pressure on his political opponent and rivals, first and foremost on the leaders of the March 14 Alliance.

The fourth reaction was a declaration issued by MP Yāsīn Jābir, a member of the Amal Movement and of the parliamentary "Bloc (for) Development and Liberation."<sup>537</sup> In this declaration, published on September 20 on *al-Tawḥīd*, he described the video as 'the film "The Innocence of Muslims" that offends the Messenger' and as an offense against 'the feelings of the Muslims and the free people (*al-ahrār*) in the world.'<sup>538</sup> He connected the video to the 'excuse of freedom of speech' and to the 'freedom of creed Arab and Muslim people have' in the United States. He called on Muslims to unite against the video and on the international community to issue laws and rules that forbid such acts.

### **The Syrian Socialist National Party**

The SSNP (*al-ḥizb al-sūrī al-qawmī al-ijtimā'ī*) was described by George Corm as the only true cross-confessional political party (Corm 2003, 230) and by Franck Mermier as a secular, anti-sectarian, and anti-Lebanese party (Mermier 2012, 187). It was founded in 1932 by the Greek Orthodox Lebanese Anṭūn Sa'āda and aims to unite Syria, Lebanon, Mandatory Palestine, Jordan, Iraq, Kuwait, and the Turkish Hatay province into one single Syrian state (ibid). It has mainly attracted marginalized groups from the Lebanese confessional system; the Druze, the Shia, and the Greek Orthodox (Mermier 2012, 191). On a political level the SSNP has been relatively successful though, as it won two seats in the parliamentary elections in 2005 and 2009 and has had one or two ministers in the government (Mermier 2012, 204). However, the party has been facing strong internal divisions, in particular after the outbreak of the war in Syria.<sup>539</sup> According to *al-Akhbār*, the party maintains a kind of militia, 'partisan security

<sup>537</sup> Lebanese Government. 26 November 2011. اجتماع كتلة التنمية والتحرير. Doi: <https://www.lp.gov.lb/ContentRecordDetails.aspx?id=6345&title=%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B9-%D9%83%D8%AA%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%86%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B1> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>538</sup> Al-Tawhid. 20 September 2012. سلسلة واسعة من المواقف لنواب ووزراء وسفراء وشخصيات وهيئات وأحزاب في لبنان تندد بالفيلم والرسومات المسيئة للرسول.

<sup>539</sup> Al-Akhbar English. 26 August 2011. The Syrian Social Nationalists: In the Hurricane of Revolt. Doi: <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/syrian-social-nationalists-hurricane-revolt> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

apparatus,' in the neighbourhood of al-Hamra (al-Ḥamrā) in Beirut and shows little tolerance for internal dissent. The party has experienced pronounced internal divisions over its stance towards the Syrian regime and the outbreak of the Arab Spring in Syria (ibid).

The SSNP joined the series of protests organized by Hezbollah and the Amal Movement. The party's vice secretary general, Marwān Fāris, participated in the protests in Baalbek and Hermel (see Section 3.1.2). In addition, the party issued a statement on 14 September 2012 and made another declaration on September 18. The statement displayed the usual language of anti-colonial rhetoric. The party's secretary general, the Greek Orthodox MP As'ad Ḥardān, described the video as 'the offense against the Messenger of God, Muhammad', 'this condemning offense of the Messenger Muhammad.'<sup>540</sup> Interestingly, in this statement, Muhammad is not mentioned as being relevant to the Muslims, but as *the* messenger of God. This idea is backed by the condemnation of the video as offending 'the *muhammedian* message' and as attacking Christianity. At the same time, the issue of the video was placed in the context of broader violence and extremism; 'extremism in its different forms and levels, and from various sources,' 'extremism and its practices,' 'hatred, violence, murder and occupation.' This enables the SSNP to denounce its eternal enemy: "Zionism," since the video was produced by 'the forces of extremism,' by 'the racist and settling Zionist enemy' which cause 'terror, murder, slaughter, destruction in our countries [underlined by the author].' The statement insisted on this thesis; 'It is clear that the extremism that bloodies our countries with terror, murder, slaughter, (and) destruction is met with every support by Israel and the colonising forces of the West' in order to 'create the violent environment between the people, infected by ethnic, sectarian (*tā'ifiyyī*), (and) confessional (*madhhabī*) evil as a condition for the success of the plan to fragment the region and divide it into ghettos.' According to the SSNP, a symptom of this was the disappearance of the Palestinian cause. Interestingly, the party did not once mention "Lebanon," but only referred to 'our countries' and the region. Therefore, according to the SSNP, condemning this act of "extremism" was a moral and human duty. Furthermore, As'ad Ḥardān praised the visit of Benedict XVI and the role of the Roman Catholic Church in implementing the values of love and mutual respect.

In another declaration quoted in *al-Safīr* on September 18, the SSNP repeated its belief that the video is part of an 'American-Zionist plan to spread strife, chaos, extremism,

---

<sup>540</sup> Al-Anwar. 15 September 2012. حردان: الإساءة الى الإسلام جزء من مخطط أميركي - صهيوني للفتنة. Number 18142. Year 53. Doi: <http://www.archive.alanwar.com/article.php?articleID=172297&issuedate=20120915> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

fragmentation and to hit the unity of the social and civilizational woven fabric in heterogeneous societies.<sup>541</sup>

### **Michel Aoun, Free Patriotic Movement (*al-tayyār al-waṭanī al-ḥurr*)**

On 18 September 2012, *al-Tawḥīd* reported on a very short comment made by Michel Aoun (Mīshāl Aʿwn).<sup>542</sup> After a meeting with the members of the Bloc “Change and Reform,” led by Michel Aoun, he expressed his condemnation of the video – ‘an attack on prophets, messengers and dogmas’ – and praised the ‘positive propositions’ made by Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh.

### **Ṭalāl Arslān, Democratic Lebanese Party**

Walīd Junbalāt’s political rival for the leadership of the Druze, Ṭalāl Arslān, briefly condemned “The Innocence of Muslims.”<sup>543</sup> In particular, he condemned the ‘methodical attack by Zionism on Islam through the film’ and claimed ‘the Zionist attack targets two civilizations.’<sup>544</sup> On 19 September 2012, *al-Safīr* published a short reaction by the Democratic Lebanese Party, (*al-ḥizb al-dīmūqrāṭī al-lubnānī*).<sup>545</sup> The party saw the video’s aim as being to cause divisions ‘along sectarian lines’ and believed it to be part of an ‘Israeli project’ to ignite a ‘war of civilizations between East and West.’

### **ʿAlī ʿAyd, Arab Democratic Party**

The secretary general of the predominantly Alawi party, the Arab Democratic Party (*al-ḥizb al-ʿarabī al-dīmūqrāṭī*), ʿAlī ʿAyd, issued a statement on 13 September 2012.<sup>546</sup> In this statement, he described “The Innocence of Muslims” as ‘the film offending the prophet,’ ‘a condemnable, immoral act, representing an enemy for Islam and the Muslims’ that was shown in the United States. For the Alawi see section 3.3.1.4.

---

<sup>541</sup> “لنشر الفتنة والفوضى والتطرف والتفتيت وضرب وحدة النسيج الاجتماعي الحضاري في المجتمعات التعددة,, Al-Safir. 15 September 2012. جنبلاط: إسرائيل خلف العمل المسيء للرسول. ميقاتي. الأميركيون لا يتحملون مسؤولية الفيلم. Number 12284. Year 39. Page 6.

<sup>542</sup> Al-Tawhid. 18 September 2012. تواصل المواقف المننّدة والغضب في المجتمع المدني والسياسي في لبنان جراء بثّ الفيلم المسيء للاسلام .

<sup>543</sup> Ṭalāl Arslān was a minister and MP several times between 1991 and 2005 (seemingly both at the same time) Who’s Who 2007-2008 Arslane, Talal, Majid Emir). He originates from the famous Arslān family whose leader he currently is.

<sup>544</sup> Al-Safir. 15 September 2012. جنبلاط: إسرائيل خلف العمل المسيء للرسول. ميقاتي. الأميركيون لا يتحملون مسؤولية الفيلم. Number 12284. Year 39. Page 6.

<sup>545</sup> Al-Safir. 19 September 2012. حرب بيدي استعدادده لتقديم دعوى قضائية. لحدود: بالوحدة الوطنية نرد على الفيلم المسيء إلى النبي. Number 12287. Year 39. Page 4.

<sup>546</sup> Al-Anwar. 14 September 2012. مواقف تدين الفيلم الاميركي المسيء الى الرسول العربي المفتي قبانى يدعو الى صوت اسلامي - مسيحي موحد ضد الإساءة للأديان

<http://www.archive.alanwar.com/article.php?articleID=172214&issuedate=20120914> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

## The Baath Party

On 22 September 2012, *al-Tawhīd* published the position of Muḥammad Shākir al-Qawwās, leader of the Baath Party (*ḥizb al-ba‘th*) in Lebanon, on the video. He considered it an ‘attack on Islamic and human history’ that demanded a ‘collected, firm, and united position from Muslims and Christians in the Arab countries (*awṭān*) and the world.’ In addition, he criticized the position of some ‘Zionist-friendly Islamic movements’<sup>547</sup> that had allegedly sold Muhammad out.

### Summary of Section 3.2.1

These reactions show how heterogeneous the March 8 Alliance is. These parties share a common anti-colonial and anti-Israeli stance. None of these groups condemned the violent reactions. In addition, the reactions showed that different actors perceived this issue to have different levels of relevance; while some condemned the video in rather neutral terms, others, like the Amal Movement and the SSNP, made significant use of anti-colonial rhetoric.

### 3.2.2 The March 14 Alliance

This section will now analyze the declarations made by the March 14 Alliance, the Future Movement, the Lebanese Forces, the Kataeb, *al-jamā‘a al-islāmiyya*, and the Free Lebanese Party. Several representatives of this alliance also participated in a gathering staged by *al-jamā‘a al-islāmiyya* in Sidon (Section 3.1.3) and in a Christian-Muslim conference in ‘Akkār (3.6.4)

### March 14 Alliance

The March 14 Alliance released two official reactions to “The Innocence of Muslims.” In an initial statement issued by the secretariat of the alliance and quoted on *al-Liwā’* on 14 September 2012, the movement demanded the United States prosecute the makers of the video.<sup>548</sup> Yet it also harshly condemned the violent reactions to the video, especially the murder of the US ambassador to Libya, stating that Islam had been ‘offended’ again (by this). It also demanded that the authorities in Libya and Egypt prosecute those responsible for these violent clashes. A week later, following its weekly meeting, the March 14 Alliance again condemned the video as an ‘offense against Muslims.’<sup>549</sup> In particular, it criticized the video for its timing and its potential for tarnishing the image of the Arab Spring. However, the alliance also accused

<sup>547</sup> “لبعض الحركات الإسلامية المتصهينة..”

<sup>548</sup> Al-Liwa. 14 September 2012. وبالغضب الدموي في. الميقاتي والحريري وقيادات دينية وسياسية نددوا بالفيلم الأميركي المسيء للإسلام.. وبالعنف الدموي في. الدفاع عن النبي. Doi: <http://www.aliwaa.com.lb/Article.aspx?ArticleId=137215> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>549</sup> Al-Nahar. 20 September 2012. “حزب الله” لحرف الأنظار عن جرائم النظام السوري. أمانة 14 آذار: ظاهرات “حزب الله” لحرف الأنظار عن جرائم النظام السوري. Number 24854. Year 80. Page 5.

Hezbollah of diverting attention from the ‘crimes of the Syrian regime’ by staging this series of protests. The statement added that the presence of Iranian Revolutionary Guards in Lebanon violates the country’s sovereignty.

### **The Future Movement**

Several members of the Future Movement reacted officially to “The Innocence of Muslims;” alongside the Future Movement, there were also reactions by Fu’ād al-Sinyūra, Sa’d al-Ḥarīrī, MP ‘Imār al-Ḥūrī, member of the Future Bloc, and Niḍāl Ṭa’ma. To some extent, the Future Movement was in a precarious situation at that time, as its leader, Sa’d al-Ḥarīrī had left Lebanon following the collapse of his government. According to *al-Akhbār*, he was facing serious financial problems which raised questions about his credentials as the leader of his (Sunni) community.<sup>550</sup> In the meantime, the vacuum was filled to some extent by Fu’ād al-Sinyūra (Fouad Siniora), who was minister of finance from 2000 to 2004 under the late Rafiq al-Ḥarīrī.

On September 13, Fu’ād al-Sinyūra led a delegation of the Future Movement to visit Patriarch Bishāra Buṭrus al-Rā’ī.<sup>551</sup> During this visit, al-Sinyūra mentioned the up-coming visit of Benedict XVI, the role of Lebanon as a model for the region, and the thwarted attack against the patriarch during his visit to ‘Akkār. In addition, he mentioned the video as a ‘suspicious film’ and as a ‘trap’ with a vague background (‘if the maker of this film is of a given nationality’). In particular, he criticized the timing of this film allegedly aiming to provoke Muslims and weaken the Arab Spring and the democratic movement. Yet he also condemned the violent reactions to it.

Similarly, Sa’d al-Ḥarīrī criticized the video for its timing, ‘when we are working on building up dialogue, mutual understanding and mutual respect’ and the threat it posed to the Arab Spring.<sup>552</sup> In addition, he viewed the video as aiming to ‘plant strife (*fitna*) between the people and the religions’ and noted the ‘offense’ it constitutes for Islam. Despite this, Sa’d al-Ḥarīrī likewise criticized the violent reactions to it.

MP ‘Imād al-Ḥūrī, member of the Future Bloc, accused Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh of misusing the video to serve his own political interests and also accused Hezbollah’s supporters of having

---

<sup>550</sup> Al-Akhbar English. 11 August 2012. Future Movement: When Will We Get Paid? Doi: <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/future-movement-when-will-we-get-paid> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>551</sup> L’Orient Le Jour. 14 September 2012. De Bkerke, Siniora remercie le pape and dénonce le “meutre d’innocents” après le film scandale. Number 13553. Page 2.

<sup>552</sup> Al-Nahar. 14 September 2012. الحريري التقى معارضين سوريين: العنف يسيء إلى الإسلام كما الفيلم. Number 24848. Year 80. Page 4.

screamed ‘There is no God but Bashshār’ during the protests,<sup>553</sup> probably in an attempt to polemicize Hezbollah supporters.

In comparison, the Future Movement reacted relatively late. On September 19, *al-Safir* reported the movement’s call on the Arab League and international organizations to issue a law forbidding an ‘attack on religion and prophets’ and its condemnation of the violent reactions.<sup>554</sup> On September 18, following its weekly meeting, it issued a statement in which several subjects were mentioned.<sup>555</sup> The statement declared that the Apostolic Exhortation issued by Benedict XVI during his visit supported al-Azhar’s document concerning the Arab Spring and the role of Christians in the region. The statement also condemned the video, its timing, and its alleged goal of igniting strife in the region. Yet the Future Movement also condemned the violent reactions which took place in connection with “The Innocence of Muslims.”

Finally, MP Niḍāl Ṭa‘ma<sup>556</sup> expressed his position on “The Innocence of Muslims” at a students’ graduation ceremony. In his speech, which was probably given at the school he founded, Niḍāl Ṭa‘ma condemned the video as ‘this offense against the right and the freedom of creed’ and ‘the offending film’ and ‘the crime against the right (*ḥaqq*) of humanity.’<sup>557</sup> Interestingly, he added that the film primarily offended Christianity before it offended Islam, because ‘if jealously did not make us [attack] the sacred things of our partners in the nation, then Lebanon would not have a role and would not be a lighthouse for coexistence (*al-‘aysh al-mushtarak*).’<sup>558</sup> This declaration might have been motivated by the fact that he was addressing students.

### *Al-Jamā‘a al-Islāmiyya*

*Al-jamā‘a al-islāmiyya* is a key ally of the Future Movement. It was founded in 1962 as the Lebanese branch of the Muslim Brotherhood (Gervais 2012, 121) and since then it has shown a high level of political pragmatism and conservatism and has strived for the preservation of the interests of its community, the Sunnis (Gervais 2012 121-122). It ran in the parliamentary

---

<sup>553</sup> 14 March. 18 September 2012. "الفيلم المسيء للإسلام" في خدمة النظام السوري. Doi: <http://14march.org/news-details.php?nid=NDAwMTQ3> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>554</sup> Al-Safir. 19 September 2012. "حرب بيدي استعدادده لتقديم دعوى قضائية. لحدود: بالوحدة الوطنية نرد على الفيلم المسيء إلى النبي. Number 12287. Year 39. Page 4.

<sup>555</sup> Al-Nahar. 19 September 2012. "المستقبل": سلاح المقاومة إيراني يوظائف إقليمية يهدد بضرب الميثاق الوطني والعيش المشترك. Number 24853. Year 80. Page 4.

<sup>556</sup> Niḍāl Ṭa‘ma was born in 1960 and fled to Sierra Leone during the Civil War. He holds the Greek Orthodox seat for the ‘Akkār province in parliament. In addition, he was one of the founders of the Orthodox Youth Movement in ‘Akkār and has established an Orthodox school in the region, whose director he has been since 1993. 14 March. طعمة. Doi: <http://www.14march.org/profile-details.php?id=MTMxMTU1> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>557</sup> Al-Tawhid. 20 September 2012. "سلسلة واسعة من المواقف لنواب ووزراء وسفراء وشخصيات وهيئات وأحزاب في لبنان تندد بالفيلم والرسومات المسيئة للرسول. طعمة: فيلم "براءة الإسلام يسىء للمسيحيين قبل أن يسىء للمسلمين

<sup>558</sup> "فإن لم تحركنا الغيرة على مقدسات شركائنا بالوطن فلن يكون للبنان دور ومنارة للعيش المشترك".



elections in 1972 (Gervais 2012, 121). Following the Civil War, Rafīq al-Ḥarīrī made great efforts to secure an alliance with *al-jamā‘a al-islāmiyya*, even fuelling rumours about significant financial support (Gervais 2012, 120-121). However, this proximity to the Future Movement (and the March 14 Alliance) has led to a division within the party. The spiritual leader of the Lebanese Brotherhood, Faḥī Yakan, has been particularly critical of this alliance; ‘adhérer au mouvement du 14 Mars c’est se soumettre au projet de contrôle hégémonique des Etats-Unis au Moyen-Orient’ (Gervais 2012, 127), and subsequently founded the Islamic Action Front, whose reactions to “The Innocence of Muslims” will be mentioned in Section 3.5.1.5.

The reactions displayed by *al-jamā‘a al-islāmiyya* comprise two official statements and two declarations by its secretary general, MP ‘Imād al-Ḥūt. In addition, *al-jamā‘a al-islāmiyya* staged a sit-in in Sidon in late September (see Section 3.1.3)

On September 13, *al-Tawḥīd* published a short statement by the organization, in which it mostly condemned the video for ‘distorting the image of Islam.’<sup>559</sup> In addition, because of its timing, *al-jamā‘a al-islāmiyya* also accused it of seeking ‘not only (to) offend Islam, its prophet and the Muslims, but also to sow strife between Muslims and non-Muslims.’ Interestingly, *al-jamā‘a al-islāmiyya* attributed responsibility for this film to those states that allowed the video ‘under the pretence of freedoms’ because they had collaborated to a great extent in the ‘plans to trigger strife (*fitna*).’ Furthermore, the statement condemned the violent reactions by calling for ‘civilized and aware’ reactions.

The statement published on September 18 in *al-Anwar* was more elaborate when mentioning the video.<sup>560</sup> “The Innocence of Muslims” was referred to as a cinematographic production, as ‘the film offending Islam,’ the ‘hateful act,’ and ‘this enemy act.’ Furthermore, the video was accused of targeting ‘Islam as a religion and the Muslims as a community (*umma*),’ ‘offending the prophet of mercy, Muhammad’ and as ‘distorting the image of Islam and Muslims.’ In addition, the statement repeated two ideas from the previous statement; the idea that the video was aiming to cause sectarian strife and ‘fragmentation of the region on a sectarian basis,’ as well as the condemnation of the violence, again calling on Muslims to react, but using ‘civilized and aware’ means. Furthermore, it demanded the prosecution of the producers. *Al-jamā‘a al-islāmiyya* also announced that it had covered its vans in Sidon with

<sup>559</sup> Al-Tawhid. 13. September 2012. لبنان : سلسلة واسعة من المواقف المنددة من الأحزاب والجمعيات والشخصيات الإسلامية. والمسيحية والوطنية بالاساءة للنبي محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم: الغريب استنكر تعرض الفيلم الأميركي للدين الاسلامي.

<sup>560</sup> Al-Anwar. 18 September 2012. مزيد من المواقف الشاجبة للفيلم المسيء للاسلام. Number 18144. Year 53. Doi: <http://www.archive.alanwar.com/article.php?articleID=172569&issuedate=20120918> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

black banners stating ‘*ilā rasūl allāh*’ and ‘if they knew you, they would love you [Muhammad].

In an initial reaction reported on September 15 in *L’Orient Le Jour*, general secretary ‘Imād al-Ḥūt refuted the pretence of freedom of speech in the production of the video.<sup>561</sup> He appeared to acknowledge a Coptic background, as he stated ‘What has been produced does not necessarily reflect the opinion of Christians in the East.’ Thus he also seemed to suggest that some Christians might agree with what was produced. In his conversation with “Radio of the East,” reported on September 18 in *al-Anwar*, ‘Imād al-Ḥūt talked about several subjects, and, in connection to the video, he appeared to react to criticism against the *al-jamā‘a al-islāmiyya*.<sup>562</sup> He explained that *al-jamā‘a al-islāmiyya* did not organize protests because the organization had already issued a statement condemning the video, and such an action was better than the ‘violence by groups who do not belong to Islam.’ He maintained that Arab and Islamic governments needed to pressure the UN to issue a statement. In addition, he made what could be a possible criticism of Hezbollah, as he stated that it was necessary to react to “The Innocence of Muslims” but anger at the ‘bloodshed in Syria is more of a duty.’ More precisely he questioned Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh’s ability to organize peaceful protests. As well as the video, ‘Imād al-Ḥūt also discussed the presence of Iranian Revolutionary Guards in Lebanon and the visit of Benedict XVI, whom he considered to have issued a call to Christians to join the Arab Spring.

### **Samīr Ja‘ja‘, Lebanese Forces**

Samīr Ja‘ja‘ (Samir Geagea) issued two reactions to “The Innocence of Muslims.”

He was born into a poor family (Aubin-Boltanski 2012, 58) and joined the Lebanese Forces that were founded in 1976 by Bashir Gemayel. Although Samīr Ja‘ja‘ was raised in the neighborhood Ain el-Remaneh in Beirut, he is known as “the man of Bcharré,” a Maronite village in Mount Lebanon (Aubin-Boltanski 2012, 60). During the civil war, he was involved in several crimes, among them the murder of Tony Frangié’s family (although his actual responsibility is not clear). Subsequently, he was imprisoned from 1994 to 2005 and during this time, he acquired the image of a “martyr,” as he was one of the few warlords who served his sentence (Aubin-Boltanski 2012, 58). Since then, he has tried to establish himself as the temporal leader of the Christians (Aubin-Boltanski 2012, 70).

---

<sup>561</sup> L’Orient le Jour. 15 September 2012. Dénonciation politique des “objectifs douteux” du film, mais aussi des violences. Number 13554. Page 5.

<sup>562</sup> Al-Anwar. 18 September 2012. الحوت تمنى مناقشة الاستراتيجية الدفاعية الخميس وإعلاء صوت الدولة على مشاريع الدويلا. Number 18144. Year 53. Doi:

<http://www.archive.alanwar.com/article.php?articleID=172564&issuedate=20120918> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

On September 14, *al-Anwar* reported on Samīr Ja‘ja‘’s statement on the necessity of respecting religion and “*muqaddasāt*” and his condemnation of the ‘offense of a cinematographic movie offending the messenger of Islam.’<sup>563</sup> Yet, in the name of the Lebanese Forces, he also condemned the violent reactions to the film, in particular the attack on the US consulate in Benghazi. He reported that he had called the US ambassador to Lebanon to convey his condolences.

His reaction as reported on September 18 in *L’Orient Le Jour* differed greatly. Samīr Ja‘ja‘ repeated his condemnation of “The Innocence of Muslims” saying; ‘I harshly condemn this film, not only as a Lebanese who has to defend the interests of the second half of the nation, but also absolutely.’<sup>564</sup> More important, he harshly criticized the way Hezbollah dealt with the video; ‘what bothered me was the way some insignificant people behind this futile film were able to provoke the mobilization of some groups of Muslims which will confirm the negative image conveyed by this film.’ More precisely, he accused Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh of having misused this film for political goals.

#### **Kataeb (*ḥizb al-katā‘ib al-lubnāniyya*)**

Former president of the republic, Amin Gemayel (Amīn al-Jumayyil) and his nephew, Nadim Gemayel (Nadīm al-Jumayyil) also reacted officially to “The Innocence of Muslims.”

During a press conference, probably on 17 September or 18 September 2012, Amīn al-Jumayyil alluded to diverse subjects such as the visit of Benedict XVI, Hezbollah’s protests, and election law.<sup>565</sup> With regards to the pope’s visit, al-Jumayyil expressed his sorrow over the events in Tripoli during the pope’s visit. In addition, he condemned the violent reactions to the video, asking ‘We try to understand Islamic feelings, [but] we question: Is this the right way to express our protest? Does this serve the Quran and Islamic symbols? No. On the contrary.’ Interestingly, in this quotation he still used “we” despite evoking the violent Muslim reactions. Furthermore, he questioned Hezbollah’s ability to guarantee peaceful protests; ‘We also ask: Against whom is Naṣr Allāh protesting?’ and ‘we don’t know where this mobilization can possibly lead.’

In contrast, Nadīm al-Jumayyil’s reaction was limited to a condemnation of the video, classing it as an ‘attempt to destabilize the region’ and he was also critical of the violent

---

<sup>563</sup> Al-Anwar. 14 September 2012. - مواقف تدين الفيلم الأميركي المسيء الى الرسول العربي المفتي قبانى يدعو الى صوت اسلامي - مسيحي موحد ضد الإساءة للأديان

<sup>564</sup> L’Orient le Jour. 18 September 2012. Geagea: Le Hezbollah n’est pas prêt au dialogue et utilise le film islamophobe pour se créer la dimension politique qu’il espère. Number 13557. Page 3.

<sup>565</sup> Al-Anwar. 18 September 2012. الجميل استنكر في مؤتمر صحافي الإساءة للإسلام وخطف مواطن: خطاب نصر الله بتوقيته ضرب وفقاً أوجده زيارة البابا. Number 18144. Year 53. Doi: <http://www.archive.alanwar.com/article.php?articleID=172576&issuedate=20120918> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

reactions to it.<sup>566</sup> During his visit with the Greek Orthodox Bishop of Beirut, Ilyās ‘Awdih, he praised Benedict XVI’s visit, which had given ‘very much confidence to the Christians in the region.’

### **National Liberal Party**

The National Liberal Party (*ḥizb al-waṭaniyyīn al-aḥrār*), a rather leftist party, was founded in 1959 by former president Camille Chamoun (Kamīl Nimr Sham‘ūn) (Shahnahan 2005, 93), president of Lebanon from 1952 to 1958. The party maintained a militia during the Civil War but it was dissolved by the Kataeb in 1980 (Labévière 2009, 26). It used to have Shia support, but is a mainly Maronite party that joined the March 14 Alliance (Shahnahan 2005, 93).

The statement issued by this party after its weekly meeting strongly resembles the positions of other members of the March 14 Alliance.<sup>567</sup> The party expressed its condemnation of the video, but it added that it was ‘deeply sorry’ for the violent reactions that ‘distort the image of Islam more than those who produced’ the video. The statement asserted that Christians and Christianity have also been ‘offended.’ Interestingly it repeated another of Samīr Ja‘ja’s ideas relating to the responsibility of the US; ‘Neither the Americans nor the American government are responsible, and neither are the West or any religion.’ Instead, the responsibility of this video was ascribed to ‘a little extremist group.’ Another recurrent issue mentioned by the March 14 Alliance is mentioned here; the war in Syria. The Free Lebanese Party stated that the furore surrounding this video was engineered ‘to distract [attention] from the crimes of the Syrian regime.’ Finally, the statement referred to other issues that were mentioned by the March 14 Alliance; the visit by Benedict XVI (viewed as a call on Muslims and Christians to ‘work together under the principles of freedom, justice, equality, and partnership’), Hezbollah’s weapons and the presence of Iranian Revolutionary guards in Lebanon.

### **Buṭrus Ḥarb**

Buṭrus Ḥarb has been an MP from 1972 to 1992, in 1996, and from 2000 on, and has also been a minister several times.<sup>568</sup> His headquarters are in Tannourine in Mount Lebanon; he is a Maronite (Douayhi 2012, 483) and he is part of the March 14 Alliance. In a press

---

<sup>566</sup> Gemayel, Nadim. ?. MP. Nadim Gemayel visits Metropolitan Elias Audi النائب نديم الجميل بعد زيارة المطران عوده :Doi<http://www.nadimgemayel.com/newsInformation.asp?NewsId=432> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>567</sup> Al-Anwar. 22 September 2012. الأحرار: الفيلم المسيء للمسلمين عمل طائش وللحوار شروط كي لا يصبح ملهة وغطاء. Number 18148. Year 53. Doi: <http://www.archive.alanwar.com/article.php?articleID=173042&issuedate=20120922> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>568</sup> Who’s Who 2007-2008 Harb, Butros.

conference on 18 September 2012, he briefly mentioned “The Innocence of Muslims.”<sup>569</sup> He considered it ‘not only an offense against the prophet and against Muslims, but also against all revealed religions, especially against the coexistence between Muslims and Christians’ and demanded the prosecution of its makers.

### ***Summary of Section 3.2.2***

Although the members of the March 14 Alliance are also very heterogeneous, their reactions display a lower level of heterogeneity than the March 8 Alliance. There are more common patterns: condemnation of the violence and of Hezbollah, which reportedly tried to hide its involvement in the Syrian conflict by creating a hue and cry surrounding the video. In addition, the background of the video is mentioned only vaguely and does not seem to be relevant.

### **3.2.3 Other Political Actors**

This third section will describe the reactions of prominent actors such as Walīd Junbalāṭ, Īlī Firzīlī, as well as former President Emile Lahoud (Imīl Laḥūd), *ḥizb al-ittiḥād*, *ḥarakat al-nāṣirīn al-mustaqillīn*, and *niḍāl al-lubnānī al-‘arabī*, and also those of less famous actors such as *ḥizb al-wafāq al-waṭanī*, and Bahā’ al-Dīn ‘Ītānī.

### **Walīd Junbalāṭ**

Walīd Junbalāṭ is an important actor in Lebanese political life. Under him, the Progressive Socialist Party became a party exclusively representing Druze interests (el-Husseini 2012, 61). During the Civil War, he maintained a militia and contributed to the ethnic cleansing of the Chouf (Rivoal 2012, 142); until 2004 he had been one of the closest allies of Syria for some time (Knudsen; Kerr 2012, 157). Then he joined the March 14 Alliance for a while.

Despite his party’s participation in the sit-in organized by *al-jamā‘a al-islāmiyya* (see Section 3.1.3), Walīd Junbalāṭ’s reaction to “The Innocence of Muslims” differed completely from those of the March 14 Alliance. His condemnation of the video “The Innocence of Muslims” was particularly elaborate. It was published on 14 September 2012, on the website of his party, the Progressive Socialist Party (*al-ḥizb al-taqadummī al-ishtirākī*).<sup>570</sup> Walīd Junbalāṭ described the video as ‘the film “The Innocence of Muslims”’ (al-Nahar 15 September

---

<sup>569</sup> Al-Safir. 19 September 2012. الحرب يبدي استعداداه لتقديم دعوى قضائية. لحدود: بالوحدة الوطنية نرد على الفيلم المسيء إلى النبي. Number 12287. Year 80. Page 4.

<sup>570</sup> Al-Nahar. 15 September 2012. جنبلاط: الفيلم المسيء إلى الإسلام هدفه التشويش على الثورات العربية. Number 24849. Year 80. Page 7. In this paragraph quoted as “al-Nahar 15 September 2012.”

2012), ‘the suspicious film,’ ‘the violation of religions and its symbols,’ ‘these suspicious plans,’ aiming to ‘intensify the feelings of hatred’ (ibid). He connected the video to Israel in various ways. Firstly, he stated: ‘It is not possible not to make Israel responsible’<sup>571</sup> Secondly, the timing of the release during Benedict XVI’s visit caused him to reflect on Lebanon as a ‘diverse democracy in contrast to the monolithic Israel’ (ibid). In addition, he accused Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu of having consistently pressured the United States into attacking Iran and thus plunging the region into a ‘sectarian and doctrinal (*madhhabī*) chaos which would serve the interests of Israel’ (ibid). Thus Junbalāt called on the United States to issue a law criminalizing blasphemy similar to the law prohibiting Anti-Semitism (ibid). Furthermore, he condemned the violent reactions to the film and the murder of the US ambassador (al-Nahar 15 September 2012).

### **Īlī Firzli, Former Second Speaker of Parliament**

Elie Ferzli (Īlī Firzli) was born in 1948 in Zahlé; he was an MP from 1991 to 2005, and deputy speaker of parliament from 1992 to 2005.<sup>572</sup> From 2004 to 2005 he was a minister. In addition, he is a leading member of the Orthodox Gathering (see Section 3.5.2) He expressed his view on “The Innocence of Muslims” in a conversation with *al-intiqād* and he posted on his blog.<sup>573</sup> As well as mentioning the ‘film named “The Innocence of Muslims,”’ he also referred to the cartoons and to Terry Jones. He considered all these acts part of a series of offenses that started a decade ago to ‘ignite the “clash of civilizations” (*ḥarb al-ḥaḍāra*).’ He placed these issues in the broader context of a clash of civilization in the interest of Israel; ‘the Zionist creature’ with Israel sitting at the head of a war. Īlī Firzli re-wrote the history of the twentieth century, starting with the Balfour Declaration that ‘planted the Zionist creature in the region.’ Now, he believed that the collapse of the Soviet Union has meant that the West was searching for a new war between ‘the East which is majority Muslim and the West which is majority Christian.’ In this context, “The Innocence of Muslims” particularly affected Christians because it aimed to ‘inflame Islamic feelings against the Christians in the region, especially the Copts in the region, in order to deepen the conflict and to destroy the Christians in the East.’ Interestingly, he called for reactions in which he placed himself side by side with Muslims; ‘we all have to be behind the Messenger and defend him by emulating his ethics.’ Thus, Īlī Firzli

<sup>571</sup> Al-Hayat. 15 September 2012. جنبلاط يدين الفيلم المسيء والرد عليه: لا يمكن تنزيه اسرائيل عن التخطيط له. Number 18061. Page 9.

<sup>572</sup> Who’s Who 2007-2008 Ferzli, Elie Najib.

<sup>573</sup> Ferzli, Elie. 26 September 2012. Elie Ferzli Blog. Doi: [http://elieferzli.blogspot.co.at/2012\\_09\\_01\\_archive.html](http://elieferzli.blogspot.co.at/2012_09_01_archive.html) (retrieved May 17, 2016).

placed the video in the context of a solidarity between Muslims and Christians which rested on a common history and even a shared identity, and the film was reportedly targeting this unity.

**Emile Lahoud, *ḥizb al-ittihād, ḥarakat al-nāṣirīn al-mustaqillīn, niḍāl al-lubnānī al-‘arabī***

On or around 18 September 2012, former President Emile Lahoud (Imīl Laḥūd)<sup>574</sup> received a delegation from three parties, *ḥizb al-ittihād*,<sup>575</sup> *ḥarakat al-nāṣirīn al-mustaqillīn*<sup>576</sup> and *niḍāl al-lubnānī al-‘arabī*, which is led by former MP Fayṣal al-Dāwūd.<sup>577</sup> As a result, the reactions given by of these four actors will be analysed together.

On September 13, *al-Tawḥīd* quoted the declaration made by Fayṣal al-Dāwūd in which he condemned the repetition of ‘offenses.’<sup>578</sup> Yet he underlined the impossibility of distorting the image of Islam, as ‘this tolerant Islamic message, a producer of films cannot distort it.’ In addition, he connected the video to “Zionism” which ‘produces the clash of civilizations.’

Similarly, in the same article, *al-Tawḥīd* also reported *ḥizb al-ittihād*’s condemnation of the video. The video is described as an “offense” and immediately connected to “Zionism.”<sup>579</sup> The party considered the video a product of ‘American and Zionist hate’ and part of the US strategy to ‘protect the Zionist creature and support it in its dreams.’ *Ḥizb al-ittihād* accuses the video of aiming to stir up “sectarian strife (*fitna ṭā’ifiyya*) and pushing Muslims and Copts into a bloody conflict to implement the plans of the New Middle East.’ However, the party stated that this alleged plan had failed, since Muslims and Christians had protested together against the video and it praised the position taken by the ‘Coptic church.’ Interestingly, the declaration added a description of Muhammad, entrusted by God to ‘carry the Islamic banner for the world, Islam, and Muslims who call for the religion of right.’

Finally, *al-Tawḥīd*’s September 13 article also mentioned the comment by the leader of *ḥarakat al-nāṣirīn al-mustaqillīn*, Muṣṭafā Ḥamdān, on the Arab Spring. He asserted that the

---

<sup>574</sup> Imīl Laḥūd was born in the Metn district (*qaḍā’ al-Matn*) of Mount Lebanon and was a cadet officer in the navy who went on to rebuild the Lebanese army and re-introduced mandatory service (el-Husseini 2012, 91) until 2006. When he was elected president in 1998, it was reportedly under pressure from Syria and he increasingly sent officers to Syria for training (ibid). He was president of Lebanon from 1998 to 2007.

<sup>575</sup> *Ḥizb al-ittihād* can be described as a party inspired by Gamāl ‘Abd al-Nāṣir whose goals of freedom, socialism, and unity it pursues.

<sup>576</sup> *Ḥarakat al-nāṣirīn al-mustaqillīn* is also called “*al-murābiṭūn*.”

<sup>577</sup> Al-Nahar. 19 September 2012. لحدود: تزامن مشبوه للفيلم مع زيارة البابا. Number 24853. Year 80. Page 5.

<sup>578</sup> Al-Tawhid. 13. September 2012. لبنان: سلسلة واسعة من المواقف المنندة من الأحزاب والجمعيات والشخصيات الإسلامية والمسيحية والوطنية بالاساءة للنبي محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم: الغريب استنكر تعرض الفيلم الأميركي للدين الاسلامي.

<sup>579</sup> Al-Tawhid. 13. September 2012. لبنان: سلسلة واسعة من المواقف المنندة من الأحزاب والجمعيات والشخصيات الإسلامية والمسيحية والوطنية بالاساءة للنبي محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم: الغريب استنكر تعرض الفيلم الأميركي للدين الاسلامي.

United States had been attempting to ‘interfere and contain this movement’<sup>580</sup> since its beginning.

Following the meeting between Imīl Laḥūd, *ḥizb al-ittiḥād*, *ḥarakat al-nāṣirīn al-mustaḡillīn*, and *niḍāl al-lubnānī al-‘arabī*, these actors issued another reaction to “The Innocence of Muslims.” Imīl Laḥūd condemned the video harshly and attributed it to Israel, the ‘old, new enemy’, because the timing only benefited ‘the Israeli enemy who always seeks to harm the unity of Lebanon and the coexistence [...] between all its [elements].’<sup>581</sup> He therefore stressed the need for unity: ‘The most important and strongest position the Lebanese and the community (*umma*) of Arabs can possibly take’ is ‘unity and then unity’ (ibid). Similarly, the leader of *ḥizb al-ittiḥād*, ‘Abd al-Raḥīm Marrād, asserted that such ‘movies’ were not unusual for the United States, which also undertook the ‘the slaughter of the grandsons of the messenger in Palestine, Iraq, Somalia, and most Islamic countries.’<sup>582</sup> Interestingly, Christians were also counted as “grandsons” of Muhammad. He considered the film to be a result of ‘Zionist control over the US Administration’ (ibid). In addition, Fayṣal al-Dāwūd, the leader of *niḍāl al-lubnānī al-‘arabī*, condemned the video as a ‘shame’ for the United States and the West.<sup>583</sup> He quoted Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh who allegedly referred to the video as a ‘means of explosion on an international level’, but thanks to ‘the awareness of Christians and Muslims,’ this failed (ibid).

### *ḥizb al-wafāq al-waṭanī*

The president of the party *ḥizb al-wafāq al-waṭanī*, Bilāl Taqī al-Dīn, offered two reactions to “The Innocence of Muslims.” He also believes that the video produced by ‘Zionist-American circles’ sought to ‘fuel hatred and tension’ and ‘produce strife between Muslims and Christians,’ thereby ‘producing enmity between Muslims and Christians.’<sup>584</sup> In addition, he asserted that Islam and Christianity could not possibly be behind such a ‘destabilizing work that offends the freedom of religion’ (ibid). In another declaration quoted on *al-Tawḥīd* on

<sup>580</sup> Al-Tawhid. 13. September 2012. لبنان: سلسلة واسعة من المواقف المنددة من الأحزاب والجمعيات والشخصيات الإسلامية. المسيحية والوطنية بالاساءة للنبي محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم: الغريب استنكر تعرض الفيلم الأميركي للدين الاسلامي.

<sup>581</sup> Al-Safir. 19 September 2012. حرب بيدي استعدادده لتقديم دعوى قضائية. لحدود: بالوحدة الوطنية نرد على الفيلم المسيء إلى النبي. Number 12287. Year 39. Page 4.

<sup>582</sup> Al-Safir. 19 September 2012. حرب بيدي استعدادده لتقديم دعوى قضائية. لحدود: بالوحدة الوطنية نرد على الفيلم المسيء إلى النبي. Number 12287. Year 39. Page 4.

<sup>583</sup> Al-Nashra. 18 September 2012. Doi: فيصل الداود: الفيلم المسيء للإسلام وصمة عار على أميركا والعالم الغربي.

<http://www.elnashra.com/news/show/524506/%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%B5%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%88%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85-%D9%88%D8%B5%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B1> (retrieved April 22, 2014).

<sup>584</sup> Al-Tawhid. 13. September 2012. لبنان: سلسلة واسعة من المواقف المنددة من الأحزاب والجمعيات والشخصيات الإسلامية. المسيحية والوطنية بالاساءة للنبي محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم.



September 18, Bilāl Taqī al-Dīn harshly criticized *mufīī* Rashīd Qabbānī's reported passivity on "The Innocence of Muslims: 'Where is his Excellence, the *mufīī* of the Republic? [...] Must he not call for protests in the mosques? Must he not be at the forefront of its war and in the defence of the person of the Messenger?'"<sup>585</sup> In addition, he called on Muslims *and* Christians to react to the video and criticized the silence of Arab countries.

### **Bahā' al-Dīn 'Ītānī**

On 17 September 2012, former MP Bahā' al-Dīn 'Ītānī<sup>586</sup> issued a statement in which he condemned "The Innocence of Muslims" 'the film offending Islam' that was allegedly shown on the internet and in American cinemas. He stated that the "film" aimed to 'create unrest in the Muslim and Arab world' and served the 'interests of the Israeli enemy.'

### **Summary of Section 3.2**

All these reactions demonstrate a contrast between the March 14 Alliance and all the other political parties and actors, comprising both the March 8 Alliance and others. While the March 14 Alliance tended to criticize both the violent reactions and Hezbollah, the others placed the video in the context of enmity with Israel and used a strongly anti-colonial discourse. This section has shown how the video was used by the various political actors to exert pressure on its contenders.

## **3.3 The Religious Institutions**

### **3.3.1 The Muslim Communities**

This section will look at the reactions of religious institutions in Lebanon, that is to say the official Islamic institutions of the Sunni, Shia, Druze and Alawi communities (section 3.3.1), as well as at the reactions of the churches (Section 3.3.2).

#### **3.3.1.1 The Sunni Community**

Since the end of the Civil War, the Sunni community has been facing a serious crisis because it has lost its urban elite (Rougier 2004, 124). In addition, its religious leadership lacks

---

<sup>585</sup> Al-Tawhid. 18 September 2012. تواصل المواقف المنذرة والغضب في المجتمع المدني والسياسي في لبنان جراء بث الفيلم المسيء للاسلام .

<sup>586</sup> Bahā' al-Dīn 'Ītānī was born in 1941 (Al-Akhbar. بهاء الدين عيتاني. Doi: <http://al-akhbar.com/node/82828> (retrieved May 17, 2016). He probably leans towards the March 8 Alliance, as he considers Iran a regional power that serves the interests of the Islamic community (Donya al-Watan. 19 January 2016. لقاء الجمعيات والشخصيات الإسلامية في لبنان: إيران قوة إقليمية ستضع طاقاتها في خدمة مصالح الأمة. Doi: <http://www.alwatanvoice.com/arabic/news/2016/01/19/853072.html> (retrieved May 17, 2016) and is against Israel. He is a member of the Panarab movement *ḥarakat al-qamiyyīn al-'arab* (Manhum. بهاء الدين عبد اللطيف عيتاني. Doi: <http://www.manhum.com/mhsite/id.asp?pid=49> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

legitimacy (see Rougier 2004, 120) and part of its political leadership, especially the Future Movement, has tried to influence the religious institution, the *dār al-fatwā*, to its benefit.

The *dār al-fatwā* was established in 1922 under the French Mandate and the position of *muftī* was created in 1932 (Rougier 2004, 114-115). In 1955 a law was passed to regulate the Sunni community (ibid). The *muftī* names the imams, the preachers, the teachers, the muezzins, the provincial *muftī*, and manages the Islamic endowments (Rougier 2004, 118-119). Yet lower-ranking ‘*ulamā*’ do not receive funding from the *dār al-fatwa* and Zoltan Pall notes that the positions of high-ranking ‘*ulamā*’ often have a political dimension (Pall 2013, 31). In addition, the Future Movement has tried to increase its political hold on this religious institution. Following a reform initiated by Rafiq Hariri in 1996, the electoral base was so much reduced that the institution now lacks any popular legitimacy (Rougier 2004, 118). Under the premiership of Fu’ād al-Sinyūra, a new law was proposed to modify the 1955 law, redefining the position of the *muftī* so that he is no longer the ‘religious leader of all Muslim sects’ but the ‘religious leader of Sunni Muslims.’<sup>587</sup> In addition, *muftī* Rashīd Qabbānī allegedly lacked charisma (Rougier 2004, 118-119) and authority (Pall 2013, 32). As a result, he faced pressure from both politicians and Sunni clerics. The competition between Rashīd Qabbānī and the political Sunni leadership, particularly the Future Movement, reached a new level with the premiership of Najīb Mīqātī (2005; 2011-2014) and Fu’ād al-Sinyūra (2005-2008), the political leadership even questioning the authority of the *muftī* (Al-Akhbar 16 August 2012). From below, the non-official, marginal elements have felt compelled to take over the defence of Sunni Orthodox Islam (Gervais 2006, 63). For instance, *shaykh* Māhir Ḥammūd<sup>588</sup> criticized the *dār al-fatwā* for being an ‘annexe of the Lebanese government’ (Gervais 2012, 120). In addition, Māhir Ḥammūd was amongst a group of ‘*ulamā*’ that accused the *muftī* of corruption: ‘Does not the *muftī* see in religion anything but the money and the wealth he robs from the *dār al-fatwā* with the backing of al-Sinyūra, al-Ḥarīrī and their likes?’<sup>589</sup>

In the context of “The Innocence of Muslims,” the *muftī* Rashīd Qabbānī delivered five reactions, each one issued in a different context; firstly, in an open letter to the Muslims; secondly, in a Friday sermon, thirdly, during the meeting between Benedict XVI and the Islamic religious leaders, fourthly, at a gathering at *dār al-fatwā*, and finally, in an appearance on *al-Manār*, Hezbollah’s channel. These numerous and diverse reactions might have been motivated

---

<sup>587</sup> Al-Akhbar English. 16 August 2012. Lebanon’s Mufti: The Future Movement Wants My Turban. Doi. <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/lebanons-mufti-future-movement-wants-my-turban> (retrieved May 17, 2016). This source is quoted in this section as “Al-Akhbar 16 August 2012.”

<sup>588</sup> About Māhir Ḥammūd, see section 3.5.1.

<sup>589</sup> Al-Safir. 17 February 2011. لقاء علماني يدعو قباني إلى الاستقالة والسنيرة إلى إعادة المال السروق. Number 11816. Year 37. Page 2.

by the violent protests in the neighbourhood of Achrafieh (al-Ashrafiyya) in Beirut in 2006 in reaction to the so-called Danish cartoons.<sup>590</sup> These violent reactions showed just how much the *dār al-fatwā* was lacking in authority and power (Gervais 2006, 57). The reaction of the *mufī* of Tripoli, Mālik al-Shi‘ār, will also be analysed here. He participated in a conference of civil society actors in Tripoli (see Section 3.1.1). Furthermore, the *mufī* of northern Lebanon, the *mufī* of Tyr, and a representative of Islamic Endowments participated in joint Christian-Muslim conferences (see Section 3.6).

In his letter to the Muslims published on 13 September 2012, on *al-Tawhīd*, Rashīd Qabbānī described the video as ‘an American film whose title is “The Innocence of Muslims,”’ as ‘this hateful act,’ part of the repeated attacks on Islam, Muhammad and the Quran. It aimed to ‘harm the personal relations between the religions of the world’ and ‘plant strife between Muslims and Christians in the world.’<sup>591</sup> Thus, he definitively placed the video in the context of “Western blasphemy” ‘justified by the freedom of expression,’ and mused that the United States, ‘the most powerful country in the world,’ which ‘tries to extend its influence everywhere in the world, it is not possible that they do not know or are not aware’ of it. As a result, he demanded counter-measures on an international level in the name of the Lebanese people. Similarly, Qabbānī demanded a national Lebanese response; ‘We repeat our call to Muslim and Christian Lebanese to be united (*al-ṣawt al-wāḥid*) in the refusal of offense [...] so that Lebanon remains a message and a model of coexistence.’<sup>592</sup>

In his sermon on Friday 14 2012, in the Muḥammad al-Amīn mosque in downtown Beirut, Rashīd Qabbānī repeated similar ideas. He questioned the possibility of the United States not being aware of this ‘film shaming and offending Islam and its prophet (PBUH).’<sup>593</sup> This ‘call of terror’ sought, according to the *mufī*, to anger the feelings of Muslims in order to provide an opportunity to say ‘look at those terrorist Muslims’ and to cause ‘strife between Muslims and Christians,’ especially in the context of the pope’s visit. Furthermore, the “film” is viewed as an attack on both Islam and Christianity, targeting Islam ‘today,’ and Christianity ‘tomorrow.’ In his sermon, Qabbānī addressed both the people in the mosque and Muslims and Christians in general whom he called on to unite.

---

<sup>590</sup> The Danish mission and a Maronite church were attacked in February 2006 by angry protesters in the mainly Christian area of Achrafieh. Rashīd Qabbānī ascribed responsibility for these clashes to agents provocateurs. See The New York Times. 5 February 2006. Protesters in Beirut Set Danish Consulate on Fire. Doi: [http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/05/international/middleeast/05cnd-beirut.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/05/international/middleeast/05cnd-beirut.html?_r=0) (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>591</sup> Al-Tawhid. 13. September 2012. لبنان : سلسلة واسعة من المواقف المنددة من الأحزاب والجمعيات والشخصيات الإسلامية والمسيحية والوطنية بالاساءة للنبي محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم.

<sup>592</sup> نكرر دعوتنا للبنانيين المسلمين والمسيحيين ليكونوا الصوت الواحد في رفض الإساءة للنبي محمد وللإسلام وللأديان، ليبقى لبنان الرسالة، والنموذج في العيش المشترك بين جميع الأديان

<sup>593</sup> Al-Hayat. 25 September 2012. قبانى: المسييون إلى الإسلام يستفزوننا لنفعل الأذى كما حدث في بلدنا. Number 18061. Page 9.

Interestingly, in the context of the meeting between Benedict XVI and the Lebanese Islamic religious leaders on Sunday 16 September 2012, Rashīd Qabbānī did mention this issue, among other things, but then dwelt more precisely on its background. The video was then described as the ‘extracts of a film,’ of a man with ‘Zionist and American funding, of Jewish origin who has actually a Coptic name,’ ‘Bassiley,’ who ‘gathered five million dollars from the Jewish lobby.’<sup>594</sup> Thus, Niqūlā Bāsīlī Niqūlā was made responsible for this “film,” but the actual responsibility was ascribed to the ‘Jewish lobby’ which ‘believes neither in Christianity nor in Islam at all.’ Interestingly, while the *mufī* mentioned the involvement of a Copt, he also expressed his relief at the condemnations issued by the Maronite Patriarchate, ‘other’ Christian religious leaders, and Christians ‘in all their religious, spiritual and civil institutions.’ He insisted on the need to not make ‘Christians in Lebanon, in the region or in the world responsible for a single act.’ In addition, he repeated the idea that the video aimed to cause ‘strife (*fitna*)’ and to hurt both ‘Muslims and Christians’, as it was also an “offense” against Christianity.

On 21 September 2012, Rashīd Qabbānī invited the *shuyūkh* and imams to *dār al-fatwā*. In his speech, he expressed his ideas concerning a “Zionist” and “Jewish” background more vividly; ‘Zionist circles which try to destabilise the ranks of coexistence.’<sup>595</sup> Therefore, ‘Zionism is the enemy of religion which it fought in the West.’ In particular, the *mufī* criticized the “West” for its double standards; ‘We ask: why do the United States and the European countries forbid Anti-Semitism but do not issue a law forbidding enmity towards religion (*‘adā’ li l-dīn*)?’ Therefore, he demanded a criminalization of causing “offense” and mentioned the upcoming spiritual summit, saying ‘Christians and Muslims in Lebanon are strongly united (*yad wāhida*)’ (see Section 3.6.1).

In contrast, in his appearance on Hezbollah-owned al-Manār, the *mufī* did not dwell at length on the issue of “Zionism,” but only mentioned the reported funding of five million dollars.<sup>596</sup> He particularly criticized the double-standards of the West which practiced ‘racism against Muslims under the pretence of secularism.’ He reminded the audience of the fact that Islam had been victim of such ‘attacks’ since it first began and stressed that he considered the timing to be intentional.

<sup>594</sup> Al-Nahar. 19 September 2012. زيارة البابا شهادة للبنان. مفتي الجمهورية: Number 24853. Year 80. Page 2.

<sup>595</sup> “الدوائر الصهيونية التي تريد زعزعة صفوفهم في العيش المشترك”

Al-Nahar. 21 September 2012. اجتماع بدعوة من قباني دان، براءة المسلمين: “لن يفيد أميركا التوصل من مسؤولياتها. Number 24855. Year 80. Page 6.

<sup>596</sup> Al-Manar. 21 September 2012. قباني للمنار: الفيلم المسيء لإثارة فتنة مسيحية-إسلامية وغير قلق من فتنة طائفية Doi: . http://www.almanar.com.lb/adetails.php?fromval=1&cid=21&frid=21&eid=312001 (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Aside from Rashīd Qabbānī, the *muftī* of Tripoli, *shaykh* Mālik al-Shi‘ār, also reacted to the video.<sup>597</sup> He described the video as ‘the film offending the Messenger and 1.5 billion Muslims,’ a ‘trouble-making and hurtful act’ staged by ‘worldwide Judaism (*al-yahūdiyya al-‘alāmiyya*).' Yet according to Mālik al-Shi‘ār, this video was unsurprising for ‘worldwide Judaism’ which has not refrained from harming ‘our beloved Messenger, the other prophets and messengers.’ In addition, he condemned this video as the product of a certain kind of freedom that allowed the ‘attack on the prophet of Muslims.’

All these reactions are elaborate and demonstrate a lack attempts at mobilizing Muslims in protests. Interestingly, the *muftī* began by accusing the United States of involvement, and then went on to accuse “Zionism,” “the Jews” and Israel, but exactly which one is never explicitly mentioned.

### 3.3.1.2 The Shia Community

The Shia gained recognition as a separate community under the French mandate which created the *ja‘farī* tribunals (Mervin 2000, 394). However, these tribunals’ competences were limited to personal matters and *fiqh* (Shahnahan 2005, 162). Thus, in 1967, following the efforts of the Shia cleric and leader Mūsā al-Ṣadr, law number 72/1967 established a separate representative body for the Shia community, the Higher Islamic Shia Council (*al-majlis al-islāmī al-shī‘ī al-a‘lā*) (Rabbath 1986, 127-129). This marked the final step towards full emancipation from the Sunni institutions. As a result, this Shia institution is much more independent and powerful and has greater legitimacy than the *dār al-fatwā*. It is composed of a legal committee and an executive committee (Rougier 2004, 118). The legal committee is made up of twelve ‘*ulamā*’ that are elected by all the ‘*ulamā*’ in Lebanon with a religious diploma (Rougier 2004, 118), whereas the executive committee is composed among others of current judges and various *muftī*, current and former MPs, magistrates of the judiciary, university professors, lawyers, doctors, engineers, and presidents of local councils (Rabbath 1986, 127-129). Currently, this Higher Islamic Shia council is led by ‘Abd al-Amīr Qabalān, its vice-president (Mervin 2012, 345), because the actual president, Mūsā al-Ṣadr, has continued to be its president even after his disappearance in Libya in 1978.

The reactions of the religious representatives of the Shia community comprised official declarations and the participation in Christian-Muslim reactions. ‘Abd al-Amīr Qabalān’s reactions were reported by several media outlets on 13 September 2012, and on 18 September,

---

<sup>597</sup> Al-Anwar. 15 September 2012. اعتصامات ومواقف منددة بالفيلم الاميركي المسيء الى الاسلام احراق مطعم في طرابلس ومحاولة اقتحام السراي... وسقوط قتيل وجرحى http://www.archive.alanwar.com/article.php?articleID=172301&issuedate=20120915 (retrieved May 17, 2016).

as well as in the context of a meeting with the Gathering of Islamic 'ulamā' (*tajammu' al-'ulamā' al-muslimīn*). In addition, the Higher Islamic Shia Council issued two statements and there are two additional reactions. Section 3.6.2.3 will discuss the organization of a Christian-Muslim conference in the *dār al-ja'farī* in Tyr.

On approximately September 13, the vice-president of the Higher Islamic Council, 'Abd al-Amīr Qabalān, was reported to have condemned "The Innocence of Muslims" as 'a cowardly act,' displaying 'deeply buried feelings of hatred,' and funded by the 'Zionist movement.'<sup>598</sup> This video allegedly aimed to 'distort the image of Islam and create strife between Christians and Muslims.' Therefore, 'Abd al-Amīr Qabalān saw the best reaction to the video as an intensification of Muslim-Christian relations.

In his reaction, reported on September 18 by *al-Anwar*, 'Abd al-Amīr Qabalān defended Islam at length, describing it as a 'white page and an oasis for goodness, justice, and humanity.'<sup>599</sup> In particular, he depicted Muhammad as the embodiment of a 'model of humanity and of moral values. He is great in his moderate reason, in his blessed sayings and in his movement.' After having defined a universal mission for Muhammad, 'Abd al-Amīr Qabalān concluded that the offense 'of his person is an attack on humanity and the spiritual values Muhammad represents.' In addition, he called on Islamic and Arabic governments to pressure the United States into prosecuting the "offenders," and remained very vague regarding the background of "The Innocence of Muslims."

When receiving a delegation of the Gathering of Islamic Ulema (*tajammu' al-'ulamā' al-muslimīn*), 'Abd al-Amīr Qabalān repeated his idea of "Zionist" responsibility for this video and also expressed his concern regarding the discord between Sunni and Shia Muslims.<sup>600</sup>

Interestingly, the statement issued by the executive committee (*hay'at al-tablīgh al-dīnī*) of the Higher Islamic Shia Council and quoted in *al-Anwar* on 19 September 2012 is both very elaborate in its reflection and implicit and vague on the issue itself. Thus, "The Innocence of Muslims" was defined as one of '(especially) the latest offenses (*isā'āt*) against Islam and the prophet Muhammad,' 'the uncivilized phenomenon,' 'the offenses and excesses,' 'the deviating and uncivilized phenomena,' 'the inhuman anomaly,' 'these shameful and heavy defects,' 'this

---

<sup>598</sup> Al-Anwar. 14 September 2012. - مواقف تدين الفيلم الاميركي المسيء الى الرسول العربي المفتي قبانى يدعو الى صوت اسلامي - مسيحي موحد ضد الإساءة للأديان

<sup>599</sup> "فالإسلام صفحة بيضاء وواحة للخير والعدل والإنصاف والإنسانية," Al-Anwar. 18 September 2012. مزيد من المواقف الشاجبة للفيلم المسيء للإسلام.

<sup>600</sup> وفد "تجمع العلماء المسلمين" زار المفتي الجعفري الشيخ أحمد قبالان :Doi. http://tajamo.net/tajamon/acts/115 (retrieved April 22, 2014).

criminal behaviour.’<sup>601</sup> The video was framed in a very moralizing way as an example of moral deviation and anomalies. The whole issue was seemingly interpreted as a piece of puppet theatre, governed by ‘hidden hands who do not want peace and stability in this world, but a climate of discord, blood, evil, and crime.’ The Higher Islamic Shia Council considered the video a call to all that was evil, as mentioned previously, and to a climate of ‘religious and political extremism with the color of blood and the stamp of *takfīr* and murder.’ It was also viewed as the product of “faulty democracies” that result from ‘an old Christian error and a new Islamic mistake of representing the prophets and sacred items in art’ and has a very dangerous ‘impact on creed, culture, and behavior.’ The council considered the video to be creating ‘discord (*fitna*) and an image of Islam that is not true.’ Overall, the responsibility for this purportedly deviant and perverse act was ascribed to cultural, civilizational, and moral conditions. As a result, the council justified the violent reactions, as a ‘natural expression’ that ‘equals the amount of offense.’ In addition, it also explicitly criticized Christian religious practices such as use of icons. In contrast, the council defined a necessary opposition composed of the believers and the ‘free ones (*al-aḥrār*)’ whose awareness needs to be raised, of religious institutions which are ‘not allowed to remain hands crossed’ and a law forbidding this, at UN level.

Eventually, in late September 2012, the Higher Islamic Shia Council issued another statement under the leadership of ‘Abd al-Amīr Qabalān and mentioned this issue once again; ‘the crime committed against the right (*ḥaqq*) of the Messenger of God, Muhammad, and the immoral offense against him.’<sup>602</sup> Interestingly, the precise object of the offense was clearly mentioned this time; ‘the latest film and the offending cartoons in some French and European newspapers,’ meaning the cartoons published in *Charlie Hebdo*. The fact that the cartoons were published in a French magazine seemed to have eased the mention of a background. This implies that the council was well aware of the Coptic background but that it was too sensitive an issue to be mentioned. Therefore, it preferred to refer to ‘invisible hands.’ This new condemnation did not place the issue in a context of social and moral deviation, but rather expressed its rejection of the pretence of democracy and freedom of opinion,’ aimed at ‘weakening Muslims.’ The statement also related the satisfaction felt with the broad condemnation. Nevertheless, it still called on ‘official, religious human rights institutions, the

---

<sup>601</sup> Al-Anwar. 19 September 2012. بيان للمجلس الشيعي يدعو الى بلورة خطاب يرسم صيغ مواجهة حضارية لظاهرة الاساءة للمقدسات. Number 18145. Year 53. Doi:

<http://www.archive.alanwar.com/article.php?articleID=172655&issuedate=20120919> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>602</sup> Al-Anwar. 27 September 2012. المجلس الشيعي ينوه بزيارة البابا وبدعوته للحوار والتعايش. Number 18152. Year 53. Doi: <http://www.archive.alanwar.com/article.php?articleID=173538&issuedate=20120927> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Arab League, (and) the Organization of Islamic Conference' to address the UN appealing for a law prohibiting the offense of religions. The Higher Islamic Shia Council also referred to the issue of kidnapped Lebanese in Syria, the conflicts in Syria and Bahrain, as well as the measures of the army.

In addition, *al-Anwar* reported a gathering of the '*ulamā*' of Tyre (Ṣūr) under the leadership of *shaykh* 'Alī Yāsīn. The '*ulamā*' issued a statement in which they praised Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh's speech.<sup>603</sup> All in all, the statement seems to lean heavily towards Hezbollah, because the '*ulamā*' considered it a 'duty for every free human being' to participate in Hezbollah's protest in Tyre on 19 September 2012. This statement also defined an enemy; 'It is a duty to preserve the holy icon which equals the army, the people and the resistance against the Zionist enemy.'<sup>604</sup> After that, 'Alī Yāsīn delivered a speech at a sit-in staged by the Palestinian Islamic Authority in the refugee camp al-Buṣṣ, in which he stated 'There is no difference between Muslims and Christians, there is a Zionist-American plan against the Arab world and the region.'

Furthermore, we have the reaction of a member of the Higher Islamic Shia Council, 'Afīf al-Nābulṣī, who was born in 1941 in the district of Sidon and was trained in Najaf.<sup>605</sup> He founded the Authority of the '*ulamā*' of South Lebanon (*hay'at 'ulamā' Jabal 'Āmil*), which 'Abbās al-Mūsawī, the former secretary general of Hezbollah, was also a member of (ibid). 'Afīf al-Nābulṣī promotes resistance against the 'Zionist plan in Lebanon' (ibid). He briefly mentioned "The Innocence of Muslims" while he was receiving a delegation of Palestinian intellectuals on or around 18 September 2012.<sup>606</sup> He described the video as 'one of the faces of the enemy of this enmity.' He also criticized the attempts of the United States and Israel to fight Palestinian identity and memory, and asserted that it was not possible to separate military resistance from cultural resistance.

### 3.3.1.3 The Druze Community

The status of the Druze community is regulated by a law issued in 1962 which established two religious leaders or *shaykh al-'aql* (Rabbath 1986, 113). Following a change to this law in 2006, the community is currently governed by one *shaykh al-'aql* who is directly elected by all Druze males aged over 21 (Rougier 2004, 118), and by a Druze Spiritual Council

<sup>603</sup> Al-Anwar. 18 September 2012. . مزيد من المواقف الشاجبة للفيلم المسيء للاسلام .

<sup>604</sup> "وجوب الحفاظ على الأيقونة المقدسة وهي معادلة الجيش والشعب والمقاومة من أجل مواجهة العدوان الصهيوني",

<sup>605</sup> Website Nabulsi. Doi. <http://www.nabulsi.org/> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>606</sup> Al-Tawhid. 18 September 2012. تواصل المواقف المننددة والغضب في المجتمع المدني والسياسي في لبنان جراء بث الفيلم المسيء للاسلام.



(*al-majlis al-madhabī al-durzī*) composed of both permanent and elected members.<sup>607</sup> The fixed members are made up of current ministers, current and former MPs, judges and the highest judges, among others (ibid). As a result of the reform in 2006, the Druze community is split between two political streams and leaders, and two *shaykh al-aql*. The official *shaykh al-‘aql*, Na‘īm Ḥasan, in power since 2006, is affiliated to Walīd Junbalāt, leader of the Progressive Socialist Party.<sup>608</sup> However, Walīd Junbalāt’s political rival, Ṭalāl Arslān, who also comes from a famous and powerful Druze family, has declared Naṣr al-Dīn al-Gharīb *shaykh al-‘aql* (ibid). In early September 2012, elections for a new term of the Druze Spiritual Council took place.<sup>609</sup> The Progressive Socialist Party won 76% of the votes and the former minister Wā‘im Wahhāb, who entered the poll, won 24% (ibid).

The reactions to “The Innocence of Muslims” reflected these divisions within the Druze community, as both Na‘īm Ḥasan and Naṣr al-Dīn al-Gharīb reacted officially. In addition, a Druze cleric participated in a Christian-Muslim conference organized by *tajammu‘ al-‘ulamā’ al-muslimīn* (3.6.2) and another cleric might have participated in a similar local reaction, although this is uncertain (see Section 3.6.3).

On September 14, Na‘īm Ḥasan was quoted as condemning the ‘offense against Islam and the person of the most noble messenger,’ as an attack on ‘religious symbols and values.’<sup>610</sup> He demanded the conservation of ‘brotherhood among the sons of the revealed religions and maintenance of the coexistence (*al-‘aysh al-mushtarak*) between Christians and Muslims in (all) the parts of the world.’

On 22 September 2012, Na‘īm Ḥasan invited all the elected and permanent members of the Druze Spiritual Council as well as the president of the Druze courts and the judges to his headquarters in Beirut to discuss the issue of “The Innocence of Muslims.”<sup>611</sup> The council’s statement asserted that ‘in its content, in its timing and in its aim’, the video - and the cartoons - ‘disregard the values embodied by the greatest prophet and it intentionally offends the perfume of his life [...] without any regard for the feelings of Muslims.’ However, it also criticized the

<sup>607</sup> Al-Nahar 10. September 2012. مقاطعة إرسلانية ... الأكتريية لجنبلاط وحصة. لوهاب وحياء إرسلان دعمت النساء. Number 24843. Year 80. Page 6.

<sup>608</sup> Al-Akhbar English. 8 August 2012. Druze Spiritual Council: Another Lebanese Divide. Doi: <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/battle-over-druze-spiritual-council-reveals-major-splits-community> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>609</sup> Al-Nahar 10. September 2012. مقاطعة إرسلانية ... الأكتريية لجنبلاط وحصة. لوهاب وحياء إرسلان دعمت النساء. Number 24843. Year 80. Page 6.

<sup>610</sup> Al-Nahar. 14 September 2012. قباني وقبلان وحسن ولحام يستكرون الفيلم المسيء الى النبي. Number 24848. Year 80. Page 5.

<sup>611</sup> Al-Anwar 22. September 2012. المجلس المذهبي الدرزي يناشد المسلمين عدم الانجرار لمخططات وقتن المسيئين. Number 18148. Year 53. Doi: <http://www.archive.alanwar.com/article.php?articleID=173072&issuedate=20120922> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

violence in connection with these two issues; Muslims were called on to ‘control their mind, to plead, to pray, and take responsible action to support Islam and the most noble prophet.’<sup>612</sup> The statement issued by this gathering repeated this condemnation of the violence and called for ‘responsible and aware reactions.’<sup>613</sup> Similarly, it viewed the video and the cartoons as an ‘offense against humanity and human dignity’ under the pretence of freedom of expression (ibid). It also insisted on the issue of ‘strife’ which these ‘offenses’ sought to cause: ‘strife and tensions between the followers of the revealed religions’ (ibid). Eventually, the statement formulated two messages; one addressed to the UN and international organizations to use the existing laws and pass new ones to prevent such “offenses,” and the second addressed to ‘Muslim and Christian Lebanese for continued solidarity and unity’ (ibid).

Alongside the official representatives of the Druze community, Naṣr al-Dīn al-Gharīb also issued two comments on “The Innocence of Muslims.” In both cases, he insisted on its “Zionist” background. On September 13, *al-Tawhīd* quoted a statement issued by Naṣr al-Dīn al-Gharīb, in which he declared the ‘film’ to be an ‘violation of Islam’ by the United States and Israel.<sup>614</sup> He stated that ‘Peace and brotherhood must be preserved between the people, especially between the Islamic people and the Christian peoples (*shu‘ūb*).’ In his statement published on September 18, on *al-Tawhīd*, Naṣr al-Dīn al-Gharīb insisted more firmly on the “Zionist-Israeli background;” ‘It is not surprising that Zionism offends Islam and the Messenger of God, as it also offends Christianity and even its [own] religion and its [own] prophets.’<sup>615</sup> Here, al-Gharīb alludes to verse 3:181 and 183:

Allah has certainly heard the statement of those [Jews] who said, "Indeed, Allah is poor, while we are rich." We will record what they said and their killing of the prophets without right and will say, "Taste the punishment of the Burning Fire. [...] [They are] those who said, "Indeed, Allah has taken our promise not to believe any messenger until he brings us an offering which fire [from heaven] will consume." Say, "There have already come to you messengers before me with clear proofs and [even] that of which you speak. So why did you kill them, if you should be truthful?<sup>616</sup>

Concerning this, he referred to Israel’s practices of ‘murder, crimes, (and) hate’ in the Palestinian ‘occupied territories.’ In addition, Naṣr al-Dīn al-Gharīb mentioned the ‘stirring up

<sup>612</sup> Al-Nahar. 22 September 2012. مشيخة العقل والهيئة الدينية والمحاكم الدرزية: مواجهة عقلانية ومعالجة جادة للإساءات. Number 24856. Year 80. Page 5.

<sup>613</sup> Al-Anwar 22. September 2012. المجلس المذهبي الدرزي يناشد المسلمين عدم الانجرار لمخططات وقتن المسيئين.

<sup>614</sup> Al-Tawhid. 13. September 2012. لبنان: سلسلة واسعة من المواقف المنندة من الأحزاب والجمعيات والشخصيات الإسلامية والمسيحية والوطنية بالإساءة للنبي محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم.

<sup>615</sup> Al-Tawhid. 18 September 2012. تواصل المواقف المنندة والغضب في المجتمع المدني والسياسي في لبنان جراء بث الفيلم المسيء للإسلام.

<sup>616</sup> Quran. Doi: <http://quran.com/3/181> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

of strife (*fitun*) and the agitating of people,' not as an aim in itself, but rather as a consequence. Furthermore, he criticized the silence of some rulers who allegedly did not hesitate to condemn the violent reactions, and praised the visit by Pope Benedict XVI.

Two aspects of these reactions are particularly interesting. On the one hand, these Druze figures insisted on the unity between all followers of the revealed religions, probably referring to themselves, the heterodox Druze, more so given the history of enmity between Druze and Maronite Christians. On the other hand, however, the content and formulation of these reactions seemed to place the Druze within an Islamic Orthodox framework by referring to the Quran and the veneration of Muhammad, although this does not actually necessarily comply with traditional Druze teachings. Moreover, the official religious Druze leadership defined "the other" as offensive freedom of speech, whereas Naṣr al-Dīn al-Gharīb denounced "Zionism" as the other.

#### 3.3.1.4 The Alawite Community

Defined as a 'forgotten sect' by *al-Akhbar*,<sup>617</sup> little is known about the Alawis of Lebanon. Both their recognition and their sectarian institution are very recent. An Islamic Alawi council (*al-majlis al-islāmī al-'alawī*) was only established in 2009 (*al-Akhbar* 8 November 2011) and *shaykh* Asad 'Āṣī was elected its president.<sup>618</sup> The figures for this community range from 70,000 to 120,000 people living mostly in the Jabal Muḥsin area of Tripoli and in the 'Akkār region; the community is generally very poor (*al-Akhbar* 8 November 2011). Under the leadership of the 'Ayd family, the Lebanese Alawis have entered the "sectarian" game by setting up a party to represent them, the Arab Democratic Party (*al-ḥizb al-'arabī al-dīmūqrātī*); however, its leadership has been increasingly questioned (*ibid*). Furthermore, it was only with the Taif Agreement that the Alawis began to be represented in Lebanon. Previously, some had converted to Sunni or Shia Islam in order to achieve (better) state positions (*ibid*). Since 1992, the Alawis have been allotted two seats in parliament as well as an ambassador and higher ranking official state positions in addition to the Alawi militias that appeared during the Civil War and were integrated into the Lebanese security forces (*ibid*). Contact with the Syrian regime was reportedly established during the Civil War when the regime supplied the community in Tripoli with support (*ibid*). The Arab Democratic Party was aligned with the March 8 Alliance.

---

<sup>617</sup> *Al-Akhbar* English. 8 November 2011. Lebanon's Alawi: A Minority Struggles in a 'Nation' of Sects. Doi: <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/lebanon%E2%80%99s-alawi-minority-struggles-%E2%80%98nation%E2%80%99-sects> (retrieved May 17, 2016). This source is quoted in this section as "al-Akhbar 8 November 2011."

<sup>618</sup> *Al-Nahar*. 20 March 2009. رئيس ونائب رئيس بالتزكية للمجلس الإسلامي العلوي. Number 23644. Year 76. Page 7.

On September 13, a statement by the president of the Islamic Alawi Council, Asad ‘Āṣī, was published on *Lebanon Files*. In this statement, he described “The Innocence of Muslims” as ‘true intellectual terror’ produced by ‘worldwide Zionism and its dark circles’ which primarily aimed to distort the image of Islam with this video.<sup>619</sup> Interestingly, the religious leader of the Alawis dwelt at length on Muhammad, whose image the video allegedly sought to tarnish: ‘our *ḥanaḥī* Islamic religion,’ ‘his faithful Arabic prophet (PBUH), this symbol of this great religion,’ ‘the prophet of leadership and mercy,’ ‘*ḥanaḥī* Islam which is a message from heaven to the earth,’ ‘this holy Islamic symbol.’ This statement emphasizes the adherence of the Alawis to Islam, although this sect originates from the eleventh imam and is often designated as “*ghulāt*” (extremist, excessive) (by other Islamic groups?).<sup>620</sup> Within their gnostic cosmogony, the Alawis revere both Muhammad and ‘Alī with the latter being viewed as the incarnation of the essence of God. To some extent, this reaction is justified by the fact that ‘As we understand it, democracy allows us to defend our prophet.’

### ***Summary of Section 3.3.1***

Although all official Islamic communities harshly condemned the video, the focus of the reactions varied to some extent. For instance, the Islamic Alawi Council and the Druze Spiritual Council insisted on the offense to Muhammad, while the Higher Islamic Shia Council formulated an elaborate criticism of the video as a whole. The accusations levelled against “Zionism” were also recurrent and often anti-Semitic in nature. Overall, this section has shown that the reactions of the official Islamic institutions were limited to issuing condemnations and that they did not seek to actively mobilize their communities.

### **3.3.2 The Churches**

Several churches in Lebanon reacted to “The Innocence of Muslims.” These reactions include both of official statements and joint Christian-Muslim reactions. The latter will be analyzed in a subsequent section. The following section, however, will discuss the reactions (and absence of reactions) displayed by the Maronite Church, the Greek Orthodox Church, the Greek Catholic Melkite Church, the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Armenian Catholic Church, and the Syriac Catholic Church. The analysis of these reactions focuses mainly on the questions of the motivation for the reaction, its relevance and the means employed in the reaction.

---

<sup>619</sup> Lebanon Files. 13 September 2012. Doi: [أسد عاصي استنكر الفيلم المسيء للإسلام .](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1525083412000000)  
<http://www.lebanonfiles.com/news/437254> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>620</sup> Encyclopedia Islamica. “Nuṣayriyya.”

### 3.3.2.1 The Maronite Church

The reactions by the Maronite Church are analyzed in following sections; two reactions by the Maronite Patriarch, *mār* Bishāra Buṭrus al-Rā'ī; one reaction by the Bishop of Tripoli (Ṭarābulus), George Bū Jūda; one reaction by the bishop of Tyre (Ṣūr), Shukr Allāh Nabīl al-Hājǰ; and one reaction by Antoine Ḍaw, the secretary general of the Maronite Bishopric Committee for Christian-Muslim Dialogue (*al-lajna al-usqūfiyya li l-ḥiwār al-masīḥī al-islāmī*). In addition, Bishop Shukr Allāh Nabīl al-Hājǰ; Father Antoine Ḍaw; the bishop of Baalbek (Ba'labakk), Sam'ān 'Aṭā' Allāh, a representative of the Bishop of 'Akkār; and the abbot of a monastery in Nabatieh took part in joint Christian-Muslim conferences and there was also a spiritual summit which took place in Bkerké (see Section 3.4). Of all these reactions of the Maronite Church, this section will analyze the declarations.

Al-Rā'ī was born in 1945 and was Bishop of Byblos (Jubayl) from 1990 until his election to Patriarch.<sup>621</sup> Since his election, he has become known for a number of controversial decisions and stances. While former Patriarch Sfeir (Naṣr Allāh Buṭrus Ṣufair) tended to lean towards the March 14 Alliance, al-Rā'ī seemed to be more accommodating towards the March 8 Alliance and its positions.<sup>622</sup> He visited the Maronite dioceses in Syria and met with Syrian President Bashshār al-Asad in November 2011 (ibid). In addition, he reportedly had a verbal clash with former French President Nicolas Sarkozy over the crisis in Syria in July 2011. As a result, Hezbollah has praised the new patriarch for taking the Lebanese Christians out of 'Western investment.'<sup>623</sup> In addition, al-Rā'ī has established a dialogue with all political actors in Lebanon, including Hezbollah.<sup>624</sup> Besides this, according to *al-Akhbār*, the patriarch has promoted the see of the patriarchate, Bkerké, as an 'umbrella for all Christian forces' and has stated that 'the [Christian] command is [his]', thus allegedly calling into question Samīr Ja'ja's assertions that he is the only Christian leader (ibid). However, the patriarch has maintained positive relations with other leaders of the March 14 Alliance such as Amīn al-Jumayyil, Fu'ād al-Sīnūra and Sa'd al-Ḥarīrī.<sup>625</sup>

---

<sup>621</sup> Who's Who: "Rai."

<sup>622</sup> Al-Akhbar English. 29 March 2012. The Maronite Patriarch: Staying the Course One Year After His Election. Doi: <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/maronite-patriarch-staying-course-one-year-after-his-election> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>623</sup> Al-Safir. 16 September 2011. *البيطيركية المارونية*. Number 11988. Year 38. Page 2.

<sup>624</sup> Al-Akhbar English. 18 March 2012. Geagea and the Maronite Church: A Battle for Patriarchy Doi: <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/geagea-and-maronite-church-battle-patriarchy> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>625</sup> Al-Akhbar English. 29 March 2012. The Maronite Patriarch: Staying the Course One Year After His Election.

Aside from his attendance at the spiritual summit that took place in Bkerké in late September 2012, *mār* Bishāra Buṭrus al-Rāʿī has had two official reactions to this video. He expressed his view for the first time on 13 September 2012, at a press conference in connection with Pope Benedict XVI's visit to Lebanon (September 15-17, 2012).<sup>626</sup> During the press conference he mentioned "The Innocence of Muslims" very briefly. He referred to the video by its title, "*barāʿat al-muslimīn*," as well as 'the offending film', a 'shameful film', an 'offense against all of us', and an 'attack on all religions' (al-Nahar 14 September 2012). Furthermore, he demanded the removal of the 'film' (al-Safir 14 September 2012; al-Nahar 14 September 2012) and an intervention by the United Nations in this matter (al-Safir 14 September 2012). Interestingly, the patriarch condemned the violence in reaction to this video (al-Safir 14 September 2012; al-Nahar 14 September 2012). Al-Rāʿī also alluded to the visit of the pope and criticized the Arab Spring. He considered the visit 'a message against the Clash of Civilizations' (al-Safir 14 September 2012; al-Nahar 14 September 2012) and demanded 'a true Arab Spring, realized in the Arab countries by Christianity and Islam' (al-Safir 14 September 2012). In general, the patriarch seems to oppose the idea of an "Arab Spring," as suggested by his clash with Nicolas Sarkozy over Syria. Al-Rāʿī's opposition is motivated by the example of Iraq, where 'democracies have become civil wars and led to the emigration of Christians.'<sup>627</sup> His reaction to "The Innocence of Muslims" was met apparently with some criticism, as, while he was on his way to India on 19 September 2012, journalists asked the patriarchate whether he supported Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh's call on the United States to stop the spread of the 'film.'<sup>628</sup> The patriarch retorted that he had preceded the secretary general of Hezbollah in his condemnation of the film, and asserted anew that this was 'an offense' not only against Islam and 'his prophet,' but against all religions. He reminded the journalists of the fact that there were 'constant offenses against the church, Christians, and the Gospel in movies.' He insisted on the need for the UN to intervene.

On 14 September 2012, the statement by the bishop of Tripoli, George Bū Jūda, was published, quoting his demand for punishment and an end to such 'offense.'<sup>629</sup> The bishop

<sup>626</sup> Al-Nahar. 14 September 2012. الراعي: زيارته دعوة للسلام في شرق الحديدي والنار. الحضور المسيحي في هذه المنطقة يعطيها هوية. Number 24848. Year 80. Page 7. In this paragraph this source is quoted as "al-Nahar 14 September 2012." Al-Safir. 14 September 2012. الراعي: البابا سيدين العنف في سوريا وانتشار السلاح والمال. Number 12283. Year 39. Page 2. In this paragraph this source as quoted as "al-Safir 14 September 2012."

<sup>627</sup> Al-Nahar. 28 September 2011. الراعي في القمة يتخوف من حرب سنية-علوية. Number 24520. Page 4.

<sup>628</sup> Al-Nahar. 19 September 2012. الراعي الى الهند: لقرار يمنع الإساءة الى الديانات. Number 24853. Year 80. Page 5.

<sup>629</sup> Al-Akhar al-Yawm. 14 September 2012. المطران بو جوده دان الفيلم المسيء للإسلام. Doi: <http://www.akhbaralyawm.com/article-40358/2012/9/14/index.php> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

viewed “The Innocence of Muslims” as an attack against ‘us,’ whose timing suggests the intention to sow ‘strife between all communities (*tawā’if*).’

On 19 September 2012 the bishop of Tyre (Şūr), Shukr Allāh Nabīl al-Ḥājj,<sup>630</sup> made a television appearance expressing his solidarity with Muslims; ‘enough of this attack on the most sacred (thing) that exists.’<sup>631</sup>

Father Antoine Ḍaw, the secretary general of the Maronite Bishopric Committee for the Christian-Muslim Dialogue (*al-lajna al-usqūfiyya li l-ḥiwār al-masṭḥī al-islāmī*) gave two reactions to “The Innocence of Muslims.” On 17 September 2012, he participated in the protest in Beirut organized by Hezbollah and the Amal Movement (see Section 3.1.2) and also in a conference organized by *tajammu’ al-‘ulamā’ al-muslimīn* (Section 3.6.2). On 22 September 2012, *al-Safīr* published a statement under the title “Christians and Muslims are Together against the Offense of Religions.”<sup>632</sup>

Antoine Ḍaw was born in 1940 in the region of Jubayl and has been secretary general of this committee for interreligious dialogue since 1990 (Mokrani 2009, 516). He has been a strong advocate of “*uruba*” (Arabism, French *arabité*), which, unlike traditional Maronitism, emphasizes a connection to Arab and Islamic civilizational identity.

His criticism of the “The Innocence of Muslims” was an occasion for him to praise Christian-Muslim coexistence in Lebanon. The video was defined as ‘the film *barā’at al-muslimīn*’ which offended the great prophet, Islam, and the Muslims,’ a ‘racist attack on Islam under the excuse of Islamophobia or the movement of fear of Islam.’<sup>633</sup> He accused the video of contradicting the teachings and values of Christianity and Islam and of attacking the ‘culture of Christian-Muslim brotherhood, living together, the partnership in love and the unity in diversity.’<sup>634</sup> The statement constantly emphasised coexistence, saying, ‘We live with him [the other] in freedom, dignity, safety, peace, and love; this is the essence of the culture of Christian-Muslim dialogue,’ ‘Christians and Muslims together, believing in God Almighty, in the humanity of the human being, in the solidarity of brothers and the sons of the civilization of justice, equality, peace, and love.’ He spoke in the name of Christians and Muslims, but his

---

<sup>630</sup> Bishop al-Ḥājj was born in 1943 in Sidon (Şaydā) and has been vicar general of Tyr since 1992 (Who’s Who: “Mgr Nabil Hajj”).

<sup>631</sup> Al-Nashra. 19 September 2012. :Doi: المطران الحاج: الفتنة المرادة من الفيلم المسيء للإسلام تطال المسيحيين: <http://www.elnashra.com/news/show/525135/news/> (retrieved May 5, 2014).

<sup>632</sup> Daw, Antoine. 22 September 2012. مسيحيون ومسلمون معاً ضد الإساءة إلى الأديان. *Al-Safīr*. Number 12290. Year 39. Page 4.

<sup>633</sup> Daw, Antoine. 22 September 2012. مسيحيون ومسلمون معاً ضد الإساءة إلى الأديان. *Al-Safīr*. Number 12290. Year 39. Page 4.

<sup>634</sup> “ثقافة الإخاء المسيحي الإسلامي و العيش معاً والشراكة في المحبة والوحدة في التنوع.”

comment seemed very abstract. He may be referring to the *Nostrae aetate*, in which Vatican II underlined the common theological and monotheist roots of Christianity and Islam. However, he implicitly criticized the current situation in the Middle East, as he added: ‘We condemn the misuse of religion in conflicts and violent reactions.’ According to Antoine Daw, freedom of religion and the freedom of expression are equally important and need to be dealt with in a responsible manner. In addition, he demanded a UN law prohibiting such acts as the video. Interestingly, he also demanded ‘an honest commitment to the Arab Islamic-Christian awakening.’ This statement might be understood as a criticism of the nature the Arab Spring, much like that made by Patriarch al-Rā’ī. This statement also epitomized the desire for equality in forging a common future - and a common past - as well as an attempt at appropriation and rooting. Father Daw recalled that ‘the Arabic civilization is our civilization [...] we were the fathers of its renaissance [*nahḍa*]’ (Mokrani 2009, 521). These are a few examples of a Maronite church that leans towards an Arab identity. Antoine Daw’s reactions were more elaborate than those of other Maronite clerics. He insisted on Christian-Muslims unity grounded in shared values and theological tenants. Yet he does implicitly express some criticisms.

A way to get a feeling for the importance of this issue for the Catholic Church is to take a look at the Maronite bishops’ monthly meetings in October and November 2012. “The Innocence of Muslims” was not mentioned at either of these two meetings.<sup>635</sup> Thus, the reactions issued by different representatives of the Maronite Church may have been motivated by a symbolic show of solidarity with Muslims.

### 3.3.2.2 The Greek Orthodox Church

The Greek Orthodox Church’s reaction is composed of a statement by the Holy Synod and a statement by Bishop George Khuḍr, as well as of the speeches delivered by the Bishop of ‘Akkār, Bāsīliyūs Maṣṣūr, and his representative, Father Nāyif Iṣṭifān, in two joint Christian-Muslim conferences (see Section 3.6.4).

The Greek Orthodox Church is the church that has mostly acknowledged an Arab identity; as Patriarch Ignatius IV wrote, ‘the Antiochian Church [...] upholds Arab Orthodoxy and Arab Christianity by its own choice’ (Ignatius IV Hazim 2006, 26). This attitude has contributed to a greater accommodation towards Islam. For instance, the Metropolitan Bishop George Khuḍr stated: ‘We belong to the Islamic civilization. We are from this East’ (Mokrani

---

<sup>635</sup> Diocèse Jounieh. 28 September 2012. *البيان اجتماع الاساقفة الموارنة - الجمعة*. ايلول: Doi: <http://www.diocesejounieh.org.lb/index.php/2013-02-01-21-33-38/59-2012-01-25-18-44-14/384-28-2012> (retrieved May 17, 2016).



2009, 463). However, this ought not to be understood as an assimilation, but instead as part of the carving out of a necessary and deeply rooted Christian presence in the Middle East (Hager 2016). According to these two leading Greek Orthodox clerics, this peculiar attitude is also the result of being able to differentiate between a political, national identity and a religious identity; ‘*Nous sommes d’empire* [...] The Orthodox do not mix their religious affiliation with their civil governance.’<sup>636</sup> As a result, Bishop George Khodr has tended to promote the Greek Orthodox as more valuable Lebanese citizens because of their non-sectarian stance (Hager 2016). For instance, during the Civil War, the Greek Orthodox did not form militias (although some did join other communities’ militias) and the National Resistance Front against the Israeli occupation was formed by the Greek Orthodox George Ḥāwī.<sup>637</sup> Like the Coptic Orthodox Church, the Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch experienced an internal reform from the middle of the twentieth century onwards, called the “Orthodox Youth Movement.” One of its leading actors was Bishop George Khodr. Yet, unlike the Coptic Orthodox Church, the Greek Orthodox Church followed different world views that can be defined to some extent as a “Protestant” approach to reviving Antiochian heritage with a special focus on the Gospel. This did not lead to its estrangement from Muslims. This youth movement furthered the distinction between religious and political belonging. Yet, unlike in the Coptic Orthodox Church, the Orthodox Youth Movement was not able to permeate the higher levels of the hierarchy.

In recent years, however, this non-sectarian position has increasingly been questioned and the Holy Synod, which gathered in October 2012 and mentioned “The Innocence of Muslims,” actually dealt first and foremost with the request by some Greek Orthodox Lebanese leaders to establish a “General Civil Commission for the Greek Orthodox in Lebanon.” Since the end of the Civil War, the Greek Orthodox have complained about their lack of representation in the confessional system. Several delegations visited Patriarch Ighnāṭiyūs IV Ḥāzim and, in cooperation with Lebanese bishops, submitted a draft for a sectarian institution that would include former deputies, ministers, officers, and former diplomats.<sup>638</sup> This initiative was

---

<sup>636</sup> Arab Orthodoxy. 21 March 2010. +Georges Khodr on the Orthodox in Lebanese Politics Doi: <http://araborthodoxy.blogspot.co.at/2010/03/georges-khodr-on-orthodox-in-lebanese.html> (retrieved May 17 2016).

<sup>637</sup> Arab Orthodoxy. 20 February 2012. Another View of Orthodoxy, Sectarianism, and Secularism in Lebanon. Al-Nahar. Doi: <http://araborthodoxy.blogspot.co.at/2012/02/another-view-of-orthodoxy-sectarianism.html> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>638</sup> Arab Orthodoxy. 4 October 2012. Al-Safir Gives Some Background on the 'Civil Commission' Plan. Al-Safir. Doi: <http://araborthodoxy.blogspot.co.at/2012/10/al-safir-gives-some-background-on-civil.html> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

strongly condemned by the Orthodox Youth Movement because it would ‘entrust the community’s affairs to politicians and man of wealth and influence.’<sup>639</sup>

Yet, this sensitive issue was not mentioned in the final statement issued by the Holy Synod which gathered in the monastery of Balamand from October 2 – 4, 2012. Patriarch Ighnāṭiyūs IV Ḥāzīm and the metropolitan bishops of Lebanon, Syria and the “diaspora” all participated in it.<sup>640</sup> The Holy Synod was not able to meet in June 2012 because of the war in Syria.<sup>641</sup> Amongst several other issues, the final statement alluded very implicitly to the video “The Innocence of Muslims” as part of a section entitled “The Media.” The media are said to play a key role in shaping public opinion and are called on to spread the values of ‘knowledge freedom, open-mindedness, and education to promote acceptance of the other.’ It can be assumed that this paragraph actually condemned the video, because the statement went on to mention the bishops’ condemnation of ‘offenses (*isā’āt*) against religious symbols and values,’ which targetted both Christianity and Islam and aim to ‘stir up strife (*fitna*) between the two monotheist religions.’ Furthermore, the synod fathers condemned the violence in reaction to the video, as it ‘contradicts the spirit of Christianity and Islam.’

In a similarly implicit and cryptic manner, the statement mentioned the conflict in Syria and demonstrated a clear attempt to ground the Christians in this region. The Holy Synod insisted on these ‘Eastern Christians’ ‘scientific, intellectual, and literary’ contribution to ‘Arab civilization’ and stated that they would continue to contribute in the ‘faith in the teachings of the Gospels and ecclesiastical tradition.’ In particular, the statement underlined the Greek Orthodox Church’s role in ‘uncovering the original face serving the human being’<sup>642</sup> and added that ‘they are the sons of love and of evangelical meekness.’<sup>643</sup> Thus the denominations “*al-rūm al-urthūdhuks*” (Greek Orthodox) and “Eastern Christians” are interchangeable. As a result, the statement demanded equality in rights and duties and rejects the concept that it is a “minority.”

In contrast, Bishop George Khuḍr’s condemnation of “The Innocence of Muslims” in an article entitled “The Attack on Islam” in *al-Nahār* on 29 September 2012, was much more

---

<sup>639</sup> Arab Orthodoxy. 3 October 2012. The Youth Movement Rejects the Plan for a "Civil Commission." Al-Akhbar. Doi: <http://araborthodoxy.blogspot.co.at/2012/10/the-youth-movement-rejects-plan-for.html> accessed (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>640</sup> Al-Nour. 2012. الدورة التاسعة والأربعون للمجمع الأنطاكي المقدس. Number 7. Year 68. Pages 384-385.

<sup>641</sup> Arab Orthodoxy. 3 October 2012. The Youth Movement Rejects the Plan for a "Civil Commission." Al-Akhbar.

<sup>642</sup> للكنيسة الأنطاكية الأرثوذكسية المتأصلة في المشرق العربي، أن تؤدي دور الريادة في إظهار وجه المسيحية الأصيل الخادم للإنسان من دون،، “النظر إلى انتمائه العرقي أو الديني”

<sup>643</sup> “هم أبناء المحبة والوداعة الإنجيلية،،”

explicit. George Khodr was born in 1923 in the northern city of Tripoli in a Christian neighborhood surrounded by Muslims (Fleyfel 2011, 177). In 1943, he participated in a protest against the French mandate and, at that time, he became involved in the Orthodox Youth Movement (ibid), as mentioned previously. He has been one of the most prolific bishops of the Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch. Thanks to his weekly column in *al-Nahār*, he is a leading actor in ecumenism and interreligious dialogue. As he stated in this article published on 29 September 2012, he has taught Islamic sciences at the University of Balamand (Fleyfel 2011, 178).

His condemnation of the “The Innocence of Muslims” begins by undermining it and then by presenting the Lebanese “counter-model.” In this article, George Khodr states that he has seen the film and can thus refute it as having no ‘true foundation.’<sup>644</sup> He considers the ‘film’ an ‘offending film’ and also mentions the latest cartoons in the ‘French magazine’ *Charlie Hebdo*. More generally, he views all of this as part of a ‘phenomenon’ reaching back to the cartoons of Muhammad in a Danish magazine in 2006. As for the film’s background, the bishop remains very vague, merely suggesting that it seems ‘as if there were behind it an orchestra intending to divide’ and placing it in the more general context of “Western” hatred of Islam. In doing this, he uses the vocabulary of war; ‘Why this attack by the West on Islam?’ ‘There is a desire to beat Islam, with mockery and revenge,’ ‘What is there in the mentality of producers of cinema films or press articles that [leads them] to attack Islam?’ As a result, he asks himself whether there are any political forces combatting Islam and feels compelled to ‘define it as an act of politics and the secret services.’ George Khodr also alternates between the use of “we,” when evoking his personal experience and his condemnation of the video, and “I,” when speaking in the name of Muslims and Christians. This latter framework is introduced by self-designations like ‘We Arab Christians,’ ‘our region,’ ‘we are one, the *umma* of God.’ At the same time, however, there is a constant “other,” an external enemy, in the shape of the West; ‘The West has to understand that the crusades are over.’ George Khodr insists on the video having no connection to ‘Christianity, as a religion, institution or people’ and expresses both his complete solidarity with Muslims and his esteem for ‘Arab Muslim religious leaders’ who have been able to differentiate the Christians from this “film.” Interestingly, this issue leads him to dwell on Lebanon, where ‘Christian theological institutions teach Islam to Christians and Muslims alike,’ and to define the history of Christian-Muslim relations. The statement ‘We the Arab Christians, since the conquest, we have decided to live with Muslims in peace and

---

<sup>644</sup> Khodr, George. 29 September 2012. الحملة على الإسلام. Al-Nahar. Number 24863. Year 80. Pages 1 and 12.

social unity with total liberty for all' is not only a redefinition of the history of Christian-Muslim relations, but it also shows a strong intention to overcome the status of victim and subject and to redefine Christians and Muslims as equal partners. In addition, he mentions Muhammad as 'the Arab messenger,' the 'Arab prophet.'

While the condemnation made by the Holy Synod was very implicit, George Khodr's reaction reflected an elaborate reflection on this issue, insisting on Christian-Muslim unity. This unity rests on a shared history, equality between Muslims and Christians and a common enemy.

### 3.3.2.3 The Greek Catholic Melkite Church

In the case of this church, there are three separate reactions to the video; i.e. three declarations. On 13 September 2012, the Greek Catholic patriarch, Gregorius III Laḥḥām,<sup>645</sup> issued a statement in the name of all the Catholic churches in Syria, condemning both the video and the violence following it, stating 'These people do not know how to defend Islam.'<sup>646</sup> Instead, the patriarch called for 'love, mutual respect and meeting, dialogue.'<sup>647</sup>

In addition, there are two reactions from the Bishop of Firzil and Zahlé (Firzil, Zaḥla wa l-Biqā'), 'Iṣām Yūḥannā Darwīsh. Bishop Darwīsh was born in 1945 in Damascus but grew up in Lebanon, in the Chouf region (al-Shūf).<sup>648</sup> In 1992, the Melkite Holy Synod elected him bishop of Australia and he subsequently became the head of the bishops of the "diaspora" (ibid). In 2011, he was elected bishop of the diocese of Zahlé (ibid), one of the most important Greek Catholic dioceses, as the city of Zahlé (al-Zaḥla) has a strong Greek Catholic presence (Chaoul 2012, 435-437). He has been very critical of the Arab Spring, especially in Syria, which he views as 'a conspiracy against the Arabs, both Muslims and Christians, but Christians, especially, are subjected to submission.'<sup>649</sup> According to him, the aim of this conflict is to 'change the East into one sect [...] Israel is the greatest beneficiary' (ibid). This is an example of this church's strong stance against Israel (see Chapter 4).

In an interview published at the end of September 2012, Bishop 'Iṣām Yūḥannā Darwīsh described "The Innocence of Muslims" as a threat for the very values of morality, and asserted

---

<sup>645</sup> Patriarch Gregorius III Laḥḥām was born in 1933 in Dārāyā, Syria, and, from 1981 until his election to the patriarchate in 2000, was patriarchal vicar in Jerusalem (Proche Orient Chrétien. 2000. 50. 3-4. 371).

<sup>646</sup> Al-Nahar. 14 September 2012. قباني وقبلان وحسن ولحام يستنكرون الفيلم المسيء الى النبي. Number 24848. Year 80. Page 5.

<sup>647</sup> Greek Catholic Patriarchate. 13 September 2012. البطريرك غريغوريوس الثالث الاحترام إيمان الآخر, بيان تنديد بالفيلم المسيء للإسلام. Doi: <http://www.pgc-lb.org/ara/gregorios/view/Respect-for-the-faith-of-others-Condemnation-of-the-film-defamatory-to-Islam> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>648</sup> Al-Rasoul. 2011. أهلاً براعياً الجديد. Number 122-124. Pages 6-7.

<sup>649</sup> Al-Safir. 11 September 2013. المطران درويش ل"السفير". إسرائيل المستفيد الأكبر من تفريغ الشرق من مسيحييه. Number 12576. Year 40. Page 13.

that, ‘through our unity, Christians and Muslims, have joint responsibility for the defense and the conservation of the spiritual values in the whole world.’<sup>650</sup> In addition, during a mass in a village in the Beqaa valley, the bishop once again referred to the video. In his sermon, he condemned the various ‘offenses’ that had of late primarily targeted Islam.<sup>651</sup> However, any mention he made to its background was still very vague, ‘the enemies of all revealed religions.’ In addition, he called on Christians to remain ‘steadfast to the land.’ This mass gathered high-ranking visitors such as the former bishop of Zahlé, André Ḥaddād, the former vice-speaker of parliament, Īlī Firzli, and the Greek Catholic politician and “political leader (*za’īm*)” Iliyās Skāf (ibid).

### 3.3.2.4 The Armenian Apostolic Church

The Armenian Apostolic Church displayed two types of interesting reactions; the brief reaction given by the Armenian patriarch of Cilicia, Ārām I, and the differing reactions in Armenia. During the spiritual summit in Bkerké, Ārām I condemned the film and ‘similar plans’ which did not ‘embody the freedom of speech, but offend holy values and principals’<sup>652</sup> to the media. He added that ‘Christianity and Islam believe in peace and not in violence, in dialogue and not in being distanced’ (ibid). He insisted on the long history of accommodation between the two: ‘these religions have lived in the Middle East for centuries’ (ibid). Interestingly, the patriarchate of Etchmiadzin and the Armenian Republic officially condemned “The Innocence of Muslims.”<sup>653</sup>

<sup>650</sup> Zenit. 28 September 2012. المطران عصام يوحنا درويش في تقييم لزيارة قداسة البابا الى لبنان: الزيارة ناجحة أكثر مما كنا نتصور. Doi: <http://www.zenit.org/ar/articles/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B7%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%B9%D8%B5%D8%A7%D9%85-%D9%8A%D9%88%D8%AD%D9%86%D8%A7-%D8%AF%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%B4-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%AA%D9%82%D9%8A%D9%8A%D9%85-%D9%84%D8%B2%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D9%82%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%A7-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%89-%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B2%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%AD%D8%A9-%D8%A3%D9%83%D8%AB%D8%B1-%D9%85%D9%85%D8%A7-%D9%83%D9%86%D8%A7-%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%B5%D9%88%D8%B1> (retrieved October 6, 2013).

<sup>651</sup> Al-Nahar. 25 September 2012. لبنان: المطران درويش ندد بالإساءات إلى الأديان. Number 24859. Year 80. Page 6.

<sup>652</sup> Aztabarabic. 25 September 2012. الكاثوليكوس أرام الأول يحضر القمة الروحية المسيحية -الاسلامية في بكركي ويقول: “المسيحية والاسلام تعايشنا في الشرق الأوسط لقرون طويلة”. Doi: <http://www.aztagarabic.com/archives/6419> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>653</sup> Al-Ahram. 28 September 2012. بطريرك عموم الأرمن يستنكر الإساءة للأنبياء. Number 45952. Year 137. Page 4.

### 3.3.2.5 The Armenian Catholic Church

At the end of September 2012, the Armenian Catholic Church gathered for a Synod in Lebanon and in its final statement it mentioned – very vaguely – the issue of “The Innocence of Muslims,” as the last of five subjects:

The fathers of the Synod condemned the violations that insult the sanctity of religions and their sacred symbols, and it calls for unity in the faith of the One God, calling to implement His books and revealed commandments, and in the faith of spiritual and moral values, and of the family in one united society.<sup>654</sup>

The Synod also referred to the Armenian genocide, the “Year of Faith” Pope Benedict XVI had announced, the study and implementation of the Apostolic Exhortation, youth participation in World Youth Day, and the letter to the pope thanking him for his visit.

### 3.3.2.6 The Syriac Catholic Church

The Holy Synod of the Syriac Catholic Church also took place in September 2012 but did not mention the film at all. Instead, it expressed its concerns about the situation in Iraq, Palestine, Syria, and Lebanon.<sup>655</sup>

#### *Summary of Section 3.3.2*

Except for reactions by George Khuḍr and Antoine Ḍaw, these other condemnations show that they were mainly motivated by the desire to provide a symbolic show of solidarity. Interestingly, while the title of the video was more readily mentioned, the references to it were sometimes particularly implicit, subsumed under the umbrella of “The Media” or “The Offense on Religion.”

### 3.4 The State

This section will analyse the reactions of the “state” which comprise declarations by the president, Michel Sleiman (Mīshāl Sulaymān); the prime minister, Najīb Mīqātī; four ministers, the minister of Foreign Affairs, ‘Adnān Mansūr, the agriculture minister, Ḥusayn al-Ḥājī al-Ḥasan, the minister for youth and sports, Fayṣal Kirāmī, and the minister of expatriates, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Tīrrū; as well as the reaction of a parliamentary committee. The reaction provided by the parliamentary speaker, Nabih Berri (Nabīh Birrī), is not mentioned in this section, because

---

<sup>654</sup> Aztagarabic. 28 September 2012. البيان الختامي لسينودس الكنيسة الأرمنية الكاثوليكية: نأمل أن يعم السلام ويوحد المسؤولين. كلمتهم للتأخي. Doi: <http://www.aztagarabic.com/archives/6441> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>655</sup> Al-Nahar. 22 September 2012. المجمع السرياني دعا إلى تفعيل الحوار اللبناني واستنكار كل أعمال العنف والتدخل في سوريا. Number 24856. Year 80. Page 6.

his comment reflected his position as a leading figure of the March 8 Alliance rather than his position as parliamentary speaker.

President Sulaymān reportedly issued two reactions to “The Innocence of Muslims.” The first time he mentioned the video was probably on 13 September 2012, during the preparations for Benedict XVI’s visit. He defined it as ‘a negative film about Muhammad,’ ‘a film of this kind’ produced by an individual ‘maybe Zionist.’<sup>656</sup> He considered the “film” proof of ‘decay at the level of civilized values’ which ‘offends public freedoms, human rights, and all democratic principles,’ values the West believes in. He stated that Lebanon ‘est totalement le contraire de ce qui s’est produit à travers le film négatif sur le prophète Mohammed.’ In addition, he condemned the violent reactions in some countries, whereas, ironically, Lebanon was actually used as an example of how the reactions to the video should have been. It was probably the following day, on September 14, that Mīshāl Sulaymān once again mentioned this video when receiving the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch Ignatius Zaka I.<sup>657</sup> He again condemned “The Innocence of Muslims” as a ‘film offending the Islamic community (*tā’ifa*),’ and ‘a criminal act, whatever its reasons may be.’ However, he mainly condemned the violent and unjustifiable reactions to it; ‘What happened contradicts the principle of the protection of general freedoms.’ This condemnation did not seem to refer to the violent clashes that happened in Tripoli that same day, as Mīshāl Sulaymān once again underlined the ‘good example’ set by Lebanon.

Prime Minister Najīb Mīqātī’s various comments on “The Innocence of Muslims” seemed to vary according to whom he was addressing. On 14 September 2012, he was quoted in *al-Safir* as saying the video was part of series of ‘offenses (*isā’āt*)’ against Islam and referred to its condemnation by all confessions.<sup>658</sup> In this quotation, he also condemned the violent reactions. This same condemnation was repeated during his telephone call with Hillary Clinton, then US secretary of the State Department, to whom he conveyed his condolences for the killing of the US ambassador to Libya, Chris Stevens,<sup>659</sup> and during his meeting with the US

---

<sup>656</sup> “par l’intermédiaire de l’oeuvre d’un individu, peut-être sioniste.” L’Orient le Jour. 14 September 2012. Sleiman condamne le film sur le Prophète et les réactions inacceptables qui ont suivi. Number 13553. Page 3.

<sup>657</sup> Al-Safir. 14 September 2012. Doi . سليمان عزى أوباما بالسفير في ليبيا. وندد بالفيلم المسيء الى الإسلام. [https://www.lexisnexis.com/uk/nexis/results/docview/docview.do?docLinkInd=true&risb=21\\_T19655778972&format=GNBFULL&sort=BOOLEAN&startDocNo=51&resultsUrlKey=29\\_T19655760993&cisb=22\\_T19655778974&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=383614&docNo=53](https://www.lexisnexis.com/uk/nexis/results/docview/docview.do?docLinkInd=true&risb=21_T19655778972&format=GNBFULL&sort=BOOLEAN&startDocNo=51&resultsUrlKey=29_T19655760993&cisb=22_T19655778974&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=383614&docNo=53) (retrieved April 11, 2014).

<sup>658</sup> Al-Safir. 14 September 2012. سليمان وميقاتي والحريري وجعجع بئددون بالإساءة للنبي. Number 12283. Year 39. Page 4.

<sup>659</sup> Al-Nahar. 14 September 2012. ميقاتي عزى كلينتون بحادثة بنغازي: الرد الدموي ليس للدفاع عن الإسلام. Number 24848. Year 80. Page 3.

ambassador to Lebanon.<sup>660</sup> During this latter conversation, he condemned the targeting of the US consulate in Benghazi as contradicting ‘the teachings of the *ḥanafī* Islamic religion’ and stated: ‘It is not possible to make a friend, the American people, bear the responsibility for a single act’ (ibid). In contrast, during his meeting with representatives of international organizations and diplomats from Western and Arab countries in the Serail, Najīb Mīqātī stated that Israel was responsible for this video, as it paralleled the ‘Israeli war against the Palestinian cause.’<sup>661</sup> He also demanded measures on an international level to counter what he saw as the goals of the video.

Similarly, the minister of Foreign Affairs, ‘Adnān Maṣṣūr, also criticized the video as an ‘offense’ as well as criticising the violent reactions to it.<sup>662</sup> He likewise underlined its condemnation by all the confessions in Lebanon. Later, he was praised calling an urgent meeting at the Arab League to discuss the issue of this video.<sup>663</sup> ‘Adnān Maṣṣūr is a Shia and member of the Amal Movement.

The minister of agriculture, Ḥusayn al-Ḥājj al-Ḥasan<sup>664</sup> reacted to “The Innocence of Muslims” during a pedagogic event in the Nabatieh province.<sup>665</sup> He described the video as ‘the latest film offending the Messenger of humanity’ and he attributed it to ‘American, Zionist and Western intelligence circles’ that reportedly use all means to try to provoke strife in the region. Interestingly, however, he also mentioned the visit by Benedict XVI which gave him the opportunity to promote the model of Lebanon ‘from the viewpoint of an original *muhammadian* position, a resisting Islam, the Lebanese citizenship, of belonging to the Arab community and to the Islamic community, from all these positions, our message is that Lebanon is the nation of message.’<sup>666</sup> This message was further defined as being one of ‘coexistence, love, and living together.’<sup>667</sup> It is the nation (*waṭan*) of resistance against occupation.’ In addition, Lebanon was

<sup>660</sup> Al-Nahar. 15 September 2012. ميقاتي رفض تحميل أميركا الصديقة المسؤولية كونيبي: فيلم مقزز ولا ميّر لمقابلاته بالعنف. Number 24849. Year 80. Page 7.

<sup>661</sup> L’Orient le Jour. 18 September 2012. Mikati favorable à des mesures internationales pour déjouer les plans à l’origine du film. Number 13557. Page 4.

<sup>662</sup> Al-Tawhid. 13. September 2012. لبنان : سلسلة واسعة من المواقف المنددة من الأحزاب والجمعيات والشخصيات الإسلامية. المسيحية والوطنية بالاساءة للنبي محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم.

<sup>663</sup> Sky News. 17 September 2012. دعت الحكومة اللبنانية إلى اجتماع طارئ لمجلس وزراء الخارجية العرب لبحث أزمة الفيلم الذي. انتج في الولايات المتحدة الأميركية، واعتبر مسيء للإسلام. Doi:

<http://www.skynewsarabia.com/web/article/45627/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A1-%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>664</sup> Ḥusayn al-Ḥājj al-Ḥasan is a member of Hezbollah and has been minister of agriculture from 2009 to January 2011 and since June 2011.

<sup>665</sup> Al-Nahar. 16 September 2012. الحاج حسن: الدوائر الامريكية تنثير الفتن معنيون بمكافحة الأقصاء والتكفير. Number 24850. Year 80. Page 5.

<sup>666</sup> إننا من موقع الإسلام المحمدي الأصيل والإسلام المقاوم والوطنية اللبنانية والانتماء الى أمتين العربية والإسلامية، من كل هذه المواقع،،  
‘رسالتنا هي أن لبنان وطن الرسالة’

<sup>667</sup> ‘رسالة التعايش والمحبة والعيش المشترك’



defined as the ‘civilizational and intellectual connection between Islam and Christianity,’ ‘our message is the message of the prophet of Islam and the prophet of love.’ This is a very elaborate declaration that used the video as an opportunity to establish Lebanon as a model for coexistence, referring in particular to the image coined by John Paul II of Lebanon as a message when he visited in May 1997 (Hager 2016).

In his reaction, the minister for youth and sports, Fayṣal Kirāmī, seemed to refer to positions expressed by Hezbollah’s secretary general as he described it as the video offending the ‘life and person of the most noble Messenger, Muhammad.’ Kirāmī saw the video as aiming to ‘spread hatred and division between Muslims and Christians.’ Interestingly, Kirāmī stated that Muslims were expected to react violently against Christians in the region. Fayṣal Kirāmī asserted that he supported the way Naṣr Allāh dealt with the “film,” yet he condemned the violence and praised the ‘clear and swift positions’ of the churches, especially of Patriarch al-Rā’ī and Mīshāl A’wn. However, A’wn’s reaction was not actually very vocal (see Section 3.2.1).

In contrast, the minister of expatriates and member of the Progressive Socialist Party, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Tirrū, criticized the timing of the video and the violence following it, calling on Muslims and Christians to stand as ‘one united community.’<sup>668</sup>

On September 20, *al-Anwar* reported on the statement issued by a parliamentary committee composed of a dozen MPs.<sup>669</sup> The parliamentary vice-president, Farīd Makārī, read a declaration that dealt with several subjects, among them the issue of “The Innocence of Muslims” and the cartoons published in *Charlie Hebdo*. This video was described as an ‘offense against the revealed religions, especially the spread of the American film entitled “The Innocence of Muslims” and the spread of pictures in a French magazine.’ The committee called on the government to take measures against such acts and called for a prohibition of the spread of film on the internet.

#### ***Summary of Section 3.4***

The reactions of the state representatives are very heterogeneous. The president and the prime minister (unlike the speaker of the parliament, Nabih Berri, see Section 3.2.1) were both particularly much more cautious. Overall, the reactions condemned the violent clashes which

---

<sup>668</sup> Al-Tawhid. 18 September 2012. تواصل المواقف المنذرة والغضب في المجتمع المدني والسياسي في لبنان جراء بث الفيلم المسيء للإسلام.

<sup>669</sup> Al-Anwar. 20 September 2012. صدقت مشروع التعليم العالي وتوصية تتعلق بالإساءة إلى الأديان. Number 18148. Year 53. Doi: <http://www.archive.alanwar.com/article.php?articleID=172796&issuedate=20120920> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

were a reaction to the video. Aside from the minister of Foreign Affairs, the state did not take any direct measures against the video.

### 3.5 The Reactions of non-Political and Non-Official Actors

This section comprises the reactions of a broad range of non-political and non-official actors such as Islamist actors and organizations (5.3.1), Christian organizations (5.3.2) and other organizations (5.3.3).

#### 3.1.1 Islamist Actors and Organizations: Competing for the Leadership

To some extent, this section is concerned with two sorts of Islamist streams, the anti-Hezbollah preacher Aḥmad al-Asīr (3.5.1.1) on the one hand, and a broad network of Sunni-Shia Islamist clerics (‘*ulamā*’) on the other, who tend to sympathize with the anti-colonial Islam promoted by Hezbollah (and Iran) (section 3.5.1.4 and 3.5.1.5).

##### 3.5.1.1 Aḥmad al-Asīr

The controversy surrounding the video “The Innocence of Muslims” provided Aḥmad al-Asīr with a crucial opportunity to establish himself as the political leader of the Sunni community.

Aḥmad al-Asīr was born in Sidon (Ṣaydā) to a Sunni father and a Shia mother.<sup>670</sup> Named the capital of the South, Sidon is a very important centre of Islamism and Islamist movements. It is there that *al-jamā‘a al-islāmiyya*, *al-fajr* and other streams originate from. Aḥmad al-Asīr studied at the Sharia faculty of the *dār al-fatwā*, but did not finish his degree and initially joined *al-jamā‘a al-islāmiyya* (ibid). However, he soon criticized the movement for having a political outlook instead of focusing on religious matters (ibid). Therefore, he turned to a preaching movement that originated from southern Asia, Tablighi Jamaat (*tablīgh-i jamā‘at*) (ibid). When he started preaching in the Bilal mosque in Sidon, he consistently avoided political issues, and in particular ‘sought to separate the religious-ideological beliefs of Hezbollah’s followers from the victory against Israel.’<sup>671</sup> However, the clashes of 7 May 2008 marked a turning point when

---

<sup>670</sup> Al-Hayat. 15 March 2014. أحمد الأسير بين التنصّل والتقهّم: إنّه سحر الساحر الملتبس. Doi: <http://www.alhayat.com/Articles/1139661/%D8%A3%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%B5%D9%91%D9%84-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%81%D9%87%D9%91%D9%85--%D8%A5%D9%86%D9%91%D9%87-%D8%B3%D8%AD%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%A8%D8%B3> (retrieved May 17, 2016). In this paragraph, this source is quoted as “al-Hayat 15 March 2014.”

<sup>671</sup> Al-Akhbar English. 6 March 2012. Ahmad al-Assir: A Salafi with a Difference. Doi: <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/ahmad-al-assir-salafi-difference> (retrieved May 17, 2016). In this paragraph, this source is quoted as “al-Akhbar 6 March 2012.”

there were increasing reports about ‘the persecution of the Sunni community at the hands of the resistance’ (ibid). Then al-Asīr started directing verbal attacks against Hezbollah and the ‘hegemonic project of the party of resistance.’<sup>672</sup> Aḥmad al-Asīr consistently tried to avoid the name “Hezbollah” (literally “the party of God”) and instead resorted to circumlocutions like “the party of resistance.” He also stated: ‘Our problem is with Hezbollah and Iran’ (ibid). Thus, al-Asīr tried to distinguish between “two types of Shia;” on the one hand there were the Shia embodied by Mūsā al-Ṣadr and on the other hand there were the Shia embodied by Khomaynī and Hezbollah (ibid). At the same time, Hezbollah was criticized for having drawn attention to this previously unknown preacher from Sidon.<sup>673</sup> A second turning point came at the beginning of the war in Syria and the successive involvement of a number of Lebanese political actors. From then on, Aḥmad al-Asīr seemed to have become an actor who was notorious for promoting the Sunni-Shia divide (al-Akhbar 6 March 2012). In doing so, he came to fill a leadership gap within the Sunni community. As previously mentioned, this community has faced a serious political and religious crisis and in 2012 was facing a leadership vacuum. The March 14 Alliance, in particular, has been vocal in its opposition to Hezbollah. As a result, in September 2012, the preacher was ‘filling a vacuum among Syria’s and Hezbollah’s enemies in Lebanon’ according to *al-Akhbār*. In addition, his fellowship went beyond the Sunni community, or at least Sunni Lebanese youths from Sidon, also comprising newly religious Palestinian and Syrian youth from Sidon with little education (al-Hayat 15 March 2014). In April 2014, *al-Hayāt* estimated that his followers numbered a few hundred (ibid).

In his statement as a political Sunni leader, Aḥmad al-Asīr resorted to using “the Christians” as political assets. During a visit to ‘Akkār in December 2012, he met with leading figures of the region, among them Christian leaders (POC 2013, 195). He stated: ‘We want to emphasize coexistence. We have to extend our hand, especially to Christians. The Christians are the closest to us. We have coexisted with them for 1,400 years’ (ibid). In addition, in early September 2012, Samīr Ja‘ja‘’s visit to al-Asīr provoked protests in Sidon because of crimes committed in that city by the Lebanese Forces during the civil war.<sup>674</sup> Eventually, the polarization reached such a level that in November 2012 al-Asīr was expected to announce the creation of a militia.<sup>675</sup> However, Palestinian Islamist forces reportedly said that they would not

<sup>672</sup> Al-Akhbar English. 2 March 2012. Al-Assir: A New Guardian of “Sunni Interests” in Lebanon. Doi: <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/al-assir-new-guardian-sunni-interest-lebanon> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>673</sup> Al-Arabiya English. 25 June 2013. Breaking down Ahmad al-Assir: the Man behind the Beard. Doi: <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/perspective/profiles/2013/06/25/Breaking-down-Ahmad-al-Assir-the-man-behind-the-beard.html> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>674</sup> Al-Safir. 5 September 2012. اعتصام صيداوي ضد زيارة القوات “للأسير”. Number 12275. Year 39. Page 4.

<sup>675</sup> Al-Akhbar English. 25 November 2012. Salafi Cleric’s Militia Ambitions Curtailed. Doi: <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/salafi-cleric%E2%80%99s-militia-ambitions-curtailed> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

support such an escalation (ibid). However, al-Asīr's followers regularly clashed with the Lebanese army and killed soldiers.<sup>676</sup> He also became involved in the war in Syria and was finally arrested in August 2015 (ibid).

Aḥmad al-Asīr offered two reactions to "The Innocence of Muslims." The first was given in an interview with the newspaper *al-Jumhūriyya* and the second one took the form of a big protest he staged in downtown Beirut, as a competing reaction to the protests organized by Hezbollah and the Amal Movement. Overall, these two reactions showed a strong effort on his behalf to appear to be a moderate and charismatic leader, not only for the Sunni community, but potentially also for the whole of Lebanon.

In his interview with the newspaper *al-Jumhūriyya*, his condemnation of the video addressed the issue of a multi-religious Lebanon while also taking the form of a criticism of Hezbollah. According to Aḥmad al-Asīr, "The Innocence of Muslims" aimed to create 'strife between Christians and Muslims.'<sup>677</sup> In addition, he praised the pope's visit, which he considered to be of great benefit to the Christians – 'our Christian brothers and partners' – and for the Lebanese in general. At the same time, however, he criticized Hezbollah harshly, stating that the video 'offends Muslims, whether Sunni or Shia.' In particular, al-Asīr criticised Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh's call for protests through which he established himself as the leader of all Muslims. He also criticised the secretary general's assertion that the video constituted a greater threat than the burning of the al-Aqṣā mosque in 1960 and recalled the involvement of Hezbollah in Syria: 'the *shaykh* of the mosques, the churches [Naṣr Allāh] destroys in Syria, and the children he strips of their skin.' In contrast, Aḥmad al-Asīr asserted that he had been the first leader to call for protests but that he had postponed them because of the pope's visit. In addition, he strongly condemned the violent clashes in Tripoli.

Aḥmad al-Asīr's sit-in took place on Friday, 21 September 2012, from 3 to 8pm, in the Square of Martyrs in downtown Beirut.<sup>678</sup> The high-ranking participants were 'Umar Bakrī, the former singer Faḍl Shākir, and a representative of the "Free Christians," the journalist Farīd Dukkān.<sup>679</sup> In another article, *al-Nahār* presented Farīd Dukkān as the leader of the organization "Free Christian Youth."<sup>680</sup> Faḍl Shākir was a famous Palestinian singer who turned to Salafi

---

<sup>676</sup> The Guardian. 17 August 2015. Fugitive Lebanese cleric Ahmad al-Assir fails to avoid arrest with '70s makeover.' Doi: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/aug/17/fugitive-lebanese-cleric-ahmad-al-assir-arrest-70s-makeover-beirut> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>677</sup> Naharnet. 18 September 2012. الأسيير ينتقد دعوة نصر الله الى التظاهر: "براءة المسلمين" اساء الى الاسلام بكامله. Doi: <http://www.naharnet.com/stories/ar/53922> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>678</sup> Al-Nahar. 22 September 2012. إعتصام إمام مسجد بلال بن رباح قطع أوصال بيروت. Number 24855. Year 80. Page 5.

<sup>679</sup> Al-Nahar. 22 September 2012. إعتصام إمام مسجد بلال بن رباح قطع أوصال بيروت. Number 24855. Year 80. Page 5.

<sup>680</sup> Al-Nahar. 1 October 2012. "لقاء إيماني" مع الأسير في الميناء. Number 24865. Year 80. Page 6.

Islam and eventually gave up singing.<sup>681</sup> This was announced in late September 2012 (ibid). This shows that Aḥmad al-Asīr was not able to attract any high-ranking Christian actors. In addition, people according to the organizers,<sup>682</sup> the sit-in attracted some three thousand including Lebanese, Syrians, and Palestinians<sup>683</sup> from the refugee camp ‘Ayn al-Ḥilwa in Sidon.<sup>684</sup> According to *al-Nahār*, there were two types of participants; those who came by bus from Sidon as well as young people from Beirut and other regions.<sup>685</sup> In addition, there were also women, some of them reportedly wearing ‘mini-jupe.’<sup>686</sup> According to *al-Nahār*, this was the first protest by the supporters of al-Asīr in six months.<sup>687</sup> They carried the Palestinian and the Turkish flags, as well as the Islamic black flags and the flag of the Syrian revolution,<sup>688</sup> and the flag of the Future Movement and of *al-jamā‘a al-islāmiyya*.<sup>689</sup> Furthermore, one photo published by *Saida Online* showed two women in t-shirts carrying a banner stating ‘If I were Christian, I would rely on you, Muhammad, but I am Muslim and I love you...’ with grammatical errors.<sup>690</sup> On stage, there was a huge banner which stated ‘Zionism is the enemy of Islam.’ According to *al-Nahār*, most of the youth participating did so primarily in reaction to Hezbollah’s protests in order to state: ‘We Sunnis are also here.’<sup>691</sup>

The speeches given by Aḥmad al-Asīr and Farīd Dukkān will now be analysed. Like Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh, Aḥmad al-Asīr made use of rhetoric devices to present himself as a charismatic leader.<sup>692</sup> He sometimes switched to dialect and tried to animate the audience, who interrupted his speech a few times with cries such as ‘Omar, Omar’ and ‘*lā ilāha illā llāhu.*’ In addition, Aḥmad al-Asīr sometimes appeared to be acting theatrically, suddenly switching from smiling to an angry mood. To some extent, al-Asīr’s attempts appear to have failed, as,

<sup>681</sup> Al-Nahar. 25 September 2012. فضل شاكر يعتزل الفن وينصرف للعبادة. Nahar al-Kafif. Number 24859. Year 80.

<sup>682</sup> Al-Akhbar. 22 September 2012. الأسير في بيروت لنصرة الرسول: We love you. Doi: <https://www.al-akhbar.com/node/167809> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>683</sup> Al-Hayat. 22 September 2012. إجراءات أمنية كثيفة لحماية المؤسسات الفرنسية والأميركية والأوروبية في لبنان . غضب من بيروت . وصيدا إلى بعلبك نصره للرسول.

<sup>684</sup> Al-Nahar. 22 September 2012. اعتصام إمام مسجد بلال بن رباح قطع أوصال بيروت. Number 24855. Year 80. Page 5.

<sup>685</sup> Al-Nahar Shabab. 27 September 2012. مشاركون نصره للأسير أم للرسول؟. In al-Nahar. Number 24861. Year 80. Page 22.

<sup>686</sup> Al-Akhbar. 22 September 2012. الأسير في بيروت لنصرة الرسول: We love you. Doi: <https://www.al-akhbar.com/node/167809> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>687</sup> Al-Nahar. 22 September 2012. اعتصام إمام مسجد بلال بن رباح قطع أوصال بيروت. Number 24855. Year 80. Page 5.

<sup>688</sup> Al-Hayat. 22 September 2012. إجراءات أمنية كثيفة لحماية المؤسسات الفرنسية والأميركية والأوروبية في لبنان . غضب من بيروت . وصيدا إلى بعلبك نصره للرسول.

<sup>689</sup> Al-Nahar Shabab. 27 September 2012. مشاركون نصره للأسير أم للرسول؟. In al-Nahar. Number 24861. Year 80. Page 22.

<sup>690</sup> Saida Online. ?. صورة (55 الشهداء في ساحة الشهداء لنبي في أنصاره نصره للنبي في ساحة الشهداء (55 صورة). Doi: <http://www.saidaonline.com/newsapp.php?go=fullnews&newsid=49807> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>691</sup> Al-Nahar Shabab. 27 September 2012. مشاركون نصره للأسير أم للرسول؟. In al-Nahar. Number 24861. Year 80. Page 22.

<sup>692</sup> YouTube. 22 September 2012. 2012 09 21 I انتصاراً لنبي الإسلام I. Doi: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EPetsalWSgQ> (retrieved May 17, 2016). This source is quoted in this section as “YouTube 22 September 2012.”

following the call for prayer, he continued his speech although many people had already left the sit-in (YouTube 22 September 2012).

In addition, he attempted to present himself as a national leader. Firstly, he greeted those who had come from Sunni areas like Tripoli, ‘Akkār, Wādī Khālid (in the ‘Akkār region), and al-Biqā’ (YouTube 22 September 2012). Secondly, he stated ‘We thank you without distinction: women, men, *shuyūkh*, children, Christians, members of the media, and the security forces.’ Then he condemned the video as ‘those offenses’ committed by ‘a small group that only represents itself’ and by ‘extremist associations.’<sup>693</sup> Thus, he did not mention the Coptic involvement but instead connected it to ‘criminal Zionism’ (ibid). In addition, he described countries that allowed such “offenses” as extremist and also mentioned the French cartoons (YouTube 22 September 2012). Subsequently, he mentioned the good Christian-Muslim relations and praised the condemnations issued by a number of Christian actors: ‘At the head, Christians in Lebanon and, at the top, the respected president of the Republic [applause, screams and whistling] because he was the first to condemn (the video), and, at the top, the leader of the Christian Church in Lebanon, Patriarch al-Rā’ī’ (YouTube 22 September 2012). Then, Aḥmad al-Asīr gradually began to increase his criticism of Hezbollah. He stated: Anyone ‘who offends Ibrahim is not a Muslim, anyone who offends [...] Mūsā (PBUH) is not a Muslim, anyone who offends [...] Maryam and ‘Īsā, peace be upon him, is not a Muslim. Equally, anyone who offends our prophet is not a Muslim’ (YouTube 22 September 2012), and added: ‘Those who offend the family of the prophet, especially ‘Ā’isha, offend the prophet.’<sup>694</sup> This latter sentence is directed explicitly at the Shia who have a dispute with ‘Ā’isha. Then he pointed the finger at Iran, saying its interests coincided with those of the United States in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria.<sup>695</sup> He particularly condemned the display of photographs of Bashshār al-Asad at Hezbollah’s and the Amal Movement’s protests which allegedly constituted an ‘offense’ against Muhammad.<sup>696</sup> He went on to condemn the violent clashes in Tripoli, also mentioning the attack on a KFC in Nabatieh (YouTube 22 September 2012).

Farīd Dukkān also gave a short speech. *Al-Akhbār* describes him as a Christian journalist.<sup>697</sup> In his speech, he began, ‘Oh (you) free of the free’ ‘we as Christian and Muslim Lebanese of different social and political affiliations’ and condemned the ‘offensive film “The

---

<sup>693</sup> Saida Online. ?. (55 صورة). (اعتصام الشيخ أحمد الأسير وأنصاره نصره للنبي في ساحة الشهداء).

<sup>694</sup> Saida Online. ?. (55 صورة). (اعتصام الشيخ أحمد الأسير وأنصاره نصره للنبي في ساحة الشهداء).

<sup>695</sup> Saida Online. ?. (55 صورة). (اعتصام الشيخ أحمد الأسير وأنصاره نصره للنبي في ساحة الشهداء).

<sup>696</sup> Al-Nahar. 22 September 2012. اعتصام إمام مسجد بلال بن رباح قطع أوصال بيروت. Number 24855. Year 80. Page 5.

<sup>697</sup> Al-Akhbar English. 21 September 2012. Salafi leader draws over 1,000 at Beirut rally. Doi: <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/salafi-leader-draws-over-1000-beirut-rally> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Innocence of Muslims.’<sup>698</sup> He considered it ‘not only violating religion, but the very essence of the human being.’ He did not mention a specific background to the film, referring only ‘to (those) who want to sow strife between Christians and Muslims,’ he stated: ‘we all defend the revealed religions.’ His argument that ‘the religion of Christ condemns the offense of the other, especially of the Islamic religion’ is particularly interesting. In addition, he asserted that ‘the freedom of speech, of action, and creed are international basic freedoms.’ He called on the ‘leaders of the Lebanese communities to hold a spiritual summit and form a legal group’ that would formulate a law and submit it to the United Nations. This generally rather moderate speech is concluded by an idea drawn from al-Asīr that the war in Syria constitutes a greater threat.

In his reaction to “The Innocence of Muslims,” Aḥmad al-Asīr tried to establish himself as a Lebanese leader. In doing so, he tried to counter the monopoly Hezbollah has on the defence of Islam and tried to appear accommodating towards Christians.

### 3.5.1.2 ‘Umar Bakrī

On 19 September 2012, *al-Akhbār* reported that the Islamist preacher and agitator ‘Umar Bakrī (Omar Bakri) asked Muslims to support a *fatwā* that would make it ‘legitimate to kill those who have insulted the prophet Muhammad.’<sup>699</sup> He also expressed his opposition to protests that would only cause harm, but stated that the video demanded a ‘strong response.’

### 3.5.1.3 Māhir Ḥammūd

The Islamist leader Māhir Ḥammūd made two declarations concerning “The Innocence of Muslims” and another one concerning the visit of Benedict XVI. Māhir Ḥammūd is a liberal Islamist (Rougier 2004, 125). He descends from a famous religious family in Sidon and preaches in the al-Quds mosque there (Rougier 2007, 153). He maintained a small militia during the Civil War (Rougier 2004, 226). According to Bernard Rougier, he was one of Hezbollah’s first supporters and had previously been a founding member of *tajammu‘ al-‘ulamā’ al-muslimīn* (see further below, Section 3.5.14).

On 17 September 2012, Māhir Ḥammūd condemned the video on television as ‘the film offending Islam’ and ‘these acts, perversions, and lies.’<sup>700</sup> He considered it an opportunity for Muslims to unite and reminded them that they should not remain silent. In this regard, he evoked

<sup>698</sup> YouTube. 23 September 2012. 2012 09 21 الأستاذ فريد الدكان. Doi: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TqcBCpE7oVw> (retrieved May 17, 2016). The analysis of this discourse is based on this source.

<sup>699</sup> Al-Akhbar. 21 September 2012. A "day of rage" spreads across Lebanon. Doi: <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/day-rage-spreads-across-lebanon> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>700</sup> Al-Tawhid. 17 September 2012. مواقف لعلماء ولجان وجمعيات واحزاب في لبنان منددة بالفيلم المسيء للاسلام.

the same idea as Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh, i.e. no reaction would signal ‘we allow others to exceed our creeds.’ During this TV appearance, he also repeated his idea that Benedict XVI’s visit was very important, as it fostered Christian-Muslim relations, something even more important in the context of the ‘Christian crisis of fear of the spread of Islamic thought.’<sup>701</sup>

Moreover, on September 22, *L’Orient le Jour* reported that during his Friday sermon, Ḥammūd expressed his support for a *fatwā* that would allow the murder of those who had participated in the production of the video.<sup>702</sup> According to the newspaper, roughly three hundred people listened to his sermon.

Finally, Ḥammūd’s analysis of Christian-Muslim relations given on the occasion of Benedict XVI’s visit should also be mentioned here. According to Ḥammūd, Islam has ‘textually and historically’ fostered relations between Muslims and Christians, whom he called ‘*ahl al-kitāb* and *al-naṣārā*, in accordance with their Islamic historical designation.’<sup>703</sup> Interestingly, this first quotation shows that Ḥammūd was aware that these terms are Islamic and not part of the Arab Christian wording. In particular, he referred to the pact between Caliph ‘Umar and Patriarch Sophronius to establish the foundation for these relations. At the same time, Māhir Ḥammūd defined Europe as a counter-model because of the religious persecutions that took place and the Frankish wars’ (crusade wars). In this regard, he praised John Paul II’s apology for ‘what happened in the history of the church’ and the ‘offenses of the church.’ Thus, he seemed to equate the church with Europe and the West. In contrast, he established the paradigm of a golden age, as he stated that any examples of persecution in the history of Islam had nothing to do with Islam, but rather were the result of ‘followers of the other religions.’ As a result, these foundations do not only prove the good relations in the past but also in the future; he expressed a need to reflect on this history and realize ‘the necessity of the importance of Islamic-Christian coexistence under Islamic rule.’ Furthermore, he criticised ‘some Arab Christians’ reliance on the West, especially criticising those who relied on Israel ‘to preserve their existence’ during the Civil War. He also strongly emphasised that all Muslim actors had welcomed Benedict XVI’s visit.

---

<sup>701</sup> "أزمة تخويف للمسيحيين من انتشار الفكر الإسلامي" <sup>701</sup>

<sup>702</sup> *L’Orient Le Jour*. 22 September 2012. Cheikh Hammoud appelle, de Saida, au meurtre des acteurs du film islamophobe. Number 13561. Page 4.

<sup>703</sup> *Al-Tawhid*. 14 September 2012. الشيخ الشعار دان الفيلم المسيء للإسلام وطالب بسحبه/ الشيخ حمود: ردات الفعل الطبيعية التي Doi:

<http://www.altawhid.org/2012/09/14/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D9%8A%D8%AE-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A6-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7/> (retrieved May 17, 2016).



### 3.5.1.4 An Anti-Colonial Network against “The Innocence of Muslims”

The fourth part of this section on Islamic reactions to the video will look at the reactions of Islamic (Islamist) actors and organizations that promoted an “anti-colonial” and “anti-Zionist” understanding of the video and can be considered as leaning towards Hezbollah, at least in terms of the content of their reactions. We will start by looking at the groups and actors around the Islamic Action Front, then at *tajammu‘ al-‘ulamā’ al-muslimīn*, then at two conferences and, lastly, at “other actors.”

To start with, we will look at the reactions displayed by the Islamic Action Front, *liqā’ al-jam‘iyyāt wa l-shakhṣiyyāt al-islāmiyya*, *shaykh Sharīf Tawtyū*, *ḥarakat al-tawḥīd al-islāmī*, and *tayyār al-fajr*.

The Islamic Action Front (*jabhat al-‘amal al-islāmī*) is an offshoot of the Lebanese Muslim Brotherhood, *al-jamā‘a al-islāmiyya*, and was established by Fathī Yakan in 2006 in the wake of the war against Israel. Fathī Yakan was born in 1933 in Tripoli and was a leading figure during the emergence of the Islamist movement in Lebanon.<sup>704</sup> In the 1990s, he was a member of the Lebanese parliament (*ibid*). As shown above (see Section 3.2.2), however, he increasingly opposed the strategic and political choices made by the Future Movement and the March 14 Alliance and therefore established the Islamic Action Front. On the one hand, this gathering tends to sympathise with Hezbollah’s ideas and has strongly opposed the March 14 Alliance’s increasing enmity towards Hezbollah. On the other hand, however, the establishment of the Islamic Action Front was also an effort to contend with Hezbollah’s monopoly over the Islamic discourse of resistance (see Gervais 2012, 128). These ideas are shared by the Gathering of Islamic Associations and Personalities (*liqā’ al-jam‘iyyāt wa l-shakhṣiyyāt al-islāmiyya*), which stated that Syria would soon win against the ‘international terrorist conspiracy’ and against the ‘plans to divide our region.’<sup>705</sup> In addition, *tayyār al-fajr* (“Stream of Dawn”) has cooperated with the Islamic Action Front in recent years and was founded in the wake of the Israeli occupation of Sidon in 1985. Fathī Yakan established the Islamic Action Front in cooperation with leading Islamic figures of the *ḥarakat al-tawḥīd al-islāmī*; *shaykh ‘Abd al-Nāṣir Jibrī*, leader of *ḥarakat al-umma*; and *tayyār al-fajr*.

<sup>704</sup> Daily Star Lebanon. 15 June 2009. Islamic Action Front announces death of its leader Fathi Yakan. Doi: <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2009/Jun-15/53330-islamic-action-front-announces-death-of-its-leader-fathi-yakan.ashx> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>705</sup> Facebook. 27 May 2014. الهيئة العامة للإذاعة والتلفزيون – سورية. Doi: <https://ar-ar.facebook.com/SyriaTVChannels/posts/640969782659103?fref=nf> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

On September 13, *al-Tawhīd* published a joint statement by the Islamic Action Front and *liqā' al-jam'īyyāt wa l-shakhṣiyyāt al-islāmiyya*.<sup>706</sup> The statement mentioned the involvement of 'Terry Jones and Jewish and Coptic extremists.' However, the two organizations ascribed the actual responsibility for the film to the United States, in particular to 'the evil US Administration which is directly responsible for the film offending and shaming the prophet of Islam, our Lord Muhammad (PBUH).' The United States was also made responsible for having supported and protected the film, which allegedly affected 1.5 billion Muslims. In addition, the Islamic Action Front and *liqā' al-jam'īyyāt wa l-shakhṣiyyāt al-islāmiyya* directly called out the US for its reported double standards, denouncing it for allegedly caring about freedom, justice, and stability in the Muslim world but staging wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Lebanon in 2006. It reminded the US 'despite your absolute support for this Zionist monster,'<sup>707</sup> Israel lost the war against Lebanon (so it alleges).

On the following day, 14 September 2012, *al-Tawhīd* published the reaction of a leading member of the Islamic Action Front, *shaykh* Sharīf Tawtyū, who is also a member of *ḥarakat al-tawhīd al-islāmī*.<sup>708</sup> Sharīf Tawtyū called the video 'the shameful and offending film which violates and assaults Islam and the prophet Muhammad (PBUH),' made by 'fascist Jews' and 'some extremist Copts.' He connected the video to the massacre in the Palestinian refugee camps of Shubra and Shatila in 1982. Like the previous statement, Sharīf Tawtyū clearly ascribed responsibility to the United States. Besides being described as an "offense," the video was also accused of lacking any consideration for the 'feelings and emotions of 1.5 billion Muslims.' Interestingly, Sharīf Tawtyū also placed the video in the context of a violation of the 'freedom of creed, the freedom to practice religious rituals.' As mentioned above, Tawtyū also saw a connection between this video and the thirtieth anniversary of the massacre of Shubra and Shatila, framing it as an example of 'a total military, security, political, media, ideological, and propaganda war against Islam, its symbols, and Muslims.'<sup>709</sup> Sharīf Tawtyū also participated in a conference in Beirut on 18 September 2012 (see below).

With regards to *ḥarakat al-tawhīd al-islāmī*, its reaction was published on 13 September 2012 on Hezbollah's website.<sup>710</sup> The organization strongly condemned the 'film' 'produced by Americans and extremist Copts and funded by Zionism.' It called on Muslims to turn the

<sup>706</sup> لبنان: سلسلة واسعة من المواقف المنددة من الأحزاب والجمعيات والشخصيات الإسلامية والمسيحية. Al-Tawhid. 13 September 2012. والوطنية بالاساءة للنبي محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم.

<sup>707</sup> "رغم دعمك المطلق لهذا الكيان الصهيوني المسخ،"

<sup>708</sup> Al-Tawhid. 14 September 2012. الشيخ الشعار دان الفيلم المسيء للإسلام وطالب بسحبه/ الشيخ حمود: ردات الفعل الطبيعية التي طالت السفارات الاميركية في العالم العربي كانت هبة رباتية

<sup>709</sup> "هناك حرباً عسكرية وأمنية واقتصادية وسياسية وإعلامية ومعنوية ودعائية شاملة ضد الإسلام ورموزه وضد المسلمين،"

<sup>710</sup> Moqawama. 13 September 2012. :Doi . والاسلام (ص) للنبي محمد(ص) .Doi . <http://www.moqawama.org/essaydetails.php?eid=26394&cid=199#.Vhzawm6ZTIV> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

coming Friday, September 14, into a ‘day of anger’ and protests. *Ḥarakat al-tawḥīd al-islāmī* was founded in 1982 around the Sunni *shaykh* Sa‘īd Sha‘bān in Tripoli (Mervin 2008, 81) and was one of the main militias in the city during the Civil War (Rougier 2007, 45).

The statement by *liqā’ al-jam‘iyyāt wa l-shakhṣiyyāt al-islāmiyya* was published on 17 September 2012 on *al-Tawḥīd*.<sup>711</sup> Together with “The Innocence of Muslims,” defined as ‘this film of strife,’ the statement also condemned the publication of cartoons by Charlie Hebdo. Both are viewed as ‘an open and dangerous enemy against our Arabic and Islamic community’ and as ‘a new war and a crusade(-like) attack.’ They are also accused of targeting ‘the creed, the banner and the faith of more than 1.5 billion Muslims in the world.’ Like Sharīf Tawtyū, *liqā’ al-jam‘iyyāt wa l-shakhṣiyyāt al-islāmiyya* criticised the video and the cartoons within the framework of their own understanding of human rights. Firstly, the statement stated that ‘responsible freedom does not assault and does not expose the prophets, the messengers of God and the messages revealed.’ In this regard, ‘freedom of creed (*ḥurriyat al-mu‘taqad*)’ is viewed as the most ‘simple’ and basic human right. Thus, “responsible freedom” does not ‘attack its boundaries and does not expose the simplest human right’, i.e. “freedom of creed.”

*Tayyār al-fajr*’s statement, published on 20 September 2012 on *al-Tawḥīd* mostly condemned the so called double standards of the United States and France.<sup>712</sup> Both countries are accused of having taken a position of ‘attacking the Islamic religion and its prophet without any consideration for human rights, the human being, and dogmatic and religious freedoms.’ Thus it called on France to change this and to free the prisoner George Abdullah.

This paragraph will look at the reactions issued by *tajammu‘ al-‘ulamā’ al-muslimīn*; *shaykh* Muṣṭafā Malaṣṣ; *shaykh* ‘Abd al-Nāṣir Jibrī, the leader of *ḥarakat al-umma* and also at two conferences; one at *ḥarakat al-umma*’s headquarters and the other organized by *tajamu‘ al-‘ulamā’ al-muslimīn*.

*Tajammu‘ al-‘ulamā’ al-muslimīn* is another important organization that gathers together those Sunni and Shia ‘*ulamā’*’ who agree with *imām* Rūḥ Allāh Khomaynī (Mervin 2008, 81). It was established in 1982 by the Iranian ambassador to Lebanon in order to benefit religious leaders and to reduce the Sunni-Shia divide (Rougier 2007, 32). During its meeting with the vice president of the Higher Islamic Shia Council, ‘Abd al-Amīr Qabalān, *tajammu‘ al-‘ulamā’ al-muslimīn* defined itself as part of the “Axis of Resistance”<sup>713</sup> and as continuing

<sup>711</sup> Al-Tawhid. 17 September 2012. مواقف لعلماء ولجان وجمعيات واحزاب في لبنان منددة بالفيلم المسيء للاسلام.

<sup>712</sup> Al-Tawhid. 20 September 2012. سلسلة واسعة من المواقف لنواب ووزراء وسفراء وشخصيات وهيئات واحزاب في لبنان تندد بالفيلم والرسومات المسيئة للرسول.

<sup>713</sup> Tajamo. 13 September 2012. "وفد "تجمع العلماء المسلمين" زار المفتي الجعفري الشيخ أحمد قبلان". Doi: <http://tajamo.net/tajamon/acts/115> (retrieved April 22, 2014).

Mūsā al-Ṣadr's efforts for national unity.<sup>714</sup> It also expressed its goal of working towards Islamic unity and unity between Muslims and Christians.<sup>715</sup> This section also comprises the reaction from *shaykh* Muṣṭafā Malaṣṣ, a member of *tajammu' al-'ulamā' al-muslimīn* and director of Sharia institute in Minieh (al-Miniyya) in the 'Akkār.<sup>716</sup> In an article in April 2015 he asserted that Sunni and Shia agreed on basic principles and differ only on non-essential matters.<sup>717</sup> They should therefore be qualified as two different 'parties' rather than as two different *madhhab* (ibid). Yet he questioned why the Sunni would not commemorate Ashura ('*āṣūrā*') as it commemorates a historical event aimed at reforming the Islamic community and fighting corruption (ibid).

On September 13 *al-Tawhīd* published a statement by *tajammu' al-'ulamā' al-muslimīn* in which it condemned the video but immediately placed it in the context of "Zionist enmity."<sup>718</sup> It explained the reason for this video by claiming 'it is known that the Zionist creature lives its last days.' As a result, "Zionism" is said to try to 'offend Islam as a religion and as moral values' by any means and is targeting 'the head of Islam through its symbols, its thoughts, its Sharia law, its creed, and its concepts.' In addition, the video's background was directly connected to this theory, as the statement discussed the responsibility of Sam Bacile, an 'Israeli-American' and his report of having gathered five million dollars from one hundred Jews. The statement added that if Muslims united to 'liberate Palestine,' then the days of this 'Zionist creature' would indeed be numbered and criticised certain leading actors in particular; 'Where are the Arabs, the Muslims, Islamic Cooperation? They came together to make war on Syria.' In addition, *tajammu' al-'ulamā' al-muslimīn* implicitly condemned the violent reactions in the Muslim world through its call for 'peaceful' reactions. Yet it also made the United States responsible for this violence as well as for the video. Lastly, the organization praised Benedict XVI's position and 'especially (the position) of a number of Christian religious leaders.' The recurrent argument put forward by Christian actors, namely that this constituted an offense against Christianity itself, is understood in this statement as the Christian awareness of 'Zionism's' targeting of 'religions and, at the head, Lord Christ (peace upon him) and the Christian churches.'

<sup>714</sup> Tajamo. 13 September 2012. "تجمع العلماء يلتقى سماحة الشيخ عبد الأمير قبالان." Doi: <http://tajamo.net/tajamon/acts/116> (retrieved April 22, 2014).

<sup>715</sup> Tajamo. 13 September 2012. "تجمع العلماء يلتقى سماحة الشيخ عبد الأمير قبالان." Doi: <http://tajamo.net/tajamon/acts/116> (retrieved April 22, 2014).

<sup>716</sup> (<http://alsheikhmustaphamalas.blogspot.co.at/> accessed 4 February 2016).

<sup>717</sup> Al-Manar. 18 November 2014. الشيخ مصطفى ملص: السنة والشيعه هما أكبر حزبين في التاريخ. Doi: <http://www.almanar.com.lb/adetails.php?eid=1031248> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>718</sup> Al-Tawhid. 13 September 2012. لبنان : سلسلة واسعة من المواقف المنددة من الأحزاب والجمعيات والشخصيات الإسلامية. والمسححية والوطنية بالاساءة للنبي محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم.

The primary focus of *shaykh* Muṣṭafā Malaṣṣ' sermon given in a mosque in Minieh, 'Akkār, seemed to have been Benedict XVI's visit.<sup>719</sup> He considered the visit a call by the pope for 'peace, tolerance, love, renunciation of violence, a call to coexistence, and (for) respect of the other.' According to Malaṣṣ, these concepts are likewise shared by Islam. Therefore, he concluded: 'that is why the Nazarenes [*al-naṣārā*] are the closest to those who believe in God', i.e. the Muslims. This statement paraphrases the Quran:

You will surely find the most intense of the people in animosity toward the believers [to be] the Jews and those who associate others with Allah; and you will find the nearest of them in affection to the believers those who say, "We are Christians." That is because among them are priests and monks and because they are not arrogant.<sup>720</sup>

It is within this Quranic context of a connection between Muslims and Christians on the one hand, and of an "enmity" of the Jews towards Muslims that "The Innocence of Muslims" is analysed. Muṣṭafā Malaṣṣ condemned the video as 'this cowardly and condemned film,' 'the attack that plants hatred between the communities (*umma*) and the people.' All this reportedly took place under the leadership of 'worldwide Zionism.' The preacher offered 'proof' of this assumption by referring to Quran 5:64:

And the Jews say, "The hand of Allah is chained." Chained are their hands, and cursed are they for what they say. Rather, both His hands are extended; He spends however He wills. And that which has been revealed to you from your Lord will surely increase many of them in transgression and disbelief. And We have cast among them animosity and hatred until the Day of Resurrection. Every time they kindled the fire of war [against you], Allah extinguished it.

And they strive throughout the land [causing] corruption, and Allah does not like corrupters.<sup>721</sup>

Seemingly, Muṣṭafā Malaṣṣ did not differentiate between the Jews of the Quran and "Zionism." Yet later on in his sermon, he also ascribed a responsibility for this video to the United States. Subsequently, Muṣṭafā Malaṣṣ dwelt on the violent reactions he considers one of the goals of the video. He called on Muslims to remain within the ethics of Islam; 'Although America commits the ugliest crimes against our community, this must not lead us to reactions that contradict with what our religion has commanded us.' Thus, Muslims need to comply with the peaceful rules of Islam when being attacked, because 'this is the difference between the revealed human being and the slave of its lusts [in] the materialistic civilization.' As a result, throughout his speech, Muṣṭafā Malaṣṣ elaborated the complex image of the "other" as Zionist, Quranic Jewish, materialist, Western; basically, as everything that the Muslim is not.

---

<sup>719</sup> Al-Tawhid. 14 September 2012. الشيخ الشعار دان الفيلم المسيء للاسلام وطالب بسحبه/ الشيخ حمود: رداً الفعل الطبيعية التي. طالبت السفارات الاميركية في العالم العربي كانت هبة ربانية

<sup>720</sup> Quran. Doi: <http://quran.com/5/82> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>721</sup> Quran. Doi: <http://quran.com/5> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

In a short statement of reaction published on 13 September 2012, *shaykh* ‘Abd al-Nāṣir Jibrī, the secretary general of *ḥarakat al-umma* condemned “The Innocence of Muslims” for ‘targeting the holiest of sacred items (*muqaddasāt*)’ and for ‘provoking popular anger to create a conflict between the people to benefit American-Zionist control.’<sup>722</sup> ‘Abd al-Nāṣir Jibrī is also the president of the College al-Dawa (Preaching College) in Beirut, which was funded by the Libyan regime (Rougier 2007, 211). In addition, he is a member of the Sufi *naqshbandiyya* order and his spiritual guide was the late *muftī* of Syria (Rougier 2007, 212). In his condemnation of the video, its actual background was not mentioned at all, but instead its responsibility was ascribed to the eternal enemy, America and Zionism. ‘Abd al-Nāṣir Jibrī also praised the position of the Roman Catholic Church on this issue (ibid). He later participated in a conference at *ḥarakat al-umma*’s headquarters, and *al-Tawhīd* introduced him as “the general coordinator of the Islamic Action Front.”<sup>723</sup> He can be said to subscribe to the ideology of the March 8 Alliance; in reaction to the execution of the Shia scholar Nimr Bāqir an-Nimr in January 2016, he described the Saudi scholar as a promoter of freedom of speech who was executed by a tyrannical ruler.’<sup>724</sup> Furthermore, Jibrī called on Saudi Arabia to stop its wars in Yemen, Libya, Syria, Iraq and, surprisingly, ‘in Palestine’ (ibid).

On 18 September 2012, *al-Tawhīd* reported on a conference at *ḥarakat al-umma*’s headquarters which gathered together *liqā’ al-jam’iyyāt wa l-shakhṣiyyāt al-islāmiyya*, ‘Abd al-Nāṣir Jibrī, and Sharīf Tawtyū, as well as ‘*ulamā*’ and lay actors.<sup>725</sup> In his speech, ‘Abd al-Nāṣir Jibrī called on ‘the free world, the international community, all nobles and the liberal Christians in the world’ to work on issuing a law that would forbid ‘the exposure of and attack on the messengers of God, the prophets, Islamic symbols and the messages revealed.’ In his speech, Sharīf Tawtyū mentioned both the video and the cartoons published in Charlie Hebdo. In particular, he insisted that the ‘film of strife constituted a dangerous enemy for our Islamic Arab community.’ Yet both men also demanded an ‘almighty, firm and assertive’ position from

<sup>722</sup> Al-Tawhid. 13 September 2012. لبنان: سلسلة واسعة من المواقف المنددة من الأحزاب والجمعيات والشخصيات الإسلامية والمسيحية والوطنية بالاساءة للنبي محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم.

<sup>723</sup> Al-Tawhid. 18 September 2012. تواصل المواقف المنددة والغضب في المجتمع المدني والسياسي في لبنان جراء بث الفيلم المسيء للإسلام.

<sup>724</sup> Al-Nashra. 9 January 2016. Doi: <http://www.elnashra.com/news/show/950582/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D9%8A%D8%AE-%D8%AC%D8%A8%D8%B1%D9%8A-%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%83%D9%85-%D9%8A%D8%AD%D8%B3%D8%A8-%D9%86%D9%81%D8%B3%D9%87-%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%B9%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%85%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%B9%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%A8> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>725</sup> Al-Tawhid. 18 September 2012. تواصل المواقف المنددة والغضب في المجتمع المدني والسياسي في لبنان جراء بث الفيلم المسيء للإسلام.

the ‘whole community.’ In addition, he demanded the suspension of the film, and that its makers, distributor and supporter be punished using the ‘harshest punishment’ possible.

On 18 September 2012, *tajammu‘ al-‘ulamā‘ al-muslimīn* organized a conference at the headquarters of the Professional Press Association.<sup>726</sup> Following speeches by a number of participants – a member of this professional association, Muḥammad Ba‘albakī; *shaykh* al-Zayn; *shaykh* Aḥmad Qabalān; *shaykh* Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Qaṭ‘; *shaykh* Yūsif Da‘mūsh; and Māhir Ḥammūd – a common statement was issued. The statement asserted that the ‘protection of the Zionist creature is [...] one of the primary motivations for the offending film’ and considered it a ‘clear attempt to [produce] strife between Muslims and Christians, especially in Egypt.’ Yet, at the same time, the gathered ‘ulamā‘ viewed the United States as the key figure responsible for this ‘offense against the Muslims as represented in the film offending the prophet.’ As a result, it has to bear the consequences for this offense and stop the spread of the video. In addition, the statement proposed its own definition of freedom: ‘There is a difference between the freedom of expression and the freedom to offend.’ The statement re-asserted the responsibility of ‘America and worldwide Zionism’ in an effort to divert attention from Christians; ‘there is no sin in this for our Christian brothers.’ As a result, it praised the position taken by Benedict XVI, Patriarch al-Rā‘ī, the ‘pope of the Copts in Egypt’ and other Christian clerics. It also praised the initiative of the Lebanese minister of Foreign Affairs. However, the statement criticised Islamic Cooperation’s attitude, questioning its contribution to solving the crisis in Syria.

The various speeches differed to some extent.

Muḥammad Ba‘albakī, a member of the Press Association, ascribed responsibility to Zionists: ‘the hands of the Zionist enemy [are] evident in what happened’ and described the video as a ‘conspiracy of the ugliest conspiracies’ to stir up strife between the ‘believes in God.’ Yet he conceded that ‘Muhammad is greater than the stupidity embodied in this film.’

*Shaykh* al-Zayn is the religious judge of Sidon, an important preacher in the city and an important leader of the Palestinians (Rougier 1997, 37). *Shaykh* al-Zayn likewise stated that there was no need to defend Muhammad, because God ‘honoured him.’ He attributed the video to ‘the enemies of Islam who harbour hatred in their hearts and a hatred of Islam and the Messenger of God.’ Yet, overall the speech was dominated by the call for Islamic unity which he envisioned, at least to some extent, under the banner of Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh; ‘I hope that soon

---

<sup>726</sup> Al-Tawhid. 18 September 2012. تواصل المواقف المنددة والغضب في المجتمع المدني والسياسي في لبنان جراء بث الفيلم المسيء للإسلام.

we will pray in the al-Aqṣā mosque behind Hezbollah’s secretary general, his excellence, *al-sayyid Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh*.’

In contrast, *shaykh Aḥmad Qabalān* demanded reactions in Lebanon that were ‘fit for the Messenger of God.’ In addition, he expressed his faith in the strength of Christian-Muslim relations: ‘What the societies of the West aspired to will not influence Islamic-Christian coexistence because what it joins are heavenly values [that cannot be destroyed by] the devils of the earth.’

*Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Qaṭ’* mentioned the rivalry between the March 8 and the March 14 Alliance, stating that ‘the prophet does not need them [these two alliances].’

Similarly, *shaykh Yūsif Da‘mūsh*<sup>727</sup> placed the video in the context of the Sunni Shia divide; ‘America strives day and night to [stir up] strife between Sunna and Shia and today, the day has come to sow strife between Muslims and Christians.’ He considered the video an ‘American-Zionist plan for strife.’ Thus, he called for unity between Muslims and praised calls by Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh for a law prohibiting such “offenses” (although this call did not only come from Naṣr Allāh).

Finally, Māhir Ḥammūd called for ‘stormy reactions in Lebanon that comprise all Muslim and Christian communities (*tawā’if*),’ centered in Bkerké.

Although the United States were viewed as the main instigator of this video, the reactions were framed within the context of a “Zionist enmity,” permanent and essential. In this regard, the enmity is related to those verses in the Quran that deal negatively with Jews. There is a confusion, demonstrated by the interchangeable use of terms, between the Quranic Jews, the contemporary Jews, Zionism and Israel – though the latter is never explicitly mentioned. Christians were not mentioned. The reactions focused instead on the “Zionist enemy” and Islamic unity.

Finally, this section will look at the reactions of imam Ḥussām al-‘Īlānī, ‘*alāma al-sayyid Aḥmad Shawqī*, *shaykh Muḥammad bin Darwīsh Abū al-Qaṭ’*, and ‘Iṣām ‘Abd al-Qādir Ghandūr.

Like several other actors, the imam of the *al-Ghafrān* mosque in Sidon, Ḥusām al-‘Īlānī, ascribed responsibility for the video to the US Administration and considered the video to be part of a series of “offenses” that began with the burning of a copy of the Quran by Terry

---

<sup>727</sup> Yūsif Da‘mūsh is the head of *tajammu‘ al-‘ulamā’* in Jabal ‘Āmil, a gathering of Shia scholars in Southern Lebanon. In one instance, he stated that Iraq, where he studied, was his second homeland. (Imam Ali. 10 May 2015. الامين العام للعتبة العلوية المقدسة يلتقي بوفد علماء تجمع جبل عامل. Doi: <http://www.imamali-a.com/?id=316&sid=2193> (retrieved May 17, 2016).



Jones.<sup>728</sup> To some extent, he seemed to suggest a conspiracy behind the violent reactions, since he questioned why there were no peaceful reactions at US embassies.

‘*Alāma al-sayyid* Aḥmad Shawqī condemned the video as ‘the film offending Islam, Muslims and the messages revealed’ and as ‘not a plan of strife, but strife in its essence.’<sup>729</sup> In particular, Aḥmad Shawqī placed the video in connection with the visit by Benedict XVI and called for ‘love, dialogue, and mutual benefice (*maṣālaḥa*).’ In addition, he praised the condemnation by the Roman Catholic Church.

Similarly, *shaykh* Muḥammad bin Darwīsh Abū al-Qaṭ‘ also attributed the responsibility for “The Innocence of Muslims” to the ‘Zionist lobby’ which is ‘the shared enemy of both Muslims and Christians.’<sup>730</sup> The video allegedly aims to ‘push Muslims and Christians against each other.’

In contrast, ‘Iṣām ‘Abd al-Qādir Ghandūr,<sup>731</sup> leader of *al-liqā’ al-islāmī al-waḥdawī*, placed the video in the context of the ‘fear of the spread of Islam’ by ‘the constant military and intellectual Western enemy.’<sup>732</sup> As a result of this fear of the ‘rightness of the Islamic creed,’ the “West” undertakes these ‘repeated attempts to distort the image of Islam.’

### 3.5.1.5 ‘Alī Faḍl Allāh

‘Alī Faḍl Allāh, the son of Muḥammad Ḥusayn Faḍl Allāh, gave four reactions to “The Innocence of Muslims.” Like his father, who was the spiritual leader of Hezbollah, he follows a moderate Islam, close to the people, and preaches in the mosque in Birr al-‘Abid in the southern suburb of Beirut (Mervin 2012, 345). In addition, he manages the office of the *marja’* (ibid).

‘Alī Faḍl Allāh’s first reaction to the video was published on 13 September 2012 on *al-Tawḥīd* and took place while he was receiving a delegation of Iranian students.<sup>733</sup> He condemned the video as ‘the new attack’ on Islam and its noble prophet,’ ‘the offending American-Zionist film’ that displays the ‘size of hatred and enmity present in Western and

<sup>728</sup> لبنان: سلسلة واسعة من المواقف المنددة من الأحزاب والجمعيات والشخصيات الإسلامية والمسيحية. والوطنية بالإساءة للنبي محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم.

<sup>729</sup> لبنان: سلسلة واسعة من المواقف المنددة من الأحزاب والجمعيات والشخصيات الإسلامية والمسيحية. والوطنية بالإساءة للنبي محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم.

<sup>730</sup> لبنان: سلسلة واسعة من المواقف المنددة من الأحزاب والجمعيات والشخصيات الإسلامية والمسيحية. والوطنية بالإساءة للنبي محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم.

<sup>731</sup> ‘Iṣām ‘Abd al-Qādir Ghandūr does not seem to be opposed to Hezbollah, as he welcomed the understanding between Hezbollah and the Salafī stream as a first step towards closing the door to “strife.” (Moqawama. 19 August 2008. Doi: <http://www.moqawama.org/essaydetails.php?eid=10065&cid=199> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>732</sup> لبنان: سلسلة واسعة من المواقف لنواب ووزراء وسفراء وشخصيات وهيئات وأحزاب في لبنان تندد بالفيلم والرسومات المسيئة للرسول.

<sup>733</sup> لبنان: سلسلة واسعة من المواقف المنددة من الأحزاب والجمعيات والشخصيات الإسلامية والمسيحية. والوطنية بالإساءة للنبي محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم.

Zionist circles for Islam and the Muslims.’ He called on Muslims to unite and to avoid ‘strife’ like that in Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq. He also called for ‘civilized’ and ‘wise’ reactions. In addition, he praised the numerous condemnations by Christians he viewed as ‘another step in Islamic-Christian co-operation American-Zionist arrogance.’<sup>734</sup>

In his sermon on Friday, 14 September 2012, ‘Alī Faḍl Allāh discussed several subjects, among them the issue of “The Innocence of Muslims.”<sup>735</sup> The video is merely alluded to in moralising terms; ‘what happened of that recent offense against the right of the Messenger of God, this offense, which is not the first and will not be the last.’ He questioned whether freedom of speech justified the offense of ‘the feelings of hundreds of millions of Muslims in the world.’ He accused the video of aiming to distort the image of Islam and to sow strife. Thus, ‘Alī Faḍl Allāh’s criticism was directed particularly towards the “West” and its double standard, in particular its ‘lecturing us on the acceptance of the other, coexistence, and respecting difference.’ He equated offense against religious content with offense against the other; ‘the freedom they want is distorting the image of the other and offending him.’ He called on Muslims to unite in peaceful reactions. In addition, he expressed his hope that Benedict XVI’s visit would result in an even greater improvement in Christian-Muslim relations and an end to Christian fears which ‘have no foundation and spring from the human and revealed values the prophet Muhammad and the Lord Christ called for, the values of love, mercy, justice, and charity’ and stand united against injustice.

On 22 September 2012, *al-Hayāt* quoted him expressing the need for a ‘strategic plan on all levels,’ and stated ‘we did not see anything in the offense except Islamic-Christian strife,’ but this failed thanks to ‘the capacity of those Muslims and Christians who are aware.’<sup>736</sup>

Finally, on September 24, *al-Safīr* published another comment by ‘Alī Faḍl Allāh. This time, his condemnation of “The Innocence of Muslims” (and the French cartoons) took place by means of an analysis of Muhammad.<sup>737</sup> In the first place, the scholar denied that either of the productions had any scientific foundation, as he stated that ‘a researcher looking for true knowledge’ in ‘his life and his *sunna*’ would find something completely different. Thus, Muhammad is described as ‘not an average human being, but [...] a school in the building of the human being, in the past, the present and the future and [...] a proof of goodness, truth, beauty, and virtue’ and improving the human being; ‘yes, producing the human being according

---

<sup>734</sup> “محطة أخرى من محطات اللقاء الإسلامي المسيحي في مواجهة الغطرسة الأمريكية الصهيونية”

<sup>735</sup> Al-Anwar. 15 September 2012. Number 18142. Year 53. Doi: <http://www.archive.alanwar.com/article.php?articleID=172298&issuedate=20120915> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>736</sup> Al-Hayat. 22 September 2012. غضب من بيروت. وصيدا إلى بعلبك نصره للرسول

<sup>737</sup> Fadhallah, Ali. 24 September 2012. أسمى من الأحقاد. *Al-Safīr*. Number 12291. Year 39. Page 4.

to the attributes of God.’ Faḍl Allāh enumerated Muhammad’s moral qualities – for instance, his kindness towards the poor – and concluded: ‘Muhammad himself was a prophet before becoming a messenger for the whole of humanity.’ However, Faḍl Allāh did not want to establish an *imitatio muhammadi* as Salafism does, but instead underlined *the message rather than the human being*, quoting verse 3:144: ‘Muhammad is not but a messenger. [Other] messengers have passed on before him. So if he was to die or be killed, would you turn back on your heels [to unbelief]?’ As a result, he used “we,” also appearing to encompass the Christians. All in all, Faḍl Allāh did not establish a particular national, or even religious, framework. Instead he established a moral and civilizational framework: ‘We, like all the people who follow the principles and the belongings.’ An “other” is more clearly defined: ‘Why this hate? Why all this hate? We address these questions to the cartoonists of the West who always draw slogans of humanity, connection, and globalization’ and questioned ‘Since when is producing strife a value?’ He stated ‘Our problem is not in the difference of opinion, even when it comes to the freedom of opinion. The problem between us is the non-existence of morality, values, and principles, especially when it comes to our great causes.’ Thus, the “other” is not clearly mentioned but framed in opposition to everything Muhammad as a messenger stood for. Importantly, this other is characterised by complete nihilism. To conclude, “The Innocence of Muslims” gave ‘Alī Faḍl Allāh the opportunity to insist on the moral values embodied in Islam.

### ***Summary of Section 3.5***

All in all, these reactions suggest a division within the Islamist stream, as al-Asīr framed his reactions in opposition to Hezbollah, and the actors mentioned in Section 3.5.1.5 were well aware of these divisions. Although many seemed to be aware of a Coptic involvement, the actual responsibility for this video was displaced towards “Zionism,” and many reactions show a strong anti-Semitic stance. Unlike Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh, who made use of to this same diversion, in these examples there is no justification provided for it. Yet, these reactions can be understood as attempts to boost the idea of resistance against Israel in Lebanon.

### **3.5.2 Christian Organizations**

This section will analyse the various reactions of Christian organizations; the Maronite League, the Maronite General Council, the Orthodox Gathering, the Greek Catholic League, the Syriac League, the Gathering of Independent Christians, and the Catholic Media Centre. All these organizations, except for the last two, can be described as “sectarian,” as they defend the

political interests of their communities and are, to some extent, composed of political representatives of these communities.

The main questions regarding these organizations are related to the content and the relevance of these reactions.

### **The Maronite League**

The Maronite League (*al-rābiṭa al-mārūniyya*) is an important Maronite organization. It was founded in 1952 and currently comprises one thousand members, among them the former presidents of Lebanon, MPs, ministers, high-ranking officials, leaders in economic and social fields, and exceptional intellectuals.<sup>738</sup> It promotes a ‘free, independent, plural, and democratic Lebanon’ (ibid) as well as the preservation of ‘Lebanese heritage, Christian-Muslim dialogue, (and) the Arab culture in whose renaissance the Maronite have played such important a role.’<sup>739</sup> During the Civil War, the Maronite League attempted to reconcile the rival Maronite forces (Labévière 2009, 28) and once again played a significant role following the assassination attempt of Buṭrus Ḥarb in 2012.<sup>740</sup> Together with the Maronite General Council (*al-majlis al-āmm al-mārūnī*) and the Maronite Diaspora Institution, the Maronite League attempted to ease tensions between the Christian parties of the March 14 Alliance and those of the March 8 Alliance (ibid).

In a statement published on September 13, the Maronite League mentioned “The Innocence of Muslims” as its seventh point alongside several other subjects.<sup>741</sup> These subjects were the pope’s visit, the measures taken by the army, Patriarch al-Rā’ī’s visit to the al-Shūf, and the economy. The video was then condemned as ‘the American film,’ the ‘offense against the Islamic religion,’ ‘a suspicious action’ undertaken by (those with) ‘malicious hands and intentions’ aiming to ‘stir up strife’ and ‘damage relations between the religions.’

---

<sup>738</sup> Maronite League. الرابطة المارونية نبذة تاريخية. Doi: <http://maronite-league.org/about-us/> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>739</sup> Maronite League. تعمل الرابطة المارونية على تحقيق الأهداف التالية. Doi: <http://maronite-league.org/about-us/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%87%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%81/> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>740</sup> Al-Akhbar English. 11 July 2012. Lebanese Crisis (III): Christian Rapprochement or Just a Game? Doi: <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/lebanese-crisis-iii-christian-rapprochement-or-just-game> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>741</sup> Al-Rabita al-Marouniya. 13 September 2012. بيان صدر عن الرابطة المارونية البيان الآتي. Beyrouth Doi: <http://maronite-league.org/%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%AA/%D8%AA%D8%A8%D8%AF%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%B7%D8%A9-%D8%A5%D8%B1%D8%AA%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AD%D9%87%D8%A7-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%8A-%D8%A5/> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

## The Maronite General Council

Similarly, the Maronite General Council issued a declaration that was read by the former minister Wadī' Khāzin.<sup>742</sup> It accused the video of 'creating a conflict between Muslims and Christians.' "The Innocence of Muslims" was condemned as an 'offense against the Islamic religion' and as a 'self-repeating phenomenon.' The council called for a punishment on an international level similar to the one existing for Anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial.

## The Orthodox Gathering

A statement from the Orthodox Gathering (*al-liqā' al-urthūdhuksiyya*) was published on 20 September 2012 on *al-Tawhīd*.<sup>743</sup> It referred to the video by its title and also mentioned the French cartoons. Both were condemned for 'exposing the prophet of the Muslims, Muhammad.' It attributed the video to 'Zionism' which allegedly aimed to '[stir up] a battle between Christians and Muslims, especially after the successful visit of his Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI.' It demanded an international law prohibiting this kind of action. To a certain extent, this reaction reflects the ideas expressed by Īlī Firzī (Section 3.2.3).

The Orthodox Gathering (*al-liqā' al-urthūdhuksiyya*) was established by leading Greek Orthodox politicians, among them Īlī Firzī, to submit and promote a new and controversial electoral law (Noble 2013). The current electoral law dates back to 1960 and divided Lebanon into twenty-six electoral districts. The party or the candidate who reaches a relative majority, wins all the seats. In contrast, the "Orthodox Plan" proposed by the Orthodox Gathering would treat Lebanon as a single electoral district and compel voters to vote candidates of their own community.

## The Greek Catholic League

The Greek Catholic League's reaction (*rābiḩat al-rūm al-kāthūlīk*) to the video was expressed following a meeting that concluded with the issuing of a statement. In this statement, the league dwelt at length on the visit of Benedict XVI and the importance it held for Lebanon; a 'small country, but big in terms of the will of its sons.'<sup>744</sup> It stated the country would not surrender to 'religious extremism or strife,' but would continue on the path of 'love, openness,

---

<sup>742</sup> Al-Nahar. 19 September 2012. الغوغائية تحقق ما يريده مطلقو الفيلم. ,,تجمع العلماء": أميركا مسؤولة أولى عن الإساءة. Number 24853. Year 80. Page 5.

<sup>743</sup> Tawhid. 20 September 2012. سلسلة واسعة من المواقف لنواب ووزراء وسفراء وشخصيات وهيئات وأحزاب في لبنان تندد بالفيلم . والرسومات المسيئة للرسول .

<sup>744</sup> Noursat. 19 September 2012. رابطة الروم الكاثوليك استنكرت الفيلم المسيء الى المسلمين . :Doi . <http://www.noursat.tv/ar/news-details.php?cid=13&id=4038> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

coexistence, and mutual respect.’ Lastly, the statement briefly mentioned the video, referring to it as ‘the big offense,’ ‘the film “The Innocence of Muslims,”’ and ‘offending the Messenger and Islam.’ Greek Catholic League sees the video as aiming to ‘distort the image of Islam and Muslims,’ provoke them, and ‘create tensions between Muslims and Christians in the world and in the Middle East’ in the context of the pope’s visit.

The Greek Catholic League was founded in 1979<sup>745</sup> and views itself as ‘the daughter of the church;’ ‘guardians of the faith, guardians of the church, guardians of the right and truth, guardians of the historic Melkite path (*malsak*), guardians of society and of the nation.’<sup>746</sup> For the 33<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the League, the Greek Catholic Bishop of Beirut and Jbail, Kīrillus Buṭrus emphasized the non-sectarian position this community had always pursued, as it did not have a militia during the Civil War. He described this stance as follows: ‘We are for the nation first, then comes the community and then the church.’<sup>747</sup>

### The Syriac League

In his condemnation of “The Innocence of Muslims,” the president of the Syriac League, Ḥabīb Afrām, asserted that the belief in freedom ‘in all its dimensions does not mean the freedom to despise diversity and plurality or to be reckless with holy things of one or values.’<sup>748</sup> Compared to the other reactions in this section, Ḥabīb Afrām did not specify the object of his condemnation, but rather made a general ethical and moral statement.

Ḥabīb Afrām can be described as the spokesman of his community, the Syriac Orthodox Christians. He founded the Syriac League (*al-rābiṭa al-suriyāniyya*) in 1975 because, he stated, the community was in need of a representative body.<sup>749</sup> Yet this organization is ‘civilian, non-governmental, un-official, and not a party’ (ibid). In addition, he is also the president of the Union of Christian Leagues in Lebanon,<sup>750</sup> which was established in 1985 and comprises the Syriac Orthodox, the Syriac Catholic, the Chaldean, the Latin, and the Protestant communities (Corm 2003, 189).

---

<sup>745</sup> Ucip Liban. 24 April 2012. :Doi بمسترس في عشاء رابطة الروم الكاثوليك في الدكوانة: للمساواة بين كل الطوائف <http://www.ucipliban.org/%D8%A8%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%B3-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%B9%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%B7%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%AB%D9%88%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%83-%D9%81%D9%8A/> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>746</sup> Ucip Liban. 24 April 2012. بطرس في عشاء رابطة الروم الكاثوليك في الدكوانة: للمساواة بين كل الطوائف.

<sup>747</sup> Ucip Liban. 24 April 2012. بطرس في عشاء رابطة الروم الكاثوليك في الدكوانة: للمساواة بين كل الطوائف.

<sup>748</sup> Al-Liwa. 14 September 2012. ميقاتي والحريري وقيادات دينية وسياسية نددوا بالفيلم الأميركي المسيء للإسلام.. وبالغضب الدموي في الدفاع عن النبي.

<sup>749</sup> Al-Jazeera Documentary. المجتمعات الدينية – السريان. Doi: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rp5iq-fG0j0> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>750</sup> Afram, Habib. 23 October 2014. Lecture at the NEST. Beirut.

### **The Catholic Center for Media**

The Catholic Center for Media (*al-markaz al-kāthūlīkī li l-i'lān*), which was founded by the bishopric commission (Fleyfel 2013, 71), condemned the video, because ‘an offense against one religion is an offense against all religions.’<sup>751</sup> It called for the prohibition and removal of the “film.”

### **The Gathering of Independent Christians**

The president of The Gathering of Independent Christians (*liqā' al-masāhiyyīn al-mustaqlillīn*), Shādī Mas'ad, also issued a brief reaction to “The Innocence of Muslims.” This party was founded in January 2012 in Harissa (Ḥarīṣā) and is inspired by the ideas of Patriarch al-Rā'ī (POC 2012, 394). Shādī Mas'ad is also the former head of Fund of Expatriates.<sup>752</sup> In his reaction to “The Innocence of Muslims,” he rejected the pretence of freedom of speech and demanded the removal of the ‘film’ from internet search engines (ibid). However, he also condemned the ‘unreasonable reactions’ to the film, especially those in Tripoli (ibid).

### **Summary of Section 3.5.2**

Interestingly, fully half of the organizations referred to “The Innocence of Muslims” as an offense against Islam, thus distinguishing it from Christianity, and viewed it as aiming to cause strife between Christians and Muslims. Only the Orthodox Gathering attributed a clear background to the video – “Zionism” – and only Shādī Mas'ad condemned the violence which followed it.

### **3.5.3 Organizations**

This section comprises the reactions issued by the Front for Lebanese Building (*jabhat al-binā' al-lubnānī*), the National Democratic Gathering in Lebanon (*al-tajammu' al-waṭanī al-dīmūqrāṭī fī lubnān*), the Platform for National Unity (*minbar al-waḥda al-waṭaniyya*), and the Popular Lebanese Conference (*al-mu'tamar al-sha'bī al-lubnānī*).

The leader of the Front for Lebanese Building (*jabhat al-binā' al-lubnānī*), Zuhayr al-Khaṭīb, condemned what he referred to as ‘the dangerous crime in the production of the American film “The Innocence of Muslims”’ in a declaration published on September 18. He

---

<sup>751</sup> Al-Safir. 18 September 2012. استمرار الإدانات للإساءة إلى الرسول. Number 12286. Year 39. Page 4.

<sup>752</sup> الصندوق المركزي للمهجرين

Al-Anwar. 18 September 2012. مزيد من المواقف الشاجبة للفيلم المسيء للإسلام.

connected it to ‘worldwide Zionism,’<sup>753</sup> but he also strongly criticized the March 14 Alliance for defending and absolving the United States (of responsibility) (ibid). The organization’s slogan is “Arabism – Resistance – Development.”<sup>754</sup> *Jabhat al-binā’ al-lubnānī* considers that the Syrian regime is facing a ‘*takfīrī* attack’ as part of a project by Israel and ‘its partners’ to divide the Middle East.<sup>755</sup>

On September 17, the National Democratic Gathering in Lebanon (*al-tajammu’ al-waṭanī al-dīmūqrāṭī fī lubnān*) criticized the ‘American-Zionist film’ that aimed to ‘stir up strife between Christians and Muslims.’<sup>756</sup> It called for peaceful protests in Lebanon and for the respect for Muslim and Christian believers (ibid). This organization aims to establish a ‘civilian, democratic, modern state founded on the basis of citizenship and non-sectarianism.’<sup>757</sup> It also promotes resistance against the ‘Zionist enemy’ and unity and Arabism for Lebanon (ibid).

Under the leadership of former Prime Minister Selim Hoss (Salīm al-Ḥuṣṣ),<sup>758</sup> the Platform for National Unity (*minbar al-waḥda al-waṭaniyya*) issued a reaction to “The Innocence of Muslims” and the Charlie Hebdo cartoons during its weekly meeting.<sup>759</sup> The statement denounced France in particular for its double standards, as a country where, on the one hand, protests against the “The Innocence of Muslims” were forbidden, but where, on the other hand, the justice system ordered the French magazine *Closer* to remove its pictures of the topless Duchess of Cambridge (born Kate Middleton) because these pictures violated her privacy. The Platform for National Unity called on Arab and Lebanese leaders to issue a law through the UN and the Arab League forbidding this kind of offense on the international level.

Finally, the leader of the Popular Lebanese Conference (*al-mu’tamar al-sha’bī al-lubnānī*), Kamāl Shātīlā, condemned the video for its alleged aim of creating ‘Islamic-Christian

<sup>753</sup> Al-Tawhid. 18 September 2012. تواصل المواقف المنذدة والغضب في المجتمع المدني والسياسي في لبنان جراء بث الفيلم المسيء للاسلام .

<sup>754</sup> Jabhat al-Bina al-Lubnani. Doi: <http://jabhatalbina.org/new/> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>755</sup> Al-Ahed News. 4 February 2016. Doi: <http://www.alahednews.com.lb/fastnews/317584/%D8%AC%D8%A8%D9%87%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A-%D9%86%D8%AD%D9%8A%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%B4%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A-%D9%83%D9%85%D8%A7-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%85%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%AC%D9%87%D9%88%D8%AF%D9%87%D9%85-%D8%B6%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%83%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%B1#.VsXDwXnFbIV> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>756</sup> Al-Tawhid. 18 September 2012. تواصل المواقف المنذدة والغضب في المجتمع المدني والسياسي في لبنان جراء بث الفيلم المسيء للاسلام .

<sup>757</sup> Al-Tajamu al-Watani al-Dimuqrati. Doi: <http://www.pdal.org/ahdaf.html> (retrieved February 18, 2016).

<sup>758</sup> Salīm al-Ḥuṣṣ was prime minister several times: 1976-1980, 1987-1989, 1989-1990, and 1998-2000.

<sup>759</sup> Al-Safir. 26 September. حقوق الإنسان” تتبنى بيان بكركي الراض للاساءة. Number 12293. Year 39. Page 4.



strife in Egypt and the world.’<sup>760</sup> He also criticized those Islamic forces that pretended to carry the banner of Islam but failed to do so. In addition, he welcomed Benedict XVI’s visit and stated that ‘the preservation of the Christian existence in the Arab region and the intensification of its role in Arab life is an obligation every follower of Arabism (*‘urubiyyīn*) ought to strive for.’ During the Civil War, Kamāl Shātīlā belonged to the Nasserist forces and returned to Lebanon in 2000 after sixteen years in exile.<sup>761</sup>

### 3.6 Joint Christian-Muslim Reactions

This final section will look at the joint Christian-Muslim reactions on various levels and analyse the various means of accommodation.

#### 3.6.1 The “Spiritual Summit”

In late September 2012, on September 24, the heads of the various different religious communities gathered at the see of the Maronite Patriarchate in Bkerké to discuss several issues, including “The Innocence of Muslims.” Such “spiritual summits” (*al-qimam al-rūḥiyya*) are an example of the sustained efforts being undertaken by religious actors in Lebanon in recent years to foster good interreligious relations and understanding (Hager 2016). This spiritual summit in late September 2012 provided a very vivid illustration of these efforts.

Spiritual summits gathering together representatives of the churches and of the official Islamic institutions take place on a regular basis, and the September 2012 summit was the fourth since the election of Patriarch *mār* Bishāra Buṭrus al-Rā’ī.<sup>762</sup> Such summits are closely linked to the National Committee for Dialogue (*al-lajna al-waṭaniyya li l-ḥiwār*); the summit discussed a statement drafted by the committee and subsequently issued its official statement.

The permanent National Committee for Dialogue (*al-lajna al-waṭaniyya li l-ḥiwār*) was founded following the war between Israel and Lebanon in 1993, when the representatives of all religious communities came together in Bkerké on 2 August 1993 and decided to found a

---

<sup>760</sup> Al-Tawhid. 17 September 2012. موافق لعلماء ولجان وجمعيات واحزاب في لبنان منددة بالفيلم المسيء للاسلام.

<sup>761</sup> Al-Bawaba. 23 September 2000. عودة المعارض اللبناني كمال شاتيللا إلى بلاده بعد 16 عاما من الإبعاد القسري. Doi: <http://www.albawaba.com/ar/%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%AE%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86/%D8%B9%D9%88%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%B6-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A-%D9%83%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%8A%D9%84%D8%A7-%D8%A5%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%A8%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%87-%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%AF-16-%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%A7-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%B3%D8%B1%D9%8A> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>762</sup> Al-Safir. 25 September 2012. قمة يكركي الروحية تناشد الدولية اتخاذ اجراءات لمنع الانهيار الإقتصادي. Number 12292. Year 39. Page 2.

permanent committee which would represent all these communities (Mokrani 2009, 509-510). The see of Bkerké was chosen because of the Maronite patriarch's historical role in the independence of Lebanon (Mokrani 2009, 509). According to Hares Chehab (Ḥārith Shihāb), one of its two general secretaries, the committee should not to be defined as a forum of interreligious dialogue, but rather as an institution dealing with every-day matters.<sup>763</sup> It meets on a regular basis and issues recommendations but these are not necessarily implemented.<sup>764</sup> The other general secretary of the committee is Muḥammad Sammak.<sup>765</sup> Aside from the Maronite community, Ḥārith Shihāb also cooperates with the smaller Christian Communities; the Armenian Catholic, the Protestant, the Chaldean, the Syriac Catholic, the Syriac Orthodox, the Latin, the Assyrian, and the Coptic churches.<sup>766</sup> In addition, there is one representative for the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, one for the Greek Catholic Melkite Patriarchate and one for the Armenian Apostolic Catholics.<sup>767</sup> As for the Muslims, they are represented by one representative from the Sunni *dār al-fatwā*, Muḥammad Sammak; one representative from the Higher Islamic Shia Council and one representative from the Druze *shaykh al-'aql*.<sup>768</sup> The Alawi sect does not have a separate representative. In addition, Ḥārith Shihāb, a lawyer by training, is the former head of the Maronite League and the current head of the Emir Shihāb family in Lebanon.<sup>769</sup>

The media reported the exact procedures in this summit in depth; from the drafting of a statement in the National Committee to the issuing of a common position by the spiritual summit. On 24 September 2012, *al-Nahār* reported that a draft statement was discussed by the representatives in the National Committee and the two secretary-generals, Ḥārith Shihāb and Muḥammad Sammak.<sup>770</sup> Subsequently, on September 23, Shihāb submitted this draft to

<sup>763</sup> Chehab, Hares. 9 December 2014. Personal Interview. Beirut.

<sup>764</sup> Islamic-Christian National Dialogue Committee. Emir Hares Chakib Chehab. Doi: <http://chrislam.org/members.html> (retrieved October 22, 2015).

<sup>765</sup> Muḥammad Sammak is a key actor in the interreligious dialogue. He was one of the signatories of the document "A Common Word Between Us and You" (see Chapter 5) and is an advisor to the *mufī* of Lebanon. In addition, he is a board member of the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue in Vienna.

<sup>766</sup> Le Comité National Islamo-Chrétien pour le Dialogue. Formation et Action du Comité du Dialogue. Doi: <http://chrislam.org/bckground.html> (retrieved October 22, 2015).

<sup>767</sup> Le Comité National Islamo-Chrétien pour le Dialogue. Formation et Action du Comité du Dialogue. Doi: <http://chrislam.org/bckground.html> (retrieved October 22, 2015).

<sup>768</sup> Le Comité National Islamo-Chrétien pour le Dialogue. Formation et Action du Comité du Dialogue. Doi: <http://chrislam.org/bckground.html> (retrieved October 22, 2016).

<sup>769</sup> Islamic-Christian National Dialogue Committee. Emir Hares Chakib Chehab. Doi: <http://chrislam.org/members.html> (retrieved October 22, 2015).

<sup>770</sup> Al-Nahar. 24 September 2012. عناوين في القمة الروحية اليوم و الحضور مكتمل إسلامياً 3. Number 24857. Year 80. Page 2. This source is quoted in this section as "al-Nahar 24 September 2012."

Patriarch al-Rā'ī<sup>771</sup> who spoke via a telephone call with the *mufīī*, Rashīd Qabbānī (al-Nahar 24 September 2012). The spiritual summit took place on September 24 and began with Hārith Shihāb reading the draft statement (al-Safir 25 September 2012) followed by several religious leaders delivering speeches. Overall, the media reported that the summit was very calm and harmonious and all leaders were in complete agreement (al-Safir 25 September 2012). There were only some minor changes made to the drafted statement; these were 'linguistic' in nature and did not change the 'essence' of the document (al-Safir 25 September 2012). These changes reflect a tremendous effort at rapprochement between the communities. For instance, 'Abd al-Amīr Qabalān, the vice-president of the Higher Islamic Shia Council, suggested adding a paragraph on the visit of Benedict XVI thanking him for his visit, adding that 'Israel is the enemy of all [...] because Lebanon is the place where all confessions meet and form partnerships' and he went on to describe Bkerké as 'place of goodness and blessing' (al-Safir 25 September 2012). Similarly, in his speech Rashīd Qabbānī emphasized the importance of this visit and underlined his solidarity with the Christians: 'side by side with them in all their demands. We Muslims have to stand with Christians so that our rights and theirs are equal.'<sup>772</sup> Furthermore, he suggested changing the condemnation of the offense against Islam to 'the continued and repeated offense on Lady Mary and the prophet 'Īsā [underlined by the author]' and also proposed establishing a committee to criminalize such offenses. In addition, the president of the Islamic Alawi Council, *shaykh* Asad 'Āsī, praised Benedict XVI's visit and Qabbānī's letter to the pope (al-Safir 25 September 2012). On the Christian side, Patriarch al-Rā'ī also made considerable efforts to enable mutual understanding. In his speech, he asserted that the 'offense' against Muhammad was an 'offense against Muslims and Christians.'<sup>773</sup> In addition, in a highly symbolic gesture, he allowed the Muslim representatives and delegations to pray in another room (Shihāb 2014).

Finally, the summit adopted the following position on the video "The Innocence of Muslims":

Secondly, the condemnation of the film "The Innocence of Muslims" offending Islam, its prophet and its messenger Muhammad [underlined by the author]. The film is a lie, a defamation and a dishonesty. They [the representatives] have already condemned it individually; they insist

<sup>771</sup> Al-Safir. 25 September 2012. قمة بركي الروحية تناشد الدولية اتخاذ اجراءات لمنع الانهيار الاقتصادي. Number 12292. Year 39. Page 2. This source is quoted in this section as "al-Safir 25 September 2012."

<sup>772</sup> Al-Anwar. 25 September 2012. القمة المسيحية - الاسلامية في بركي: ارتياح لزيارة البابا التاريخية. Number 18150. Year :Doi .53http://www.archive.alanwar.com/article.php?articleID=173244&issuedate=20120925 (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>773</sup> Aztag Arabic. 25 September 2012. الكاثوليكوس آرام الأول يحضر القمة الروحية المسيحية -الاسلامية في بركي ويقول: "المسيحية والاسلام تعايشتا في الشرق الأوسط لقرون طويلة".

that the violation of the sanctity of any religion is a violation of the sanctity of all religions. Likewise, they condemn the violent reactions that resulted in innocent victims and offended Christians and the role of worship in some countries. They appeal to the United Nations, the Security Council, the League of Arab States and to other organizations and institutions concerned to take decisions that are made without the right to exploit the right of freedom of speech, without offending religions and their holy symbols.<sup>774</sup>

Thus the statement condemned both the “offense” against Islam and the violent and anti-Christian reactions, probably in reference to Egypt. In addition, it decided on the establishment of a committee of specialised legal experts to work on a law forbidding this. It also called on the National Committee to establish the follow-up mechanisms necessary for the implementation of the spiritual summit’s recommendations. The religious representatives give a justification for these demands; common theological foundations:

The call to insist on the unity of faith in God and the working on His commandments, on His spiritual and moral values in personal, family and social life, as well as on the place and role of the human being as under God’s management.<sup>775</sup>

Examining the representatives and the participants, it seems that all the communities appear to have been present except for the Greek Catholic Melkite Church. The Patriarch initially wanted to send a deputy, ‘Iṣām Yūḥannā Darwīsh, but he was eventually unable to attend the summit (al-Safir 25 September 2012). According to the Maronite Patriarchate’s website, the following people participated:

- *mār* Bishāra Buṭrus al-Rā’ī, Maronite patriarch;
- *shaykh* Muḥammad Rashīd Qabbānī, *muftī* of Lebanon;
- *imām shaykh* ‘Abd al-Amīr Qabalān, vice-president of the High Islamic Shia Council;
- *shaykh* ‘aql Na’īm Ḥasan, spiritual leader of the Druze;
- *shaykh* Āssad ‘Āṣī, president of the Islamic Alawi Council;
- Ārām I. Kīshiyān, Catholicos of the Armenian Apostolic Church of Cilicia;
- *mār* Ighnāṭiyūs Yūsif III. Yūnān, patriarch of the Syriac Catholic Church;
- Reverend Dr. Salīm Ṣayhyūnī, president of the Evangelical Synod in Lebanon and Syria;

---

<sup>774</sup> Bkerki. 24 September 2012. بيان القمة الروحية بركك - الثني . Doi: [http://www.bkerkelb.org/arabic/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1714:-----24--2012-&catid=263:2011-09-07-08-04-38&Itemid=66](http://www.bkerkelb.org/arabic/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1714:-----24--2012-&catid=263:2011-09-07-08-04-38&Itemid=66) (retrieved December 9, 2013).

This source is to be found in Attached Documents 1.

<sup>775</sup> Bkerki. 24 September 2012. بيان القمة الروحية بركك - الثني .

- Bishop Ilyās ‘Awdih, Greek Orthodox metropolitan bishop of Beirut;
- Bishop Būlus Daḥdah, Roman Catholic apostolic vicar of Beirut;
- Mīshāl Qaṣarjī, patriarchal representative of the Chaldean Church, and Chaldean Bishop in Lebanon;
- George Ṣalībā, representative of the Syriac Orthodox patriarch;
- *Monsignor* Mūrādiyān, representative of the Armenian Catholic Patriarch;
- *al-arshimandrīt* Rūyīs, introduced by the patriarchate’s website as the representative of the Coptic Catholic Church. In fact, Rūyīs al-Awrushalaymī is actually the representative of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Lebanon and Syria;<sup>776</sup>
- *al-arshimandrīt* ‘Imānū’īl Yūḥannā, representative of the Assyrian Church.<sup>777</sup>

Salīm Ṣayhyūnī was president of the Evangelical Synod in Lebanon and Syria for fifty-six years.<sup>778</sup> In addition, the Syriac Catholic Patriarch, Ighnāṭiyūs Yūsif III Yūnān, also participated in the spiritual summit, although the Holy Synod of the Syrian Catholic Church took place at the same time (al-Nahar 24 September 2012). All in all, *al-Safir* listed more than thirty-five clerics (al-Safir 25 September 2012). Additionally, there were also members of the National Committee for Dialogue, such as Ḥārith Shihāb, Kamīl Mūsā, Mīshāl ‘Abd, as well as the coordinator of relations between the religions in Bkerké, Hādī Ḍaw, another representative of the Higher Islamic Shia Council, Nazīh Jmūl, Patrik Marrād for the Armenian Catholic Church, and an entire Catholic delegation.<sup>779</sup>

Following the spiritual summit, the Parliamentary Committee for Human Rights adopted the statement and issued another document in which it added Article 10 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,<sup>780</sup> as well as Article 4 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.<sup>781</sup> Its president, Mīshāl

<sup>776</sup> Al-Nahar. 29 September 2010. سينودس الكنيسة الكاثوليكية الخاص من أجل الشرق الأوسط. ممثلون من 5 كنائس غير كاثوليكية. سجّلوا ملاحظات السينودي وعبروا عن آمالهم Number 24177. Year 77. Page 13.

<sup>777</sup> Bkerki. 24 September 2012. 2012 ايلول 24 بيان القمة الروحية بركك - الثاني .

<sup>778</sup> Al-Nahar. 30 December 2012. السينودس الإنجيلي كرم القس صيهوني و كلمات نوهت ب56 عاماً خدمة. Number 24262. Year 80. Page 5 .

<sup>779</sup> Aztag Arabic. 25 September 2012. الكاثوليكوس آرام الأول يحضر القمة الروحية المسيحية -الاسلامية في برككي ويقول: . “المسيحية والاسلام تعايشتا في الشرق الأوسط لقرون طويلة” .

<sup>780</sup> “Article 10. 1. All persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person. 2. (a) Accused persons shall, save in exceptional circumstances, be segregated from convicted persons and shall be subject to separate treatment appropriate to their status as unconvicted persons [...]” (United Nations Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner. 16 December 1966. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Doi: <http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>781</sup> “Article 4 states: Parties condemn all propaganda and all organizations which are based on ideas or theories of superiority of one race or group of persons of one colour or ethnic origin, or which attempt to justify or promote racial hatred and discrimination in any form, and undertake to adopt immediate and positive measures designed to eradicate all incitement to, or acts of, such discrimination and, to this end, with due regard to the

‘Abd, considered Lebanon the primary victim of ‘attacks on religions’ because of its religious heterogeneity.<sup>782</sup>

This spiritual summit vividly demonstrated the efforts made at rapprochement and mutual understanding. At the same time, there was a clear distinction made between what is Islamic and what is Christian which was expressed through the use of the respective terminology.

### 2.6.2 Christian-Muslim Reactions in Beirut

This section covers the gatherings organized by *tajammu ‘al-‘ulamā’ al-muslimīn* which brought high-ranking religious figures together, and also the (all-)female sit-in staged by members of the March 8 Alliance.

After the spiritual summit, *tajammu ‘al-‘ulamā’ al-muslimīn*<sup>783</sup> invited several Islamic and Christian representatives to an “Islamic-Christian consultative meeting” to discuss the statement.<sup>784</sup> These representatives were Father Qusṭanṭīn Naṣār, Greek Orthodox; Father Mikardīsh Kīshīshiyān, Armenian Apostolic; Father Antoine Ḍaw, Maronite; *shaykh* Muḥammad ‘Alī al-Miqdād, representative of the Higher Islamic Shia Council; *shaykh* Nazīh al-‘Arīḏī, representative of the Druze *shaykh al-‘aql*; *shaykh* Ghāzī Ḥinīna, Māhir Mazhar and Ḥusayn Ghibrīs.<sup>785</sup> In a common statement in which ‘we join our voices to those of the free and the noble’ (al-Nahar 27 September 2012), the participants condemned the offense and asserted that the Coptic Orthodox Church was not responsible for this video (Tajamo 26 September 2012). They praised the peaceful protests in Lebanon (Tajamo 26 September 2012), thus maintaining silence surrounding the events in Tripoli, only referring to the protests organized

---

principles embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the rights expressly set forth in article 5 of this Convention, inter alia:

- (a) Shall declare an offence punishable by law all dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred, incitement to racial discrimination, as well as all acts of violence or incitement to such acts against any race or group of persons of another colour or ethnic origin, and also the provision of any assistance to racist activities, including the financing thereof;
- (b) Shall declare illegal and prohibit organizations, and also organized and all other propaganda activities, which promote and incite racial discrimination, and shall recognize participation in such organizations or activities as an offence punishable by law;
- (c) Shall not permit public authorities or public institutions, national or local, to promote or incite racial discrimination.” United Nations Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner. 21 December 1965. International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

Doi: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CERD.aspx> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>782</sup> Al-Safir. 26 September. حقوق الإنسان” تتبنى بيان بكركي الرفض للإساءة. Number 12293. Year 39. Page 4.

<sup>783</sup> For information on this organization see Section 3.5.1.5

<sup>784</sup> Tajamo. 26 September 2012. لقاء تشاوري اسلامي مسيحي للبحث في الإساءة للرسول محمد (ص) Doi: <http://tajamo.net/tajamon/acts/124> (retrieved April 22, 2014).

This source is quoted in this section as “Tajamo 26 September 2012.”

<sup>785</sup> Al-Nahar. 27 September. لقاء تشاوري “إسلامي ومسيحي: ليتبع الفاتيكان ملف الإساءة الى النبي. Number 24861. Year 80. Page 5. This source is quoted in this section as “al-Nahar 27 September 2012.”

by Hezbollah and Amal. In addition, they thanked Benedict XVI, whom they described as the ‘highest authority in the world for Christians’ (Tajamo 26 September 2012), Al-Azhar and, interestingly, Qom and Najaf for their positions on “The Innocence of Muslims” (al-Nahar 27 September 2012). It is interesting that the cities of Qom and Najaf were established as two additional sources of authority in Islam. The Catholic pope’s visit was described as an important opportunity for the ‘religious, Lebanese and local woven fabric (*nasāj*)’ (Tajamo 26 September 2012). In addition, the gathering supported the establishment of a committee to issue a law forbidding such ‘offenses’ and supported the demands of the spiritual summit (al-Nahar 27 September 2012).

On September 28 or 29, *al-Nahār* reported on a female sit-in protesting against “The Innocence of Muslims” that took place in downtown Beirut in front of the “UN-ESCWA” building under the slogan “Muslims and Christians defend the dignity of the prophets and the holy items (*muqaddasāt*).”<sup>786</sup> Leading female members of Hezbollah, the Amal Movement, the Marada Movement,<sup>787</sup> Islamic Jihad, *ḥizb aḥīd al-‘arabī*, and other Islamist movements all delivered speeches at this sit-in. This very heterogeneous union reflected the strategic partnerships within the March 8 Alliance.

As the Marada Movement had not officially reacted to “The Innocence of Muslims,” Mīrnā Zukhriyā, the movement’s representative for female issues, said in her speech that she represented Marada’s official position and that ‘fanaticism is a manifestation of ignorance.’ Shahnāz Mallāḥ, leader of the Office for Female Affairs in the Amal Movement, stated ‘we Muslims and Christians, followers of Mūsā and ‘Īsā,’ were against the ‘followers of Zionism.’ The Hezbollah’s representative, Khadīja Sulūm, quoted Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh stating that the defense of Muhammad is the defense of ‘al-Aqṣā, all prophets, all religions and all revealed books.’ Similarly, the representative of *ḥizb al-tawḥīd al-‘arabī*, Fadā Wahhāb Abū Ḍarghīm, asserted that ‘Zionist thought’ aimed to cause ‘events of rifts between the [...] followers of the revealed religions.’ In contrast, Umm Ashraf, a member of the female committee of Islamic Jihad, considered the video to be the ‘true face of the West uncovered’ and described Muhammad as ‘our Lord Muhammad [who] enlightened the world with justice, mercy, ethics,

<sup>786</sup> Al-Anwar. 29 September 2012. تحت شعار مسلمون ومسيحيون دفاعاً عن كرامة الأنبياء والمقدسات. اعتصام نسائي في وسط بيروت تنديداً بالفيلم المسيء. Number 18154. Year 53. Doi: <http://www.archive.alanwar.com/article.php?articleID=173782&issuedate=20120929> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>787</sup> During the Lebanese Civil War, the Marada movement strongly opposed the Lebanese Forces and the Kataeb – nowadays part of the March 14 Alliance – that had entered into an alliance with Israel (Labévière 2009, 26). The Marada movement opposed this alliance and insisted on its belonging to the Arab world. The leader of the Marada Movement, Tony Frangié, whose family was killed by the Lebanese Forces in 1978, joined Michel Aoun’s agreement with Hezbollah (Labévière 2009, 284-285).

and values.’ In addition, in her speech, Jamāl Harmiz Ghubrayyil lamented the production of the film with the words ‘as if what happens in the region is not enough, as if the control of terror were not enough...’ and Umm Muḥammad al-Mulūk, representing the organization *al-du‘āt* condemned the video for aiming to cause ‘a battle between Muslims and Christians.’

### 3.6.3 Christian-Muslim Reactions in the South

This section describes the gatherings organized by the (Shia) *dār al-ja‘farī* in Tyr, the march in Nabatieh led by the head of a monastery, and a conference held in the district of Hasbaya.

#### Tyre

On 22 September 2012, the *dār al-ja‘farī* in Tyre organized a cross-sectarian conference to protest against “The Innocence of Muslims.” Along with the Shia *mufī* of Tyre and Jabal ‘Āmil, *shaykh* Ḥasan ‘Abd Allāh, this event also gathered the Maronite bishop of Tyre, Shukr Allāh Nabīl al-Ḥājī and the Sunni *mufī* of Tyre and its surroundings, *shaykh* Midrār al-Ḥabāl.<sup>788</sup> In his speech, Ḥasan ‘Abd Allāh described “The Innocence of Muslims” as an attack on all religions (ibid). Similarly, the Maronite bishop considered the video an ‘offense’ and a ‘violation’ aiming to sow ‘strife between Muslims and Christians.’<sup>789</sup> He also praised the condemnations issued by Islamic and Christian institutions (ibid).

#### Nabatieh

On September 24, *al-Liwā’* reported on a joint Christian-Muslim reaction initiated by the head of the Maronite monastery of Saint Anthony (*mār* Anṭūniyūs), Father Dr. Bāsīl Bāsīl, in Nabatieh (Nabaṭīya) in southern Lebanon.<sup>790</sup> The abbot led a march comprising members of the monastery and the parish and also visited several Islamic institutions in the city. The Christian delegation reportedly stated that ‘any offense against Islam is an offense against Christianity, and aims at discord’ they would not permit. Subsequently, they went to Kafr Raman, met the president of the district, Kamāl Ghabrīs, and its Islamic leader, Ghālīb Ḍāhir, and joined the protest organized by the district. During this protest, Father Bāsīl delivered a speech in which he asserted that ‘every violation of the noble Quran is a violation of the holy Gospel and any holy book.’ The newspaper seemed to suggest that the Maronite abbot played a leading role in this Christian-Muslim reaction.

<sup>788</sup> Al-Safir. 22 September 2012. قباني يدعو إلى سن قانون دولي يمنع إهانة الدين. Number 12290. Year 39. Page 4.

<sup>789</sup> Al-Hayat. 22 September 2012. غضب من بيروت وصيدا إلى بعلبك نصرة للرسول. Number 18068. Page 7.

<sup>790</sup> Al-Liwa. 24 September 2012. إساءته لظهور الإسلام؟ أين حلفاء عون من الرد على.



## Hasbaya

The city and administrative entity (*qaḍā'*) of Hasbaya is located in the Nabatieh province, on Mount Hermon. It has suffered greatly under Israeli occupation and is still a very heterogeneous area. For instance, the secretary general of the SSNP, As'ad Ḥardān is an MP for the Greek Orthodox community. Hasbaya is one of the five main areas where Druze live in Lebanon (Dana 2003, 90).

On 2 October 2012, the Committee of the Citizens of Arkoub organized a conference in the Islamic center of Hasbaya<sup>791</sup> with the title “The Unity of the Community (*umma*) is our Weapon against the Zionist-American Conspiracy.”<sup>792</sup> Its participants were Muḥammad Ḥamdān, the president of the committee; the MPs of the region; Walīd al-Ghafūr, the *qā'im maqām*; 'Abd al-Ḥusayn al-'Abd Allāh, the *mufīī ja'farī* of Marjayoun (Mardsch 'Uyūn); *archimandrite* Mīshāl Abū Ḥaydar (representing the Greek Orthodox bishop of Sidon, Tyr and Marjayoun, Kafūrī (al-Safir 4 October 2012); Father Daniel Aoueyki; Father Ḥanna Khoury; *shaykh* Ḥasan Shujā' (USJ 2014, 263) and *shaykh* Jihād Ḥamad, representing *mufīī* Ḥasan Dallī (al-Safir 4 October 2012). It can be assumed that the priests Father Daniel Aoueyki and Father Ḥanna Khoury represented the Maronite and/or the Greek Catholic Melkite community, and that *shaykh* Jihād Ḥamad is a Sunni or Druze representative.

In his speech, Muḥammad Ḥamdān, the president of the Committee of the Citizens of Arkoub, condemned the video as an ‘offense and exposure of Islam and Christianity,’ as ‘sources of strife (*fiṭna*), that displayed an ‘intellectual, philosophical, and strategic background that the Zionist-American alliance has’ (al-Safir 4 October 2012). The final statement condemned the video as ‘an American-Zionist attack on Islam which represents intellectual terror that spurs hate, wars, and conflicts between people’ (ibid). In addition, it criticized some governments and ‘private Arab institutions’ for their quick apology to the US (USJ 2014, 263).

These three joint Christian-Muslim reactions in Tyre, Nabatieh and Hasbaya (Arkoub) represented both higher-ranking and local initiatives. Unlike the protests organized by Hezbollah and the Amal Movement in Bint Jbail and Tyre, these initiatives showed that Christians played an equal role at the very least. Interestingly, the conference in Hasbaya insisted on the Zionist background of the video.

---

<sup>791</sup> Institut d'Études Islamo-Chrétiennes, Université Saint-Joseph. 2014. Déclarations communes islamo-chrétiennes. “Études et documents islamo-chrétiens,” Number 16, Beirut, Page 263.

This source is quoted in this section as “USJ 2014, 263.”

<sup>792</sup> Al-Safir. 4 October 2012. لقاء إسلامي مسيحي ضد العنصرية. Number 12300. Year 39. Page 5.

In this section, this source is quoted as “al-Safir 4 October 2012.”

### 3.6.4 Christian-Muslim Reactions in the 'Akkār Province

In the context of the 'Akkār province, two joint Christian-Muslim conferences took place. This northern region is one of the poorest regions in Lebanon; it has a poverty rate of 63.3%, compared to the (mainly Christian) districts of Koura, Zghorta, Bsharre and Batroun in Mount Lebanon, where the poverty rate is 24.7% (Mouchref 2008, 1). In addition, 31% to 74% of the people over the age of ten are illiterate (Verdeil, Faour, Velut 2007, 144). In 2003 the province of 'Akkār was created as a separate administrative entity from Tripoli in order to improve access to government services (Verdeil, Faour, Velut 2007, 25). Yet this had little impact. One of the reasons for the very high level of poverty was the increasing isolation of the region experienced throughout its history; firstly, with the creation of the state of Lebanon, the region lost its connection to the wider Syrian hinterland, and during the Civil War it was cut off from other parts of Lebanon. Prior to the war in Syria, the region relied mostly on the business of smuggling diesel, gas, cigarettes, tobacco, and food from Syria into Lebanon (Mouchref 2008, 18). Since the outbreak of the war in Syria, the province has had to come to terms with the growing influx of Syrian refugees. Overall, the problems the city of Tripoli faces are the same as those faced by 'Akkār, but on a lower level. Unlike other regions or cities in Lebanon, 'Akkār does not have a *za'im*, a leader (Rougier 2011, 10). However, a number of political forces have tried to fill this gap. In particular, the Future Movement, which won the largest amount of seats at the parliamentary elections in 2005 (Verdeil, Faour, Velut 2007, 19), has used the region as a human reservoir.<sup>793</sup> Moreover, the region has provided the Lebanese army with a high level of casualties and has faced high rates of migration.<sup>794</sup> Sunni political groups like the Future Movement and aspiring Sunni leaders like *shaykh* Aḥmad al-Asīr have strongly used the region that is mainly Sunni but also contains a high number of Christians and Alawis. There are a large number of Maronite, Greek Orthodox and a lower number of Melkite Christians in several districts, as well as an important proportion of Alawi in others (Verdeil, Faour, Velut 2007, 86). In an angry letter to Patriarch al-Rā'ī, Joseph Abdallah, university professor and brother of the imprisoned George Abdallah, affirmed the strong anti-sectarian stance of this region in general and criticized the Maronite Patriarchate for its lack of support of George Abdallah's case and its causing the people to suffer an 'intellectual and political

---

<sup>793</sup> Al-Akhbar English. 15 May 2012. Tripoli, North Lebanon: The Forgotten City. Doi: <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/tripoli-north-lebanon-forgotten-city> (retrieved May 17, 2016). Al-Akhbar, however, has overall been highly critical of the Future Movement and the March 14 Alliance.

<sup>794</sup> Al-Safir. 13 September 2011. 63% من العكاريين محرومون من التعليم ... و مثلهم تحت خط الفقر. Number 11985. Page 5.

blockade by the Maronite church' as well as 'persecution, murder, and displacement at the hands of sectarian Christian fractions.'<sup>795</sup>

There were two Christian-Muslim conferences, one in Bebnine and one in Halba.

### **Bebnine**

The first Christian-Muslim conference in 'Akkār took place in the Bebnine, a densely populated village (Moucharf 2008, 9) and bore the title "For the Support and the Loyalty of the Messenger of God." There are three different, slightly conflicting reports dealing with this event. These reports are drawn from *al-Tawhīd*,<sup>796</sup> *al-Nahār*<sup>797</sup> and an article on the Future Movement's website.<sup>798</sup> According to *al-Tawhīd*, the conference was organised by the village's president, Kafāḥ Kassār, and brought together political and religious leaders from the region, like the Greek Orthodox bishop, Bāsilyūs Maṣṣūr, and Ilyās Jirjis, a representative of the Maronite bishop, George Bū Jūda (al-Tawhid 22 September 2012). In addition to these figures, according to *al-Nahār*, several heads of districts and towns in 'Akkār and the Sunni *mufī* of northern Lebanon, Usama al-Rifā'ī,<sup>799</sup> participated in the conference (al-Nahar 22 September 2012). In contrast, aside from all these figures, the Future Movement's website reported the participation of several representatives of the March 14 Alliance; the MPs of the Future Bloc, Riyāḍ Raḥāl, Mu'īn al-Mir'ibī, Khālid Zahramān, Khuḍr Ḥabīb, Niḍāl Ṭu'ma, Qāsim 'Abd al-'Azīz, Khāzīm al-Khayr, the former MPs Muṣṭafā Hāshim and Wajīh al-Ba'rīnī; a member of the Future Movement's political bureau, Muḥammad al-Marrād; the general coordinator of the Future Movement in 'Akkār, Khālid Ṭah; the coordinator of the Lebanese Forces in 'Akkār, Nabīl Sarkīs; and a member of *al-jamā'a al-islāmiyya*, Muḥammad Hawshar (al-Mustaqbal 23 September 2012). These people were not mentioned at all on *al-Tawhīd*, and *al-Nahār* only mentioned that 'political figures' participated in the conference. As a result, it is when reading this latter report that the conference becomes a Christian-Muslim reaction under the leadership of the March 14 Alliance.

---

<sup>795</sup> Abdallah, Joseph. 12 August 2012. A Letter to the Patriarch: Do the Resistance Fighters of Akkar Not Deserve Tributes? *Al-Akhbar English*. Doi: <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/letter-patriarch-do-resistance-fighters-akkar-not-deserve-tributes> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

<sup>796</sup> Al-Tawhid. 22 September 2012. تواصل المواقف المستتكرة للإساءة الغربية للإسلام في لبنان: أئمة المساجد وقوى واحزاب. This source is quoted in this section as "al-Tawhid 22 September 2012."

<sup>797</sup> Al-Nahar. 22 September 2012. لقاء عكاري جمع قيادات سياسية ودينية: الفيلم "إساءة إلى المسيحيين والمسلمين". Number 24856. Year 80. Page 6. This source is quoted in this section as "al-Nahar 22 September 2012."

<sup>798</sup> Al-Mustaqbal. 23 September 2012. مزيد من المسيرات والمواقف المنددة بالتطاول على الإسلام. Doi:

<http://almustaqbal.com/v4/Article.aspx?Type=np&Articleid=539975> (retrieved May 17, 2016). This source is

quoted in this section as "al-Mustaqbal 23 September 2012."

<sup>799</sup> The latter was then in conflict with Rashīd Qabbānī who forbade al-Rifā'ī from issuing *fatwā*. In Al-Akhbar English. 16 August 2012. Lebanon's Mufti: The Future Movement Wants My Turban.

Bishop Bāsīlyūs Maṣūr was born in Latakia (al-Lādhiqīyah) in Syria in 1962, studied at the University of Balamand, earned a doctorate from the University of Thessaloniki and was named bishop of ‘Akkār by the Holy Synod in 2008 (POC 2008, 350) In his speech delivered at this conference and quoted by *al-Tawhīd*, the bishop condemned the video: ‘the film offended all religions, [both] Christianity and Islam. This is an intellectual crime,’ committed by ‘those who hate and who know neither God nor His word. They lost their humanity after they lost their faith’ (al-Tawhid 22 September 2012). Thus, he remained very vague on the background to the film and insisted instead on the unity between Christians and Muslims: ‘we are the sons of God, together on this earth.’ To some extent, Bāsīlyūs Maṣūr’s speech suggests both a criticism of the violence and an “Islamization of Christianity:” ‘yet it is our right to be angry when someone offends our prophets and our messengers [underlined by the author], but we have to be civilized in our behavior.’ This expression is either to be understood as a consequent display of solidarity with Muslims or as an example of a use of Islamic terminology when referring to Jesus Christ.

According to *al-Nahār*, the heads of the districts and towns and *muftī* al-Rifā‘ī emphasized the unity between Christians and Muslims; Kafāḥ Kassār, the mayor of Bebnine insisted on the ‘importance of the unity of the spiritual family in countering threats,’ and al-Rifā‘ī insisted on the importance of unity between all ‘spiritual Christians and Islamic families.’ ‘Abduh Makhūl ‘Abduh, president of the Kobayat district (al-Qubayāt) asserted the ‘Muslims[’] and their Christian brothers[’] right to be angry at the offense against their prophets and their messengers’ (al-Nahar 22 September 2012). Other mayors understood the video as targeting the Arabs; Muḥammad ‘Alī Ḥusayn, president of the Union of the Districts of the Plain of ‘Akkār, considered its aim to be the spreading of ‘disunion and strife (*futun*)’ in ‘our Arabic and Islamic homelands (*awṭān*),’ and Sajī‘ ‘Aṭṭīyya, president of the Union of Districts of al-Jūma, regarded it as a war against ‘us as Arabs,’ adding that since the Declaration of Balfour ‘we as Christians have felt that the heinous offense has targeted us’ (ibid). Finally, some, including Sajī‘ ‘Aṭṭīyya, implied a “Jewish/Zionist” background to the video (ibid). ‘Abduh Makhūl ‘Abduh condemned the video as attempts by the ‘Jews’ to sow a ‘culture of fear’ (ibid). Similarly, Aḥmad al-Mīr, president of the Union of Districts of Litoral al-Qayṭa‘ and its Areas, asserted that ‘the Islamic-Christian rapprochement has angered the Zionist gang (*aṣāba*)’ and has resulted in ‘racist strife (*futun*)’, like the ‘film’ “The Innocence of Muslims” (ibid).

In comparison, the Future Movement’s website quoted slightly different positions. It seemed that the political representatives did not give speeches, except for the state

representatives and Bishop Maṣṣūr. For instance, Aḥmad al-Mīr is only quoted as calling on the Lebanese government to take measures against such ‘offenses’ on an international level (al-Mustaḡbal 23 September 2012). Usama al-Rifāʿī is quoted as condemning the violent reactions.

### Halba

On September 22, *al-Tawḥīd* reported on a joint Christian-Muslim conference in Halba, in ‘Akkār with the title “This is the Noble Verse: We do not differentiate between His Messengers.”<sup>800</sup> Representatives of several communities participated in this conference; Father Nāyif Iṣṭifān representing of Bishop Bāsīlyūs Maṣṣūr; former MP Wajīh al-Baʿrīnī; *shaykh* Dr. Muḥammad al-Ḥasan, representing the president of Islamic endowments in ‘Akkār, and *shaykh* ‘Ilm al-Dīn Ḥamdān, a representative of the Islamic Alawi Council; Asʿad al-Suḥrānī, presented as the representative for religious affairs at this conference, as well as leaders of the districts, and religious, political, economic, cultural, and pedagogic activists. This is the only case, except for the spiritual summit, in which a representative of the Alawis participated. In his introductory speech to the conference, Asʿad al-Suḥrānī explained that the purpose of the conference was to harshly condemn ‘the film “The Innocence of Muslims” and the cartoons offending the prophet Muhammad and Islam’ produced by ‘Zionist-American circles.’ This led him to mention the situation in the Palestinian Territories: ‘The rape of Palestine, the Judaization of Jerusalem and of the Islamic and Christian holy things,’ as well as the provoking of ‘sectarian conflicts and strife (*fitna*) between Muslims and Christians in order to implement the plan of the Greater Middle East.’ He also quoted the Quran: ‘And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds’ (21:107); ‘And do not insult those they invoke other than Allah, lest they insult Allah in enmity without knowledge’ (6:108). He conceded that it was a duty for the ‘believers’ to react, but by means of ‘the peaceful, democratic reaction far away from violence and any form of destruction.’ In addition, he called on the Arab and Islamic governments to pressure European countries and the United States into enshrining Islam in the constitution as a religion and not as a culture. It is not clear what Asʿad al-Suḥrānī meant by this demand.

In addition, Nāyif Iṣṭifān, a priest, delivered Bāsīlyūs Maṣṣūr’s speech. Interestingly, this speech was much more elaborate than the speech Bishop Maṣṣūr delivered himself in

---

<sup>800</sup> Tawhid. 22 September 2012. لقاء تضامني في عكار ندد بالفيلم المسيء الى الرسول: للتمسك بالوحدة والعروبة الجامعة ورفض .Doi ..المخططات الصهيونية <http://www.altawhid.org/2012/09/22/%D9%84%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%AA%D8%B6%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%86%D9%8A-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%B9%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D9%86%D8%AF%D8%AF-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A1/> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Bebnine. In addition to being a cleric, Nāyif Iṣṭifān is also a poet and a historian who has published a number of books about 'Akkār and the Greek Orthodox diocese of 'Akkār.<sup>801</sup> The common theological roots suggested by Bishop Bāsīliyūs Maṣṣūr are elaborated more vividly in this speech: 'The believers in God are brothers who support each other and advocate for each other when God sheds light on them and those who hate him.' This led the priest to define a common creed:

Muslims and Christians, we believe in God, his angels and in His revelation, in the resurrection (*yawm al-qiyāma*). We do not distinguish in this between one and the other in any of the ways of the prophets.

Nāyif Iṣṭifān mentioned both the Christian *yawm al-qiyāma* and the Islamic *yawm al-dīn*. Again, there seems to be a strong "Islamization" of Christianity, as he refers to 'all prophets of God.' Interestingly, Muhammad is referred to as 'the Messenger Muhammad, son of 'Abd Allāh' who 'has presented goodness to humanity.' This analysis establishes a sort of triangle between Muslims, Christians and God, since this speech suggests that Muslims and Christians alike revere Jesus Christ and Muhammad as prophets. He insisted on a similarity of creeds and blended out the differences. In addition, Nāyif Iṣṭifān addressed both the present audience, in whose name he spoke ('I greet you all as one 'Akkārī family') and God, asking 'God almighty to enlighten the hearts of all of us with faith in, trust and reliance on Him.' The condemnation of "The Innocence of Muslims" rests upon this shared theological foundation: 'and together, with one voice, we totally refuse these plans founded by the global Zionist institutions to assault the principle of faith in God.' Yet, besides this alleged Zionist war on theological foundations, the priest referred to a cultural framework: 'we as Arab Christians and as Arabs.' Finally, he mentioned the actual subject of the conference, "The Innocence of Muslims," although still only in vague terms; 'this screaming and shameful insolence,' a 'breach of the Christian principles from the cross of our holy book.' He demanded a UN law criminalizing this 'offense.'

The conference's final statement defined both the 'film' and the cartoons as 'offenses' produced by 'Zionism' with the goal of furthering the plan of the "Greater Middle East," 'strife'

---

<sup>801</sup> Al-Nahar. 23 July 2014 :Doi . كتاب للأب المؤرخ نايف اسطفان وثائق تتناول أبرشية عكار الأرثوذكسية .  
<http://newspaper.annahar.com/article/153796-%D9%83%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%B1%D8%AE-%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%8A%D9%81-%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%B7%D9%81%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%88%D8%AB%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%82-%D8%AA%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%84-%D8%A3%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%B4%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%B9%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B1%D8%AB%D9%88%D8%B0%D9%83%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A9>  
(retrieved May 17, 2016).

and divide. Therefore, the statement called for ‘holding on to national unity and uniting/joining Arabism,’<sup>802</sup> as well as the enshrining Islam in European constitutions. However, it is unclear what is meant by this demand.

Interestingly, the Alawi representative was not reported to have delivered a speech. In addition, Nāyif Istīfān’s speech suggests a strong assimilation of Islam and Christianity, insisting on the similarities and blending out the dogmatic differences.

### ***Summary of Section 3.6***

Overall, the joint Christian-Muslim reactions analyzed in Sections 3.6.2, 3.6.3, and 3.6.4, which came from Beirut, southern, and northern Lebanon showed that they were mainly supported by Maronites, the Greek Orthodox, and the Sunni and Shia religious institutions and only rarely by the Druze, Alawi, and other Christian communities.

This whole section has shown a discrepancy between the higher-ranking religious levels and Hezbollah’s protests on the one hand, and local Christian-Muslim reactions on the other hand, particularly in the North (3.6.4). While the spiritual summit maintained a clear distinction between what is Islamic and what is Christian and mentioned Muhammad as the prophet and messenger of Islam, local actors, especially those in northern Lebanon, displayed a high level of religious assimilation. Nāyif Istīfān’s speech in particular blurred the boundaries between Islamic and Christians creeds. Local initiatives, especially those in the South and the North, displayed a strong sense of unity which was not framed in national Lebanese terms but rather seem to rest on common religious identities and values. As a result, Lebanon’s broad religious heterogeneity, which comprises various Islamic and Christian sects, is reduced to the “Christian-Muslim” partnership. In addition, this unity was very often framed against the backdrop of a common enemy, “Zionism.” The differences between northern and southern Christian-Muslim reactions may result from different histories. As mentioned in Section 3.1.2, the South suffered greatly in the Civil War and the ensuing sectarian upheavals. Importantly, local initiatives also demonstrated a strong degree of equality between Christian and Sunni Muslim actors (other minorities such as the Alawi and Druze seemed to have been sidelined).

### ***Conclusion to Chapter 3***

Lebanese reactions to “The Innocence of Muslims” pointed to the high level of polarization in Lebanese politics, especially along an alleged Sunni-Shia divide. In this regard, the issue of this video was beneficial for some actors, especially for Hezbollah and the Salafi

---

<sup>802</sup> “والرد بالمزيد من التمسك بالوحدة الوطنية والعروبة الجامعة,”

preacher Aḥmad al-Asīr. Hezbollah and its leader, Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh, displayed a high level of mobilization and visibility. Its mobilization against the video also represented an attempt to act as a national, cross-sectarian leader.

The case of Hezbollah displays vividly how “The Innocence of Muslims” not only offered a means of boosting one’s credentials but also an opportunity to pressure one’s political and ideological rivals. In this way, the leaders of the March 14 Alliance used this event to denounce Hezbollah’s role in Syria. While the Shia seemed to show a high level of organised and peaceful mobilisation, the Sunni displayed a lack of such mobilization by religious or political leaders with the gap being filled by marginal, unofficial actors, such as Aḥmad al-Asīr.

However, the Lebanese reactions also reflected the contrasting relevance of this video for the various actors. In particular, the comments from the broad range of Christian actors and institutions suggested a symbolic act of solidarity with Muslims. This solidarity could be understood as a social practice in the context of a multi-religious Lebanon. Yet these Christian actors and institutions were highly heterogeneous; ranging from churches, to the president, from Christian politicians to Christians organizations, as well as local lay and cleric actors. This heterogeneity and the ideological outlook of certain actors affected the content of the reactions. Interestingly, unlike the Coptic reactions in Egypt, Christian reactions in Lebanon demonstrated little effort to dissociate Christians in the country from “The Innocence of Muslims.”

The video was overwhelmingly condemned for being an “offense” against Islam and Muhammad. Some actors, such as Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh, the Amal Movement, the Druze Spiritual Council, and the Maronite Church considered it an attack on Islam, Muhammad or on all Lebanese. In some cases, the video was also seen as a proof of the hatred and anomaly of the West. Yet, it seemed that none of the actors had actually watched the video, except for the Greek Orthodox Bishop George Khuḍr, and none discussed its content. Overall, many actors accused the makers of the video of having produced it under the pretence of freedom of speech. Many criticised the West for its alleged double standards of promoting freedom of speech in some cases and forbidding it in other cases. As a result, many actors demanded an international law that would prohibit offenses against religion.

With regards to the goals reportedly conveyed by “The Innocence of Muslims,” the idea coined by Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh that the video aimed to ignite strife between Christians and Muslims was widely echoed. The Future Movement, however, accused the video of threatening the achievements of the Arab Spring, while former speaker of parliament, Īlī Firzī, viewed it



as another step in the plan to strip the Middle East of its Christians. Similar ideas were expressed by the Syrian Social National Party, Druze leader Ṭalāl Arslān, the Higher Islamic Shia Council (all those actors rather sympathise with Hezbollah), who denounced the video for its aim of dividing the region along sectarian lines.

In this regard, the alleged objectives of the video and the video itself were very often connected to Israel or “Zionism,” as the ever-present enemy. Although many actors in Lebanon were well aware of the involvement of Coptic extremists (for instance Hezbollah), the video was almost systematically framed in the context of the fight against Zionism. More important, this idea was not only put forward by Hezbollah but also by a broad range of Muslim and Christian actors on both a local and national level. This idea of a Zionist background was quite obsessively referred to and discussed. In some cases, the boundaries between Zionism, the (Quranic) Jews, and Israel were blurred. Although “the other” was often obsessively mentioned in the reactions, “we” hardly emerged at all. Only a few actors defined Lebanon as a positive counter-framework to “Zionism,” as a model of religious coexistence. This idea was most vividly expressed by the Hezbollah minister of agriculture. This omission stands in stark contrast to continuous efforts by Lebanese actors in recent years to promote the country as a model of Christian-Muslim relations (Hager 2016). However, there were some reflections on the good Christian-Muslim relations in Lebanon, even though they did not mention the country explicitly.

Still, a particularly interesting and specific aspect of the Lebanese reactions were the many and diverse joint Christian-Muslim reactions. These comprised the protests organised by Hezbollah and the Amal Movement (3.1.2), the spiritual summit (3.6.1) as well as various local initiatives (3.6.3; 3.6.4), all of which showed different modalities of religious accommodations. Hezbollah and the Amal Movement tried to promote Christian and cross-sectarian visibility and even seemed to need this Christian and Sunni visibility in order to allow them to appear as an inclusive, Lebanese actor. The inter-religious mobilisation undertaken by Hezbollah and the Amal Movement clearly showed expectations towards Christians to be part of the “anti-Zionist struggle” and to show solidarity. The efforts to promote Christian (and Sunni) visibility remained largely merely symbolic and actually reduced the status of Christian and Sunni actors that of passive bystanders.

The spiritual summit that brought together all the religious representatives of Lebanon illustrated the supreme effort to achieve mutual understanding and rapprochement. Yet, behind these efforts, the speeches and final statement clearly distinguished between Islamic and

Christian dogmatic differences. In contrast, local initiatives in southern and northern Lebanon displayed a solidarity that may have been motivated by a need to overcome the wounds of the Civil War, in particular in the case of the South. Yet compared to the protests organised by Hezbollah in Bint Jbail and Tyre, where there may have been similar motivations, these local initiatives demonstrated a high level of equality between Christian and Muslim actors. Interestingly, although the northern and southern part of Lebanon had been unevenly affected by the Israeli occupation, both local reactions displayed a recurrent obsession with Zionism. Unlike Hezbollah's protests and the spiritual summit, the two conferences in 'Akkār pointed to a religious and dogmatic assimilation and a nearly biological unity.

Interestingly, the most telling examples of mutual assimilations were expressed by actors belonging to or close to the March 8 Alliance, i.e. Hezbollah. For instance, the Syrian Social National Party and Īlī Firzī mentioned Muhammad as *the* messenger and not as the messenger of Islam. Interestingly, George Khuḍr defined Muhammad as the "Arab prophet" or the "Arab messenger." Similarly, Hezbollah leader Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh showed a certain limited effort to accommodate others by using the term "Īsā al-Masīḥ," instead of simply referring to Jesus as a(n) (Islamic) prophet. In addition, Shia scholar and religious leader 'Alī Fadhallāh alluded to the same values of love, mercy and justice reportedly promoted by both Jesus Christ and Muhammad.

Both within these different contexts of Christian-Muslim reactions, and overall, there were some reflections of unity between Christians and Muslims. This unity was understood in terms of shared values and a common monotheistic creed (church leaders and the spiritual summit, the Islamist actors analysed in Section 3.5.1.3). Some Muslim actors, like the Hezbollah minister of agriculture and the various "anti-colonial" Islamist actors (Section 3.5.1.3) considered this Christian-Muslim coexistence part of the resistance against Israel. Other Islamist actors viewed this coexistence in an Islamic framework, and one preacher in 'Akkār provided the only example of Christians referred to as "Nazarenes." Interestingly, a broad range of Islamist actors demonstrated attempts to prevent backlashes against Christians.

Finally, with regards to the issue of violence in connection to "The Innocence of Muslims," there were many more condemnations made by Christian actors in Lebanon than in the other countries analysed. Both the violent reactions and the backlashes against Christians were denounced by the churches, the president, and the Christian actors in the March 14 Alliance. In this regard, the leaders of the Lebanese Forces, *ḥizb al-katā'ib*, and the National Liberal Party all pointed to the negative impact this violence had on the image of Muslims and

Islam. Many Muslim actors likewise condemned the violence. Yet the actors of the March 8 Alliance did not mention these violent reactions at all and some Islamist actors described in Section 3.5 ascribed the responsibility to the United States or further escalated the situation.

## Chapter 4: Israel and the Palestinian Territories: Palestinian National Unity in the Shadow of Israeli Occupation

### Introduction

This chapter is short in comparison with the chapters on Egypt and Lebanon. It will analyse the various reactions in different political contexts; Jerusalem and the West Bank, Israel, and Gaza. There were far fewer reactions to “The Innocence of Muslims” in these contexts as a whole and even fewer in the context of Gaza. However, these few Palestinian reactions are especially interesting since they did not display an official, structured and pervasive discourse on Christian-Muslim unity.

As will be shown in the part of the first section dealing with Jerusalem and the West Bank (4.1), the reactions eventually connected the video to the issue of “price-tag.” The newspaper *Haaretz* explained in its 5 September 2012 issue that the term “price-tag” was coined by Israeli settlers as a form of revenge for forced evacuations of settlements in the West Bank and Gaza.<sup>803</sup> In this article, *Haaretz* reported on a price-tag that had been discovered the previous day, on 4 September 2012, at the Latrun Trappist monastery. The door of the monastery had been burnt and slogans written on the walls included ‘Jesus is a monkey’ and ‘Migron.’ The term “Migron” referred to the recent evacuation of the “Migron” settlement in the West Bank. This action was condemned by Israeli political and religious leaders. In addition, *Haaretz* reported that since January 2012 there had been two more cases of “price-tag” targeting the Greek Orthodox Church in the Valley of the Cross as well as the Baptist church in central Jerusalem. In both cases slogans such as ‘Jesus is dead,’ ‘Death to the Christians,’ ‘Mary is a prostitute,’ and ‘Price-tag’ were found.

At first glance, the Palestinian case(s) seem to differ from Christian-Muslim relations in Lebanon and Egypt, as these relations have been rather good. The Latin priest Rafiq Khoury explained that Christian-Muslim relations in Palestine have differed from those in other countries due to several reasons.<sup>804</sup> Firstly, Christian Palestinians have always considered themselves Arab Palestinian Christians and have not attempted to develop a separate ethnic identity. Secondly, in the context of the Palestinian issue, both Christians and Muslims have ‘suffered’ equally and fought equally for the re-establishment of their rights. Moreover, Father Rafiq Khoury stated that both Christians and Muslims share the same aspirations for the future, and finally, the very fact that Jesus Christ was born, and died in this land is itself an important

---

<sup>803</sup> *Haaretz*. 5 September 2012. Monastery near Jerusalem torched; Catholics blame Israeli ‘hatred.’ Number 28380. Volume 92. Pages 1 and 2.

<sup>804</sup> Khoury, Rafiq. 25 March 2015. Personal Interview. Jerusalem.

consideration. In another article, Fr. Khoury further characterised the idea that Christians in Palestine have never struggled with their Arab identity as ‘non-discussable’ (Khoury 1993, 29-30). However, in recent years, there has been an increasing amount of discussion about this issue among Arab Israelis (see below).

Historically, the Christians in historic Palestine were rather homogenous, as they mainly belonged to the Greek Orthodox Church. In the nineteenth century, however, the landscape changed as many churches (re-)affirmed their hold not only on the Christian holy places but also on the Christian Palestinians themselves. In 1847 the Latin Patriarchate was re-established and during the nineteenth century several Protestant churches were founded. In addition, the Greek Catholic Melkite Church also started proselytising among Christians in Palestine (and in Transjordan). While the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate was increasingly riven by a conflict between the ethnic Greek higher-ranking hierarchy and the Arab laity and lower-ranking clerics, the Latin (Roman Catholic), the Protestant, and the Melkite Churches invested heavily in education and social services. As a result, missionary and European schools were founded which meant that Christians were increasingly well educated. (Robson 2011, 25). Subsequently, these churches began to develop a genuine Arab and Palestinian identity, something the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate has still not achieved today.

As a consequence, in the West Bank today, the Greek Orthodox constitute a slight majority of 51% of Christians (Kårtveit 2014, 115). In contrast, in Israel, the Melkite are the largest group of Christians (Fleyfel 2013, 136). Yet the number of Christians in all of the West Bank, Israel, and Gaza has dropped dramatically over the last few decades. While they represented 8-10% of the population at the beginning of the twentieth century (Mansour 2012) this proportion has now decreased to 1.2% in the Palestinian Territories and 2% in Israel (Heyberger 2013, 15-17). According to Mitri Raheb, the actual figure is even lower, as Palestinian Christians in Israel actually represent only 1.2% of the population (Raheb 2012, 13). It is noteworthy that the figures for Israel are not representative, since there are many Christian Russians, Christian Zionists, (Fleyfel 2013, 138) and migrants amongst Israeli Christians.

The reasons for this fall in the proportion of Christians both in the Palestinian Territories and in Israel are the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, emigration, and lower birth rates amongst Christians (Mansour 2012). The *nakba* in 1948 affected the Christian Palestinians particularly badly, as one third were expelled. In Jerusalem, nearly half of the Christian inhabitants were expelled or emigrated (Robson 2011, 161). Marie-Armelle Beaulieu, chief editor of the

Franciscan *Magazine Terre Sainte*, placed particular emphasis on the economic and political situation, the occupation, and isolation in explaining the high rates of emigration.<sup>805</sup>

Before analysing the historical developments and, more specifically, the current situation in the West Bank, Israel, and Gaza, it is necessary to provide a brief overview of the various churches. The former Latin patriarch, Michel Sabbah (Mīshīl Ṣabbāḥ), has listed thirteen churches in the Holy Land. The first of these is the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, whose jurisdiction stretches over the Palestinian Territories, Israel, Jordan, and Mount Sinai (Sabbah 2005, 35). The jurisdiction of the Latin Patriarchate also comprises these three countries – excluding Mount Sinai – as well as Cyprus (ibid). The third patriarch in Jerusalem is the Armenian Apostolic patriarch (ibid). Moreover, the Greek Catholic Church, the Maronite Church, the Syrian Catholic Church, the Armenian Catholic Church, the Syrian Orthodox Church, the Coptic Orthodox Church, the Ethiopian Church, the Anglican Church, and the Lutheran Church all also have one patriarchal vicar or bishop for the Holy Land (ibid). Finally, there is the Custody of the Holy Land, which has represented the Roman Catholic Church in Palestine since the end of the Crusades and has continued to exist alongside the re-established Latin Patriarchate.

The case of historic Palestine is particularly interesting as it shows the absence of a historic development of sectarianism. For instance, Palestine was not affected by the sectarian clashes taking place in Mount Lebanon and Damascus in the mid-nineteenth century. Some tensions did arise in major cities such as Nablus, where the Ottoman reforms were implemented, but they were far less devastating than in Ottoman Syria (Robson 2011, 11-15). Laura Robson does note, however, that the British mandate adopted a sectarian approach in dealing with Palestine: In 1921 it created a Supreme Muslim Council, despite the fact that Muslims had never before been considered a *millet*, as their institutions were part of the state (Robson 2011, 57-58).

Christian Palestinians have been vocal actors in the struggle against Zionism and the establishment of a Jewish state since the end of the nineteenth century. In this regard, the churches have increasingly come to play an important role.

In Israel, so-called Arab Israelis or in Arabic “Palestinians from inside the Green Line” (Mansour 2012, 21-23) now represent 20% of the population.<sup>806</sup> They are the descendants of

---

<sup>805</sup> Beaulieu, Marie-Armelle. 23 March 2015. Personal Interview. Jerusalem. This source is quoted in this chapter as “Beaulieu 23 March 2015.”

<sup>806</sup> Terre Sainte Magazine. January-February 2015. Etre arabe et israélien : une gageure ? Number 635/7. Pages 392-393/32-33.

those Palestinians who remained or who were able to return to their homes after 1948. The Palestinian writer Elias Sanbar described these Palestinians as being the most cut off from their ‘patrie,’ and as facing ‘demantèlement social, poursuite des expulsions, dépossession, exil intérieur, et opprobre de leurs frères’ (Sanbar 2004, 233). Firstly, following the *nakba* in 1948, existing social structures were completely crushed, particularly in the case of the Muslims, whereas the clerical structures in place among the Christians and the Druze managed to survive (Louër 2007, 19). In addition, Islamic Endowments were confiscated and the Supreme Muslim Council, which had managed the affairs of the community, was abolished and its leadership sent into exile (ibid).

The Israeli Arab community in Israel has faced not only discrimination but also attempts at dividing it. From 1948 to 1966 it was subjected to military rule and arbitrary detention (Louër 2007, 2). Furthermore, while more than 6,000 Jewish municipalities have been founded since 1948, not a single Arab community has been founded in this time.<sup>807</sup> However, in the 1970s, an Arab Israeli political activism slowly began to emerge and was initially dominated by a leftist outlook. In 1977 the Israeli Communist Party established “Hadash,” the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (*al-jabha al-dīmūqrāṭīyya li l-salām wa al-musāwāt*), to create ‘a political alternative to the government’s policy of occupation and exploitation,’ and counter a ‘system of institutionalised racism and discrimination.’<sup>808</sup> The movement promotes a leftist mindset, as it demands social justice and opposes privatisation (ibid). In addition, it strongly promotes the rights of Israeli Arabs and the establishment of a Palestinian state (ibid). It has become the most important Arab Israeli party, as will be shown in this chapter, and is one of the strongest and most important parties in the Knesset.<sup>809</sup> Alongside this movement, a contrasting Islamist stream also began to emerge amongst Palestinians in Israel. The “Islamic Movement inside Palestine” (*al-ḥaraka al-islāmiyya fī l-dākhil al-filasṭīnī*) was founded in 1971 by ‘Abd Allāh Nimar Darwīsh as a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>810</sup> In the 1980s it briefly resorted to violence but since then the Islamic Movement has focused on politics, education services, and preaching (Hroub 2000, 140). Subsequently, however, the movement has split into a more accommodating southern branch and a more radical northern branch (ibid). The northern branch

---

<sup>807</sup> Terre Sainte Magazine. January-February 2015. Etre arabe et israélien : une gageure ?

<sup>808</sup> Hadash. Hadash – our story. <http://hadash.org.il/english/> Doi: (retrieved May 16, 2016).

<sup>809</sup> Al-Jazeera. محمد بركة. Doi: <http://www.aljazeera.net/specialfiles/pages/62C188B4-C62B-41D3-B1E3-B7AF9BF716E8> (retrieved May 16, 2016).

<sup>810</sup> Al-Jazeera English. 27 October 2010. Profile: Islamic Movement in Israel. Doi: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2010/10/20101027121259776547.html> (retrieved May 16, 2016).

stopped participating in municipal politics in 2003.<sup>811</sup> Khaled Hroub credits the movement with having awakened and intensified Palestinian nationalism amongst Arab Israelis (Hroub 2000, 129).

Lauren Louër asserts that the Israeli government prefers to deal with a number of ethnic groups individually rather than with one single Arab minority (Louër 2007, 12). It is within this “sectarian approach” that several decisions taken by the Israeli government have been denounced by Palestinian actors. In particular, two measures affecting Christian Palestinians living in Israel have been seen as measures which aim to cause divisions between Christians and Muslims. The first measure is the possibility for young Christian Arabs to complete military service in the IDF, while Arab Muslims do not have to. *Haaretz* reported in 2005 that the number of Christian volunteers had increased in recent years, although they still only represented 0.1% of all conscripts.<sup>812</sup> In contrast, it is currently obligatory for the Druze and the Circassians (although the latter are Sunnis) to enlist in the IDF.<sup>813</sup> However, the Churches have heavily opposed such initiatives. For instance, the Commission for Justice and Peace of the Roman Catholic Church has accused the Israeli government of aiming to increasingly ‘Israelise the Arabs, divide them into further communities; Muslims, Druze, Christians, Bedouins’ and stated that having the option to complete military service does not reduce discrimination against Christian Israeli Arabs (POC 2014, 167-169). The second measure that created uproar among the Palestinian leadership was the decision taken by the Israeli Ministry of the Interior to recognize an “Aramaic identity.”<sup>814</sup> Thus, Christian Israeli Arabs no longer need to register as “Arabs” but as “Arameans” instead. On both issues, the Greek Orthodox priest Gabriel Naddaf (Gabriel Naddāf) has been very vocal in his support of the Israeli government’s decisions. He was eventually suspended in May 2014 by the Holy Synod of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate due to his repeated calls on young Christians to enlist in the IDF.<sup>815</sup> Interestingly, the Holy Synod announced that this decision was made in cooperation with King Abdullah II and the

---

<sup>811</sup> +972 Blog. 13 March 2015. Doing God's work: A look at the Islamic Movement in Israel. Doi: <http://972mag.com/doing-gods-work-a-look-at-the-islamic-movement-in-israel/104201/> (retrieved May 16, 2016).

<sup>812</sup> *Haaretz*. 23 March 2005. Christian Arabs Second in a Series - Israel's Christian Arabs Don't Want to Fight to Fit in. Doi: <http://www.haaretz.com/christian-arabs-second-in-a-series-israel-s-christian-arabs-don-t-want-to-fight-to-fit-in-1.153786> (retrieved May 16, 2016).

<sup>813</sup> *Haaretz*. 28 February 2012. Muslims and Christians Must Also Serve in IDF. Doi: <http://www.haaretz.com/muslims-and-christians-must-also-serve-in-idf-1.415273> (retrieved May 16, 2016).

<sup>814</sup> Independent. 18 September 2014. Israel goes back 4,000 years in 'attempt to divide and rule' its Arab minority. Doi: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-goes-back-4000-years-in-attempt-to-divide-and-rule-its-arab-minority-9742175.html> (retrieved May 16, 2016).

<sup>815</sup> Nawa. 9 May 2014. تجريد الكاهن جبرائيل ندادف من صلاحياته الكنسية والرعية Doi: <http://www.nawa.ps/arabic/?Action=Details&ID=11087> (retrieved May 16, 2016).



President of the PA, Mahmoud Abbas (Maḥmūd ‘Abbās) (ibid). Yet Fr. Gabriel Naddaf has continued his activism and actively supported the recognition of the Aramaic nationality in cooperation with the Maronite Shadi Halul.<sup>816</sup>

Interestingly, while the Commission for Justice and Peace deplored the loss of identity among Christian Arab Israelis, especially in mixed cities (POC 2014, 167-169) it is only in recent decades that the Arab Israelis have started to openly emphasise their Palestinian identity and belonging. In 2000 they contributed to the second intifada with a dozen “martyrs” (Louër 2007, 1) and protested against the Israeli airstrikes on Gaza in the summer of 2014.<sup>817</sup>

Finally, some of the events of recent years would seem to suggest that interreligious tensions are growing. One main event was the discussion concerning the construction of the Shihāb al-Din mosque in Nazareth just in front of the Church of the Nativity. However, over the last few decades, the demographic structure of the city has been completely overhauled. Twenty-five years ago Christians constituted a majority of 70%; nowadays they only represent a minority of 30%.<sup>818</sup> In addition, in the context of the crisis surrounding the Shihāb al-din mosque, the Israeli government has tended to appear biased and thus contributed to an increase in interreligious tension in the city (see Tsimhoni 2010, 220).

Following the war in 1948, the West Bank was incorporated into the newly established Kingdom of Jordan, and, according to Joseph Massad, was subsequently ‘Jordanised’ (Massad 2001, 12). Even after the war in 1967 and the beginning of Israel’s occupation of the West Bank, Jordan has continued to maintain strong links with this region and continues to fund and manage health, agriculture, and education programs (Dumper 1994, 63). When Israel first occupied the West Bank in 1967, it began to rule there by means of military laws and military courts (Kelly 2006, 7). Paradoxically, the Oslo Accords in 1993 only worsened the economic situation as Israel maintained control over the borders and thus over the movement of labour and goods (Carey 2001, 95). In addition, between 1994 and 2000 alone, Israel confiscated approximately 35,000 acres of land (ibid). Since 1967, Bethlehem in particular has been affected by the confiscation of land to build Israeli settlements and by the separation wall (Kårtveit 2014, 63). Moreover, the combined effect of the wall and the Israeli settlements mean that the northern West Bank is nearly completely separated from the southern part of the West

---

<sup>816</sup> Independent. 18 September 2014. Israel goes back 4,000 years in 'attempt to divide and rule' its Arab minority.

<sup>817</sup> Terre Sainte Magazine. January-February 2015. Etre arabe et israélien : une gageure ?

<sup>818</sup> Terre Sainte Magazine. January-February 2015. Chrétiens et musulmans : des arabes unis? Number 635/7. Pages 400/401 40/41.

Bank. Nevertheless, Tobias Kelly reported that ten thousand Palestinians continued to work in Israeli settlements as of 2006 (Kelly 2006, 65).

Interestingly, until the outbreak of the first intifada in 1987, the centre of Palestinian resistance was in the diaspora, i.e. in the refugee camps in Jordan, and in Lebanon, and Nadine Picaudou argues that ‘la résistance passive de celui qui reste agrippé à la terre (*ṣumūd*) a dû attendre la première intifada pour conquérir ses lettres de noblesse’ (Picaudou 2006, 12). As a result of the first intifada and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, the centre of Palestinian resistance shifted to the West Bank and Gaza, whose inhabitants now seem to embody this very resistance. At the same time, however, the intifada provoked a complete collapse of the economy in the West Bank (Kelly 2006, 10).

All these developments have affected Christian-Muslim relations in the West Bank. Yet there is a contrast between the attitude of the PA towards Christians and the growing interreligious tensions. Christian Palestinians such as Ḥanān Ashrawī, to name only one, have played a key role in the PLO and in the subsequent Palestinian Authority. The Palestinian Authority officially recognises thirteen Christian communities that deal with family matters (Fleyfel 2013, 139). In addition, it has established a quota system that guarantees the political representation of Christians. 10% of the seats in the parliament are allocated to Christians (Fleyfel 2013, 140) and the heads of the local councils in Bethlehem, Beit Jala, Beit Sahour, Ramallah, Bir Zeit, Jifna, Taiyba, Abud, Ain Arik, and Zababdeh must be Christians (Raheb 2012, 39). In addition, the electoral districts of Ramallah-al-Bira, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Gaza have one or two seats allocated to Christians (Raheb 2012, 40). At the same time, the occupation, isolation, and economic hardship have contributed to mounting tensions between Christians and Muslims in the West Bank. In this context, Christians are often viewed as arrogant and spoilt, benefitting from support from the churches and from Western donors and remittances (Kårtveit 2014, 99). The issue of church support of Christians will be discussed below in the introduction. Marie-Armelle Beaulieu has also mentioned the growing influence of Islamist puritanism (affecting both Christians and Muslims), which pressures Christians into closing their shops during Ramadan and into actually complying with the rules of Ramadan (Beaulieu 23 March 2015). During the intifada, militants sought refuge in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem which gave rise to conflicting reports about this event (Kårtveit 2014, 98). Interestingly, such events are systematically downplayed by Christian Palestinian leaders because they fear this lack of unity may jeopardize the Palestinian cause. In the context of the protests against Pope Benedict XVI’s speech in Regensburg, several churches in Nablus, Gaza,

and Tulkarem were firebombed (Kårtveit 2014, 102). A church leader again tried to downplay this event, speaking of ‘two to three isolated acts’ and admitting that Christians tended to maintain silence in the face of these events to avoid worsening the situation.<sup>819</sup>

Gaza has faced a complete breakdown of social and economic structures and the family clans have filled the space these have left. This is a result of Israeli economic policies in the 1960s and 1970s, the Israeli embargo on Gaza following its retreat and failure to cooperate with the PA, and the collapse of the Palestinian Authority (ICG 2007, i, 2, 3-4). As a result, powerful clans have filled the gap, establishing militias, autonomous zones, informal justice, and a kind of welfare system that has helped to ease potential tensions between rich and poor (ICG 2007, I, 6). At the same time, Hamas tried to reclaim public space after 2007 but with limited success (ICG 2007, 13).

As a result, the situation is particularly difficult for Christians in Gaza, as they are affected by the generally difficult social and economic situation and also by increasing Islamisation. Yet Hamas does defend Christians in principle, as Father Rafiq Khoury has conceded (Khoury 25 March 2015). In a document dating from 1988 entitled “The Movement’s Policy towards the Christians of Palestine”, Hamas asserted that Christians constituted an inseparable component of the Palestinian people, having the same rights and duties, and reminded them of the importance of participating in the struggle (Hroub 2000, 135). On a very personal level, Hamas leaders do have an attachment to the Christian presence in Gaza, as some of them send their children to Christian schools (Beaulieu 23 March 2015). Nevertheless, no Christian participated in the foundation of Hamas and the movement seems to display an incapacity to go beyond a certain point of Christian-Muslim practice (Hroub 2000, 139).

As previously suggested, churches have come to play an active role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Latin church under the former patriarch Michel Sabbah, and the Greek Catholic Melkite Church in particular have both been very vocal in this regard. In December 2000, during the intifada, Michel Sabbāḥ explained this involvement as follows:

Les chefs des Eglises de Jérusalem ont été plus d’une fois critiqués par les autorités sous prétexte qu’ils interféraient indûment dans la vie politique [...] Je le réaffirme : les chefs religieux ont le droit et le devoir d’intervenir dans une situation politique qui produit l’instabilité générale [...] [L’Eglise parle] parle pour faire son devoir qui consiste à dénoncer l’injustice, à défendre l’opprimé (Labévière 2000, 333).

---

<sup>819</sup> Anonymous. 22 March 2015. Personal Interview. Jerusalem.

The current Melkite patriarch, Gregorius III, was the patriarchal vicar in Jerusalem before his election to patriarch and in 1992 he protested the deportation of 413 Palestinians accused of being members of Hamas and of Islamic Jihad: ‘We all [are] fighting in the same trench. If they are deportees, then we, too, are deportees. If they are terrorists, then we, too, are terrorists’ (Hroub 2000, 138).

Some Palestinian clerics have also formulated a “liberation” or “contextual theology.” Among the most famous authors of this theory are Fr. Rafiq Khoury, mentioned above, Rev. Mitri Raheb, Naim Ateek, former Patriarch Michel Sabbah, former Bishop Elias Shaqour and Fr. Geris S. Khoury, who have tried to re-interpret the Bible in the context of Israeli occupation and Palestinian national dispossession.

This shows that the involvement of clerics in the defence of Palestinian rights is connected to the extent to which the church considers itself a genuine Arab church. For instance, the Greek Catholic Church was the product of a conflict between the Greek Orthodox hierarchy and the Arab laity – similar to the conflict currently affecting the Greek Orthodox of Jerusalem. Likewise, the Latin Patriarchate and the protestant churches – Anglican – were gradually “Arabised” in the second twentieth century, that is to say that their leadership was filled with local Arab clerics. The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate and other churches, such as the Syriac Orthodox church, do express support for Palestinian rights and criticize Israeli occupation and politics (as mentioned above) but they do not have much leverage. The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate lacks strong foreign support and has to deal with Jordan, the Palestinian Authority, Israel, and Greece.

#### **4.1 Reactions in Jerusalem and the West Bank**

This first section will analyse reactions in Jerusalem and the West Bank. Churches tended to resort to official statements, whereas Muslim actors expressed their condemnation mainly through protests. High-ranking Christian-Muslim reactions form a key part of this section.

##### **4.1.1. Reactions of the Churches in Jerusalem and the West Bank**

This first sub-section starts by looking at the reactions of the Greek Orthodox Church, the Latin Patriarchate, the Syriac Orthodox Church, and the Greek Catholic Melkite Church.

##### **The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate**

The reactions of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem comprise one official statement issued by its official spokesman, Fr. ‘Īsā Muşlah and three different reactions by

Bishop 'Aṭā' Allāh Ḥannā. In addition, 'Īsā Muṣṭaḥ and Bishop 'Aṭā' Allāh Ḥannā also participated in high-ranking joint Christian-Muslim conferences (see Section 4.1.3).

On 13 September 2012, the spokesman of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Fr. 'Īsā Muṣṭaḥ,<sup>820</sup> issued an official statement in the name of the Church condemning the video "The Innocence of Muslims."<sup>821</sup> The statement laid out the patriarchate's very 'clear' position on the issue of 'offense (*isā'a*) of the right (*ḥaqq*) of religions,' opposing such offenses. The video was classed as an 'inhuman crime' that reflected 'loathing' and a 'spirit of hateful racism against Islam and Muslims.' Thus, the spokesman demanded the film be prohibited, its producers be punished, and its repetition be forbidden. To counter the video, the statement addressed all 'believers in God among the sons of the revealed religions,' asking them to remain united.

Bishop 'Aṭā' Allāh Ḥannā, bishop of Sebastia (a village in the Nablus Governorate), was very vocal on the issue of "The Innocence of Muslims." He first published a statement on September 12 then referred to it during a mass in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on September 16 before finally mentioning it once again in an interview on September 27. Bishop 'Aṭā' Allāh Ḥannā is the only Arab bishop of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem. He was born in 1965 in a village in Galilee.<sup>822</sup> He completed his studies and doctorate at the University of Thessaloniki and was ordained in 1991 (*ibid*), adopting the name of "Theodosius."<sup>823</sup> Before his election to bishop of Sebastia in 2005 by the Holy Synod, he was responsible for the Arabic section of the patriarchate and was its official spokesman.<sup>824</sup> Moreover, 'Aṭā' Allāh Ḥannā has been very active in interreligious dialogue, ecumenism, and the Palestinian movement, as he is said to have founded the Orthodox Youth Movement in the Holy Land and to be an active member of the National Arabic Platform (*al-mu'tamar al-qawmī al-'arabī*). In this regard, he rejects the very idea that Christians and Muslims are two separate communities: 'In my opinion there are no communities (*tawā'if*) in Palestine. The Christians

---

<sup>820</sup> On the website of the Patriarchate, the name of the spokesman is spelt "Issa Mousleh", see Jerusalem Patriarchate. Doi: <http://www.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/main/eng/page/%CF%80%CE%B1%CF%84%CF%81%CE%B9%CE%B1%CF%81%CF%87%CE%B5%CE%B9%CE%BF%CE%BD> (retrieved May 16, 2016).

<sup>821</sup> Al-Hayat al-Jadida. 14 September 2012. الأَب مصلح: الفيلم المسيء للإسلام جريمة تثير الاشمزاز. Number 6059. Page 19.

<sup>822</sup> Al-Nahar. 2 December 2005. البطريركية الأرثوذكسية في القدس انتخب الارشمندريت عطا الله مطرانا. Number 22501. Year 73. Page 10.

<sup>823</sup> Jerusalem Patriarchate. Doi: <http://www.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/main/eng/page/%CE%B5%CF%80%CE%B9%CF%83%CE%BA%CE%BF%CF%80%CE%BF%CE%B92> (retrieved May 16, 2016). However, the website states: "His Eminence Theodosios, Archbishop of Sebastia (in the world Nizar Hanna)" and does not mention his name usually used in Arab media "'Aṭā' Allāh Ḥanna."

<sup>824</sup> Al-Nahar. 2 December 2005. البطريركية الأرثوذكسية في القدس انتخب الارشمندريت عطا الله مطرانا. Number 22501. Year 73. Page 10.

are not a *tā'ifa*. They are an indivisible part of the original Arab Palestinian people.<sup>825</sup> He emphasised: 'We do not divide the martyrs into Muslims and Christians. All martyrs are ours.' In the context of "The Innocence of Muslims" and of the price-tag, some of his views were expressed more clearly.

On September 12, a statement was published which was issued by the bishop in which he condemned "The Innocence of Muslims."<sup>826</sup> In this statement, Bishop 'Aṭā' Allāh Ḥannā criticized it, calling it 'this suspicious and offending film,' 'this assault, these offenses and these attacks,'<sup>827</sup> 'these racist practices and the assault on religious symbols,' 'this inhuman work.' Interestingly, although the bishop described the video in various ways, he did not dwell at all on its background but rather framed it in the context of a conspiracy undertaken by 'sides who command and enjoy the assault on religious symbols.'<sup>828</sup> In addition, he regarded its authors in the same way as those who offended 'our Christian religion, and especially Lord Christ and his mother, the Virgin.' Consequently, he saw the video as aiming to 'stir up sectarian conflict, strife, and extremism,' especially 'strife in our ranks' and to 'divide us.' It is noteworthy that the bishop spoke alternatively in the name of Christians and in the name of both Muslims and Christians. Thus, he expressed his solidarity with Muslims in the name of Christians while it was in the name of both Christians and Muslims that he stated 'We will not deliver our mosques and our churches.' However, his addressing Muslims worldwide to remind them that 'We condemn this,' seems to reflect the limits of mutual understanding between Christians and Muslims. This impression is further enhanced by the bishop's concession that 'As we need dialogue, convergence, mutual understanding between the followers of the monotheist religions, we also need tolerance and religious brotherhood.' Interestingly, he appealed to Muslim and Christian clerics in particular to be in 'a state of mutual understanding and cooperation' for the sake of unity.

Furthermore, the video was mentioned during Bishop 'Aṭā' Allāh Ḥannā's sermon in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on 16 September 2012 together with several other issues. In this sermon, the bishop again framed the video as an attack affecting both Muslims and Christians. However, he did not mention the title of the video, instead referring to 'the continued and sustained offenses (*isā'āt*),' this time affecting not only Islam, but also 'all moral values.'

---

<sup>825</sup> Al-Safir. 18 December 2013. المطران عطا الله حنال "السفير": أنا عربي فلسطيني مسيحي من الشرق. Number 12655. Page 14.

<sup>826</sup> Markaz al-Sharq al-Arabi. Wasat. ردود فعل شعبية وعربية ودولية على فيلم الإساءة للنبي صلى الله عليه وسلم. Doi: <http://asharqalarabi.org.uk/barq/b-qiraat-92.htm> (retrieved May 16, 2016).

<sup>827</sup> "هذا التطاول وهذه الإساءات والتعديت،"

<sup>828</sup> "وراء هذا الفيلم المشبوه المسيء إنما هي جهات تتفنن وتتلاذذ بالتطاول على الرموز الدينية،"

The bishop stated that these sort of “offenses” had previously targeted the ‘sacred places (*muqaddasāt*) and religious symbols (*al-rumūz al-dīniyya*)’ of Christianity. Interestingly, ‘Aṭā’ Allāh Ḥannā once again stressed the necessity for unity in reaction to this video and the need for dialogue between the religions.

In this sermon, the bishop also mentioned the anniversary of the massacre of Shubra and Shatila, and the conflict in Syria. He deplored the war in Syria in particular, as he considered the country to be a key element in the region. He stated that Christians there have been attacked and expelled from their homes by the rebels and that the churches have been destroyed. Yet despite this he called on Christians in the East: ‘I say to the Eastern Christians’ to remain patient, steadfast in their homes and to combat evil with love.

In his interview published on September 27, the bishop’s reaction was much more a justification and a clearer denunciation of the Israeli occupation. In the name of the Christians, ‘Aṭā’ Allāh Ḥannā emphasised that the ‘film does not represent Christians in their different communities (*tawā’if*),’ and recalled the harsh rejection of the film by all churches in ‘occupied Jerusalem.’<sup>829</sup> The bishop did mention the information concerning Coptic involvement but referred to the denial of involvement of Copts in the diaspora. Overall, the video was described as ‘an uncivilised work,’ as part of a long series of “offenses (*isā’āt*),” of which the attack on the monastery of Latrun was the most recent example. Thus, it was by mentioning the price-tag committed against this monastery that the bishop was able to connect the video with Israeli occupation. He condemned ‘Zionist extremism in particular and its racist attacks on monasteries and churches in Jerusalem and the West Bank.’ Again, Bishop ‘Aṭā’ Allāh Ḥannā called for cooperation between Christians and Muslims, for a refocusing, especially on the ‘Palestinian issue,’<sup>830</sup> and for unity in ‘the ranks so that we remain one united family against racism and colonialism.’

### **The Latin Patriarchate**

The Latin Patriarchate initially published an official statement condemning the video. Then it reaffirmed its condemnation of “The Innocence of Muslims” when its bishops met in late September 2012 in Amman. Bishop William al-Shūmālī also participated in a high-ranking Christian-Muslim conference (see Section 4.1.3). Furthermore, the Latin priest Peter Madrous also contributed his individual reaction. Since 2008, the Latin Patriarchate has been led by

---

<sup>829</sup> Al-Ahed. 27 September 2012. *المطران عطا الله حنا لـ"الانتقاد": جهات مشبوهة تقف وراء الإساءة للنبي الأكرم .. ولا سبيل لردعها*. Doi: <http://www.alahednews.com.lb/essaydetails.php?eid=66137&cid=76#.Vv0kpEerfIW> (retrieved May 16, 2016)

<sup>830</sup> “بضرورة التركيز على القضايا الوطنية والإنسانية وفي مقدمتها قضية فلسطين ومقدساتها”.

Fu'ād Ṭwāl, a Jordanian and “East Banker.” He was born in 1940 in Madaba, attended the seminary in Beit Jala, was ordained in 1966 in Jerusalem and entered the diplomatic service of the Vatican, representing the Roman Catholic Church in several countries (RIIFS 2008). In 1992 he was ordained bishop of Tunis (ibid).

The Latin Patriarchate's statement was mentioned in *al-Quds* on September 16. Overall, the statement is rather brief, qualifying the video as ‘this outrageous work,’ ‘this clumsy and cheap incitement,’ conducted, interestingly, by ‘a cinema film’ ‘insulting Islam.’ Unlike the previous statements, this statement also posited its condemnation as a Christian one, as ‘Christians who believe in interreligious dialogue we cannot accept this,’ seeing the film as aiming to ‘sow hatred and sectarian strife.’ In addition, the statement alluded to the same argument put forward by the Latin Bishops later on in Amman, stating that one's personal freedom stops where the freedom of the other begins. The Latin Patriarchate also called for an end to such attacks on religions.

The bishops of the Latin Patriarchate met in Amman from 17 – 20 September 2012.<sup>831</sup> Although the meeting took place in Amman, it is nevertheless relevant to this chapter, since the Latin Patriarchate's jurisdiction comprises the Palestinian Territories and Jordan. The following people participated:

- Fu'ād Ṭwāl;
- Giacinto-Paul Marcuzzo, patriarchal vicar of Nazareth;
- Mārūn Laḥḥām, bishop and patriarchal vicar of Amman (Lahham 2012);
- William al-Shūmalī, bishop of Jerusalem and the Palestinian Territories;<sup>832</sup>
- Īfīnsū Herreira Diez, a priest in Cyprus;
- Giorgio Lingua, apostolic nuncio and archbishop of Iraq and Jordan from 2010 to 2015,<sup>833</sup>

---

<sup>831</sup> Latin Patriarchate. 20 September 2012. بيان صادر عن مؤتمر أساقفة اللاتين في الدول العربية ومجلس رؤساء الكنائس الكاثوليك في الأراضي المقدسة. Doi : <http://ar.lpj.org/2012/09/20/%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%B9%D9%86-%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B1-%D8%A3%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%82%D9%81%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84/> (retrieved May, 16 2016).

<sup>832</sup> William al-Shūmalī was born in 1050 in Beit Sahur (Bayt Sāḥūr), in 1972 he was ordained vicar for the diocese Zarqa North, in Jordan. In 2005 he was named rector of the seminary in Beit Jala (Bayt Jālā) and in 2010 he was consecrated auxiliary bishop of Jerusalem. In Latin Patriarchate. H.E. William Shomali Biography. Doi: <http://en.lpj.org/vicars/patriarchal-vicar-for-jerusalem/h-e-william-hanna-shomali-biography/> (retrieved May 16, 2016).

<sup>833</sup> Latin Patriarchate. 19 May 2015. After Jordan, Archbishop Lingua appointed Nuncio in Cuba. Doi: <http://en.lpj.org/2015/03/19/after-jordan-mgr-lingua-appointed-nuncio-in-cuba/> (retrieved May 16, 2016).



- Adel Zaki (‘Ādil Zakī), bishop of Alexandria;
- Paul Dahdah (Būlus Daḥḍaḥ), bishop of Beirut;
- Camillo Ballin, apostolic vicar of the northern Arabian Peninsula;
- Paul Hinder, apostolic vicar of the southern Arabian Peninsula;
- Giuseppe Nazzaro, apostolic vicar of Aleppo until 2013;<sup>834</sup>
- Jean Sleiman (Jān Binyamīn Sulaymān), bishop of Iraq;
- Giorgio Bertin, bishop of Djibouti and apostolic representative in Mogadishu;
- Pater Pietro Felet, secretary of the Assembly of Latin bishops.<sup>835</sup>

The statement addressed several subjects such as Pope Benedict XVI’s visit to Lebanon, the situation in the region – especially in Syria –, and the video “The Innocence of Muslims.” This video is discussed in a separate paragraph under the title ‘The Offense of Religious Symbols (*al-isā’a ilā al-rumūz al-dīniyya*).’ Interestingly, the video was condemned in explicit terms, ‘the film “The Innocence of Muslims”,’ but its exact background was not specified. Furthermore, Muhammad was understood to be a “religious symbol.” Interestingly, the video was not criticised in religious terms, but within a moral framework. Thus, the bishops asserted that the video was produced under the pretence of freedom of speech and admonish that one’s personal freedom stops where the freedom of the other begins. The bishops also condemned the ‘offense of religious symbols in the Holy Land,’ thus framing the statement in the context of the so-called price-tag. Unlike other reactions, which tended to distinguish between “*al-rumūz al-dīniyya*” (religious symbols) and “*al-muqaddasāt*” (sacred places or things), this statement suggested the use of the phrase “religious symbols” as a general concept, comprising any religious symbol, place, content, or figure. The bishops called for an international law forbidding such offenses as well as for the prosecution of the makers of this film, while also

<sup>834</sup> Latin Patriarchate. 22 April 2013. CELRA welcomes new Apostolic Administrator of Aleppo. Doi: <http://en.lpj.org/2013/04/22/celra-welcomes-new-apostolic-administrator-of-aleppo/> (retrieved May 16, 2016).

<sup>835</sup> Zenit. 20 September 2012. الاساقفة اللاتين يستنكرون بقوة الفيلم المسيء للإسلام ويدعون لمعاقبة المسؤولين عنه. Doi: <https://ar.zenit.org/articles/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%82%D9%81%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%8A%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%86%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%A8%D9%82%D9%88%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A1-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85-%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%B9%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%A8%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D8%A4%D9%88%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%B9%D9%86%D9%87> (retrieved October 3, 2013).

Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem. 20 September 2012. بيان صادر عن مؤتمر أساقفة اللاتين في الدول العربية ومجلس رؤساء الكنائس الكاثوليك في الأراضي المقدسة.

emphasising the importance of the education of future generations to ‘respect the creed of the other.’

With regards to the motivation for this statement, the Latin bishop of Amman, Mārūn Lahḥām stressed that ‘We condemn any action, any film, any report, any article that disturbs the peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims.’<sup>836</sup> Thus the condemnations by the Latin Church were seemingly primarily motivated by the potential violent reactions of Muslims; ‘especially for Muslims, they are very sensitive [...] so we, in order to prevent any violent reactions we condemn anything that hurts Muslims or Christians’ (ibid).

Additionally, the Latin priest Peter Madrous (Pītir Madrūs)<sup>837</sup> published a comment in *al-Quds* on 30 September 2012 on “The Innocence of Muslims.”<sup>838</sup> The comment did not dwell specifically on the content of the video, but rather discussed its background. Pītir Madrūs discusses the possibility of Coptic involvement, as reported in the media, and rejected this idea. He asserted instead that neither the Catholic and the Orthodox Churches, much less the Coptic Church, would support such a “film.” Thus, although the maker of the video may have been a Copt, Pītir Madrūs ascribed the producers’ mind-set to ‘the modernising and new secessionist groups the Church does not recognize,’ and has been facing, according to Madrūs, since the Reformation in the sixteenth century. He accused these groups of having always supported a Jewish state since their establishment. Pītir Madrūs equated these “modernising secessionist groups” with Evangelical groups in the United States. This reflects a strong anti-Protestant stance. However, “The Innocence of Muslims” seems to have provided him with an opportunity to discuss the plight of Palestinians and the situation of Arab Christians. The article starts by evoking the United Nations discussing the violation of the rights of Palestinians, and ends with a speech made in the name of Muslim and Christian Palestinians asserting: ‘We do not want surrender, but peace, we do not want supplication, but respect!’ In addition, Pītir Madrūs discussed the emigration of Arab Christians and noted that this had been an ongoing phenomenon since the nineteenth century. Yet he criticised the current wave of emigration as happening merely for materialistic and financial reasons and underlines the ‘vice and shame’ of Palestine being finally devoid of its Christians.

---

<sup>836</sup> Lahham, Maroun. 20 April 2015. Personal Interview. Amman.

<sup>837</sup> Peter Madrous was born in 1972 in Jerusalem and has served in several dioceses, including in South Sudan (Abouna. الأَب بِيْتَر مَدْرُوس – فلسطين. Doi: <http://www.abouna.org/authors/27> (retrieved May 16, 2016).) He has been a prolific theologian and writer (ibid), and manages his own website (Doi: <http://www.petermadros.net/ar/> (retrieved May 16, 2016).).

<sup>838</sup> Al-Quds. 30 September 2012. الإساءة إلى الإسلام وتضاؤل المسيحيين العرب وتعثر السلام. Number 15494. Page 44.

## The Syriac Orthodox Church

On 24 September 2012, *al-Quds* published a commentary by the Syriac Orthodox bishop of the Holy Land,<sup>839</sup> *mār* Sīrīyūs Malikī Marrād<sup>840</sup> (also written Mor Severios Malke Mourad<sup>841</sup>). In this commentary, a reaction to the film, the bishop insisted that he had preceded ‘our Muslim brothers’ in condemning the video, described as ‘the spread of offenses’ which aimed to sow strife. The reaction placed particular emphasis on the good relations between Christians and Muslims in the region, a fact which rested on a common history. As a result, the bishop stated that it was impossible for anyone to influence the ‘brotherly relations between us,’ strongly ‘rooted in the depth of time.’ In addition, he quoted the adage “Religion is for God and the nation is for all” (*al-dīn li-llāh wa l-waṭan li l-jamī*). Furthermore, Sīrīyūs Malikī Marrād calls on the United Nations to take measures. This statement is very interesting because, unlike the Latin and the Greek Orthodox churches, the Syriac Orthodox Church is not a “Palestinian, Arab” church and lacks significance in terms of numbers and social services. Yet the Syriac Orthodox bishop Sīrīyūs Malikī Marrād both evoked and affirmed the good relations between Christians and Muslims, unlike the two other churches.

## The Greek Catholic Melkite Church

The Greek Catholic Melkite priest of Bethlehem, Father Ya‘qūb Abū Sa‘dī, also issued a public reaction to “The Innocence of Muslims.”<sup>842</sup> He condemned the video for its timing, which he claimed pointed to the fact that its goal was to stir up strife, and denied that it was an expression of freedom of expression. Interestingly, Father Ya‘qūb Abū Sa‘dī was seemingly one of the few clerics who explicitly mentioned the background to the video, i.e. ‘the film offending (*film musī*) the “prophet Muhammad,” by an American producer.’ His call for unity rested on the fact that ‘since in the East, we live with Muslims and Jews, we have to live together in love and peace, public interest (*maṣlaḥa*), peaceful coexistence, and brotherly love.’ According to the Melkite priest, Christian-Muslim (and Christian-Muslim-Jewish coexistence) did not result from a common history or a common enemy but from a reality. This reaction was the only one which expressed unity between Christians, Muslims, and Jews.

---

<sup>839</sup> Bishop Sīrīyūs Malikī Marrād was born in 1966 in Malqyye, Syria, he was named secretary of the patriarch in 1984, he was bishop of São Paolo from 1993 to 1996 (Maier 2004, 305-312). In 1996 he was named patriarchal vicar in Jerusalem, comprising Israel, Palestine, Jordan and Egypt (ibid). There are approximately 5,000 Syriac Orthodox in the Holy Land, two thirds of them living in Bethlehem (ibid).

<sup>840</sup> Al-Quds. 24 September 2012. الحوادث الفردية لا تؤثر على علاقات المسلمين والمسيحيين. Doi: <http://www.alquds.com/news/article/view/id/386996> (retrieved June 29, 2014).

<sup>841</sup> Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch, archdiocese for the Eastern United States. Directories/World/Middle East/Holy Land. Doi: <http://syrianorthodoxchurch.org/directories/world/middle-east/> (retrieved May 16, 2016).

<sup>842</sup> Wafa PS. 13 September 2012. نأسف للإساءة للديانة الإسلامية. Doi: <http://www.wafa.ps/arabic/index.php?action=detail&id=138488> (retrieved July 18, 2014).

### ***Summary of Section 4.1.1***

All in all, the reactions to the video seem to vary, ranging from symbolic condemnation to elaborate condemnation. Few churches mentioned the backdrop to the film at all and few discussed or mentioned a Coptic background. For Bishop ‘Aṭā’ Allāh Ḥannā, this video also afforded an opportunity to condemn the Israeli occupation. The counter-arguments emphasised the moral flaws of this video and its potential threat to Palestinian unity. This unity rests on a common history (Syriac Orthodox Church), the same plight and the same enemy (‘Aṭā’ Allāh Ḥannā), and a simple fact (Melkite priest).

### **4.1.2 Other Reactions**

#### **The *Muftī***

In reaction to “The Innocence of Muslims,” the *muftī* Muḥammad Ḥusayn tried to appear active. He issued two statements; the first one on September 13 condemning “The Innocence of Muslims,” and the second one on September 19 condemning the cartoons published by *Charlie Hebdo*. He also participated in a joint Christian-Muslim conference in Ramallah (see Section 4.1.3). Besides the *muftī*, the other counterpart to official Islamic institutions, the Ministry of Islamic Endowments of the Palestinian Authority, also staged a protest in reaction to the video (see Section 4.1.3).

In his press communiqué published on 13 September 2012, *shaykh* Muḥammad Ḥusayn described the video as ‘The repetition of outrageous work against Islam and its noble Messenger’ and as ‘this immoral and uncivilised work in all its dimensions’ he attributed to ‘the thirst of a small, misguided group for instability and insecurity in the world’ and ‘worldwide suspicious, hatred and racist sides.’<sup>843</sup> In addition, Muḥammad Ḥusayn accused the video of contributing to hatred between people worldwide and considered it a ‘violation of religions and its symbols.’ In particular, he accused the West of allowing such “offenses” under the pretence of freedom of expression. Yet the *muftī* also condemned the violent reactions to the film. In an effort to counter the video, he called on international organizations to issue a law forbidding such “offenses.” He also praised the condemnations issued by the ‘churches in Palestine and the Arab countries.’

---

<sup>843</sup> Wafa PS. 13 September 2012. المفتي يثمن موقف الكنائس المستنكرة للفيلم المسيء للرسول. Doi: <http://www.wafa.ps/arabic/index.php?action=detail&id=138479> (retrieved July 18, 2014).

Similarly, when condemning the cartoons published by *Charlie Hebdo* on September 19, *mufīī* Muḥammad Ḥusayn described it as ‘this immoral work.’<sup>844</sup> The article also mentioned the ‘cartoons offending (*musī`a*) the Messenger in a French magazine.’ In this statement the *mufīī* expressed the idea of the video and the cartoons being an “offense” calling it an ‘insistence on mastering (*tafannun*) offense against Islam and its symbols,’ which ‘harm (*yusī`*) peaceful human relations.’ This time, he specifically called on the United Nations to issue a law prohibiting ‘assault on religions’ and on the Islamic Conference and the ministers of information to set up TV channels to explain Islam which would target Western countries. Furthermore, he also asked YouTube and Google to take this video down. In addition, the *mufīī* repeated his praise of the condemnations issued by the churches and Christian clerics in the region and throughout the world. To some extent, the *mufīī* might have been suggesting that there was a Christian background to this video, as he underlined his belief that condemnation on the part of the churches and clerics was all the more important since the video ‘harms the coexistence between Muslims and Christians.’

On 15 September 2012, *al-Quds* featured a short interview with Dr. Ḥannā Farrāj who condemned “The Innocence of Muslims.” As ‘an Arab Palestinian,’ he considered “The Innocence of Muslims” to constitute a provocation for the feelings of Muslims.<sup>845</sup> However, he stated that the video could not possibly harm ‘the brotherly relations between Christians and Muslims.’

#### 4.1.3 Countering “The Innocence of Muslims”

In the context of Jerusalem and the West Bank, several actions took place to express the rejection of “The Innocence of Muslims.” These reactions comprised protests, both organized and without any specific leadership, and joint Christian-Muslim conferences.

##### 4.1.3.1 Protests

First of all, protests without any specific leadership took place in several places, such as in Jerusalem on Friday, 14 September 2012 after Friday prayers;<sup>846</sup> in the refugee camp of Shu‘afāṭ on or around September 18;<sup>847</sup> in Ramallah (Rām Allāh) and al-Bireh (al-Bīra) on

<sup>844</sup> Wafa PS. 19 September 2012. المفتي العام يستهجن الإصرار على الإساءة للإسلام. Doi: <http://www.wafa.ps/arabic/index.php?action=detail&id=138838> (retrieved July 18, 2014).

<sup>845</sup> Al-Quds. 15 September 2012. الدكتور حنا فراج ل"القدس": الفيلم مس مشاعر المسيحيين قبل إخواننا المسلمين. Number 15479. Page 7.

<sup>846</sup> Al-Quds. 15 September 2012. تظاهرة غاضبة في القدس ضد الإساءة للرسول وللإسلام الشرطة الاسرائيلية تتصدى لها بالقوة. فتصيب مواطنا وتعتقل 4 آخرين. Number 15479. Page 3.

<sup>847</sup> Al-Quds. 19 September 2012. اشتباكات في مخيم شغافا احتجاجا على الفيلم المسيء للإسلام. Number 15483. Page 7.

Friday, 21 September 2012 after Friday prayers;<sup>848</sup> and in Bethlehem on Friday, 14 or 21 September 2012.<sup>849</sup> The march in Jerusalem on Friday, 14 September 2012, passed through the Damascus Gate of the old city and went up to the US embassy.<sup>850</sup> According to the Israeli police, approximately two hundred youths from the Shu‘afāt refugee camp protested and clashed with the police, throwing stones and Molotov cocktails.<sup>851</sup> The title of this article suggests that the protest was connected to the video. The protest in Bethlehem after Friday prayers in which dozens of people participated was also a protest against the economic policy of the PA.<sup>852</sup>

Secondly, several protests were led either by Sufi orders, local political leaders, or civil society. The Sufi order al-Rifā‘iyya led a march in Nablus (Nāblus) on September 15;<sup>853</sup> and the Sufi order al-Qādiriyya led a march in Jenin on September 20.<sup>854</sup> Interestingly, the march in Jenin demonstrated the ongoing importance of Sufism in Palestinian society, as local Islamic officials, such as the Sharia judge, the *mufī* of the city, and the leader of the order itself were among the high-ranking participants. The march was led by drums, *anāshīd* (hymns) and slogans.<sup>855</sup>

The minister of Islamic Endowments, Maḥmūd al-Habāsh, also staged a protest in front of his ministry in al-Bireh, which gathered together imams, preachers, the ‘*ulamā*’ and their families.<sup>856</sup> During this protest the minister delivered a speech in which he warned against the goals of this video, which he claimed were to stir up strife between Christians and Muslims, especially in the Middle East. However, he reminded his audience: ‘we are here, strongly united (*yad wāḥida*), against all these attempts.’ He called for all the people involved in the video to be punished and called on the United Nations and the international community to issue a law forbidding such “offenses.” Furthermore, the minister also announced that the ministry would launch a campaign entitled “This is Muhammad, the Messenger of God,” and specifically asked Al-Azhar and Saudi Arabia to support this initiative. Minister Maḥmūd al-Habāsh condemned

<sup>848</sup> Al-Quds. 22 September 2012. مسيرة ومهرجان في البيرة تنديداً بالفيلم السيء وإطلاق حملة نصرته للنبي محمد. Number 15486. Page 3.

<sup>849</sup> Al-Quds. ? .بييت لحم: مسيرة ضد غلاء الاسعار واستنكارا للفيلم المسيء. Doi:

<http://www.alquds.com/news/article/view/id/384656> (retrieved March 12, 2015).

<sup>850</sup> Al-Quds. 15 September 2012. تظاهرة غاضبة في القدس ضد الاساءة للرسول وللإسلام والشرطة الاسرائيلية تتصدى لها بالقوة. فتنصيب مواطننا وتعتقل 4 آخرين. Number 15479. Page 3.

<sup>851</sup> Al-Quds. 19 September 2012. اشتباكات في مخيم شعفاط احتجاجاً على الفيلم المسيء للإسلام. Number 15483. Page 7

<sup>852</sup> Al-Quds. ? .بييت لحم: مسيرة ضد غلاء الاسعار واستنكارا للفيلم المسيء.

<sup>853</sup> Al-Hayat al-Jadida, 16 September 2012. مسيرة في نابلس نصرته للرسول الأعظم. Number 6061. Page 3.

<sup>854</sup> Al-Ayyam. 21 September 2012. مسيرة في جنين احتجاجاً على الفيلم المسيء للرسول. Doi: [http://www.al-ayyam.ps/ar\\_page.php?id=b55f22by190181931Yb55f22b](http://www.al-ayyam.ps/ar_page.php?id=b55f22by190181931Yb55f22b) (retrieved May 16, 2016).

<sup>855</sup> Al-Ayyam. 21 September 2012. مسيرة في جنين احتجاجاً على الفيلم المسيء للرسول.

<sup>856</sup> Al-Hayat al-Jadida. 18 September 2012. الهباش يطالب بالعالم باستنكار الفيلم المسيء للإسلام ويدعو لسن قوانين تجرم انتهاك الأديان. Number 6067. Page 13.

the violent reactions implicitly by appealing to reactions that reflect the ‘method of Muhammad.’

On 21 September 2012, a “festival” took place in al-Bireh, which started at the mosque and during the course of which two speeches were given.<sup>857</sup> *Al-Ḥayāt al-Jadīda* reported that slogans supporting Muhammad and condemning the “offenses” were featured on the march. In her speech the governor of the province Ramallah-al-Bireh, Layla Ghannām, did not provide a clear background explanation for the video but instead asserted: ‘Irony and blackmailing is the language of those who fail,’ and further condemned the video as an ‘immoral act.’ In addition, Layla Ghannām considered “The Innocence of Muslims” – which she did not mention either as a film or by its title – to be an ‘offense (*isā’a*) against all revealed religions,’ and therefore asked for a law forbidding the production of such films.<sup>858</sup>

Interestingly, in her speech Layla Ghannām defined Palestine as a model for Christian-Muslim relations.<sup>859</sup> She reminded her audience that ‘Palestine was and will remain a model for the respect of religions and the brotherhood of Muslims and Christians.’ For the governor, this model rested upon religious events such as the fact that it is the place where Muhammad ascended to heaven and where Jesus Christ – mentioned as ‘*al-masīḥ alayhi al-salām*’ – was born. She stressed the model of Christian-Muslim relations in Palestine as a model for the world several times. She saw these relations accordingly as characterised by ‘respect, love and tolerance.’ Like other Palestinian actors, Governor Layla Ghannām praised condemnations made by ‘Christians.’

In addition, *al-Ḥayāt al-Jadīda* named a representative of the organization “The Popular Campaign for the Support of the Noble Prophet,” a certain Khālīd al-Ḥilw, who used his speech at this festival to call for an international law prohibiting such “offenses” which would be similar to the international law criminalising the denial of the Holocaust. Furthermore, he announced that his organization would work on providing the world with a true image of Muhammad in different languages. The newspaper reported that other people also delivered

---

<sup>857</sup> Al-Hayat al-Jadida. 22 September 2012. د. غنام خلال مهرجان نصره رسول الله: فلسطين ستظل نموذجاً للتأخي الإسلامي. المسيحي. Number 6067. Page 6.

<sup>858</sup> Layla Ghannām joined the Fatah Movement at an early age. She was quickly elected to the council of Ramallah and was named governor in 2010. The main task of the governor under the Palestinian Authority is to oversee the security forces and all municipal activities as well as to be in contact with the IDF. In Y Net News. 31 January 2010. First female Palestinian governor envisions change. Doi: <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3842196,00.html> (retrieved May 16, 2016).

<sup>859</sup> Al-Hayat al-Jadida. 22 September 2012. د. غنام خلال مهرجان نصره رسول الله: فلسطين ستظل نموذجاً للتأخي الإسلامي. المسيحي. Number 6067. Page 6.

speeches at this festival, among them Ḥayyān al-Idrīsī, the president of the Association for the Blind.<sup>860</sup>

On October 3, *al-Quds* also reported that a ‘sporting-religious festival’ organized by the Palestinian Union of Martial Arts took place in Tulkarim.<sup>861</sup> Several high-ranking actors participated in this conference; the deputy governor of the province of Tulkarim, Samīr Nāyifa, who is also the press speaker for the branch of Fatah in Tulkarim;<sup>862</sup> the president of the Palestinian Union of Martial Arts, Jihād ‘Awīḍa; and ‘Umār al-Badawī, the *muftī* of the province.

#### 4.1.3.2 Christian-Muslim Reactions

Joint Christian-Muslim reactions in Jerusalem and the West Bank comprised two conferences and one visit by a Christian association to the *muftī* and Ministry of Islamic Endowments. The two conferences are particularly interesting because of the language used to express national unity.

The first conference took place on 25 September 2012 in Ramallah and was organized by the Ministry of Islamic Endowments under the title “Our *muqaddasāt* ... The Symbol of our Dignity and the Face (*‘unwān*) of our Identity: The Attack on them is a Threat to our Existence.”<sup>863</sup> Thus, the conference established a clear connection between the issue of religious symbols and the Palestinian cause, and the very existence of Palestinians in Palestine and Israel. When quoting the comments, the word “*muqaddasāt*” is not translated, and its meaning will be discussed at the end of this chapter. The conference started with the recitation of verses of the Quran by an ‘*ulamā*’, then continued with speeches and ended with the issuing of a joint statement. Those who delivered speeches included Maḥmūd al-Habāsh, minister of Islamic Endowments; ‘Isā Muṣṣṭah, the spokesman of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate; *muftī* Muḥammad Ḥusayn; Bishop William al-Shūmalī; MP Muḥammad Baraka, deputy of the Israeli Knesset; and Ḥannā ‘Isā, the director of the Islamic-Christian Authority for the Protection of Jerusalem and Sacred Places (*al- hay’a al-islāmiyya al-masīḥiyya li nuṣrat al-quds wa l-muqaddasāt*).

<sup>860</sup> Israj. 28 August 2009. Doi: <http://www.israj.net/vb/showthread.php?t=3974> (retrieved April 7, 2016).

<sup>861</sup> Al-Quds. 3 October 2012. نسرة الرسول: الاتحاد الفلسطيني للفنون القتالية نجح بامتياز في المخرجان الختامي الكرمي. Number 15497. Page 26.

<sup>862</sup> Al-Fajr al-Jadid. 12 November 2014. لقاء سمير نايفة: الناطق الاعلامي لحركة فتح بطولكرم. برنامج في ذكرى الياسر - لقاء سمير نايفة: الناطق الاعلامي لحركة فتح بطولكرم. YouTube. Doi: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JpCu0AQRvxo> (retrieved May 16, 2016).

<sup>863</sup> Al-Quds, 30 September 2012. في إطار الجهود الرامية لوقف الاعتداء على الأديان و المقدسات عقدت وزارة الأوقاف و الشؤون ... رمز كرامتنا و عنوان هويتنا و الاعتداء عليها تهديد لوجودنا الدينية مؤتمرا دينيا اسلاميا مسيحيا بعنوان: مقدستنا ... رمز كرامتنا و عنوان هويتنا و الاعتداء عليها تهديد لوجودنا. Number 15494. Page 20. This source is quoted in this section as “al-Quds 30 September 2012.”



The minister of Islamic Endowments, Maḥmūd al-Habāsh condemned ‘all acts that offend (*tusī*) *muqaddasāt* in all their Islamic and Christian elements,’ and more precisely defined: ‘through racist acts of destroying and writing slogans, and the attacks on *muqaddasāt*,’<sup>864</sup> alluding to the “price-tag” on the monastery of Latrun in early September 2012, and the ‘offending film.’ He further condemned ‘these offenses against the truth (*ḥaqq*) of the prophets and the *muqaddasāt*.’ The minister thus considered Muslims and Christians in Palestine to be facing the same threats. Furthermore, he called on Jewish clerics to condemn such “offenses” clearly, on the international community to condemn this video, and on the United Nations to issue a law forbidding acts such as this. Maḥmūd al-Habāsh also signaled that the Palestinian Authority had undertaken some initiatives in response to the film.

The spokesman of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, ‘Īsā Muṣṣṭaḥ similarly stated that such “attacks” on religious symbols and institutions affected Christians and Muslims in Palestine equally and the deep solidarity between Christians and Muslims; ‘Offending the Messenger Muhammad is offending all Arabs, Muslims and their *muqaddasāt*, and it is a threat to all prophets and messengers.’ This quotation might suggest that Jesus Christ is counted amongst “the prophets and messengers” as well as the idea that Muhammad is important to Christians (al-Quds 30 September 2012). Furthermore, this solidarity is perceived as taking place within the framework of Palestinian national unity, as ‘Īsā Muṣṣṭaḥ equated ‘targeting the churches, targeting the mosques, or targeting the presence of the Palestinians on their land.’<sup>865</sup> Furthermore, the spokesman considered this conference an opportunity to send ‘a message in which we assert our unity and our love for the country and the land of peace’ (al-Quds 30 September 2012). Finally, he called on all churches worldwide to support the protection of the al-Aqṣā mosque. Thus, ‘Īsā Muṣṣṭaḥ established a shared destiny between Christians and Muslims.

This idea was similarly expressed by the *mufīī* of Jerusalem and the Palestinian homelands, Muḥammad Ḥusayn, stating that ‘offending the prophets like the film offending the Messenger Muhammad (PBUH) and the mocking cartoons, and what happened to the prophet ‘Īsā through offending slogans on the walls of churches’ equally ‘affects the feelings of the believers’ (al-Quds 30 September 2012). Yet the *mufīī* asserted that all these attempts at stirring up ‘unrest and strife between the sons of this society [underlined by the author]’ would fail. In

كل! الأفعال التي تسيء إلى المقدسات بكلّ مكوناتها الإسلامية والمسيحية (...) من خلال الأعمال العنصرية من تخريب وكتابة الشعارات “والاعتداءات على المقدسات”

<sup>865</sup> Wafa PS. 25 September 2012. المؤتمر الإسلامي المسيحي يدعو رجال الدين والحاخامات اليهود لرفض الاعتداءات على المقدسات. Doi: <http://www.wafa.ps/arabic/index.php?action=detail&id=139189> (retrieved July 18, 2016).

this quotation the term “sons of this society” has been underlined due to the use of these rather neutral words to designate the unity which exists despite Palestinian religious pluralism, particularly when compared to Lebanese and Egyptian reactions to the film. Furthermore, the *mufī* called on Christians from Palestine and Jerusalem to return to their homes, though it is not quite clear what he meant by this.

Bishop William al-Shūmalī represented the Latin patriarch Fu’ād Ṭwāl and delivered his speech. In this speech, the bishop expressed the patriarch’s faith in the national Palestinian unity - ‘the brotherly convergence’ – in the context of repeated attacks, especially following the clash concerning the al-Aqṣā mosque (al-Quds 30 September 2012). He also criticised the West for its ‘indifference’ regarding the ‘mockery of others’ and repeated the moral statement formulated in the statement the Catholic bishops made in Amman; one’s personal freedom ends where the freedom of the other begins. Throughout his speech, Bishop al-Shūmalī seemed to distinguish between Christians and Muslims, since he considered this conference an assertion of ‘our unity, Muslims and Christians.’

Following the speech by the president of judges, *shaykh* Yūsif Id’īs, the deputy of the Israeli Knesset, Muḥammad Baraka, gave a short speech in which he asserted the need for the world to learn from this Eastern model of pluralism (al-Quds 30 September 2012). In so doing he drew a direct line between the so-called Pact of ‘Umar (‘Omariān Pact’) and contemporary coexistence in the Middle East. In particular, Muḥammad Baraka called on the West to learn from this pact, described as ‘One of the greatest documents on tolerance in history.’ This speech is very interesting for two reasons. Firstly, it shows how Christian and Muslim leaders make recourse to certain events in history to explain, praise, assert, embellish and understand the present. Secondly, the presence of a Knesset MP at this conference suggests ongoing connections between Palestinians from varying political contexts, or at least between Israel and the West Bank.

In his speech, the director of the Islamic-Christian Authority for the Protection of Jerusalem and Sacred Places,<sup>866</sup> Ḥannā ‘Īsā, harshly denounced Israel for its ‘Practices of persecution and extremism against the revealed religions in the holy city [Jerusalem]’ (al-Quds 30 September 2012). He established a connection between this ‘racist fanaticism’ and the

---

<sup>866</sup> This authority comprises important members such as Bishop ‘Aṭā’ Allāh Ḥannā, former Patriarch Michel Sabbah, the Protestant Bishop Munib Yunan and Father Naim Ateeq, who were named by the PA. In Al-Quds. تسمية أعضاء مجلس رؤساء الهيئة الإسلامية المسيحية لنصرة القدس والمقدسات على النحو الآتي. Doi: [http://www.elquds.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=101&Itemid=93&lang=ar](http://www.elquds.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=101&Itemid=93&lang=ar) (retrieved May 16, 2016).

‘ethnic, religious, and political conflicts’ the Middle East has been facing since the 1940s, the further spread of which he believes Palestinians need to stop.

In a long final statement, the participants equate ‘*al-dīn/al-muqaddas*’ (al-Quds 30 September 2012). Subsequently, “*muqaddasāt*” are defined in this statement as ‘our religious and moral values built on these *muqaddasāt*, be they persons, institutions, places of worship or even symbols.’ Furthermore, the “offense” represented by “The Innocence of Muslims” is equated with the price-tags recently affecting churches. The video is described as ‘[its practices of] offending the prophets, as happened lately with the prophet of mercy [underlined by the author] (PBUH) through a film offending his message and his great life and through cartoons mocking his noble person.’ Similarly, Jesus Christ is described as ‘the prophet of love (*nabī al-mahabbā*) [underlined by the author], peace be upon him.’ These practices, both the video and the price-tag, are viewed as offending the feelings of Palestinians; ‘it offends and violates our religious feelings and emotions,’ and is thus rejected by both Christians and Muslims equally. All of these “offenses” stand accused of causing sectarian strife which ‘threatens the social woven fabric (*al-nasīj al-ijtimā’ī*),’ thus again using a rather neutral term. Furthermore, the participants of the conference called on the ‘revealed religions’ not to surrender to these attempts, called for the international community to issue an agreement forbidding an ‘attack on *al-dīn/al-muqaddas*,’ as well as enjoining Jewish clerics and rabbis to take a clear position condemning such offenses. In addition, the participants stated that no religion justifies this kind of offence.

On 9 October 2012, *al-Quds* reported on a conference organized in the province of Ramallah-al-Bireh by the Charitable Society of Lod (*jam‘iyyat al-ludd al-khayriyya*),<sup>867</sup> in an article bearing the title “The Support of the Messenger (PBUH), of all Prophets and Messengers.”<sup>868</sup> Three people were reported to have given speeches, while several other high-ranking people also participated; including the director of the Department for Research in Preaching at the Palestinian Ministry of Islamic Endowments.<sup>869</sup>

The president of this charitable association, Nāṣir Ramānah, expressed Palestinian unity through the use of several interesting terms: ‘Our Palestinian people, his Muslims and Christians, will remain its thorns in the throat of occupation, because we are the original people

---

<sup>867</sup> Al-Quds. 9 October 2012. لقاء اسلامي - مسيحي لنصرة الأنبياء والمقدسات في جمعية اللد الخيرية، Number 15503. Page 20.

<sup>868</sup> Nsrawy. 8 October 2012. القيادات الدينية الاسلامية والمسيحية ترفض التطاول على الرموز الدينية وعلى دور العبادة. Doi: <http://nsrawy.net/den/Article/1011/html> (retrieved May 16, 2016).

<sup>869</sup> Al-Quds. 9 October 2012. لقاء اسلامي - مسيحي لنصرة الأنبياء والمقدسات في جمعية اللد الخيرية.

and we are proud of our social and national woven fabric [underlined by the author]<sup>870</sup> (ibid). Later on, the idea of being in the same “trench” is expressed; ‘the Muslims stand in one trench with their Christian brothers,’ an image which is suggestive of the feeling of being at a standstill in an immobile war. Seemingly, the issue of “The Innocence of Muslims,” which was not mentioned explicitly in this speech, was placed in the broader context of ‘all forms of attacks on mosques, churches and houses of worship,’ and ‘the attacks the Islamic sacred places are exposed to’ that were widely condemned by the ‘Christian brothers.’ Nāṣir Ramānah also asserted that the purpose of this conference was the protection of Muhammad – although he did not specify from what he required protection –, the condemnation of the clash over al-Aqṣā, and the price-tag of a church. In particular, he stressed that the role of those participating was to raise awareness among ‘the sons of the united people who bow to occupation, Muslims and Christians.’<sup>871</sup>

Bishop ‘Aṭā’ Allāh Ḥannā likewise expressed a deep sense of solidarity, stating that any attack on al-Aqṣā is an attack on Christians, and vice versa: ‘we are one body’ (ibid).

Several other imams and Islamic actors also gave speeches but their content was not covered by *al-Quds*. The conference’s final statement reiterated its condemnation of the participants of ‘any attack on the prophets, [and] Islamic and Christian sacred places (*muqaddasāt*)’ (ibid).

On Sunday, 30 September 2012, a delegation from the Association for the Development of the Christian Quarter in the Old City (*jam ‘iyyat ṭaṭwīr ḥārat al-naṣārā dākhil aswār al-balda al-qadīma*) was received by *shaykh* ‘Izzām al-Khaṭīb, the director of the section for Islamic Endowments and Affairs at al-Aqṣā mosque, the *muftī*, and several other non-specified actors.<sup>872</sup> The leader of the delegation and president of this association, Bāssim Sa‘īd stated: ‘It is a national and religious duty that we stand side by side with our Muslim brothers’ and condemned “The Innocence of Muslims” (without mentioning its title) and the cartoons which ‘stir up strife between Islam and Christianity.’ The *muftī* stated that the Office of Islamic Endowments is a home for all Muslims and Christians in Jerusalem. Interestingly, the *muftī* further insisted on the unity between Christians and Muslims, both in terms of ‘wounds’ and ‘history’ and underlined the importance of the Christian presence in Jerusalem.

<sup>870</sup> “أن شعبنا الفلسطيني بمسلميه ومسيحييه سيظل شوكة في حلق الاحتلال لأننا شعب أصيل ونعتز بنسيجنا الاجتماعي والوطني.”

<sup>871</sup> “لتوطيد جسور الود والتواصل بين أبناء الشعب الواحد الذي يرضخ تحت الاحتلال من مسلمين ومسيحيين.”

<sup>872</sup> Al-Quds. 30 September 2012. وفد مسيحي يزور أوقاف القدس ويستنكر الفيلم المسيء للنبي. Doi: <http://www.alquds.com/news/article/view/id/388326> (retrieved May 16, 2016).

#### 4.1.4 The Issue of “Price-Tag”

As the reactions throughout this section have shown, the video “The Innocence of Muslims” was placed in the same context as the so-called price-tag, particularly since several events of price-tag took place during the controversy over this video.

Patriarch Fu’ād Ṭwāl, Bishop Giorgio Lingua,<sup>873</sup> and former Patriarch Michel Sabbah issued a statement in connection with the attack on the Latroun monastery which occurred in early September 2012 in which they asked: ‘What is going on in Israeli society today that permits Christians to be scapegoated [sic!] and targeted by these acts of violence?’<sup>874</sup>

On October 2, Jewish extremists under the leadership of a high-ranking member of the Likud party wanted to pray on the Dome of the Rock. At around the same time, slogans targeting Jesus Christ were found on the Franciscan monastery, Zion.<sup>875</sup>

Two high-ranking visits and one conference took place in reaction to these events. On October 4, *al-Quds* reported on a Christian-Muslim visit to the Zion monastery undertaken by *mufī* Muḥammad Ḥusayn and Bishop ‘Aṭā’ Allāh Ḥannā.<sup>876</sup> On October 4, the Latin bishop William al-Shūmalī and a number of priests visited the Dome of the Rock. They were received by the *mufī*, and the director of the Islamic Endowments and al-Aqṣā Affairs.<sup>877</sup> *Mufī* Muḥammad Ḥusayn reportedly stated that Jerusalem had always been a model of brotherhood between Christians and Muslims (*ibid*).

Finally, on 4 October 2012, the Liqa Center for Religious and Heritage Studies in the Holy Land (*markaz al-liqā’ li l-dirāsāt al-dīniyya wa l-turāthiyya fī l-arāḍī al-muqaddasa*), an organization which is led by former Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah,<sup>878</sup> organized a conference in cooperation with several organizations; the Authority of Ulema in Palestine, the Sabil Ecumenical Centre in Jerusalem (*markaz al-sabīl*), the Harmony Centre in Bethlehem (*markaz wi’ām*), and the Association for Social Development in Haifa (*jam’iyyat al-ṭaṭwīr al-ijtimā’ī*).<sup>879</sup> The purpose of this conference was to condemn the ‘attacks on prophets, messengers, Christians and Islamic sacred places (*muqaddasāt*)’ that are ‘supported by the

<sup>873</sup> *Haaretz* wrongly introduced Giorgio Lingua as the bishop of Jordan, but he was actually the bishop of Iraq.

<sup>874</sup> *Haaretz*. 5 September 2012. Monastery near Jerusalem torched; Catholics blame Israeli ‘hatred.’ Number 28380. Volume 92. Pages 1 and 2.

<sup>875</sup> *Al-Quds*. 3 October 2012. رسالة عاجلة إلى العاهل الأردني التدخل لوقف هذه الانتهاكات. اعتداء على المقدسات الإسلامية والمسيحية. في القدس. Number 15497. Pages 1 and 34.

<sup>876</sup> *Al-Quds*. 4 October 2012. وفد مقدسي إسلامي مسيحي يزور دير جبل صهيون متضامنا. Number 15498.

<sup>877</sup> *Al-Quds*. 5 October 2012. رجال الحين المسيحي يتضامون مع المسجد الأقصى في زيارة أخوية. Number 15499. Page 5.

<sup>878</sup> *Al-Liqa Centre*. AL- Liqaâ€™ Center Board of Trustees. Doi: <http://www.al-liqacenter.org.ps/eng/aboutus/board.php> (retrieved May 16, 2016).

<sup>879</sup> *Al-Quds*. 5 October 2012. مؤتمر بيت لحم يدين التطاول على الرسل والأنبياء والاعتداء على المقدسات. Number 15499. Page 5.

authorities' (ibid). In particular, the conference insisted on the need to 'respect the specificity of religions as a basis for stability, and peace, as well as for local, regional and global security,' and demanded the United Nations criminalise such "attacks" in 'literature, pictures, sculpture, and different arts, films, or...' (ibid). All in all, the Israeli occupation was considered by the participants to be the 'cause for all the excesses against the dignity of the Palestinian person and the violation of his *muqaddasāt*' (ibid). Thus an explicit connection is made between the presence of the Palestinians and the Israeli occupation. Accordingly, "price-tag" constituted a direct threat to the Palestinians.

In opening the conference, Father Geries Khoury, president of the Liqa Centre, reiterated the notion of the "attacks" against churches and mosques taking place under the protection of the Israeli army; 'the goal of these acts is to burn our unity and the sanctity of our personal security,' and classed these attacks as 'conspiracies.'<sup>880</sup>

The other speakers likewise connected these "*muqaddasāt*" with the Palestinian identity and presence. The Greek Catholic Melkite bishop of Haifa, Elias Chaqour (Ilyās Shaqqūr) asserted that 'the *muqaddasāt* are the symbol of our Palestinian identity,' and that Palestinians had been defending them for sixty-four years (ibid). The representative of the governor of Bethlehem, 'Abd al-Fatāḥ Ḥimāyil, stated that Palestinian pluralism should be a model for the world and 'the Palestinians meet under the roof of their nationality (*waṭaniyya*)' (ibid). Bishop 'Aṭā' Allāh Ḥannā labelled the "offenses" and "price-tags" 'colonial plans aiming to divide Palestinian unity into communities (*tawā'if*) and parties' (ibid). In addition, he reminded Palestinian Christians of their connection to the country; 'We, as Eastern Christians in this country, we have a close belonging and connection to this Holy Land in which Lord Jesus Christ (*Yasū 'al-Masīḥ*) lived and in which everything was presented to humanity' (ibid). Finally, the director of the Islamic-Christian Authority for the Protection of Jerusalem and Sacred Places, Ḥannā 'Īsā, made Jewish clerics responsible for these acts, reasoning that they play 'a big role in educating Jews to violence' (ibid).

<sup>880</sup> Calam 1. 4 October 2012. معا ضد العنصرية بيت لحم - مؤتمر في الاول في موقع كلام الاول في مؤتمر - معا ضد العنصرية بيت لحم  
Doi: <http://www.calam1.org/a/4431/%D8%AE%D8%A7%D8%B5-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B7%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%B9%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%87-%D8%AD%D9%86%D8%A7-%D9%8A%D9%88%D8%AC%D9%87-%D8%B1%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%B1-%D9%85%D9%88%D9%82%D8%B9-%D9%83%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%84-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B1-%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A7-%D8%B6%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%AA-%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%85/> (retrieved May 16, 2016).

This conference once again hints at the connection between Palestinians in Israel and the West Bank. It expressed more vividly the threat which “price-tag” – expressed through the desecration of religious places – allegedly posed to the very presence of Palestinians. It was viewed as a consequence of occupation and as being promoted by it.

### ***Summary of Section 4.1***

Overall, “The Innocence of Muslims” was viewed as an offense and was very often framed within the context of “price-tag,” which in itself was considered a threat to the Palestinian presence and identity. In this regard, there seems to be an elaborate discourse, as hinted at by the various discussions over “religious symbols” and “*muqaddasāt*.” These actors viewed themselves as the embodiment of the Palestinian plight. To some extent, this Palestinian context was viewed as a model. Yet these discourses also only demonstrated limited awareness of a decreasing and threatened Palestinian Christian presence.

## **4.2 Arab-Israelis: An Indivisible Component of the Palestinian People**

In Israel, “Arab Israeli” reactions to the film were generally clearly dominated by leftist parties, such as the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality, rather than by Islamic and Islamist movements, like the Islamic Movement which was mentioned in the introduction to this chapter. This section will first look at the reactions of Israeli officials (4.2.1), then at statements by “Arab Israeli” organizations and leaders (4.2.2), then at protests and, finally, at a joint Christian-Muslim protest in the city of Shefa Amr (Shifā ‘Amr) (4.2.3). This section relies in particular on reports by the leftist Arab Israeli newspaper, *al-Ittiḥād*.

### **4.2.1 Official Israeli Reactions**

Both the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior publicly denied allegations arising from early reports by the Western media which suggested the involvement of an American-Israeli citizen, “Sam Bacile,” in the production of “The Innocence of Muslims.” On September 12, the Israeli minister of the Interior denied that “Sam Bacile” was a holder of Israeli nationality.<sup>881</sup> Similarly, the deputy foreign minister, Paul Hirsch, insisted that the ‘film’ had no connections with Israel and condemned “The Innocence of Muslims.”<sup>882</sup>

---

<sup>881</sup> Al-Quds. 13 September 2012..Number 15477. Page 20 اسرائيل تندد بالفيلم المسيء للإسلام وتنفي اي علاقة لها به..

<sup>882</sup> Haaretz. 14 September 2012. Jerusalem police brace for protests over anti-Islam movie. Number 28386. Volume 92. Page.

In addition, *al-Quds* reported on the condemnation of the video by Michael Melchior, whom the newspaper described as an ‘Israeli rabbi.’<sup>883</sup> *Al-Quds* also introduced Michael Melchior as the former deputy foreign minister, former minister of social affairs, and as a supporter of interreligious dialogue (ibid). Michael Melchior additionally holds the honorary title of Chief Rabbi of Norway. In his statement, Michael Melchior stated that he expresses himself ‘in my capacity as a Jew and an Israeli rabbi,’ and condemned the film for being ‘indecent.’ Interestingly, he did not deny the involvement of Sam Bacile, who ‘defines himself as a Jew and an Israeli.’ He particularly condemned the insulting language used in this video. Furthermore, Michael Melchior considers the video an offense against millions of Muslims and against ‘the prophet of Islam, Muhammad.’ Interestingly, the rabbi rejected the pretence of freedom of speech, and viewed it instead as an ‘indecent and wicked’ abuse of this ‘freedom of expression and right to criticise [,which are] are two of the most sacred principles of democracy.’

#### 4.2.2 Statements by Arab Israeli Leaders

This subsection comprises the official statements of the Greek Orthodox priest Gabriel Naddāf on September 14; the Latin priest Amjad Ṣabāra; the president of the district of Nazareth, Rāmiz Jirāyīsī, on September 14; MP Muḥammad Baraka on September 14; the Communist Party and the Democratic Front of Haifa on September 21; as well as the MP Ḥannā Swayd on September 21.

In his condemnation of “The Innocence of Muslims,” Father Gabriel Naddāf relied on theological arguments to counter what he called ‘the film’ and ‘the immoral work.’<sup>884</sup> He insisted on the Gospel’s prohibition of ‘despising and insulting any human being,’ thus equating the human being with the sanctity of religion, and asserting that Christianity and Jesus Christ were equally targeted by this video, also referring to the *The Da Vinci Code* and *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Interestingly, although the priest mentioned his love and respect for his ‘Muslim brothers,’ he stated: ‘Christians will defend Islam and Muslims as long as [underlined by the author] we live in one society,’ ‘we are in one line against any human being who tries to ignite strife.’ The theological connection between Islam and Christianity is not framed in terms of shared values, but rather through reminders that Christianity is mentioned in the Quran. In addition, Gabriel Naddāf called on the United Nations, and especially on the UN Security

<sup>883</sup> Al-Quds. 12 September 2012. حاخام اسرئيلي يندد بفيلم اميركي مسيء للاسلام. Doi: <http://www.alquds.com/news/article/view/id/384285> (retrieved April 3, 2016).

<sup>884</sup> Al-Arab. 14 September 2012. الأب جبرائيل نداف يعلن عن رفضه التام للفيلم المسيء للرسول: انه عمل غير اخلاقي. Doi: <http://www.alarab.com/Article/485435> (retrieved May 16, 2016).



Council, to issue a law criminalising such offenses similar to an alleged law forbidding Anti-Semitism.

The Latin priest of the church of Our Lady in Nazareth, Father Amjad Ṣabāra, condemned “The Innocence of Muslims” as ‘offending and attacking the Islamic creed’ and for ‘attack[ing] the sanctity of religions and human dignity.’<sup>885</sup>

In his condemnation of “The Innocence of Muslims,” the mayor of Nazareth and member of Hadash, Rāmiz Jirāyīsī<sup>886</sup> situated his criticism within a nationalist framework. On September 14, *al-Ittiḥād* reported that Rāmiz Jirāyīsī published a statement in which he ‘harshly condemned any practice that offends or violates religious symbols and creeds,’ in particular the latest ‘film’ ‘offending (*yusī*)’ the prophet Muhammad and the Islamic religion.’<sup>887</sup> Furthermore he considered it ‘racist,’ and he rejected any attempts to justify it, stating that the video was produced under the pretence of freedom of speech but only led to more ‘hatred, tension, conflicts, and violence.’ Interestingly, the mayor then went on to examine the current situation in the region, which faced ‘continued occupation, colonization, and the denial of rights to Palestinians,’ and is allegedly bearing witnesses to an increase in hatred directed at Arabs and Palestinians. This statement is interesting as it shows how the offense of a religion is criticised in non-religious, non-sectarian, and national terms; from this reaction it is unclear whether Rāmiz Jirāyīsī is Christian or Muslim.

In his comment on “The Innocence of Muslims” published on 14 September 2012, in *al-Ittiḥād*, MP Muḥammad Baraka focused more on the background of the video.<sup>888</sup> Although stating that he would not justify the killing of the US ambassador in Benghazi, he nevertheless asserted that he did understand the anger. He considered the video in particular ‘an attempt [...] to offend Islam and Muslims and ignite a cosmic fire’ to further Islamophobia and justify US control. Interestingly, the deputy viewed the video as ‘targeting me personally.’

The joint statement issued by the Communist Party and the Democratic Front (Hadash) in Haifa likewise framed the criticism of “The Innocence of Muslims” in a nationalist context, within an anti-colonial and leftist framework. This statement was published on September 21

---

<sup>885</sup> Nsrawy Net. ?? . :Doi . . (ص) الناصرة بلد المحبة: شخصيات مسيحية تستنكر المس برسول الله محمد (ص) . . Doi: <http://nsrawy.net/NewArticle/538/html> (retrieved May 16, 2016).

<sup>886</sup> Rāmiz Jirāyīsī is a member of the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality and was elected mayor of Nazareth in 1994 by the municipal council, into which he was first elected in 1978. In addition, in 2009, he was elected chair-person of the Committee for Arab local authorities. In Facebook. Ramiz Jaraisy - سياسي سياسي . Doi: [https://ar-ar.facebook.com/Ramiz.Jaraisy/info/?tab=page\\_info](https://ar-ar.facebook.com/Ramiz.Jaraisy/info/?tab=page_info) (retrieved May 16, 2016).

<sup>887</sup> Al-Ittiḥād. 14 September 2012. الفلم القذر الذي يسيء إلى النبي محمد والدين الإسلامي. Page 5.

<sup>888</sup> Al-Ittiḥād. 14 September 2012. الفلم المنحط ضد الرسول صناعة المزبلة الأمريكية. Page 5.

by *al-Ittiḥād*.<sup>889</sup> It referred to the video as ‘a film of strife and provocation,’ ‘this shameless offense,’ “offending” ‘all Arabs, Muslims and Non-Muslims, civilised humanity.’ Furthermore, the two parties criticised the film for having been produced under the pretence of freedom of speech and, in this regard, they roundly denounced the United States for not forbidding it. Yet the Communist Party and the Democratic Front saw in the timing of this crisis the true goal of the video: to sow conflicts and colonialism. They especially warned against:

Someone [who] tries to plant discord and fuel sectarian strife between the Arab and Islamic peoples; as all plans of strife have done, whether between Christians or Muslims, between Sunna and Shia, to divert the people from the true enemy, dragging [them] to the innovation [called] “the clash of civilizations.”

Accordingly, this rhetoric was used to justify the war on Afghanistan, Iraq and the ‘division of Syria on a sectarian basis.’ In this context, the two parties were able to connect the issue of this video with the Palestinian issue: ‘The Arab Palestinian people whose rights, dignity, and sacred Islamic and Christian places have been violated.’

The MP Ḥannā Swayd and member of the Democratic Front<sup>890</sup> invoked similar reflections and criticisms of colonialism and the West in his statement condemning “The Innocence of Muslims.”<sup>891</sup> Overall, Ḥannā Swayd considered the video an “attack” by “the West” on Arabs as a whole and not on Islam alone, and when discussing his theory, he employed the terms of classical Islamic theology, as will be shown below. Lastly he moved on to discuss the situation of Christians in the Arab world. Tellingly, Ḥannā Swayd entitled his article “The Defence of Islam and Arabism: Not Only Important for Muslims!!”

Ḥannā Swayd initially provides a short overview of the video; an “artistic” production,’ opposing ‘Islam and the personality of the noble prophet,’ and its spread on modern media. However, Ḥannā Swayd then goes on to express his idea that this video actually seeks to target the ‘Arab *umma*’ in order to control it. As part of this argument, he establishes a genealogy of similar events, such as the *Satanic Verses* by Salman Rushdie, or the so-called Danish cartoons. The terms Ḥannā Swayd uses in this regard are surprising. For instance, Salman Rushdie is introduced as a ‘Muslim, foreign non-Arab (*muslim a jamī ghayr arabī*) [underlined by the author].’ The so called Danish cartoons are introduced as ‘Danish, European

<sup>889</sup> Al-Ittiḥād. 21 September 2012. Malḥaq al-Jum‘a. الاستفزاز و الفتنة و الفيلم يستنكران في حيفا يستنكران في الجبهة في حيفا يستنكران في حيفا يستنكران في حيفا! Page 6.

<sup>890</sup> Times of Israel. 19 September 2013. Christian MK calls for Knesset Christmas tree. Doi: <http://www.timesofisrael.com/christian-mk-calls-for-knesset-christmas-tree/> (retrieved May 16, 2016).

<sup>891</sup> Swayd, Hanna. 21 September 2012. الدفاع عن الاسلام والعروبة: ليس مهمة المسلمين وحدهم. Al-Ittiḥād. Malḥaq al-Jum‘a. Pages 4 and 5.

(*faranjī*) [underlined by the author] cartoons.’ In the first two examples, the author uses old-fashioned terms such as *a jamī* and *faranjī*, the first distinguishing between Arab Muslims and non-Arab Muslims, used first and foremost for Persians in late Umayyad and early Abbasid times, while the second word is an old-fashioned term used to designate Europeans. Another interesting quote can be found in his description of the background of the video’s producer, Niqūlā Bāsīlī Niqūlā, as ‘a film-producer of Coptic Egyptian origin (*min aṣl miṣrī qibtī*) [underlined by the author].’ This quote suggests the absence of sectarian logic in the Palestinian case, even though this might be rather non-intentional here. The expression “of Coptic Egyptian origin (*min aṣl miṣrī qibtī*)” implies that (original) national belonging prevails over religious affiliation, but that, in fact, the author no longer considers Niqūlā Bāsīlī Niqūlā a “true Egyptian.” This statement is interesting when compared with reactions in Egypt, in particular, where the makers of the video were almost systematically referred to as “Copts of the diaspora.”

The deputy sees the West behind all these acts and he accuses it of allowing such practices under the guise of freedom of speech. Ḥannā Swayd particularly denounces the double standard in the West which promotes freedom of speech on the one hand while simultaneously limiting it on the other. He cites the theory of evolution, climate change, and any criticism of ‘the Israeli policies of occupation and colonization’ as examples which prove the limits of freedom of speech in the West. He does, however, warn against generalization, as there are ‘liberal circles’ in the West. Interestingly, the idea that ‘The capitalist system is behind every devil wind’ reminds the reader that Ḥannā Swayd hails from a leftist, communist background.

While the article condemns the video and provides a detailed criticism of Western practices of freedom of speech, it is also an article about Christians in the Arab world, whom he refers to as ‘Arab Christians’ (*al- masṭhiyyūn al- ‘arab*). In so doing, Ḥannā Swayd also promotes the concept of “Arabism.” He provides the reader with his own definition of Arabism or “Arab civilization:” ‘as a firm civilization that refuses submission,’ which ‘formed the greenhouse and the nurse for Islam and the prophet Muhammad.’ Thus, quite naturally, MP Ḥannā Swayd acknowledges Islam and Muhammad, ‘son of Abdullah, who is undisputedly considered the greatest Arab figure the Arab community (*al-umma al- ‘arabiyya*) has produced over time.’<sup>892</sup> Interestingly, when evoking this Arab community or nation, Ḥannā Swayd refers to a neutral concept, “*umma*,” used, for instance, in the Pact of Medina which established the rights and duties of its citizens. In a similar manner, Christianity is defined as a genuinely Arab religion; ‘the Arab Christian sacred places (*muqaddasāt*) and symbols.’ At the same time,

<sup>892</sup> “أعظم شخصية عربية أنبتتها الأمة العربية على مر العصور،”

Ḥannā Swayd again uses old-fashioned Islamic terms, such as ‘the Lord Christ and Nazarene symbols (*rumūz naṣrāniyya*) [underlined by the author],’ a term which is rarely used, if not rejected, by Arab Christians.

Interestingly, nothing in this article seems to discuss or try to justify either the Arab identity of Christians in the Middle East or the question of their belonging. The approach taken by this article seemingly implies that Christians inherently belong to the Arab community. The MP likewise establishes a history of coexistence at the very beginning of this article: ‘The Arab Christians are witnesses to the tolerant Arab civilization.’<sup>893</sup> Yet, Ḥannā Swayd appears to question the loyalty of Christian Arabs, as he calls on them: ‘[because of] their loyalty to their community (*umma*), they must defend them [?] And be at the forefront of the ranks to fend off the agitators of Islam, Arabism and the Arabs.’

This question of the loyalty of Christian Arabs is discussed at length by Ḥannā Swayd. He raises the question of the position of Christian Arabs on the Arab Spring (which he does not refer to as the “Arab Spring,” but rather as a ‘popular movement’), and in particular on the war in Syria. Furthermore, Ḥannā Swayd raises the issue of the clashes between Copts and Muslims in Egypt and the attacks on churches in Iraq. He discusses a number of theories, such as the notion that Christians allegedly rely on the West, a concept he rejects; and the suggestion that the West is aiming to empty the Middle East of its Christians in a collusion between ‘Western colonialism’ and ‘takfiri Islamist [...] forces,’ something, he states, ‘I do not believe in.’ Lastly he mentions the situation in the Palestinian Territories and Israel, in particular the attack on the monastery of Latrun, the burning of pages of the New Testament, the ‘distortion of the figure of Lady Mary on TV programs,’ and concludes ‘[these are] practices we are used to.’ However, Ḥannā Swayd does not consider such events “attacks” against Christianity; ‘rather, these sacred places and symbols are subjected to attacks and distortion in their fundamentally Arab Palestinian being.’<sup>894</sup> As a result, in the name of Palestinian Christian Arabs, Ḥannā Swayd concludes: ‘We stand with our community (*umma*).’

In mentioning the “offenses” against Christian and Muslim religious symbols and contents, MP Ḥannā Swayd defined Arabism as the sole framework within which to comprehend these “offenses.” The identity and belonging of Palestinian Christians to the Arab community is not discussed. Due to their inherent, nay biological belonging to this community,

---

<sup>893</sup> “المسيحيون العرب شهود حق على الحضارة العربية السمحة”

<sup>894</sup> “بل أن هذه المقدسات والرموز تعرضت للاعتداء والتشويه لكونه عربية فلسطينية بالأساس”

Palestinian Christians likewise condemned the video. Yet while he used terms typical of classical Islam, he did not use modern terms and concepts such as “*waṭan*” at all.

#### 4.2.3 Protests

The media only reported on two protests in Israel. The first one was staged by the Islamic Movement in Tel Aviv, where a dozen members of the northern, more radical branch, protested on 13 September 2012 at the US embassy.<sup>895</sup> The second protest took place in the northern city of Acre after Friday prayers on 14 September 2012.<sup>896</sup>

In addition, there is a report about one single joint Christian-Muslim protest, which took place in the mainly Arab Israeli city of Shefa Amr (Shifā ‘Amr). This city is an important “Arab Israeli” city which has witnessed a case of Jewish extremism. In August 2005, the Israeli soldier Eden Natan-Zada took a bus to Shifā ‘Amr where he killed four Palestinians and wounded seventeen more.<sup>897</sup> He was immediately lynched by local inhabitants of Shifā ‘Amr and six people were prosecuted for their involvement in Zada’s killing (ibid).

This protest was organized by Hadash, i.e. the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality on Saturday 15 September 2012 and reportedly gathered together more than one hundred people from the city, among them high-ranking political and religious figures who delivered speeches.<sup>898</sup> In particular, *al-Ittiḥād* reported that the protest was led by the MP Muḥammad Baraka, presented here as the leader of Hadash, and whom we mentioned in a joint Christian-Muslim conference in section 4.1.3; Nāhiḍ Khāzim, the governor of the district Shifā ‘Amr; his deputy Jirīs Ḥannā; his deputy Aḥmad Ḥamdī; as well as most of the members of the city’s municipal council. Furthermore, the newspaper reported that the leader of the Druze community, *shaykh* Yūsif Abū ‘Abīd; the governor Nāhiḍ Khāzim; MP Muḥammad Baraka; Father Fu’ād Dāghir; the secretary of the professional associations of Western Galilea, Ḥasīb ‘Abūd; a member of the charitable society Elderly Home, Nāyif ‘Aliyān; and Father Bissām al-Dayr all delivered speeches during this protest.

However, there are several videos related to this protest that display a somewhat different picture. These videos suggest that the protest was attended by no more than a few

---

<sup>895</sup> Haaretz. 14 September 2012. Jerusalem police brace for protests over anti-Islam movie. Number 28386. Volume 92.

<sup>896</sup> Al-Hayat al-Jadida. 15 September 2012. مسيرات جماهيرية في محافظات الوطن تندد بالفيلم المسيء للنبي الكريم. Number 6060. Page 4.

<sup>897</sup> The Electronic Intifada. 23 December 2013. Community which confronted Israeli killer suffered years of harassment. Doi: <https://electronicintifada.net/content/community-which-confronted-israeli-killer-suffered-years-harassment/13033> (retrieved May 16, 2016).

<sup>898</sup> Al-Ittiḥād. 16 September 2012. شفاعمرو موحدة في التنديد بالفيلم المسيء للنبي العربي والإسلام. Page 5.

dozen people, also comprising a few women and Druze clerics, and was held on a street corner, where passing cars sometimes made the speeches difficult to understand.<sup>899</sup> Furthermore, to some extent the protest seemed to be organized by amateurs, for example, the person holding the microphone could not remember the name of the priest speaking, Father Bissām al-Dayr.<sup>900</sup>

*Al-Ittiḥād* begins by reporting on the speech the Druze imam, *shaykh* Yūsif Abū ‘Abīd delivered at the protest.<sup>901</sup> In this short speech, he underlined that ‘Islam, its prophet and its teachings are too big and too great for an offending film to harm it,’ and formulates an idea that will be mentioned in other speeches: ‘violating the prophet Muhammad (PBUH) [...] is violating the whole humanity.’ Yūsif Abū ‘Abīd also opened his speech by addressing the audience as follows: ‘In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.’<sup>902</sup> Furthermore, he seemed to allude to the involvement of ‘Copts of the diaspora’ in this video.

*Al-Ittiḥād* subsequently reported that the mayor of Shifā ‘Amr, Nāhiḍ Khāzim, delivered a speech. Nāhiḍ Khāzim likewise welcomed his audience with the Islamic formula ‘*al-salāmu ‘alaykum wa raḥmatuhu wa barakātuhu*,’ and ended his speech with this same formula.<sup>903</sup> The mayor framed the ‘film’ in a broader context of repeated ‘unjustifiable’ attacks, ‘the logic of hate,’ ‘inhumanity and non-respect for the other’ that has likewise affected the other religions in the past, in particular ‘our Lord Christ (*sayyidunā al-masīḥ*)’ and ‘our Lord Moses (*sayyidunā Mūsā*).’ In this regard, the video is also an opportunity to focus on the importance of Muhammad, ‘the most noble messenger (PBUH) who gave this great law (*tashrī*) to humanity,’ ‘vastly superior, higher and bigger,’ ‘this great human being,’ ‘the original noble Arabic prophet.’ In contrast to this video, he saw the protest in Shifā ‘Amr as ‘supporting the truth, humanity, and respect for different religions.’ In addition, Nāhiḍ Khāzim expressed the need to avoid generalization, by stating that the producers and writers of this video only represented themselves.

---

<sup>899</sup> YouTube. 15 September 2012a. الشيخ يوسف ابو عبيد في التظاهرة الاحتجاجية بحق الرسول عليه السلام. Doi: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0kjc94x4rSw> (retrieved May 16, 2016);

YouTube. 15 September 2012b. كلمة الرئيس ناهض خازم في التظاهرة الاحتجاجية بحق الاساءة للرسول. Doi: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oVt0GbbBZs4> (retrieved May 16, 2016);

YouTube. 15 September 2012c. كلمة النائب محمد بركة في التظاهرة الاحتجاجية للإساءة للرسول عليه السلام. Doi: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZ40KovCWGc> (retrieved May 16, 2016);

YouTube. 15 September 2012d. كلمة القس فؤاد داغر في التظاهرة الاحتجاجية للإساءة للرسول عليه السلام. Doi: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H5DTrsIE62g> (retrieved May 16, 2016);

YouTube. 15 September 2012e. الاب بسام النير في التظاهرة الاحتجاجية للإساءة للرسول عليه السلام. Doi: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZI\\_QbWqJw4Q#t=60](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZI_QbWqJw4Q#t=60) (retrieved May 16, 2016).

<sup>900</sup> YouTube. 15 September 2012e. الاب بسام النير في التظاهرة الاحتجاجية للإساءة للرسول عليه السلام.

<sup>901</sup> Al-Ittiḥād. 16 September 2012. شفاعمرو موحدة في التنديد بالفيلم المسيء للنبي العربي والإسلام.

<sup>902</sup> YouTube. 15 September 2012a. الشيخ يوسف ابو عبيد في التظاهرة الاحتجاجية بحق الرسول عليه السلام.

<sup>903</sup> YouTube. 15 September 2012b. كلمة الرئيس ناهض خازم في التظاهرة الاحتجاجية بحق الاساءة للرسول.

By contrast, in his speech MP Muḥammad Baraka insisted that the video sought to sow strife, especially in Egypt.<sup>904</sup> Muḥammad Baraka was born in 1955 and is, in addition to being deputy in the Israeli Knesset, the leader of the “Arab Israeli” party Hadash (Democratic Front for Peace and Equality).<sup>905</sup> In 2015 he retired from politics and faced charges of perjury. Like the other speakers, Muḥammad Baraka did not mention the video by its title, but rather as ‘this film,’ and insisted in particular that the video was part of an ‘American plan in the region’ to produce ‘sectarian strife in Egypt.’<sup>906</sup> Thus, he particularly criticised the attempts of the US Administration to distance itself from this video. Yet he did not say anything about the video’s background, instead emphasising that the video has ‘no connection with [...] Muslims, it has ‘no connection with [...] Christians, it had no connection to the Jews, it has no connection to [...] any religious human being.’ Interestingly, Muḥammad Baraka did not introduce a sectarian logic into his vision to counter the video but instead insisted on the Arab Palestinian identity shared by all participants; ‘the Islamic civilization and the Arab belonging are at the centre of our belonging and with regards to us, Arabs, and Palestinians...,’ and on the conviction that this was not a religious or confessional matter but rather a ‘human issue [...] we defend humanity.’ A few times the deputy used colloquial expressions such as ‘*mish ‘ārif*,’ “I don’t know.”

Interestingly, the Episcopal priest of the Church of Saint Paul,<sup>907</sup> Fu’ād Dāghir, did express a strong sense of unity among the participants in this protest, but did so through the use of a sectarian logic and while systematically distinguishing between Christians, Muslims, and Druze.<sup>908</sup> For instance he introduced the idea of an offense against religious symbols this way: ‘Any evil perpetrated against a religious symbol, be it by Muslims, by Christians, by Druze, or even be it by Jews,’ and continued anyone ‘who offends the Messengers offends us, and anyone who offends Christ offends the Muslim, anyone who offends the Muslim offends the Druze,’ anyone ‘who lays hands [*yamuss*] on the Muslim, lays hands on myself myself, as a Christian, anyone who lays hands on Christ, lays hands on the Druze, and anyone who lays hands on the Druze, lays hands on the Muslim.’ As a result, the counter-reaction to this video took place in solidarity: ‘We are together [...] Muslims Druze and Christians.’ The idea of being ‘one united voice (*ṣawt wāḥid*)’ is repeated three times. This solidarity went even further as the priest stated:

<sup>904</sup> YouTube. 15 September 2012c. كلمة النائب محمد بركة في التظاهرة الاحتجاجية للإساءة للرسول عليه السلام.

<sup>905</sup> Al-Jazeera. محمد بركة.

<sup>906</sup> YouTube. 15 September 2012c. كلمة النائب محمد بركة في التظاهرة الاحتجاجية للإساءة للرسول عليه السلام.

<sup>907</sup> The Episcopalian Diocese of Jerusalem. 2 August 2013. الكنيسة الأسقفية تعقد مؤتمرات الشبيبة لصيف 2013 في نزل. القديسة مار غريت في الناصرة. Doi: <http://www.j-diocese.org/print.php?page=news&lang=ar&item=1376050297677> (retrieved May 16, 2016).

<sup>908</sup> YouTube. 15 September 2012d. كلمة القس فؤاد داغر في التظاهرة الاحتجاجية للإساءة للرسول عليه السلام.

‘because we, Christians, Druze, Muslims, we share the same spirit, the same religion, the same God (*ilāh*), the same creed and the same symbol.’ This declaration of a complete religious and spiritual assimilation is very interesting. Interestingly, Father Fu’ād Dāghir used several colloquial expressions, such as ‘*mish maqbūl*,’ or the “b-” before a verb, in his pronunciation.

Ḥasīb ‘Abūd likewise made use of a sectarian distinction to express unity. Ḥasīb ‘Abūd is the president of the Western Galilee branch of the Israeli workers’ union.<sup>909</sup> In his speech, he defined this protest as one comprising ‘the people of this city in their different communities standing as one impenetrable dam’ against ‘all offending thoughts.’<sup>910</sup> He added that ‘all prophets, and places of worship are red lines.’

Nāyif ‘Aliyān, a member of the charitable society Elderly Home,<sup>911</sup> called on everyone in the country to condemn the ‘film.’<sup>912</sup>

Finally, in his speech, the Latin priest Bissām al-Dayr,<sup>913</sup> expressed his belief in coexistence, ‘*al-ta ‘āyush*’ and ‘*al- ‘aysh al-mushtarak*,’ which explains the participation of Christians in this protest, since ‘We condemn this film which offended our Muslim brothers who stood with us.’<sup>914</sup>

The banners carried during this protest bore among other statements: ‘The Front and the Communist Party condemn the offense against Islam and its Messenger!’ ‘The offense of Islam and its Messenger is rejected by all of us, inhabitants of Shifā ‘Amr; Christians, Muslims, and Druze,’ ‘Any offense against the truth of religious creeds and thoughts is an offense against every one of us!’ and included accusations of the video being an ‘American production.’<sup>915</sup>

When asserting the cross-sectarian condemnation of “The Innocence of Muslims” in the city of Shifā ‘Amr, the speakers resorted to different strategies to express solidarity and unity. They either posited diversity as a starting point and subsequently insisted on unity, even

<sup>909</sup> Al-Arab. 29 May 2005. وفود من البطوف والجليل تهنيء حسيب عبود بانتخابه رئيسا للهستدروت في الجليل. (<http://www.alarab.com/Article/461611> (retrieved April 11, 2016).

<sup>910</sup> Al-Ittihad. 16 September 2012. شفاعمرو موحدة في التنديد بالفيلم المسيء للنبي العربي والإسلام. Page 5,

<sup>911</sup> The Elderly Home, Charitable Society. Doi: <http://www.almosenin.org/> (retrieved May 16, 2016).

<sup>912</sup> Al-Ittihad. 16 September 2012. شفاعمرو موحدة في التنديد بالفيلم المسيء للنبي العربي والإسلام. Page 5.

<sup>913</sup> Father Bissām al-Dayr was the priest of the Saint John church in Shifā ‘Amr from 2009 to 2014, and was subsequently sent to Jordan. In Latin Patriarchate. 5 August 2014. المطران بولس ماركوتسو يترأس قداسا في رعية مار يوسف للاتين في شفاعمرو لتوديع الأب بسام الدير واستقبال الكاهن الجديد ايلي كرزم. Doi: <http://ar.lpj.org/2014/08/05/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B7%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A8%D9%88%D9%84%D8%B3-%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%83%D9%88%D8%AA%D8%B3%D9%88-%D9%8A%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%A3%D8%B3-%D9%82%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%A7-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%B1/> (retrieved May 16, 2016).

<sup>914</sup> YouTube. 15 September 2012e. الاب بسام الدير في التظاهرة الاحتجاجية للإساءة للرسول عليه السلام.

<sup>915</sup> YouTube. 15 September 2012e. الاب بسام الدير في التظاهرة الاحتجاجية للإساءة للرسول عليه السلام.



suggesting theological assimilation, or they established a shared Arab and Islamic identity and rejected the sectarian logic.

### ***Summary of Section 4.2***

Unlike the reactions in the previous section (4.1), the reactions in Israel were dominated by lay people, and particularly by left-wing actors. Interestingly, the few clerical reactions there suggested a much stronger sectarian discourse that distinguished between Christians, Muslims and Druze – the same distinction Israel makes. Most significantly, in some cases it is impossible to define the religious affiliation of the actors. These were the actors who insisted more strongly on the Arab, Palestinian identity.

### **4.3 Gaza: The Competition for the Leadership against the “Zionist Enemy”**

There have been relatively few public reactions in Gaza and no joint Christian-Muslim reactions at all. These reactions comprise approximately three protests and five political statements, which show a certain competition between Hamas and other Islamist movements in the defence of Islam.

Approximately four protests took place on September 13 and on September 15, 2012. Before that, the spokesman of the ruling Hamas, Fawzī Barhūm, condemned the video “The Innocence of Muslims”<sup>916</sup> on his Facebook account. He considered the film ‘offensive,’ as well as ‘odious, racist and extremist, and an insult to all Muslims in the world and a provocation of their feelings,’ resulting in more hatred directed at Muslims.

On September 13, one protest took place. *Haaretz* reported that a dozen people protested near the UN building, burning American and Israeli flags and chanting ““Death to America! Death to Israel.””<sup>917</sup> Furthermore, the protesters also reportedly burnt photographs of the producer of the video. The protesters are also said to have carried the flag of the Movement of Popular Resistance (*ḥarakat al-muqāwama al-sha‘biyya*), an Islamic group that emerged in 2000 during the Second Intifada and which refuses the Oslo Accord(s).<sup>918</sup> On September 13, *al-Quds* reported that the Movement of Popular Resistance staged a protest during which

---

<sup>916</sup> Al-Quds. 13 September 2012. Number 15477, Page 23. Number 15477. Page 20. *تظاهرة في غزة احتجاجا على الفيلم المسيء للإسلام*.

<sup>917</sup> Haaretz. 14 September 2012. Jerusalem police brace for protests over anti-Islam movie. Number 28386. Volume 92.

<sup>918</sup> Al-Jazeera. *لجان المقاومة الشعبية في فلسطين*. Doi:

<http://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/movementsandparties/2014/2/10/%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%B9%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%81%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B7%D9%8A%D9%86> (retrieved May 16, 2016).

pictures of Terry Jones were burnt.<sup>919</sup> The protesters reportedly chanted '*fidāk yā rasūl allāh.*' In addition, the movement's spokesman, Khālīd al-Azbat, stated in his speech that the 'film' displayed a 'clear American-Zionist policy of offending Islam in any way possible.' Thus, the information given by these two newspapers suggest that they reported on the same protests, staged by the Movement of Popular Resistance.

On September 15, *al-Ḥayāt al-Jadīda* reported on two protests; one under the leadership of Hamas and the second one in southern Gaza, under the leadership of Islamic Jihad.<sup>920</sup> *Al-Ḥayāt al-Jadīda* reported that the minister of Islamic Endowments in Gaza, Ismā'īl Raḍwān, delivered a speech in front of the building of the Palestinian legislative council in which he accused "The Innocence of Muslims" of aiming to stir up 'sectarian strife.' Interestingly, he asserted that 'the Nazarenes (*al-naṣārā*) and the Muslims refuse the offense of the Messenger.' Thus, on the one hand, the Hamas official seemed to be speaking of a certain solidarity between Christians and Muslims, while on the other hand he employed the term "Nazarenes" which is quite unusual for the Palestinian context. Furthermore, Ismā'īl Raḍwān called for a boycott of American products and emphasised that solidarity was the best reaction. On 15 September 2012 *al-Quds* also reported that Ismā'īl Raḍwān had asserted during this protest that the film was a proof of 'the American-Israeli hatred of humanity,' and had stated the impossibility of remaining silent on this issue.<sup>921</sup>

In its report on a protest in southern Gaza led by Islamic Jihad, *al-Ḥayāt al-Jadīda* reported that two leading members of the group gave speeches.<sup>922</sup> In both speeches, Islamic Jihad directed its criticisms against the "West." Thus, Abū Ṭarīq al-Madalal asserted that 'there is the West where the crusade (*al-ṣalībiyya*) allied itself with Zionism to offend Islam and its Messenger Muhammad (PBUH)' which is a 'result of the hatred moving in their hearts.' Furthermore, Abū Ṭarīq al-Madalal accused the West of using its freedom to actually offend Islam. He went on to call on Muslims to counter this video and to take responsibility for defending Islam. Similarly, Muḥammad al-Hindī, a member of Islamic Jihad's political office, denounced the "West," stating that the video was not about Muhammad but rather 'reveals the face of the West which speaks all day long about democracy and human rights.' Both speeches

<sup>919</sup> Al-Quds. 13 September 2012. .Number 15477. Page 20 . تظاهرة في غزة احتجاجا على الفيلم المسيء للإسلام.

<sup>920</sup> Al-Hayat al-Jadida. 15 September 2012. مسيرات جماهيرية في محافظات الوطن تندد بالفيلم المسيء للنبي الكريم. Number 6060. Page 4.

<sup>921</sup> Al-Quds. 15 September 2012. تظاهرة غاضبة في القدس ضد الاساءة للرسول وللإسلام الشرطة الاسرائيلية تتصدى لها بالقوة. Number 15479. Page 3. فتصيب مواطننا وتعتقل 4 آخرين

<sup>922</sup> Al-Hayat al-Jadida. 15 September 2012. مسيرات جماهيرية في محافظات الوطن تندد بالفيلم المسيء للنبي الكريم.

connected the West and the hate it allegedly cultivated for Islam. In addition, Muḥammad al-Hindī described Muhammad as having ‘enlightened the world with justice, mercy and ethics.’

On 15 September 2012, *al-Quds* reported that Ismā‘īl Haniyya had called for continued protests in his Friday sermon.<sup>923</sup> Interestingly, in the same sermon he also called for the protection of the ‘Christian brothers.’

### ***Summary of Section 4.3***

All these reactions show a clear anti-Zionist, anti-Israeli and anti-Western stance, these enemies being allegedly motivated by their hatred of Islam. In this regard, there are no significant differences between Hamas, the Movement of Popular Resistance, and Islamic Jihad. However, Hamas, as a political ruler, fashioned itself as the protector of Christians.

### ***Conclusion to Chapter 4***

The type of actors who reacted to “The Innocence of Muslims” and their level of mobilisation varied greatly. In Jerusalem and the West Bank, the Palestinian Authority was the most vocal and sought to mobilise others. In this context it was the churches who expressed their position on this video. By contrast, in Israel the reactions were dominated by lay actors and, most importantly, by leftist, not Islamist, actors. In Gaza, Hamas competed with other Islamist actors to lead the way against the video. Despite this, the overall level of mobilisation in Gaza was limited.

Overall, “The Innocence of Muslims” was mainly viewed as an “offense” and also as a racist act. Interestingly, the video was regarded differently in each of the three political contexts. In the context of Jerusalem and the West Bank, the video was eventually connected to the issue of “price-tag,” whereas in Israel some Arab Israeli actors considered it to be targeting all Arabs. In Gaza the video was viewed as yet another “attack” by the West on Islam. Some actors in both the West Bank and Israel viewed the video as aiming to stir up strife between Christians and Muslims.

Interestingly, most actors remained vague on the subject of the video’s background, and the involvement of Copts was little discussed. Instead, the video was connected to the Israeli occupation, the alleged colonial aspirations of the West, or “Zionism.” As a result, the criticism of Western double standards and of the pretence of freedom of speech were recurrent themes in all three contexts. Many actors demanded an international law prohibiting the production of

---

<sup>923</sup> Al-Quds, 15 September 2012. تظاهرة غاضبة في القدس ضد الاساءة للرسول وللإسلام والشرطة الاسرائيلية تتصدى لها بالقوة. فتتصيب مواطنا وتعتقل 4 آخرين. Number 15479. Page 3.

content offensive to religions. The counter-arguments were sometimes framed in interesting ways; the Latin Patriarchate framed its criticism in a moral context, while some Arab Israeli actors did not make use of a religious wording, but rather of a national, Palestinian wording.

Interestingly, there were limited efforts by Christian actors to dissociate Christians from this video. Thus, few Christian actors claimed to be speaking in the name of all Christians. Instead, some Christian lay actors asserted that it was a duty for Christians to show solidarity with Muslims. Thus, the positions of the Christian actors illustrated a progression from a symbolic condemnation to a more elaborate stance. A later discussion between the author and the Latin bishop of Amman suggested that a key drive behind the Christian condemnations was the potentially violent Muslim reactions.

As far as Muslim attitudes towards Christian positions are concerned, Muslim actors did not seem to express an expectation towards Christians to react. Instead, various representatives of the Palestinian Authority praised the condemnations made by Christians. Interestingly, Hamas leaders defined themselves as protectors of the Christians. Similarly, the Christian presence in the counter-reactions also varied greatly. In Jerusalem and the West Bank, the joint Christian-Muslim reactions took the form of conferences, while in Israel one such reaction took place under the leadership of Hadash.

Interestingly, there was no Christian-Muslim reaction in Gaza. To some extent, “The Innocence of Muslims” provided an opportunity to define the Palestinian societies in the West Bank and Israel as a model and to praise Christian-Muslim relations there. Accordingly, this peaceful coexistence rested on a deeply-rooted shared history, on having faced the same difficulties in the context of the events of 1948, and on the on-going occupation of the West Bank, as well as on the same Arab Palestinian identity. Some stances recalled certain selected events in the past, such the birth of Jesus Christ, the ascension of Muhammad to heaven, and the pact between Caliph ‘Umar and Patriarch Sophronius. A number of actors emphasised the deep solidarity and mutual respect between Christians and Muslims. Yet some actors regarded this coexistence as a simple matter of fact, like the Melkite priest in Bethlehem who is also the only actor who included Jews in his depiction of religious coexistence. All in all, the discussions about Christian-Muslim coexistence suggested a clear link between a person’s status as a cleric or layperson and the sectarian approach to unity. As was shown, the dominance of lay actors in the criticisms of “The Innocence of Muslims” displayed the near complete absence of a distinguishing sectarian discourse. Interestingly, in one stance, Muhammad was defined as the

“prophet of mercy” and Jesus Christ as the “prophet of love.” Ḥannā Swayd suggested that Muhammad is also important for Christians.

## **Chapter 5 Jordan: A Model of Coexistence under the Hashemite Leadership**

### **Introduction**

In the context of “The Innocence of Muslims” the case of Jordan was unusual. Unlike any other country analysed – Egypt, Lebanon, the West Bank, or Israel – there were no Christian-Muslim reactions. Thus, a key issue addressed by this chapter will be the understanding of this absence. The chapter starts by looking at the official Islamic reactions – the government and the institutions of the state. It will then look at the Christian reactions and finally, at those of various political and social actors.

Despite the visibility of their churches and the high numbers of Muslims attending Christian schools and hospitals (Chatelard 2004, 21), analyses on Christians in Jordan are scarce (Chatelard 2009, 1). Christians have played a core role in the economy and the politics of the country since before the creation of the state of Transjordan and then, later on, in Jordan,

### **Building a Nation**

There are varying estimates regarding the proportion of Christians both of Palestinian and “East Bank” origin; 5.5% according to Bernard Heyberger (Heyberger 2013, 15-17); 4% according to Géraldine Chatelard and Antoine Fleyfel (Chatelard 2009, 2; Fleyfel 2013, 80); and only 3% according to Latin Bishop Mārūn Laḥḥām<sup>924</sup> and ‘Āmir al-Ḥāfī, the vice-director of the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies.<sup>925</sup> The number of Palestinians in Jordan is estimated at approximately 60% of the population. In addition, there are Chechen and Circassian minorities.

In the nineteenth century, the territory now comprising Jordan was at the margins of the Ottoman Empire. Christians were an integral part of the tribal system. As a result, there was a lot of assimilation. Christians reportedly did not consume pork and alcohol, and Jean Louis Burckhardt reported on Muslims baptizing their children (Rogan 1999, 38). In this context,

---

<sup>924</sup> Lahham, Maroun. 20 April 2015. Personal Interview. Amman. This source is quoted in this chapter as “Lahham 20 April 2015.”

<sup>925</sup> Al-Hafi, Amir. 9 April 2015. Personal Interview. Amman.

Interestingly, in her field research on Islamic attitudes towards Christians in Jordan, Natanja Faschinger found that students at Irbid University estimated the proportion of Christians in Jordan to be between 26% and 35%, thus greatly over-estimating the real proportion of Christians (Faschinger 2014).

Eugene Rogan speaks of greater religious tolerance than in other parts of Ottoman Syria and Palestine. However, the Ottoman reforms began to affect the marginalised Transjordanian areas which were re-integrated and re-administrated by the Ottoman state (Anderson 2005, 15). In addition, an emergent new merchant class also proved to be an important actor in bringing about change (Rogan 1999, 121). Another factor was the appearance of Christian missionaries – foremost Latin, Greek Catholic Melkite, and Protestant (POC 1997, 285) – in these areas that continued to be neglected by the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Consequently, the previously homogenous Greek Orthodox Christian community was divided into several Christian communities (see below).

The Emirate of Transjordan was established in 1921 with the support of the British who installed Abdullah (‘Abd Allāh), an offspring of the Hashemites on the throne (Massad 2001, 11). Although the elite initially comprised Arabs from Syria, Palestine, and the Hijaz (Anderson 2005, 42), something which led to revolts in the 1920s, Christians were quickly promoted into high-ranking positions because of their high level of education (POC 1997, 285). In the 1920s and 1930s the new rule forced nomads to settle (Massad 2001, 56) and a number of factors led to the destruction of the Bedouin economy and the complete dependence of the tribes on the state (Massad 2001, 59).

In 1948, Transjordan annexed the West Bank and its population grew by 300%, from 375,000 to one million people (Massad 2001, 226). The war in 1967 led to the flight of another 300,000 Palestinians to Jordan (Schwedler 2006, 43). The Gulf War in 1991 and the expulsion of Palestinians from Kuwait resulted in the return to or settlement of 150,000 Palestinians in Jordan (ICG 2005, 4). The annexation of the West Bank, which was economically more developed than Transjordan, caused severe upheavals in the “East Bank.” As a result, the fault lines in Jordan are not so much along religious lines, but rather along “ethnic” lines. Luisa Gandolfo describes Jordan as ‘a large extended family and in times of crisis, it becomes a small, beleaguered tribe’ (Gandolfo 2012, 108). In particular, the idea that Jordan could become a country of “substitution” (*al-waṭan al-badīl*) for Palestine has caused controversies in recent years. The Hashemites have both silenced this issue (Schwedler 2006, 134) and used it as a means to assert their authority and prevent the emergence of competing groups (Hermann 2000).

### **Islamic Legitimacy**

According to Quintan Wiktorowicz, the Hashemites draw their political and religious legitimacy from three factors. Firstly, they are descendants of the Qurayshī tribe, which is

affiliated with Muhammad (Wiktorowicz 2001, 49). Secondly, the Hashemites guarded Mecca from 1201 to 1925, and thirdly, the Hashemite monarchy is the protector of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem (ibid). In addition, the Hashemites participated in the Great Arab Revolt in 1916 and this also enhances their legitimacy.<sup>926</sup> As a result, the Hashemite kings have promoted a depoliticized, ritualistic interpretation of Islam (Wiktorowicz 2001, 46, 77).

In addition, the Hashemites have been very active and vocal in promoting interreligious and inner-Islamic dialogue. Under the leadership of the former crown prince, Prince Hassan bin Talal (al-Ḥasan bin Ṭalāl), the concept of “*wasatiyya*,” “moderation” or “median,” was promoted (Chatelard 2004, 276). Furthermore, in 1981 Prince Hassan bin Talal founded the Al Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought to promote interreligious dialogue. In 1994 he founded the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies, an inter-disciplinary institute, which published material mostly concerning Christianity in the Arab World (Reiss 2012, 315). Similarly, King Abdullah II (‘Abd Allāh al-thānī bin al-Ḥusain), has promoted more initiatives with an international echo, particularly the “Amman Message” and “A Common Word.” The Amman Message was released in 2004 during Ramadan by the king himself to promote inter-Islamic dialogue and tolerance<sup>927</sup> and to limit the calls to takfirism (declaring a Muslim an aspotate). As stated on King Abdullah II’s website, the “Amman Message” is a result of the ‘historical responsibility of the Hashemites, as descendants of the Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him), to uphold and defend the faith.’<sup>928</sup> In particular, the values of ‘tolerance, moderation and dialogue’ were put forward as truly Islamic principles (ibid). In October 2007, the Al Bayt Institute released another programmatic document “A Common Word Between US and You.” It was signed by 138 Sunni and Shia Muslim scholars and leaders from all over the world (Yazbek Haddad; Smith 2009, 369). The document was formulated in response to Benedict XVI’s speech in Regensburg and was a call to Christian leaders to mutual understanding (ibid). In particular, “A Common Word” established shared values in both the scriptures of Islam and Christianity for the love of God and one’s neighbour (Yazbek Haddad; Smith 2009, 371).<sup>929</sup>

---

<sup>926</sup> Kildani, Hanna. 8 April 2015. Personal Interview. Marj al-Ḥammām, Amman. This source is quoted in this chapter as “Kildani 8 April 2015.”

<sup>927</sup> The Guardian. 16 June 2014. The Amman Message – clarifying the true nature of Islam. Doi: <http://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/coventry-university-partner-zone/2014/jun/16/the-amman-message-clarifying-the-true-nature-of-islam> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>928</sup> His Majesty King Abdullah II Bin al-Hussein. Initiatives Amman Message. Doi: [http://kingabdullah.jo/index.php/en\\_US/initiatives/view/id/1.html](http://kingabdullah.jo/index.php/en_US/initiatives/view/id/1.html) (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>929</sup> However, Johnny Awwad, professor at the Near East Schools of Theology in Beirut, criticised “A Common Word” for not depicting Christianity as Christians view it themselves. Instead, he stated that the document displayed a ‘Jesus [who] remains within the boundaries of Judaism’ (Awwad 2009, 78-79).

In recent years, however, there has been a growing Islamist tendency in Jordan. As will be shown below, the Muslim Brotherhood, which was established in 1945, has adopted a non-confrontational attitude that has allowed it to influence the ministry of education (see Section 5.3.1). In addition, there is also a growing Salafi spectre composed of different elements comprising a traditionalist, a quietist, and a violent outlook (ICG 2005, 5). Several factors have led to this development; proselytizing by Saudi Arabia, the war in Afghanistan (1979-1989), and growing economic problems.

### **Politics and Economy: Tensions in the Making**

The year 1992 marked the beginning of both political and economic liberalisations. Yet, despite this political liberalisation, the Jordanian parliament has remained powerless due to uneven political representation. Thus “East Bank” Jordanians (as opposed to Jordanians of Palestinian origin) as well as ethnic and religious minorities are disproportionately represented in Parliament. Christians have nine seats while Circassians and Chechens have three seats (McCallum 2012, 13). This is a result of the king’s appointment of loyal East Bankers to the senate to counter-balance the lower house which was dominated by the Muslim Brotherhood (reportedly Palestinian dominated) and oppositional groups (Schwedler 2006, 48). Moreover, the 1992 agreement with the International Monetary Fund led to cuts in the public sector which most heavily affected “East Bank” Jordanians (ICG 2005, 47). However, the budget deficit has continuously increased, reaching 60% of the GDP in 2011 (ICG 2012, 10).

The Arab Spring took place on a small scale in Jordan. However, it was potentially a dangerous moment for the monarchy, since the traditional bases of the monarchy – the tribes and the army – were key actors in the protests. It subsequently included the Jordanian Palestinians, Islamists and unaffiliated young people, all united by the same demand to end the corruption (ICG 2012, 1, 8). Despite the tension over political representation, “East Bank” and Palestinian Jordanians both voiced the same calls for a new electoral law (ICG 2012, 6).

### **The Christians in Jordan**

Besides the varying estimates regarding the proportion of Christians in Jordan, there are also varying estimates concerning the proportion each Christian community constitutes. In 2009 the Latin Bishop Mgr. Salīm al-Ṣāyigh put forward the estimate of 42,000 Latin Christians in Jordan (Sayegh 2009, 85); in April 2015 Bishop Mārūn Laḥḥām asserted there were 60,000 Latins (Lahham 20 April 2015). Eleven Christian denominations are officially recognized in Jordan; the biggest is the Greek Orthodox Church, followed by the Latin Church (part of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem), the Greek Catholic Melkite Church, the Armenian Apostolic



Church, the Protestant Churches (Episcopal, Lutheran), the Chaldean Church, the Armenian Catholic Church, the Syrian Orthodox Church, the Syrian Catholic Church, the Coptic Orthodox Church, and the Maronite Church (Fleyfel 2013, 81). However, Géraldine Chatelard mentions the Lutheran and the Episcopal Churches separately instead of the Armenian Catholic Church (Chatelard 2009, 3). Wolfram Reiss noted that the Seven-Adventist Church and the Presbyterian Church were also officially recognized as of 2009 (Reiss 2012, 305). The highest-ranking Church leaders in Jordan are the Greek Orthodox Bishop, the Latin Bishop, the Greek Catholic Bishop, and the Armenian Apostolic Bishop. The bishops of the other churches reside in Jerusalem.

The Council of Churches (*majlis ru'asā' al-kanā'is fī l-urdun*) was established in 1999 on the initiative of the four bishops of Amman; the Greek Orthodox Bishop, the Latin Bishop, the Greek Catholic Melkite Bishop, and the Armenian Apostolic Bishop (Kildānī 8 April 2015) and was recognized by the government as the body which would officially deal with Christian matters.<sup>930</sup> As Ḥanna Kildānī explained, this council did not deal with theological matters but with every-day matters and the government. Jiryis Ḥabāsh, an Evangelical priest, criticised this council as not having any legal basis.<sup>931</sup> The Council of Churches ceased to exist in late 2012 or early 2013. Various reasons were put forward for this; Fr. Ḥannā Kildānī recorded that the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem wanted to assume leadership in the council (Kildani 8 April 2015). Latin Bishop Mārūn Laḥḥām, however, said that the council was not representative of Christians in Jordan, since the bishops of the other officially recognized churches, like the Episcopal church, do not reside in Amman and were therefore not member of it (Lahham 20 April 2015). As a result, the Council of Jordan and the Holy Land was established and is headed each year alternately by the three Patriarchs of Jerusalem; the Greek Orthodox Patriarch, the Latin Patriarch, and the Armenian Apostolic Patriarch (Lahham 20 April 2015). All the churches in Jordan are represented in this new council except for 'some Protestant churches' (Lahham 20 April 2015).<sup>932</sup>

To some extent, the Christians constitute an important part of the Hashemites' religious legitimacy. The monarchy envisions its dealing with the Christians in the tradition of Caliph

---

<sup>930</sup> Linga. 14 October 2013. المرجعية الوحيدة لكل الشؤون المسيحية في الأردن هو المجلس رؤساء الكنائس في الأردن !!! Doi: <https://www.linga.org/local-news/MjMx> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>931</sup> Habash, Jiryis. 28 April 2015. Personal Interview. Amman. This source is quoted in this chapter as "Habash 28 April 2015."

<sup>932</sup> There is a certain conflict between the "traditional" churches and the "Evangelical" churches. In 2008, "traditional" churches designated Evangelical churches (which are not recognised) as a "foreign body" that allegedly harms inter-Christian and Christian-Muslim relations. Linga. 18 Februar 2008. هجوم شرس من الكنائس التقليدية على الكنائس الإنجيلية Doi: <https://www.linga.org/international-news/MTQ5Nw> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

Omar (Chatelard 2004, 276). Christians have also constituted an important geopolitical asset (Fleyfel 2013, 95), since they confirm the Hashemites' claim of embodying a moderate Islam. In 1964, during the visit of Paul VI, King Hussein defined himself as 'guardian of the Christian Holy places' (Katz 2005, 148) and in this role, Jordan has excavated and promoted numerous Biblical sites in Jordan (Katz 2005, 147). As Wolfram Reiss noted, in no other Arab country have the rulers so extensively acknowledged a Christian heritage (Reiss 2012, 318). Furthermore, the publication of *Christianity in the Arab World* by Prince Hasan bin Talal was highly important, as he insisted that the Christians were genuine and native inhabitants of the Middle East (POC 1997, 285).

In its dealings with religious minorities, the state has set up a confessional system based on a modernised Islamic understanding and on European minority rights (Chatelard 2009, 1). In 1938, Christian ecclesiastical courts were recognized alongside Islamic courts (Chatelard 2004, 146); the bishop is thus a judge in the first court (Shweihat 1992, 53). Moreover, as previously mentioned, a system of quotas guarantees a Christian presence in Parliament. However, as Bishop Mārūn Laḥḥām argued, these deputies are supposed to be the 'Christian voice,' yet in a conflict between the government and the Churches over the ecclesiastical courts, these same Christian deputies sided with the government (Lahham 20 April 2015). Unwritten tradition compels the king to nominate a Christian to the government; as of April 2015 there were even three Christian ministers.<sup>933</sup>

Despite these positive aspects, negative aspects do exist, especially in the field of mixed marriages (Kildani 8 April 2015) and conversion (Habash 28 April 2015); both exist on a legal basis which favours Islam. Even though Christian-Muslim relations remain very good on a personal level, as emphasised Fr. Ḥannā Kildānī (Kildani 8 April 2015), decreasing numbers of Christians attend public schools (Chatelard 2009, 7).

### **5.1 The State: Promoter of a Moderate, Tolerant Islam**

As outlined in the introduction, the Hashemite monarchy asserts a strong Islamic legitimacy and, in doing so, it heavily promotes its own understanding of Islam as a religion of "moderation" and "tolerance." This section starts by analysing the reactions to the video given by the government, the ministry of Islamic Endowments, the *dā'irat al-iftā'*, the Parliament, and a local council.

---

<sup>933</sup> Farraj, Bassem. 27 April 2015. Personal Interview. Amman. This source is quoted in this chapter as "Farraj 27 April 2015."

## The Government

The Jordanian government issued a reaction on 13 September 2012 through its official spokesman, Samīḥ al-Mu‘āyaṭa.<sup>934</sup> The spokesman expressed the government’s condemnation of ‘offending and targeting the noble Messenger Muhammad (PBUH), especially the film distorting *ḥanīf* Islam and its noble message (*al-islām al-ḥanīf wa risālatuhu al-samaḥa*),’ further rejecting the ‘offense against the Islamic religion and any other religion.’ With regards to the video’s background, however, the government remained rather vague and only referred to ‘extremist mind-sets and circles which aim to produce strife (*fitna*).’ Besides the possible threats linked to this video, the spokesman of the Jordanian government also rejected the pretence of freedom of thought and speech, and announced that the government would demand that Google and YouTube remove the ‘offending film’ from their websites, what Google and YouTube eventually did. At the same time, the government also condemned the targeting of embassies. The video also seemed to have presented the spokesman with an opportunity to emphasise Jordan’s role in promoting a positive image of Islam. In particular, he insisted on the “Amman Message” which reflected ‘the wisdom of its leadership that moderation (*wasatīyya*) [underlined by the author], in its true concept, contributes to combatting extremism in all its forms.’ In addition, the spokesman asserted the government’s respect for all revealed religions.

## The Minister of Islamic Endowments

The reaction given by the minister of Islamic Endowments, Islamic Affairs, and Sacred Places (*muqaddasāt*), ‘Abd al-Salām al-‘Abādī was published on 14 September 2012 in *al-Dustūr* and was cited using the words ‘the minister [...] said.’<sup>935</sup> In this article, ‘Abd al-Salām al-‘Abādī, who was minister for Islamic Endowments from 2005 to 2013,<sup>936</sup> is said to consider the video ‘the American film which offends the person of the noble prophet Muhammad,’ ‘this abominable work,’ ‘this ugly crime and this open attack,’ ‘this outrageous work.’ Interestingly, the minister remained rather vague on the background of the video, attributing it to ‘hating minds,’ and ‘this small group.’ In addition, ‘Abd al-Salām al-‘Abādī accused the makers of the video, whom he placed in the same framework as those who drew so called Danish cartoons, of aiming to ‘provoke strife and trouble between people and (of) offending religions and creeds,’ as well as increasing hatred; ‘the fire of blazed up and burning hate that eats up the

<sup>934</sup> Al-Dustour. 14 September 2012. الحكومة تعرب عن ادانتها الشديدة ورفضها القاطع للإساءة لرسول الله ص. Number 16227. Page 3.

<sup>935</sup> Al-Dustour. 14 September 2012. الحكومة تعرب عن ادانتها الشديدة ورفضها القاطع للإساءة لرسول الله ص. Number 16227. Page 3.

<sup>936</sup> Jordanian Government. لمعالي الدكتور عبد السلام العبادي السيرة الذاتية. Doi: [http://www.pm.gov.jo/arabic/index.php?page\\_type=photo\\_gallery&part=1&catid=6&image\\_id=61](http://www.pm.gov.jo/arabic/index.php?page_type=photo_gallery&part=1&catid=6&image_id=61) (retrieved September 10, 2015).

spirits of the people.’ Furthermore, he accused the video of crushing attempts at dialogue and mutual understanding, instead promoting hate which would eventually result in ‘terror [and] violence.’ As a result, ‘Abd al-Salām al-‘Abādī demanded the prosecution of the makers of the video.

The minister started by speaking in the name of his ministry and then went on to speak in the name of all Jordanians regardless of their confession. Furthermore, he reportedly expressed the feelings of people in the Arab and Muslim world. When countering the video, the minister mainly referred to the Jordanian initiatives in promoting a positive image of Islam, in particular to the “Amman Message,” issued by ‘His Majesty King Abdullah II.’ In addition, he called for the honouring of decision made by the General Assembly of the United Nations dated 20 March 2008 regarding the respect of religions and in particular of Islam. Finally, he defined – very much in compliance with official Islam in Jordan as promoted by the monarchy – Islam as ‘a religion of mercy, humanity, tolerance, moderation, and balance [underlined by the author], a religion of justice and peace, a religion that condemned the contemporary meaning of terrorism.’<sup>937</sup>

### *Dā`irat al-Iftā`*

In the same article in *al-Dustūr* dating 14 September 2012, the newspaper also mentioned the statement issued by the Fatwa council in Jordan, *dā`irat al-iftā`*. The Council of *iftā`* is charged with issuing legal opinions, appointing the *muftī* of the army, the chief of Islamic courts, the *muftī* of Jordan, and the dean of the Sharia school at the University of Jordan (Wiktorowicz 2001, 72). In April 2015, it issued a statement forbidding membership of the so called Islamic State.<sup>938</sup>

*Dā`irat al-iftā`* condemned the ‘production of a cinema film offending Islam and the prophet Muhammad (PBUH).’<sup>939</sup> Like other official actors in Jordan, *dā`irat al-iftā`* did not mention a clear background to the video, but ascribed it to ‘those who offend and their likes.’ All in all, it condemned the video for ‘being incompatible with religion and ethics,’ and a ‘call

<sup>937</sup> “دين الرحمة والإنسانية والتسامح والوسطية والاعتدال، ودين العدل والسلام وأنه دين يستنكر المعاصر للإرهاب”

<sup>938</sup> Al-Nahar. 13 April 2015. "دائرة الافتاء الاردنية تصدر فتوى تحرم الانتماء لـ"داعش". Doi: <http://www.annahar.com/article/228787-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%AF%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D9%81%D8%AA%D9%88%D9%89-%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D9%84%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%B4> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>939</sup> Al-Dustour. 14 September 2012. الحكومة تعرب عن ادانتها الشديدة ورفضها القاطع للإساءة لرسول اللهص. Number 16227.

to strife, (to) foment sectarian conflicts, and hurt the feelings of Muslims,' as well as an attempt to 'depict [Islam] as an enemy by distorting and defaming it.' Unlike the minister of Islamic Endowments, *dā'irat al-iftā'* defined itself as being part of 'this Muslim, Arab country which relies on the Hashemite leadership honoured to belong to our Lord Muhammad.' As a result, in its countering of the video, the council referred to the Hashemite monarchy, its Islamic legitimacy, and initiatives. In addition, Muhammad was defined as 'the prophet, peace be upon him, [who] is perfect in his human attributes,' 'he joins in him the perfect attributes a human being cannot attain,' 'our Lord Muhammad, peace be upon him, he is perfect in all his attributes, acts and sayings, and the faith of a believer is incomplete unless he believes in that, as well as his two professions of faith [there is no God but God and Muhammad is His messenger].' The greatness of Islam was further underlined by citing the Quran 61:8-9,<sup>940</sup> which justified the council's call to Muslims 'to stand in one united line [...] and hold fast on the principles of Islamic law and the fundamentals agreed upon.' The *dā'irat al-iftā'* once again praised Islam by issuing a reminder of the inherent tolerance of Islam which compels Muslims to respect all prophets, messengers, and the other revealed religion. Here again, it quoted the Quran 2:285.<sup>941</sup>

### **The Parliament**

On 14 September 2012, *al-Ra'y* reported on a statement issued by the Lower House of the Jordanian parliament (*majlis al-nuwwāb*).<sup>942</sup> In this statement, the deputies expressed their deep sorrow and strongest condemnation of 'this offense (*isā'a*) by a small, sinful group,' 'the attack on the tolerant [underlined by the author] Islamic creed and religious symbols,' 'such irresponsible behaviours.' Furthermore, the MPs considered the video as an attack on 'every Muslim, a personal offense against all Muslims, as it is on all human, spiritual and cultural values in the world.' As a result, they called for a ban of this 'film,' the prosecution of Terry Jones, who reportedly supported the makers of the video, as well as the prosecution of everyone who participated in the production and promotion of the video. To some extent, the deputies did also defend Islam, defining it as a tolerant religion, since it 'believes in all religions and revealed messages.'

<sup>940</sup> 'They want to extinguish the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah will perfect His light, although the disbelievers dislike it. It is He who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religion, although those who associate others with Allah dislike it.' Quran. Doi: <http://quran.com/61/8-9> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>941</sup> 'The Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord, and [so have] the believers. All of them have believed in Allah and His angels and His books and His messengers, [saying], "We make no distinction between any of His messengers." And they say, "We hear and we obey. [We seek] Your forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the [final] destination.' Quran. Doi: <http://quran.com/2> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>942</sup> Al-Rai. 14 September 2012. ردود فعل غاضبة تستنكر الفيلم المسيء إلى الرسول. Number 15304. Page 3.

On 16 September 2012, *al-Dustūr* mentioned the condemnation of “The Innocence of Muslims” by the Jordanian Senate (*majlis al-a’yān*).<sup>943</sup> In their statement issued on September 15, the senators condemned ‘these offending practices,’ ‘these hateful and abnormal practices,’ they considered an expression of ‘hate and enmity against Islam and Muslims.’ Furthermore, the senators viewed the video as a threat since it could have triggered ‘strife and conflicts between the followers of the revealed religions, openly threatening the principle of coexistence, peace, and dialogue between the peoples, civilizations and religions.’ As a result, the Senate called on the international community to condemn such practices. At the same time, however, the senate seemingly condemned the violent reactions, given that it called for ‘highly civilized [reactions] that embody the greatness of Islam.’ In this regard, the Upper House strengthened its statement by quoting two *hadīth* by Muhammad, ‘you are truly a great creation,’<sup>944</sup> ‘I was sent to complete the noble attributes of morality;’<sup>945</sup> and a verse from the Quran, ‘We have not sent you, [O Muhammad] except as a mercy to the world’<sup>946</sup> (21:107).

### **Al-Ṭafila District**

On September 17, *al-Ghad* mentioned that the municipal council of Greater Tafileh (*lajnat baldiyyat al-Ṭafila al-kubrā*) had issued a statement condemning “The Innocence of Muslims.”<sup>947</sup> It condemned ‘the offense of the Messenger of God (PBUH) in the film that was produced in America.’ Yet, the council only vaguely referred to the background of the video; ‘a criminal small group,’ ‘this small group.’ In addition, the council considered the video a display of the ‘deep hatred’ felt by the makers of the video that made it impossible to remain silent on this subject. Interestingly, the statement dwelt at length on Muhammad: ‘the prophet of God (*al-hādī*) who came to all of humanity with a religion of tolerance, love, and balance

<sup>943</sup> Al-Dustour. 16. September 2012. تواصل الادانة و الاستنكار للفيلم المسيء لرسول الله. Number 16229. Page 9.

<sup>944</sup> “وأنتك لعلى خلق عظيم”

<sup>945</sup> “انما بعثت لأتمم مكارم الأخلاق”

<sup>946</sup> Quran. Doi: <http://quran.com/21/107> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>947</sup> Al-Ghad. 17 September 2012. لجنة بلدية الطفيلة تستنكر الفيلم المسيء للرسول الكريم. Doi: <http://www.alghad.com/articles/607214-%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%86%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%86%D9%83%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A1-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%85?s=e3ac7a8af367d7f51c818fe724336e38&search=%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A1> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

[underlined by the author] (*dīn al-tasāmuḥ wa-l-maḥabba wa-al-i'tidāl*),<sup>948</sup> and as ‘the seal of prophets and messengers.’<sup>949</sup>

### ***Summary of Section 5.1***

All these official stances mostly considered “The Innocence of Muslims” as proof of the hatred directed towards Islam. As a result, these official actors promoted a specific image of Islam, emphasizing its inherent tolerance, either by referring to the official discourse in Jordan or by underlining Islam’s recognition of Christianity and Judaism. Some actors mentioned the “Amman Message,” although this actually called for inner-Islamic tolerance and not interreligious dialogue.

## **5.2 Christian Reactions: Jordan as a Model**

All Christian reactions, both by clerics and lay actors, are analysed in this section in order to underline the potential contrast with other reactions in which Christians were not explicitly mentioned.

### **5.2.1 The Churches in Jordan**

This subsection comprises the reactions of the Council of Churches in Jordan, the Greek Orthodox bishopric, and the Council of Evangelical Churches in Jordan (the latter churches are not officially recognized in Jordan). The meeting of Latin bishops that took place in Amman from 17 September to 20 September 2012 and condemned “The Innocence of Muslims” also forms part of these Jordanian Christian reactions but was analysed in the previous chapter (see Section 4.1.1).

#### **The Council of Churches in Jordan**

On 14 September 2012, the Council of Churches in Jordan initially published a long statement condemning “The Innocence of Muslims.”<sup>950</sup> According to the newspaper *al-Ra'y* this statement was issued by Ḥannā Kildānī, secretary of the council and Latin priest in the suburb of Marj al-Ḥammām. Father Ḥannā Kildānī, however, was the secretary of this council from 2010 to 2014 (Kildani 8 April 2015).

---

<sup>948</sup> “رسول الله النبي الهادي الذي جاء للبشرية كافة بدين التسامح والمحبة والاعتدال”،

<sup>949</sup> Petra. 16 September 2012. لجنة بلدية الطفيلة الكبرى تستنكر الاساءة للرسول الكريم. Doi:

[http://www.petra.gov.jo/Public\\_News/Nws\\_NewsDetails.aspx?Site\\_Id=2&lang=1&NewsID=84176&CatID=12&Type=Home&GType=1](http://www.petra.gov.jo/Public_News/Nws_NewsDetails.aspx?Site_Id=2&lang=1&NewsID=84176&CatID=12&Type=Home&GType=1) (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>950</sup> Abouna. 14 September 2012. بيان شجب واستنكار من مجلس رؤساء الكنائس في الأردن. Doi: <http://www.abouna.org/node/1164> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

This long statement starts by condemning the video. Interestingly, while the statement refers to the video by its title, it does not dwell on its background. In the very first lines of the statement, the council asserts: ‘If Muhammad is for all Arabs, then all Arabs are for Muhammad,’<sup>951</sup> thus expressing its avowal to Muhammad and goes on to insist on unity between Muslims and Christians in an Arab context. The second paragraph frames this unity in the context of the numerous initiatives undertaken by the Hashemites to promote Christian-Muslim dialogue. The third paragraph, however, alluded to the initiatives of the Roman Catholic Church towards Islam. At this point, the statement dwells more clearly on the background of the video, defining an American and Jewish background. Finally, the statement formulates another response to the video, by citing the shared theological values of Christianity and Islam. The statement also makes use of various rhetoric devices.

First of all, the statement mentions the video by its title; ‘an obscure cinematographic production in the United States [...] the cinema film “The Innocence of Muslims.”’ In addition, it dwells at length on its understanding of “the film” saying: ‘in light of the ignominious crime,’ ‘a film offending (*yusī*) the Messenger (*ṣ*), Islam and Muslims,’ aspiring to stir up ‘strife between the people and the states,’ connected to ‘the vice (*‘ayb*) that appears now and then by offending religions and the followers of the revealed messages.’ This idea of “vice” (*‘ayb*) appears in another position; ‘the film has a bulk of vice and shame (*‘ār*) and [shows the] fire of hell in the mind, heart of [those] who produced, promoted, showed, and supported it [the film].’ In contrast, the background of the video is not initially clearly mentioned; ‘a reckless individual who strives firstly to offend himself, his country, and his religion – if he has any religion at all.’ This unknown person is connected to ‘the followers of strife,’ animated by ‘their evil feelings,’ who had done similar things previously. Towards the end of the statement, the idea of evil motivations is underlined and explicitly connected to Americans and Jews: ‘Some Americans and Jews want us to leave and descend from their summits [peaceful coexistence] into the valleys of their loathing and the production of hate.’ This idea of a Western background is not further dwelt on, but the statement clearly works by holding a mirror comparing between the ‘supporters of strife (*aṣḥāb al-ḥarb*)’ and the ‘the followers of the revealed messages (*aṣḥāb al-riṣālat al-samāwiyya*).’ The video seems to have given the council the opportunity to establish Jordan as a model whose legitimacy increases with the depiction of the video as a program of hate and division. Several rhetorical devices enhance this dichotomy between “good” and “evil.” First of all, the image of light and darkness is evoked: ‘however, nowadays, (he) who

---

<sup>951</sup> “إن كان محمدا لكل العرب، فكل العرب لمحمد،”<sup>951</sup>



refuses to live under the sun, and who is already addicted to living in the darkness of bogs of hate and loathing.’<sup>952</sup> Evil is associated with natural disasters; ‘the winds of defamation,’ ‘fishing in the clouded water.’<sup>953</sup>

After having defined “the other,” we will now look at the “we” this statement frames. Here again, the text shows a progression. The first paragraph cites the belonging to the Arab and Islamic context; ‘our Arab and Islamic societies,’ ‘we Arabs, and groups of Muslims and Christians.’ More importantly, this paragraph clearly expresses a Christian avowal to Muhammad, in the third line of the statement, which supposedly explains the rejection of “The Innocence of Muslims:” ‘if Muhammad is for all Arabs, then all Arabs are for Muhammad.’ Fr. Ḥannā Kildānī stated that he used this sentence when the chaplain of the Royal Court organized a Christian-Muslim meeting in 2006 during the crisis of the so-called Danish cartoons (Kildani, 8 April 2015). Ḥannā Kildānī asserted then that these Danish cartoons had likewise offended Christianity and that Christians had a long experience of offense, for example, *Jesus Christ Superstar* (ibid). In an interview with the author, he concluded: ‘for us [Christians], he [Muhammad] is a religious leader’ (ibid). In the second paragraph, the statement establishes a Jordanian framework of religious coexistence; ‘we, as Jordanian Christians [...] our Muslim brothers.’ Yet, this framework occurs under the leadership of the Hashemite monarchy and in particular ‘at its top, His Majesty the great King Abdullah II.’ As a result, the “Amman Message,” the “Common Word,” “Al Bayt,” the Royal Institute for Interfaith Studies, and the “Week of Harmony between Religions” are mentioned. All these initiatives are fashioned as examples of ‘this national effort at openness and co-work.’ Thus, as early as this paragraph, Jordan is already defined as a model for Christian-Muslim relations. This idea of Jordan as a model, resting on a “virtuous triangle” between Christians, Muslims, and the Hashemite monarchy is one which is repeated in several other Christian reactions, as will be mentioned below. The third paragraph places the statement in a Latin framework, since it underlines the Vatican initiatives towards Islam. This clearly proves that the statement was written by a Latin priest, i.e. Ḥannā Kildānī. However, the statement does not underline the importance of the Second Vatican Council – as other Catholic reactions did in reaction to “The Innocence of Muslims” – but only mentions the Special Synod for the Middle East in 2010, and the visit by Benedict XVI to Lebanon from 15 to 17 September 2012. In particular, the statement emphasizes the good relations between Christians and Muslims that these two Roman Catholic

---

<sup>952</sup> “من يرفض أن يعيش تحت الشمس، وقد أدمن العيش في عتمة مستنقعات الكراهية والحق،”  
<sup>953</sup> “هؤلاء المصطادين في الماء العكر،”

initiatives reportedly underlined. In addition, the Council of Churches in Jordan quotes the final statement of the Special Synod for the Middle East:

We say to our Muslim citizens, that we are truly brothers, and God wants us to live together, united in the faith of the One God and the commandment of the love of God and the love of one's Neighbour [underlined by the author]. Together, we will work on building civil societies founded on citizenship, religious freedom, and the freedom of creed. Together, we will cooperate to strengthen justice, peace, human rights, and the values of life and family. It is (truly) our shared responsibility to build our nations (*awṭāninā*). We want to give the East and the West a model of coexistence between the various religions and of co-operation in building between the diverse civilizations for the good of our nations and the whole of humanity.

This long quotation stresses the shared theological values between Christians and Muslims. In this regard, the final statement of the Synod seems to express the core idea of “A Common Word,” which placed special insistence on the same faith in God and the command to love the other, i.e. the “neighbour” (see the underlined part in the quotation). However, this quotation is also a call to Muslims, reminding them of the shared monotheistic dogmas, the brotherhood, and, in particular, calling on them to commit themselves to build a secular and civil society. As a result, the quote seemingly lessens the impact of the previous paragraphs citing good Christian-Muslim relations. Nevertheless, the statement goes on to reiterate the idea of hatred embodied in the video “The Innocence of Muslims,” which results in its underlining of the very Jordanian model: ‘our response will be, we the Muslim and Christian Jordanian Arabs, the production of love and dialogue.’

Thus, to some extent, the core idea of the Council of Churches is that Jordan is the country most fit and legitimate to be a model, resting on the same monotheistic faith, a shared Arab and Islamic identity, and the leadership of the Hashemite monarchy. In addition, throughout this statement, this idea of sharing the same monotheistic creeds is pervasive; ‘in front of God, in the same boat’<sup>954</sup> (first paragraph), the Common Word, ‘united in the faith in the One God’ (third paragraph, statement of the Special Synod for the Middle East), ‘accessing the mercy and love of God’ (fourth and last paragraph). This shared monotheist faith results in the same values of ‘love and dialogue, whose material we find in the verses of the noble Quran and the Holy Gospel.’ Finally, the statement quotes the Quran ‘the God of the worlds (*rabb al-‘ālamīn*)’ and the gospel ‘Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy’ (Matthew 5,7).

---

<sup>954</sup> “أمام الله في قارب واحد،”

All in all, according to this statement, Christian-Muslim coexistence rests on a certain sameness; on a common monotheism and shared religious values, as well as on the same identity, and not on a common history. Interestingly the statement does not feel compelled to defend Islam against the accusations levelled against it in the video. To conclude, this statement by the Council of Churches was seemingly motivated by a convinced rejection of blasphemy and not by the fear of violent backlash against Christians (Kildani 8 April 2015). Ḥannā Kildānī stressed that those responsible for this video did not represent Christianity. Moreover, the criticism is not based on a theological argumentation but on the experience of living together and coexistence in a society.

### **The Greek Orthodox Bishopric**

On 19 September 2012, the Greek Orthodox diocese of Amman issued a statement condemning “The Innocence of Muslims.”<sup>955</sup> The statement displays a progression; it starts by condemning the video, then goes on to dwell on Christian-Muslim relations in a broad context, and finally in the context of Jordan under the rule of King Abdullah II. In the name of Bishop Benedictos, the clerics of the diocese, and the parish the statement expresses its ‘complete condemnation and rejection of any form of offenses (*isā’āt*),’ especially ‘the latest film which wanted to offend the person of the noble Arab Messenger,’ and ‘this fierce offensive,’ and ‘odious work.’ The statement does not dwell at all on the background of the video but only attributes it to ‘sides pursuing interest in the right (*ḥaqq*) of the Islamic religion and its symbol,’ that only aim to ‘insinuate the spirit of division and spread strife among the people.’ As a result, the Greek Orthodox diocese considers itself and Christians to be likewise “offended” by this video. In addition, the video is viewed as targeting Jordan specifically, since it reportedly aims to ‘destroy national unity.’

In contrast to “The Innocence of Muslims” and its reported goals, the statement frames a unity between Christians and Muslims in Jordan that initially rests on: ‘in Jordan as sons of the united nation (*abnā’ al-waṭan al-wāḥid*),’ who share the same historical roots: ‘and we have deeply-rooted roots and we have lived in shared prosperity equally between Muslims and Christians, without discrimination or differentiation.’ In an extension of the notion, this unity is stated to rest on the leadership of the Hashemite king, Abdullah II, for whose welfare the Greek Orthodox Church prays. Thus, the king is viewed as an inherent element of this Christian-Muslim model; ‘May His Majesty our King Abdullah II, son of Ḥusain, protect and preserve

---

<sup>955</sup> Ortho News. 19 September 2012. بيان صادر عن مطرانية الروم الأرثوذكس. Doi: <http://www.jordanorthodoxchurch.org/ar/node/1752> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

the national unity and the love that governs the sons of this nation in its different sides.”<sup>956</sup> Interestingly, this statement made extensive use of words like “*waṭan*” and “sons of the united nation.”

### **Council of Evangelical Churches in Jordan**

On 14 September 2012, the Council of Evangelical Churches in Jordan (*majma‘ al-kanā‘is al-injīliyya*) issued a statement condemning “The Innocence of Muslims.”<sup>957</sup> This council comprises five Evangelical churches that are not officially recognized by the state, but are registered as “associations” (Reiss 2012, 305); the Free Evangelical Church (*al-kanāsa al-injīliyya al-ḥurra*), the Jordan Baptist Convention (*tā‘ifat al-kanāsa al-ma‘amdāniyya al-urduniyya*), the Church of the Nazarene (*kanīsat al-nāṣarī al-injīliyya*), the National Christian and Missionaries Alliance Church (*kanīsat al-ittiḥād al-masīḥī al-injīliyya*), and the Assemblies of God Church (*kanīsat jamā‘āt allāh al-urduniyya*).<sup>958</sup> Firstly, *al-Ra‘y* invoked condemnation of the violent reactions in connection to the video. Secondly, the newspaper mentioned the council’s condemnation of any ‘offense (*isā‘a*) against any other religion.’ The statement issued by the council did not seem to explicitly refer to a background to this video. However, in its insistence on the “offense” having no ‘connection to true Christianity,’ and statement that ‘those who are behind this film do not represent any Evangelical,’ the council appeared to acknowledge an Evangelical Christian involvement, perhaps referring to the priest Terry Jones. Thus, this statement can be considered an attempt to dissociate Jordanian Evangelical Christians from this video. In addition, the statement makes use of a discourse of national unity under the leadership of the Hashemite monarchy, in a similar way to that in which the Greek Orthodox diocese did:

We in Jordan, Christians and Muslims, we stand side by side, with a united view, and we will not accept the shattering of our unity, as one Jordanian people that lives in a country beloved in

---

<sup>956</sup> حفظ جلاله مليكنا عبدالله الثاني ابن الحسين المعظم من كل سوء حافظا ومحافظا على الوحدة الوطنية والمحبة السائدة بين أبناء هذا الوطن ,, “بمختلف أطيافه”

<sup>957</sup> Al-Rai. 15 September 2012. مجلس ومجمع الكنائس يستتكران الفيلم المسيء. Doi: [http://www.alrai.com/article\\_m/539017.html](http://www.alrai.com/article_m/539017.html) (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>958</sup> Facebook. Council of Evangelical Churches of Jordan. Doi: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%85%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AC%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%AF%D9%86%D9%8A-Council-of-Evangelical-Churches-of-Jordan/529292477210732?sk=info&tab=overview> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

our hearts under the leadership of the wise Hashemite leadership, led by His Majesty King Abdullah II.<sup>959</sup>

### **Summary of Section 5.2.1**

These three reactions comprised both officially and non-officially recognized churches, both legal (Greek Orthodox Church) and lacking a legal basis (the Evangelical Churches). Yet all affirmed Jordan as a model of Christian-Muslim relations, animated by a “virtuous triangle” of the Christians, the Muslims, and the monarchy. The Evangelical churches demonstrated a strong need to dissociate (themselves) from the video.

### **5.2.2 Other Christian Organizations**

This section will firstly analyse the reactions of four Christian organizations – the Jordanian Interfaith Coexistence Research Centre, the Orthodox Society, the Jordan Theological Evangelical Seminary, and the Arab Gathering to Counter Arab Christian Emigration –, then analyse local reactions and finally examine the reactions of Christian actors in Jordan.

#### **The Jordanian Interfaith Coexistence Research Centre**

The director of the Jordanian Interfaith Coexistence Research Centre (*al-markaz al-urdunī li buḥūth al-ta‘āyush al-dīnī*), Nabīl Ḥaddād, published two statements in connection to “The Innocence of Muslims;” the first one on 13 September 2012 and the second one on 22 September 2012. Nabīl Ḥaddād is a Greek Catholic Melkite priest in the middle-class suburb Marj al-Ḥammām near Amman. He is the founder of this interreligious centre, which is allegedly supported by King Abdullah II and mostly funded by US organizations (Neveu 2004-2005, 113). In the first statement, published on September 14 in *al-Dustūr*,<sup>960</sup> the institute harshly condemned what ‘the media conveyed of a film offending (*musī*) the prophet and the creed of Islam and violates the feelings of Muslims.’ It considered the video ‘this hideous suspicious work’ that was ‘beyond any moral, dogmatic, and human principle,’ which cannot possibly be justified by freedom and an ‘offense to sacred places (*muqaddasāt*), a disbelief in and a disobedience of rules of heaven.’<sup>961</sup> The statement remained rather vague with regards to the background, ascribing it only to ‘a small group with hating minds and sick reasons.’ In particular, the centre was said to condemn the timing of this crisis, seeing in it an objective of

---

اننا في الأردن، مسيحيين ومسلمين، نقف جنباً إلى جنب متحدي الرأي ولن نقبل بزعة وحدتنا كشعب أردني واحد يعيش في بلد عزيز على ,, 959  
“قلوبنا في ظل قيادته الهاشمية الحكيمة، وعلى راسها جلالة الملك عبدالله الثاني

960 Al-Dustour. 14 September 2012. الحكومة تعرب عن ادانتها الشديدة ورفضها القاطع للإساءة لرسول الله ص. Number 16227.

Page 3.

961 “الإساءة الى المقدسات كفر وعصيان لأوامر السماء,, 961

‘igniting religious and sectarian racism.’ Furthermore, the statement formulated a complete solidarity with Muslims and stated that Christians – ‘we, as Arab Christians’ – were equally affected and offended by this video.

In the second statement published on 22 September 2012, in *al-Dustūr*, the position of the Jordanian Interfaith Coexistence Research Centre was expressed more clearly, this time by its director, Father Nabīl Ḥaddād.<sup>962</sup> The priest repeated his condemnation of the video, defining it more explicitly as ‘the expression of a conspiracy,’ that only led to ‘planting evil and hate.’ Similarly, the statement considered the video to have been produced under the pretence of freedom, but this time it added that ‘freedom stops where it violates the others’ feelings.’ Moreover, Nabīl Ḥaddād appeared to have felt compelled to resort to a stronger argument in order to counter the video, and he insisted ‘our Christianity, in its teachings and its love does not [accept] the offense (*isā’a*).’ Although, Nabīl Ḥaddād did not explicitly mention the background of the video, this insistence on the moral values of Christianity implicitly acknowledges a “Christian background.” Furthermore, he underlined the solidarity and unity between Christians and Muslims who are ‘one united team.’ As a result, this video likewise “offended” Christians, ‘especially Arab Christians.’ This unity rests upon a common history and Arab identity; ‘as it offended us as Christian Arabs, because we lived with Islam and Muslims, and shared in our history and civilization, and thus it offended our Arabism (*urūba*).’ The priest demanded an international law prohibiting offenses against religions. Interestingly, Nabīl Ḥaddād did not specifically evoke the Hashemite monarchy or Jordan in order to fortify his stance. Yet, *al-Dustūr* begins its description of the priest by mentioning his call to Christians and Muslims not to adhere to strife, as if this video did represent a real threat. Finally, Nabīl Ḥaddād strongly underlined the role of his centre and himself in promoting interreligious dialogue. He stated that he was one of the first to promote the “Amman Message” abroad and his centre was one of the first to have invited high-ranking Islamic leaders, such as ‘*ulamā*’ from al-Azhar.

### **The Orthodox Society**

---

<sup>962</sup> Al-Dustour. 22 September 2012. مختصون مسلمون ومسيحيون : الفيلم المشبوه مؤامرة على التعايش السلمي بين الأديان. Doi: <http://www.addustour.com/16616/%D9%85%D8%AE%D8%AA%D8%B5%D9%88%D9%86+%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D9%86+%D9%88%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%AD%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%86+%3A+%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85+%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B4%D8%A8%D9%88%D9%87+%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%A9+%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89+%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%B4+%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%84%D9%85%D9%8A+%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%86+%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%A7%D9%86.html> (retrieved May 21 2016).

The statement published by the Orthodox Society differed greatly in its content and tonality. It was written by the founder of the organization, Ra'ūf Abū Jābir (Farraj 27 April 2015) and published on 14 September 2012 in several Jordanian newspapers. The analysis here uses the original statement delivered to the author by the president of Orthodox Society, Bāssim Farrāj, in Amman in April 2015.<sup>963</sup> The Orthodox Society was founded in 1993 following the Fifth Orthodox Conference in Amman (Farraj 27 April 2015) It is registered at the ministry of Interior (ibid). The organization is a key actor in the so-called Orthodox Issue.

In this statement, the Orthodox Society harshly condemns ‘the showing of the film which offends Islam and the Muslim brothers and assaults religious sites (*maqāmāt*) and the Islamic creed’ as well as ‘the feelings of Muslims and Christians.’ The expression “Muslim brothers” is repeated three times in the statement. The statement connected this video with the recent price-tag against the Latrun monastery, and concluded: ‘There is a Zionist plan targeting Christian and Muslim Arabs’ and aiming to ignite ‘strife between the sons of the united Arab community (*abnā' al-umma al-'arabiyya al-wāḥida*).’ In contrast, the idea of unity between Christians and Muslims was strongly underlined and rested upon a shared Arab identity and belonging, “*abnā' al-umma al-'arabiyya al-wāḥida*.” At the end, however, this unity was said to rests upon ‘coexistence (*al-'aysh al-mushtarak*)’ ‘in this good country’ under ‘the leadership of his Majesty King Abdullah II, son of Hussein the great.’ In addition, the Orthodox Society called on the international community and Arab governments to stop the showing of this video.

### **The Jordan Theological Evangelical Seminary**

The Jordan Theological Evangelical Seminary was established in 1991 following the assumption that the reported 4% of Christians living in the Arab world are only actually Christians by label, and the organization, as an institute of higher theological education, thus aims to strengthen their Christian identity for the service of the societies they live in.<sup>964</sup>

In a brief press communiqué published in *al-Dustūr* on 16 September 2012 and issued on 15 September 2012, the Jordan Theological Evangelical Seminary (JETS) (*al- hay'a al-injīliyya al-thaqāfiyya fī l-urdun*) strongly tried to dissociate itself from “The Innocence of Muslims.” It condemned ‘all sorts of offenses against religious rituals and creeds and the foundation that represents the essence of the believing human being.’<sup>965</sup> However, the organization went on to state: ‘We as Eastern Christians, we want to make it clear that we have

---

<sup>963</sup> This statement is to be found in Attached Documents 1.

<sup>964</sup> JETS. JETS History. Doi: <http://www.jets.edu/sitepage.aspx?typeid=1&id=175> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>965</sup> Al-Dustour. 16. September 2012. تواصل الادانة والاستنكار للفيلم المسيء لرسول الله. Number 16229. Page 9.

no relation to what happened,’ and expressed its support for the ‘coexistence (*al-ta‘āyush*) and brotherhood in our Arab and Jordanian society resting on mutual respect.’

### *Al-tajammu‘ al-‘arabī li l-taṣaddī li-hijrat al-masīḥiyyīn al-‘arab*

The position of the Arab Gathering to Counter Arab Christian Emigration (*al-tajammu‘ al-‘arabī li l-taṣaddī li-hijrat al-masīḥiyyīn al-‘arab*) was briefly mentioned in *al-Dustūr* on 14 September 2012.<sup>966</sup> The organization condemned the video as an ‘offense against the noble Arab prophet and Islam’ and ‘a suspicious work,’ without dwelling on its background. Furthermore, the Arab Group considered it an ‘offense for all Christian and Muslim Arabs.’ Interestingly, the statement seemed to have been less positive than the other Christian reactions, as it formulated two calls. Firstly, it called on Christians and Muslims to ‘strengthen mutual understanding (*tafāhum*) and counter any racism and extremism.’ Secondly, it called on ‘all intellectuals of the community (*umma*) to stand united against extremism.’<sup>967</sup> In a longer press communiqué published by the press agency Petra, the spokesman of this organization, Tīsīr ‘Imārī, insisted there was a ‘conspiracy’ behind this video, especially considering its timing close to the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks; to ‘spread discord and division and create strife in our Arab societies serving enmity between Muslim and Christian Arabs.’<sup>968</sup>

### **Local Christian Reactions**

The Jordanian media reported on the stances of three mainly Christian localities but did not specify the identity of these actors. These localities are ‘Ajlūn on September 15, Mādabā on September 16, and al-Fuḥays on September 18, 2012.

On 15 September 2012, *al-Dustūr* reported that ‘Christian actions (*fa‘āliyyāt*) in ‘Ajlūn’ condemned “The Innocence of Muslims,” accusing it of being ‘a crime against the right (*ḥaqq*) of the Messenger (PBUH) and an explicit offense against Islam and Muslims.’<sup>969</sup>

On 16 September 2012, *al-Dustūr* reported on a protest against “The Innocence of Muslims”<sup>970</sup> by ‘Christian communities in the governorate of Mādabā.’ The protest reportedly

---

<sup>966</sup> Al-Dustour. 14 September 2012. الحكومة تعرب عن ادانتها الشديدة ورفضها القاطع للإساءة لرسول الله ص. Number 16227. Page 3.

<sup>967</sup> “كل مثقفي الأمة إلى الوقوف صفاً واحداً ضد التطرف.”

<sup>968</sup> “مؤامرة لبث الفرقة والانقسام ولخلق الفتنة في مجتمعاتنا العربية خدمة لأعداء العرب مسلمين ومسيحيين.”

Petra. 14 September 2012. التجمع العربي للتصدي لهجرة المسيحيين العرب يستنكر الفيلم المسيء للرسول الكريم. Doi: [http://www.petra.gov.jo/public\\_news/Nws\\_NewsDetails.aspx?Menu\\_ID=&Site\\_Id=2&lang=1&NewsID=83990&CatID=14](http://www.petra.gov.jo/public_news/Nws_NewsDetails.aspx?Menu_ID=&Site_Id=2&lang=1&NewsID=83990&CatID=14) (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>969</sup> Al-Dustour. 15 September 2012. رؤساء الكنائس: مكونات مجتمعاتنا أوعى من الخديعة وأقوى أمام الافتراء. Number 16228. Page 16.

<sup>970</sup> Al-Dustour. 16. September 2012. تواصل الادانة والاستنكار للفيلم المسيء لرسول الله. Number 16229. Page 9.



condemned the ‘offense against any of the religious symbols,’ from ‘any source and whatever its goals are,’ and it considered the video ‘a distortion of the image of Islam and Muslims.’

In addition, on 18 September 2012, *al-Dustūr* reported on a statement issued the day before by ‘popular, official, and local actions of the city al-Fuḥays.’<sup>971</sup> This statement is discussed in this section, because al-Fuḥays is one of the few remaining mainly Christian cities in Jordan; 60% of its inhabitants are reportedly Greek Orthodox, while the rest of the city is inhabited by Muslims and Latin Christians. In addition, this statement included a long quote from the statement made by the Council of Churches. First of all, these activists reportedly condemned the video, alluding to it as ‘these suspicious attempts to distort the image of Islam,’ ‘a new crime against the truth (*ḥaqq*) of the Arab Muslim prophet Muhammad, connected this time to the production of the film “The Innocence of Muslims,” ‘this seamy work,’ ‘these practices.’ The statement did not mention a background to the film but further criticised the video for its trespassing on ‘all boundaries of politeness, feelings and sensations,’ as well as for its aim of seeking to ‘plant strife in the world.’ In addition, in reaction to the video, the statement underlined the tolerance of Islam. Finally, in the middle of this report by *al-Dustūr* there is a long quote from the statement made by the Council of Churches:

The elements of our Arab and Islamic society are more aware of deceit, and stronger when resisting the winds of defamation, because we have in our religion, we, the Arabs, and the group of Muslims and Christians, something that renders us immune. We rise above the vice which appears from time to time through offending the religions under the unfounded pretence and abuse of freedom of thought.

### **Christian Actors**

On 15 September 2012, *al-Dustūr* reported on the condemnation of “The Innocence of Muslims” by the Christian MP Riḍā Ḥaddād. Riḍā Ḥaddād is one of six Christian deputies in the Jordanian parliament. In his official position, he criticised the fact that the showing of this ‘film’ at this time represented ‘a great offense to the Messenger, peace be upon him, and his noble message and an offense to millions of Muslims.’<sup>972</sup> Speaking in the name of Christians, he underlined their refusal of such “offenses.” Furthermore, he established Jordan as a counter-

---

<sup>971</sup> Al-Dustour. 18 September 2012. الأردننيون يواصلون التنديد بالفيلم المسيء للرسول. Doi:

<http://www.addustour.com/16612/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B1%D8%AF%D9%86%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%86+%D9%8A%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B5%D9%84%D9%88%D9%86+%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%AF+%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85+%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A1+%D9%84%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84.html> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>972</sup> Al-Dustour. 15 September 2012. رؤساء الكنائس: مكونات مجتمعاتنا أوعى من الخديعة وأقوى أمام الافتراء». Number 16228. Page 16.

model – ‘referring to the state of brotherly coexistence (*ta’āyush*) between Muslims and Christians in this country which constitutes a model to be followed.’ And, given this unity, he posited the Arab identity of this country; ‘we Arabs, Muslims and Christians.’

Finally, *al-Dustūr* mentioned the stance taken by the social activist Nabīha Farḥān al-Samardalī who expressed the Christian Arabs’ condemnation (‘we as Arab Christians’).<sup>973</sup> In this regard, she referred to the ‘excellent relations between Muslims and Christians [which] are a model for the whole world.’ In addition, she demanded the prosecution of the producer and writer of this ‘film.’

### ***Summary of Section 5.2.***

Overall, the reactions of Christian actors and organizations varied greatly from other non-explicit Christian reactions. Like the churches, these reactions insisted on a “virtuous triangle” between Christians, Muslims and the monarchy. All reactions remained vague with regards to the background of the video, except for the Orthodox Society, which invoked a “Zionist” plan. Interestingly, the Protestant actors felt compelled to dissociate from the video, thus suggesting a fear of generalization and that they have faced difficulties in finding acceptance as genuine Jordanian Christians.

## **5.3 Where are the Christians?**

This section suggests rather tellingly the absence of joint Christian-Muslim reactions in Jordan. This section will first look at the official stances of the actors (5.3.1) and then at the protests (5.3.2). Yet this does not mean that Christians have no role to play in political parties, organizations, professional associations, and tribes. The reactions of the professional associations can be viewed as joint Christian-Muslim reactions, given the Christians’ economic role and therefore their presence therein (Farraj 27 April 2015). The title of this section rather suggests that unlike in other countries, the very *distinction* between Christians and Muslims was seemingly not made, and the video was not understood as needing an explicit *Christian-Muslim* response.

### **5.3.1 Political and Social Actors**

This section will focus on political parties (5.3.1.1), professional associations (5.3.1.2), organizations (5.3.1.3) and tribes (5.3.1.4).

---

<sup>973</sup> Al-Dustour. 15 September 2012. «رؤساء الكنائس»: مكونات مجتمعاتنا أوعى من الخديعة وأقوى أمام الافتراء». Number 16228. Page 16.

### 5.3.1.1 Political Parties

Only three political parties published a statement condemning “The Innocence of Muslims.” These are the Islamic Action Front (IAF), the political arm of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood; *ḥizb al-wasaṭ al-islāmī* (Muslim Centre Party) and the *ḥizb al-du‘ā’*.

The Islamic Action Front (IAF) was established in 1992 following the legalization of political parties (Schwedler 2006, 65). Both the Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamic Action Front have a history of cooperation with the government and other political actors in Parliament (see Schwedler 2006, 88). The Muslim Brotherhood, called the Islamic Movement in Jordan (*al-ḥaraka al-islāmiyya*), adopted the strategy of a “march through the institutions” and, according to Marion Boulby, it began to infiltrate the Ministry of Education in the 1960s (Boulby 1999, 84). This influence has resulted in increased social pressure (Fleyfel 2013, 88-89). Yet in 2007 the Christian ‘Azīz Musā‘ada was elected into the leading committee of the IAF.<sup>974</sup> In general, the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood and the IAF view their relationship with Christians within an Islamic framework. Ziyād Abū Ghanīma, the spokesman of the Muslim Brotherhood, stated:

Islam is very clear on the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims. We believe in Jesus Christ and Moses. We believe that Christians and Jews are the people of the Book (*ahl al-kitāb*) and we are ordered by God to behave very kindly to them (Boulby 1999, 131 in Schwedler 2006, 159).

Marion Boulby, however, argues that the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan envisions Muslim-Christian cooperation primarily in the framework of ‘exposing Zionist ambitions’ (Boulby 1999, 131 in Schwedler 2006, 159-160).

On 14 September 2012, *al-Dustūr* quoted a statement by the Islamic Action Front condemning the ‘American film offending the prophet Muhammad.’<sup>975</sup> It considered the video ‘screaming attacks on the right (*ḥaqq*) of the prophet of God, Muhammad, the whole Islamic community (*umma*), on all believers in religious and human values.’ Interestingly, to some

---

<sup>974</sup> Al-Jazeera. 20 February 2007. انتخاب أول مسيحي في قيادة الحزب الإسلامي الأبرز بالأردن. Doi: <http://www.aljazeera.net/news/reportsandinterviews/2007/2/20/%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%AE%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D8%A3%D9%88%D9%84-%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%AD%D9%8A-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%82%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%B2%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%B2-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B1%D8%AF%D9%86> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>975</sup> Al-Dustour. 14 September 2012. الحكومة تعرب عن ادانتها الشديدة ورفضها القاطع للإساءة لرسول الله ص. Number 16227. Page 3.

extent the IAF viewed the “Innocence of Muslims” in the context of the phenomenon of price-tag in the Palestinian Territories, since it expressed its condemnation of all ‘offenses (*isā’āt*) [...] of our religious symbols that happen from time to time in occupied Palestine, the United States and in Europe.’ Nevertheless, the party asserted the importance of ‘peaceful and civilised’ reactions. Moreover, it called on the US government and on other countries to issue laws condemning such acts, as well as on Arab and Islamic governments to take a firm stance. Interestingly, this statement is very cautious and short, while the IAF, and especially the Muslim Brotherhood, participated in several protests (see Section 5.3.2) which also criticised the government.

The second party that published a statement condemning “The Innocence of Muslims” was *ḥizb al-wasaṭ al-islāmī* on 13 September 2012.<sup>976</sup> This political party was established in 2003 by several Islamist-minded politicians who had rejected the Muslim Brotherhood’s growing dominance over the IAF (Schwedler 2006, 201). According to Jilian Schwedler, it is committed to pluralism, human rights, and social equality (Schwedler 2006, 201). Yet the Al-Quds Centre for Political Studies mentioned that one of the principles promoted by *ḥizb al-wasaṭ al-islāmī* is the ‘need to change general principles towards Islam.’<sup>977</sup> In the brief statement paraphrased by *al-Dustūr*, the political party condemned such ‘offending acts,’ aimed at ‘deepening the violence between the people.’ The party expressed its fear of violent reactions and demanded the suspension of the film’s spread. In addition, *ḥizb al-wasaṭ al-islāmī* defined Islam thus; ‘the tolerant Islamic religion is the religion of moderation and balance [underlined by the author].’ A member of this party reacted to the video as the leader of *ḥamlat rasūl allāh yuwahḥidunā* (see Section 5.3.1.3).

On 16 September 2012 *ḥizb al-du‘ā* published a statement condemning the ‘production of strife and evil through [this] offending film’ under the pretence of freedom of expression; ‘freedom does not mean offending others.’<sup>978</sup> Muhammad was described in this statement as the ‘master of humankind,’ and Islam as ‘the true Islamic thought, standing on the pillar of

<sup>976</sup> Al-Dustour. 14 September 2012. الحكومة تعرب عن ادانتها الشديدة ورفضها القاطع للإساءة لرسول الله ص. Number 16227. Page 3.

<sup>977</sup> Al-Quds Centre for Political Studies حزب الوسط الإسلامي Doi: <http://jpp.alqudscenter.org/ar/parties/view/48/%D8%AD%D8%B2%D8%A8.%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%B3%D8%B7.%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>978</sup> Al-Dustour. 17 September 2012. تواصل الإدانة والاستنكار للفيلم المسيء لرسول الله. Doi: <http://www.addustour.com/16611/%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B5%D9%84+%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%A9+%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%86%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%B1+%D9%84%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85+%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A1+%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84+%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%87.html> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

tolerance, moderation, balance, reason, love, and peace [underlined by the author].’ Interestingly this party, established in 1993, has Christians in its ranks and presented itself as a modern, open-minded party and, though lacking popular reach (al-Attayat; Shteivi; Sweiss 2005, 88), was the only political party which made a reference to Christians in the context of “The Innocence of Muslims.” The statement warned against ‘violating Islamic and Christian revealed dogmas because the followers of the revealed religions are an integral part of our Arab nation (*umma*).’ In addition, *hizb al-du‘ā*’ implicitly condemned the violent reactions, as it called for reasonable reactions. It also considered Islamic institutions in the West to have a role to play in explaining and promoting a positive image of Islam.

#### ***Summary of Section 5.3.1.1***

The reactions of these political parties showed the adoption of the official discourse on Islam in Jordan, in particular the use of slogans like “moderation” and “balance.” Interestingly, the two Islamist parties did not mention the Christians, whereas *hizb al-du‘ā*’ did.

#### **5.3.1.2 The Professional Associations: A Vocal Actor**

Compared to the reactions of political parties, the reactions of professional associations provide a more articulate and in-depth reaction to “The Innocence of Muslims.” This suggests the on-going importance of professional associations in political debates.

Until the political liberalisation of 1992, professional associations were the place where political debate took place. Their establishment is closely linked to the war in 1948, when thousands of Palestinians subsequently fled to Jordan, and when the annexation of the West Bank caused a sudden modernisation (Dietrich 1999, 292). Moreover, most of the professional associations were established in the 1950s under the supervision of the government (Dietrich 1999, 292); the association of lawyers in 1950, the association of journalists in 1952, the association of engineers in 1957, the association of agricultural engineers in 1968 (Dietrich 1999, 294). Unlike trade unions, which were subject to repression, professional associations were able to assert their independence (Dietrich 1999, 294). This independence resulted among others factors from its strong membership, which is compulsory (Dietrich 1999, 297). At the end of the 1990s, they comprised 25% of the work force, i.e. 200,000 members (Hermann 2000, 59). The role of professional associations is said to have diminished since 1992 (Hermann 2000,

59). However, according to the journalist Fahd al-Khaytān, their role has not changed, since people continue to view them as a substitute for political parties.<sup>979</sup>

The subsequent analysis does not hint at the actual importance of professional associations in terms of power, but rather at their continued visibility and the articulation of political discourse by these actors.

Various professional associations from across the country published statements condemning “The Innocence of Muslims:” the professional associations on 13 September, 2012<sup>980</sup> the professional association of lawyers on 16 September,<sup>981</sup> Chamber Commerce on 15 September,<sup>982</sup> the engineers after their meeting on 15 September,<sup>983</sup> the association of journalists on 16 September,<sup>984</sup> the association of lawyers on 16 September,<sup>985</sup> as well as the professional associations of al-Salt, the professional association of teachers in al-Balqā’, and the association of agricultural engineers in al-Balqā’ on 18 September.<sup>986</sup> Furthermore, the association of agricultural engineers staged a sit-in in front of the building of the Counsel of professional associations,<sup>987</sup> and the Imams and employees of the ministry of Islamic Endowments staged a protest on 17 September in the greater area of Amman, *sāhat al-nakhīl*.<sup>988</sup> The latter are mentioned here as part of professional associations because they are employed

---

<sup>979</sup> Al-Jazeera. 12 May 2015. دور النقابات المهنية في الحياة السياسية بالأردن. Doi. <http://www.aljazeera.net/programs/arab-present-situation/2015/5/12/%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%87%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B1%D8%AF%D9%86> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>980</sup> Al-Dustour. 14 September 2012. الحكومة تعرب عن ادانتها الشديدة ورفضها الفاطح للإساءة لرسول الله ص. Number 16227. Page 3.

<sup>981</sup> Al-Dustour. 16. September 2012. تواصل الادانة والاستنكار للفيلم المسيء لرسول الله. Number 16229. Page 9.

<sup>982</sup> Al-Dustour. 16. September 2012. تواصل الادانة والاستنكار للفيلم المسيء لرسول الله. Number 16229. Page 9.

<sup>983</sup> Al-Dustour. 17 September 2012. تواصل الادانة والاستنكار للفيلم المسيء لرسول الله.

<sup>984</sup> Al-Dustour. 17 September 2012. تواصل الادانة والاستنكار للفيلم المسيء لرسول الله.

<sup>985</sup> Al-Dustour. 17 September 2012. تواصل الادانة والاستنكار للفيلم المسيء لرسول الله.

<sup>986</sup> Al-Ghad. 18 September 2012. السلط: فاعليات شعبية ورسمية ترفض المساس بقيم الإسلام. Doi. <http://www.alghad.com/articles/607138-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%B7-%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%B4%D8%B9%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%B1%D9%81%D8%B6-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%B3-%D8%A8%D9%82%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85?s=e3ac7a8af367d7f51c818fe724336e38&search=%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A1> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>987</sup> Al-Dustour. 16. September 2012. تواصل الادانة والاستنكار للفيلم المسيء لرسول الله. Number 16229. Page 9.

<sup>988</sup> Al-Dustour. 18 September 2012. الفعاليات الرسمية والشعبية تواصل التنديد بالفيلم المسيء لرسول الله. Number 16231. Page 6.

by the state and all mosques in Jordan are controlled by the government (Wiktorowicz 2001, 53-54).

In most cases, “The Innocence of Muslims” was considered a ‘film’ (the Professional Associations, the Journalist, the Engineers, the Agricultural Engineers in al-Balqā’) which was widely viewed as an ‘offense:’ ‘to the prophets, the messengers, to the lords of the laws and the revealed religions’ (Journalists), ‘to all revealed religions in general and the feelings of Muslims in particular’ (Engineers), ‘to all Muslims in the world’ (Agricultural Engineers). In addition, the video was also considered a ‘provocation of the feelings of Muslims,’ ‘an evil and hateful act on the Messenger Muhammad, Peace be upon him’ (Lawyers), ‘an attack on the *muqaddasāt* and the values humanity cannot live without’ (Agricultural Engineers), ‘an assault on his noble person. They distort the image of his valuable life’ (Teachers al-Balqā’). In this regard, the video was viewed as a distortion of Islam; ‘a miserable attempt to distort the image of Islam by offending the Messenger sent to humankind’ (Lawyers). Interestingly, the video was also denounced for what it claimed to represent: a violation of human rights; ‘a screaming attack on the freedom of religion’ (Professional Associations Salt), ‘a screaming violation of the principles of freedom and the right to free speech’ (Journalists).

Thus, the video was also an opportunity for some associations to defend the image of Islam and Muhammad. The Chamber of Commerce underlined Islam’s tolerance; ‘Islam, which believes in all religions and all revealed messages.’ The Lawyers described Muhammad as ‘the gift sent the whole humanity and the mercy of the world in the message is the greatest that anchors the rules of peace and tolerance in the religion that God, praise to Him, has granted to all people, in order to lead them from the cult of the idols to the cult of God.’ This all-encompassing religion accordingly coexists with other religions (Agricultural Engineers).

As a result, the professional associations expressed various demands. Some associations expressed rather vague demands such as ‘a united Arab-Islamic position’ (Agricultural Engineers), and an end to ‘violating and touching religions’ (Chamber Commerce). In addition, the Arab and Islamic governments were called on take measures condemning the video, to boycott countries allowing such offenses (Teachers in al-Balqā’), and to pressure the US Administration via its ambassador to Jordan (Agricultural Engineers). In addition, they also demanded an end to the showing of this film and other similar films and cartoons (Chamber Commerce, Journalists, Engineers).

The issues of the background of the video, Christian-Muslim relations and the threats resulting from this video are closely connected. First of all, most professional associations did not refer to the background of the video at all, except for the Chamber of Commerce which spoke of ‘hateful minds and circles,’ the Lawyers who spoke of ‘ [persons] who hate,’ and the Imams who spoke of ‘the boldness of the Jews and the crusaders.’ In this regard, the Teachers in al-Balqā’ stated that the video was ‘part of a programmed war on Islam by the American and Zionist policy.’ In comparison, several professional associations referred to the potential threat arising as a result of the video; the Journalists considered the video a threat to peace and security in the world. Similarly, the Professional Associations in Salt viewed the video as aiming to sow sectarian strife, and a professor, Maḥmūd Abū Ghanīma, accused the video of aiming to divide the region and sow hate (Agricultural Engineers). In this regard, the protest of the imams displayed some self-criticism, since its media coordinator considered the video proof of the state of decay of the Muslim world, and called on the participants and Muslims to imitate Muhammad in their reactions (Imams). Similarly, the Engineers called on Muslims not to provide an opportunity to others to interfere in Muslim countries with their reactions.

Eventually, out of ten reactions, only two professional associations actually mentioned Christians in different ways. Firstly, the Professional Association asserted in its statement on 13 September 2012, that Christians condemned the video before Muslims did and it also rejected any generalization about Christians and Muslims based on a single act by an extremist. Thus the association implicitly conceded that the video had some “Christian background.” Similarly, it resorted to a theological argument in order to counter the video, stating the video did not represent Christian teachings. Secondly, during their sit-in, the Agricultural Engineers apparently referred to the content of the first part of the video, as they reportedly rejected its claims, and stated instead: ‘Muslims and Christians in this Arab country and Arab nation live on the same land, they have the same denominators which have connected them for a long time.’<sup>989</sup>

### ***Summary of Section 5.3.1.2***

These reactions revealed that not only specific professional associations felt the need to express themselves on such a religious and non-economic an issue as “The Innocence of Muslims.” The reactions reached beyond mere condemnation and reflected a deep sense of

---

<sup>989</sup> المسلمين والمسيحيين في هذا البلد والوطن العربي يعيشون على ارض واحدة، لهم قواسم مشتركة تجمعهم من قديم الزمن



responsibility. Interestingly, when defending Islam, the professional associations did not make use of the slogans promoted by the Hashemites.

### 5.3.1.3 Organizations

This section comprises a heterogeneous range of organizations with both an Islamic and a secular outlook. To start with, we will look at the reactions of two Islamic organizations – *al-muntadā al-‘ālamī li l-wasaṭiyya* (the International Forum for Moderation), *ḥamlat rasūl allāh yuwahḥidunā* (the Campaign “The Messenger of God Unites Us”) – *tajammu‘ multaḳā al-khaṭṭ al-sākhin* (the Gathering the Forum for the Hot Line) established in 2011, and of the Jordanian Association for Human Rights (*al-jam‘iyya al-urduniyya li ḥuqūq al-insān*), as well as two local reactions.

On 14 September 2012, *al-Dustūr* mentioned a condemnation of “The Innocence of Muslims” issued by the International Forum for Moderation (*al-muntadā al-‘ālamī li l-wasaṭiyya*). This organization defines itself as an intellectual institution that promotes a moderate, open-minded understanding of Islam, the ‘elevation of Muslims’ as well as better understanding amongst Muslims and with other religions.<sup>990</sup> As of September 2015, the movement was led by the former prime minister of Sudan, al-Ṣādiq al-Mahdī, and comprised members from Sudan, Palestine, Jordan, and several other Arab countries.<sup>991</sup> In its statement published on 13 September 2012, the organization condemned the video as ‘this coward work.’<sup>992</sup> Interestingly, the statement mainly focused on a means of countering this video. Firstly, *al-muntadā al-‘ālamī li l-wasaṭiyya* called on ‘those who are reasonable, the supporters of human rights, the people of wisdom to counter this cowardly work.’ Secondly, it called on Arab and Islamic countries to issue a statement forbidding such acts. Thirdly, the organization insisted on the need to defend the principles of Islam properly. To some extent, the statement also expressed the need for lobbying in Western countries.

In addition, *al-Dustūr* reported on a condemnation made by the organization “The Messenger of God unites us” (*ḥamlat rasūl allāh yuwahḥidunā*) on 14 September 2012. This movement was mentioned by the newspaper in 2008 as an organized and reflective Arab reaction which turned to Jordanian justice in order to obtain a prosecution against the makers

---

<sup>990</sup> Wasatyea. الفكرة والتأسيس. Doi: <http://www.wasatyea.net/?q=node/3#.VfZvhH2rfIU> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>991</sup> Wasatyea. مكتبنا الدائم. Doi: <http://www.wasatyea.net/?q=node/6#.VfZwlX2rfIU> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>992</sup> Al-Dustour. 14 September 2012. الحكومة تعرب عن ادانتها الشديدة ورفضها القاطع للإساءة لرسول الله ص. Number 16227.

of the so-called Danish cartoons and the Dutch MP,<sup>993</sup> Geert Wilders. In addition, the article also mentioned that *ḥamlat rasūl allāh yuwaḥḥidunā* was established by former MP<sup>994</sup> and former member of the *ḥizb al-wasaṭ al-islāmī*,<sup>995</sup> Zakaryā al-Shaykh, following the publication of the so-called Danish cartoons.<sup>996</sup> In this long reference concerning the stance of this movement, *al-Dustūr* initially mentioned the general stance of the movement; then the stance of its leader, Zakaryā al-Shaykh; and finally the stance of the legal advisor of the movement, Ṭāriq al-Ḥawāmada.<sup>997</sup> First of all, it is not clear in which context *ḥamlat rasūl allāh yuwaḥḥidunā* made its position on “The Innocence of Muslims” known, since the newspaper only wrote ‘the Jordanian *ḥamlat rasūl allāh yuwaḥḥidunā* called on the American Administration and on all Western countries [...]’ To some extent, the stance was a warning against the United States and Western countries to basically learn their lessons from the developments in Egypt, Yemen, Tunisia, and Indonesia where the US embassies were attacked. Interestingly, as regards to the background of this video the movement clearly stated:

The spread of an indecent film that assaults the Lord of humankind, Muhammad (PBUH), that was produced by the American-Zionist Sam Bacile, supported by the Zionist American priest Terry Jones who has burnt a copy of the noble Quran, and by a number of immigrant Copts of Egypt in America.

Interestingly, the movement seemed to have relied on Western reports about the video rather than on Egyptian media. In addition, Sam Bacile was not considered a “Jew,” as Niqūlā Bāsīlī Niqūlā initially described himself at first, but a “Zionist.” At the end of the article, the movement was also said to call for ‘a truly genuine Islamic Spring.’

In this report, the leader of the movement, Zakaryā al-Shaykh, was especially critical of the Western practices of ‘Western terror which provoke[s] the feelings of the Muslims,’ and in particular ‘the Western countries, led by the United States of America, the official patron of

<sup>993</sup> Al-Dustour. 9 July 2008. ملاحظة: حملة «رسول الله يوحنا» ورد الفعل المدروس. Doi:

<http://www.addustour.com/15080/%D9%85%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%B8%D8%A9%3A+%D8%AD%D9%85%D9%84%D8%A9+%C2%AB%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84+%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%87+%D9%8A%D9%88%D8%AD%D8%AF%D9%86%D8%A7%C2%BB+%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%AF+%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D8%B9%D9%84+%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AF%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B3.html> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>994</sup> Facebook. الصفحة الرسمية للنائب د. زكريا الشيخ مجتمع. Doi. <https://ar-ar.facebook.com/zakariaalsheikh> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>995</sup> YouTube. 21 April 2014. المدينة نيوز - بتول دانو تيكا - زكريا الشيخ عن إستقالته من حزب الوسط الاسلامي. Doi:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hsoz7deI-00> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>996</sup> Al-Dustour. 14 September 2012. حملة "رسول الله يوحنا": يد العدالة الشعبية الإسلامية ستطال كل من يتناول على رسولنا الكريم. Number 16227. Page 3.

<sup>997</sup> Al-Dustour. 14 September 2012. حملة "رسول الله يوحنا": يد العدالة الشعبية الإسلامية ستطال كل من يتناول على رسولنا الكريم. Number 16227. Page 3.

this politics of intellectual terror, of igniting strife and supporting the culture of clashes between the religions.’ In this context, the various reactions to the “The Innocence of Muslims” were viewed as a logical consequence of these policies. In addition, Zakaryā al-Shaykh warned Arab and Islamic governments against crushing the protests, and overall he warned that the violent reactions could be misused to tarnish the image of Islam. Throughout his stance, the former MP used several expressions to describe Muhammad.<sup>998</sup>

In contrast, the legal advisor of the movement, Ṭāriq al-Ḥawāmada, insisted on legal means as the best reaction; ‘the civilised legal reaction will be the strongest weapon in countering the calls to strife.’ He announced that *ḥamlat rasūl allāh yuwahhīdunā* would establish a commission in order to consider the video. In addition, the Jordanian minister of foreign affairs was called on to take his responsibility in this matter, and he insisted in particular on the role Jordan had to play in the defence of ‘our religion and our noble prophet.’ In particular, this organization suggested a strong civil movement in Jordan that actively “defended Islam,” through peaceful legal means. Interestingly, *ḥamlat rasūl allāh yuwahhīdunā* ascribed a “Zionist” and “American” background to the video and thus deviated from the many reactions in Jordan that did not evoke a background at all.

On 16 September 2012, *al-Dustūr* mentioned the statement by *tajjamu ‘multaqī al-khaṭṭ al-sākhin*. This movement was launched in 2011 on the initiative of a number of Jordanian figures aiming to achieve positive and safe reforms.<sup>999</sup> It demands equality, dignity, freedom, and complete reforms for all citizens in Jordan (ibid). In addition, it insists on the right of return for Palestinians.<sup>1000</sup> The movement is led by the (former) minister of culture Barakāt ‘Awjān.<sup>1001</sup> Barakāt ‘Awjān published the statement in the name of the organization, expressing

<sup>998</sup> “نصرة للحبيب المصطفى،،؛ الرسول الأعظم،،؛ حبيبنا المصطفى صلى الله عليه وسلم ورموز ديننا الإسلامي الحنيف،،”

<sup>999</sup> Al-Madenah News. 7 November 2012. تجمع ملتقى الخط الساخن يطالب بصيغة توافقية على قرار رفع الدعم. Doi:

<http://www.almadenahnews.com/article/182722-%D8%AA%D8%AC%D9%85%D8%B9-%D9%85%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%82%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D8%B7-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%AE%D9%86-%D9%8A%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8-%D8%A8%D8%B5%D9%8A%D8%BA%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%81%D9%82%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D9%82%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%B1%D9%81%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D8%B9%D9%85> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>1000</sup> Al-Bolsala. 12 September 2011. "الخط الساخن" يدعو إلى مؤتمر يناقش جدل الهوية الأردنية. Doi:

[http://www.albosala.com/News/Jordan/2011/9/21/\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D8%B7\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%AE%D9%86\\_%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%B9%D9%88\\_%D8%A5%D9%84%D9%89\\_%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B1\\_%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%B4\\_%D8%AC%D8%AF%D9%84\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%87%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%A9\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B1%D8%AF%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9\\_?info=TWpRbVVHRm5aU114K3U=.plx](http://www.albosala.com/News/Jordan/2011/9/21/_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D8%B7_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%AE%D9%86_%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%B9%D9%88_%D8%A5%D9%84%D9%89_%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B1_%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%B4_%D8%AC%D8%AF%D9%84_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%87%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%A9_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B1%D8%AF%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9_?info=TWpRbVVHRm5aU114K3U=.plx) (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>1001</sup> Enjaz News. ? وزير الثقافة بركات عوجان دخل قلوب المتقنين. Doi. <http://enzajnews.com/details.aspx?id=25653> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

his surprise at the stance of the Arab and Islamic states and therefore asking for a united Arab-Islamic position.<sup>1002</sup> He referred to the impossibility of remaining silent when faced with such ‘threats to the feelings of Muslims, in such a way.’ In addition, he underlined the importance of inter-religious dialogue and the respect of ‘creed and religion.’

On 17 September 2012, the Jordanian Association for Human Rights (*al-jam‘iyya al-urduniyya li huqūq al-insān*) published a statement condemning the video “The Innocence of Muslims.” This organization was established in 1996 and aims to protect and strengthen human rights in Jordan, but in compliance with the historical heritage of Jordan.<sup>1003</sup> In its statement, the Association for Human Rights harshly condemned the ‘appearance of an American film comprising extreme offenses (*isā’āt*) against the messenger Muhammad (PBUH),’ ‘its essence vilifies the Islamic religion and mocks the values, the principles and the ethics of the noble Messenger,’ and considered its content as ‘sparking feelings of evil and religious hatred between humankind.’<sup>1004</sup> It accused the video of sowing strife and hate when ‘religious coexistence’ was reportedly so much needed. Thus, the association demanded the punishment of the makers of this video. Yet it also condemned the violent reactions, in particular the murder of the US ambassador and the destruction of property, rejecting ‘all forms of violence and the spilling of innocent blood.’

On 18 September 2012, *al-Ghad* mentioned the condemnation of the video by ‘popular and official activities in al-Salt and the people of city al-Fuḥays’ who had published a statement condemning the ‘film’ the day before.<sup>1005</sup> The statement was said to consider the video an attempt to distort the image of Islam and a new attack on the ‘truth of the Arab, Islamic prophet.’ These two cities have an important Christian presence and these two reactions can therefore be connected with the three local Christian reactions in the previous section (5.2.2).

### 5.3.1.4 The Tribes

In the context of “The Innocence of Muslims,” two tribal confederations provided reactions to it; the coalition of Banī Ḥamīda, and the Tribes of the Tafileh Governorate Province Demanding Reform. The Banī Ḥamīda is a confederation of semi-nomadic tribes who gradually

<sup>1002</sup> Al-Dustour. 16. September 2012. تواصل الادانة والاستنكار للفيلم المسيء لرسول الله. Number 16229. Page 9.

<sup>1003</sup> Guide to Civil Society in Jordan. الجمعية الأردنية لحقوق الإنسان. Doi: <http://www.civilsociety-jo.net/ar/organization/447/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B1%D8%AF%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%88%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D9%86%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%86> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>1004</sup> Al-Dustour. 18 September 2012. الفعاليات الرسمية والشعبية تواصل التنديد بالفيلم المسيء لرسول الله. Number 16231. Page 6.

<sup>1005</sup> Al-Ghad. 18 September 2012. السلط: فاعليات شعبية ورسمية ترفض المساس بقيم الإسلام.

settled and live mostly in the area of the Wādī Mujīb (Wādī al-Mūjīb) (Alon 2009, 157). Overall, tribes have always played an important role in Jordan. Their power and wealth, however, varies greatly; the economic situation depends on their proximity to Amman and belonging to a big federation increases their access to wealth and power (Dietrich 1999, 117). In recent years, privatisation and budget reductions have decreased the importance of the tribes (ICG 2005, 5). Tribes used to have a “liberal” mind-set but have subsequently contributed to an increase in Salafi-Jihadi ideas (ICG 2005, 5).

In comparison to other actors in Jordan, the two tribes reacted to the video relatively late. On 18 September 2012, *al-Dustūr* mentioned the condemnation issued by the Coalition of Banī Ḥamīda (*i`tilāf abnā` qabīlat Banī Ḥamīda*) following its gathering in the house of the tribe’s co-coordinator.<sup>1006</sup> The statement started by mentioning Muhammad; ‘this is the prophet of Islam, Muhammad (PBUH), the mercy to the world and all that was created by God. He leads them from the darkness to the light.’ The tribe condemned the video by denouncing in particular the Western understanding of freedom, which ‘violates the feelings of others,’ and considered the film to be first and foremost a political act with no direct religious link. As a result, it considers it a duty towards ‘our beloved, our example, our lord’ to condemn and refute this video.

On 19 September 2012, *al-Dustūr* commented on the statement by the tribes of the Tafīleh Governorate Demanding Reform, *tajamu` kāfat abnā` ashā`ir muḥāfaẓat al-Taḥīla al-muṭālibīn bi l-iṣlāḥ*.<sup>1007</sup> It condemned the ‘attempts to offend,’ ‘the production of a poor film attempting to offend the person of the Messenger (PBUH)’ produced by an ‘insignificant [person].’ Furthermore, it saw it as not representative of the ‘followers of the revealed religions.’ Instead, the statement recalled the foundation of Christian-Muslim relations, i.e. the “Omarian pact:” “We as Muslims, we do not complete our faith except through our faith in God, His books, His Messenger, where our brothers from the revealed religions lived and continue to live to among us. To them that which is for us and upon them which is upon us.’ This “community of rights and duties” is to be found in the Hanafi School which was a means of preventing the assimilation of Christians, preserving their autonomy and identity (Krämer 1995, 585).

---

<sup>1006</sup> Al-Dustour. 18 September 2012. الأردننيون يواصلون التنديد بالفيلم المسيء للرسول.

<sup>1007</sup> Al-Dustour. 19 September 2012. فعاليات الوسطية و«عشائر الطفيلة» تستنكر الإساءة إلى النبي الكريم. Number 16231. Page 29.

### ***Summary of Section 5.3***

This section illustrated the strong political visibility and activism of professional associations. The discrepancy of the reactions between the political parties on the one hand and the professional associations and some organizations on the other hand, showed that the political parties tended to adopt the official discourse on Islam and its slogans (“moderation”), whereas the professional associations tended to use another wording. This deviation from the official discourse was also clear when the West and sometimes a “Zionist plan” were invoked, an invocation which the official actors discussed in Section 5.1. did not make at all. “Christians” were hardly ever invoked, and if they were, then it was to underline the tolerance of Islam towards other “revealed messages.”

#### **5.3.2 The Protests**

This section will analyse the protests which took place in connection with “The Innocence of Muslims,” starting with Amman (5.3.2.1), then continuing with the northern governorates (5.3.2.2), then the centre (5.3.2.3), before finally ending with the southern city of Ma‘ān (5.3.2.4).

##### **5.3.2.1 Amman**

First of all, the media reported on three protests in Amman. These protests were mainly organized by Islamist, even Salafi-Jihadi forces, among them the Hizb ut-Tahrir.

*Al-Dustūr* reported on two protests on Friday 14 2012. The first one started after Friday prayers at the Ḥusaynī mosque in downtown Amman.<sup>1008</sup> The march was organized by the Muslim Brotherhood and a number of ‘popular movements’ participated, among them leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood and its political arm, the Islamic Action Front. During the march, the US flag was burnt.

On that same day, a dozen supporters of the Salafi-Jihadi movement staged a sit-in at a mosque near the US embassy after Friday prayers.<sup>1009</sup> The gathering reportedly expressed slogans against the United States and Barack Obama and burnt an American flag. In addition, three leaders of this movement delivered speeches or made calls; Abū Muḥammad al-Ṭahāwī,<sup>1010</sup> Sa‘d al-Ḥanīfī, and Abū Siyāf. In his speech at this protest against “The Innocence

<sup>1008</sup> *Al-Dustour*. 15 September 2012. مسيرات واعتصامات تندد بالإساءة للرسول الكريم. Number 16228. Page 29.

<sup>1009</sup> *Al-Dustour*. 15 September 2012. مسيرات واعتصامات تندد بالإساءة للرسول الكريم. Number 162228. Page 29.

<sup>1010</sup> As of October 2014, Abū Muḥammad al-Ṭahāwī was in prison in Zarqa under extensive surveillance. In an open letter he had stated that the international coalition against the so-called Islamic State was a ‘satanic pact,’ and expressed his agreement with the organization. In *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*. 1 October 2014. لطحاوي: الدولة الإسلامية ليست “فقاعة” والتحالف حرب على الله ورسوله ولن أغير موقفي. Doi: <http://www.alquds.co.uk/?p=229164> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

of Muslims,” Ṭaḥāwī was simply quoted as having said: ‘what was made, was not the first act against Muslims.’ Besides this, Sa‘d al-Ḥanīfī, introduced in this article as a leader of the movement, asserted that an excuse in such a case was not enough. Finally, another leader of the movement, ‘known as “Abū Siyāf,”’ reportedly called for a gathering near the US embassy, but some refused, and the sit-in was said to have split into two groups.

In addition to these two protests, Hizb ut-Tahrir (*ḥizb al-tahrīr*)<sup>1011</sup> organized a protest on 17 September 2012, apparently in front of the public transport building.<sup>1012</sup> *Al-Dustūr* reported that three speeches were delivered during this protest. A key leader of the movement, “Dr.” Nādir al-Tamīmī<sup>1013</sup> stated in his speech that the video – ‘the offending film’ – did not only ‘expose the Messenger – PBUH – but also all Muslims.’ Therefore, he considered it a duty upon all Muslims to counter this video, insisting on the fact that ‘Islam is our history and our pride,’ and that this Muslim community is the best. In addition, a certain Dr. Dhīb ‘Abd Allah, whose identity was not further elucidated by the newspaper, called on ‘citizens’ to ‘return to the book of God, the Sunna of His noble prophet, and implement the law of God in all the aspects of our life.’ The gathering chanted slogans.<sup>1014</sup> Furthermore, a participant condemned the ‘continued attacks and offensives against the Messenger,’ while a woman, called ‘Umm Badr,’ spoke in the name of women.

### 5.3.2.2 Northern Governorates

As far as the northern governorates of Irbid, Jarash, ‘Ajlūn and Al-Balqā’ are concerned, the media reported on eight protests that were organized by a broader range of actors than in Amman.

In the case of the outermost of the northern governorates, Irbid, we have found five protests in connection to “The Innocence of Muslims.” Two protests took place on Friday 14

<sup>1011</sup> The Hizb ut-Tahrir was founded in 1953 by the Palestinian Taqī al-Dīn al-Nabhānī who tried to register the organization at the Jordanian ministry of interior as a political party (Boulby 1999, 55), an application which was refused. However, membership of the Hizb ut-Tahrir is not forbidden Al-Ray. 29 September 2005. و تصدر حكمها. Doi: [http://www.alrai.com/article\\_m/123023.html](http://www.alrai.com/article_m/123023.html) (retrieved May 2016). It is not very present in Jordan, more so since the Muslim Brotherhood was able to counter the competition from other Islamist groups, among them the Hizb ut-Tahrir (ICG 2005, 47).

<sup>1012</sup> Al-Dustour. 18 September 2012. الفعاليات الرسمية والشعبية تواصل التنديد بالفيلم المسيء لرسول الله. Number 16231. Page 6.

<sup>1013</sup> Nādir al-Tamīmī is a Palestinian and the son of one the founding member of the Hizb ut-Tahrir. He first studied at al-Azhar, then worked at the Jordanian ministry of Islamic Endowments, left, went to Saudi Arabia, but was forbidden from entering it again. In 1993 he joined the Hizb ut-Tahrir and played a role in the Palestinian revolutionary forces. In Facebook. Doi: <http://nader-altamimi.com/AuxView.aspx?ID=171> (retrieved May 21, 2016). According to his Facebook page, his views are “moderate.”

<sup>1014</sup> نحن فداك يا رسول الله.. هو الصادق الأمين.. صلى الله على محمد»، «بالروح بالدم نفديك يا رسول»، «لا إله إلا الله.. نحن فداك يا حبيب الله»، «الله اكبر ولا إله إلا الله

September 2012. Following the Friday prayer, thousands of people reportedly marched and, according to *al-Dustūr*, called on others not to remain silent on the issue of this “offense” and on the Islamic states to take a firm position.<sup>1015</sup> In contrast, *al-Ghad* reported on two protests in Irbid, one of them was organized by the “Popular Movement in the North” and the “Islamic Movement,” the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>1016</sup> Both protests not only condemned the video, but also demanded the removal of the US ambassador (ibid). In addition, the protest also criticised the government, demanding that it immediately to release its prisoners, implement reforms, and rethink its economic policy (ibid).

Similarly, *al-Dustūr* and *al-Ghad* reported differently on a protest on Friday 14 2012, in the outermost northern city of al-Ramthā.<sup>1017</sup> According to *al-Dustūr* thousands of people joined a march, demanding a boycott of American and ‘Zionist’ products as well as the prosecution of the makers of the video, refuting the pretence of freedom of speech and human rights.<sup>1018</sup> The gathering reportedly considered the video ‘an attack on the holiest of holy symbols (*muqaddasāt*) of Muslims’ (ibid). In contrast, *al-Ghad* reported that some five hundred people participated in this march that was staged by a ‘youth and popular movement.’<sup>1019</sup> Two imams of the city reportedly delivered speeches and condemned ‘the violation of the person of the Messenger’ (ibid).

In the context of the district al-Koura (al-Kūra), once again there are two reports concerning a protest. *Al-Dustūr* reported on a sit-in in the locality Dayr Abī Sa‘īd that was organized by the Muslim Brotherhood, the National Front for Reform (*al-jabha al-waṭaniyya li l-iṣlāḥ*), and local activists from the professional associations.<sup>1020</sup> In addition, the newspaper

<sup>1015</sup> Al-Dustour. 15 September 2012. مسيرات واعتصامات تندد بالإساءة للرسول الكريم. Number 16228. Page 29.

<sup>1016</sup> Al-Ghad. 15 September 2012. مسيرتان في إربد نصرته للنبي وللمطالبة بالافراج عن المعتقلين. Doi: <http://www.alghad.com/articles/607360-%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A5%D8%B1%D8%A8%D8%AF-%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D9%84%D9%84%D9%86%D8%A8%D9%8A-%D9%88%D9%84%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AC-%D8%B9%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%AA%D9%82%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%86> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>1017</sup> Since the outbreak of the war in Syria, the population in ar-Ramthā has dramatically increased.

<sup>1018</sup> Al-Dustour. 15 September 2012. مسيرات واعتصامات تندد بالإساءة للرسول الكريم. Number 16228. Page 29.

<sup>1019</sup> Al-Ghad. 15 September 2012. مسيرة بالرمتا واعتصام بالكورة نصرته للرسول الكريم. Doi: <http://www.alghad.com/articles/607354-%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D9%85%D8%AB%D8%A7-%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%85?s=e3ac7a8af367d7f51c818fe724336e38&search=%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A1> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>1020</sup> Al-Dustour. 15 September 2012. مسيرات واعتصامات تندد بالإساءة للرسول الكريم. Number 16228. Page 29.



reported on a dozens of people who organized the sit-in but on no more than two hundred participants (ibid). Similarly, *al-Ghad* wrote that this sit-in was organized by the Muslim Brotherhood, the National Front for Reform, and the professional associations.<sup>1021</sup> However, it also reported that the “offense” was ‘produced by the Jews’ (ibid).

The National Front for Reform (*al-jabha al-waṭaniyya li l-iṣlāḥ*) is the broadest pro-reform coalition in Jordan which comprises, informally (ICG 2012, 17), the Baathist progressive Party, the Socialist Party (ICG 2012, 17-18), the Islamic Action Front, leftist activists, professional associations, and independent opposition actors of both Palestinian and “East Banker” origin (ICG 2012, 7). According to its Facebook page, the movement demands a reform of the security institutions and a complete democratic reform.<sup>1022</sup> In addition, it promotes the “right of return” and rejects the idea of Jordan as a “nation of substitution” (ibid). Furthermore, it defines “Zionism” as the main threat to Jordan (ibid).

Finally, in the governorate of Irbid, the Student Union of Yarmouk University staged a protest on 18 September 2012. This student union was founded in 1992 to ‘build the personality of the student [and make him] aware of the issues of his community (*umma*).<sup>1023</sup> During this protest called for by the student union, only Islamic slogans were voiced.<sup>1024</sup> In addition, it reportedly condemned the ‘offense’ by ‘a small group of people hating Islam and Muslims,’ and called for protests on a national and Arab level, as well as for the boycott of ‘American and Jewish products.’ With regards to Islam, the protests allegedly considered it ‘the religion of balance, moderation, and non-violence [underlined by the author] (*dīn al-i’tidāl wa al-wasaṭiyya wa nabdh al-‘unf*), and rejected the violation of religions and religious symbols in

<sup>1021</sup> Al-Ghad. 15 September 2012. مسيرة بالرمثا واعتصام بالكرورة نصررة للرسول الكريم.

<sup>1022</sup> Facebook. الجبهة الوطنية للاصلاح – الاردن. Doi:

<https://www.facebook.com/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%A8%D9%87%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%B7%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B5%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%AF%D9%86-205639022807884/timeline/> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>1023</sup> Yarmouk University. اتحاد طلبة الجامعة. Doi:

[https://www.yu.edu.jo/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=117&Itemid=452](https://www.yu.edu.jo/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=117&Itemid=452) (retrieved April 14, 2016).

<sup>1024</sup> إلا الحبيب يا أعداء الله، "بالروح بالدم نفديك يا محمد"، "ليبيك يا رسول الله" و"كلنا أحفاد رسول الله"

Al-Ghad. 19 September 2012. وقفة احتجاجية في جامعة اليرموك نصررة للرسول الكريم. Doi:

<http://www.alghad.com/articles/607055-%D9%88%D9%82%D9%81%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%AA%D8%AC%D8%A7%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%85%D9%88%D9%83-%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%85?s=e3ac7a8af367d7f51c818fe724336e38&search=%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A1> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

their differences.’ In addition, the leader of the student union, Aḥmad al-Baṭṭāniyya, viewed the video and the cartoons only as expressing ‘deep hatred.’

Two protests took place in the governorate of Jirash. The first one was on Friday 14 September 2012, following the Friday prayer, when dozens participated in a sit-in and march that was organized by the Islamic Movement (the Muslim Brotherhood) and the Coalition of Jirash for Reform (*i`tilāf jirash li l-iṣlāḥ*).<sup>1025</sup> This movement is described as a youth movement by *al-Dustūr*. According to *al-Dustūr* the protestors chanted Islamic slogans (ibid). According to *al-Ghad*, however, the march also demanded the protection of freedom and expressed its rejection of restrictions to freedom of speech and the imprisonment of those people participating in sit-ins.<sup>1026</sup>

On 17 September 2012, following the evening prayer, the movement “*al-‘iyāṣira* for Reform” (*ḥirāk al-‘iyāṣira li l-iṣlāḥ*)<sup>1027</sup> staged a march in the locality of Sākib, in the governorate of Jirash.<sup>1028</sup> Roughly a few hundred people participated in this march that reportedly criticised both the video and the continued imprisonment of activists. In addition, it called on the Islamic world to take a united position and accused the video of aiming to create strife and divide the Islamic world from the rest of the world. The leader of this movement, Kamāl al-‘Iyāṣira reportedly stated that “The Innocence of Muslims” constituted an ‘offense against the Messenger and all of us.’

There is only one report on a protest in the governorate of ‘Ajlūn, but it was joined by a broad range of political and social actors. This protest took place on 14 September 2012 in the locality of Kufranja, following the Friday prayer, when a march and a sit-in took place.<sup>1029</sup> The

<sup>1025</sup> Al-Dustour. 15 September 2012. مسيرات واعتصامات تندد بالإساءة للرسول الكريم. Number 16228. Page 29.

<sup>1026</sup> Al-Ghad. 15 September 2012. الجرشيون ينددون بالفيلم المسيء للرسول. Doi: <http://www.alghad.com/articles/607348-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%B1%D8%B4%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%AF%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A1-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>1027</sup> The movement *ḥirāk al-‘iyāṣira li l-iṣlāḥ* seems to be one of the movements that appeared during the Arab Spring in Jordan and have called for reform. In particular, the movement reported on pressures and threats exerted on it by ‘ignorant people’ and the security forces because of its activism for peaceful democratic change. In Ammon News. 12 August 2011. " حراك العياصرة" يؤكّدون إقامة مسيرتهم. Doi: <http://www.ammonnews.net/article.aspx?articleno=104407> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>1028</sup> Al-Dustour. 18 September 2012. الأردنيون يواصلون التنديد بالفيلم المسيء للرسول.

<sup>1029</sup> Al-Ghad. 15 September 2012. عجلون: فعاليات شعبية تنتصر للرسول وتطالب بالاصلاح. Doi: <http://www.alghad.com/articles/607357-%D8%B9%D8%AC%D9%84%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%81%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%B4%D8%B9%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%B1-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84-%D9%88%D8%AA%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B5%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD?s=e3ac7a8af367d7f51c818fe7>

protest was reportedly led by a member of the Islamic Action Front, Muḥammad Farīhāt, and the Popular Movement for Kufranja for Reform and Change (*ḥirāk kufranja al-shaʿbī li l-iṣlāḥ wa al-taghyīr*), representatives of the Islamic movement and other popular movements also participated in this protest. The Movement for Kufranja for Reform and Change is a locally based movement comprising local politicians, national figures, and, probably, the tribes as well.<sup>1030</sup> Furthermore, the former MP Aḥmad ʿInāb,<sup>1031</sup> *shaykh* Muḥammad al-Zaghūl, and Rātīb al-ʿInānza delivered speeches at this march. All these speeches condemned “The Innocence of Muslims,” demanded a law criminalising such acts and called on Arab and Islamic governments to take measures against them.<sup>1032</sup> Moreover, the speeches criticised the current election law and stated that the reforms implemented so far by the Jordanian government were not enough; instead it demanded a thorough battle against corruption and those involved in corruption (*ibid*). In addition, the banners carried at this protest reportedly criticised the United States for allowing the showing of “The Innocence of Muslims.”

Finally, *al-Ghad* reported on a protest that took place following the Friday prayer on 14 September 2012, in al-Salt and al-Balqāʿ.<sup>1033</sup> Although these are two different cities, *al-Ghad* only reported that ‘dozens of members of the youth and popular movement’ staged a protest against the ‘offense to the Messenger of God, by the enemies of the Arab and Islamic communities.’

### 5.3.2.3 Central Governorates

In comparison to the northern governorates, there were far fewer protests against “The Innocence of Muslims” in the central governorates, i.e. Mādabā, al-Karak and Tafīleh (al-Taḥfīla). Although these governorates are actually the main pillars of the Hashemite monarchy, the protests of 2011 started in these governorates. More specifically, the first protests started in southern East Bank locality Dhībān (ICG 2012, 9). These governorates have been heavily

---

24336e38&search=%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A1 (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>1030</sup> See Ajloun News. 6 January 2012. حراك كفرنجة للإصلاح يعقد إجتماعا لمناقشة سبل تطوير عمل الحراك الشعبي. Doi: <http://www.ajlounnews.net/index.php?module=news&id=7546&category=71> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>1031</sup> Aḥmad ʿInāb was deputy in the Jordanian parliament from 1993 to 1993, and from 1997 to 2001; he was seemingly very vocal during the Arab Spring in Jordan. In Enjaz News. الدكتور احمد عناب .... قائد يتمتع بحكمة استثنائية. Doi: <http://www.enjaznews.com/details.aspx?id=26852> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>1032</sup> Al-Ghad. 15 September 2012. عجلون: فعاليات شعبية تنتصر للرسول وتطالب بالإصلاح.

<sup>1032</sup> See Ajloun News. 6 January 2012. حراك كفرنجة للإصلاح يعقد إجتماعا لمناقشة سبل تطوير عمل الحراك الشعبي.

<sup>1033</sup> Al-Ghad. 15 September 2012. حراك السلط يؤكد مقاطعته للانتخابات. Doi: <http://www.alghad.com/articles/607350-%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%83-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%B7-%D9%8A%D8%A4%D9%83%D8%AF-%D9%85%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%B7%D8%B9%D8%AA%D9%87-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%AE%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%AA> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

affected by the collapse of agriculture and the reduction of public spending (ibid) since most inhabitants of the governorates are employed in the public sector (ICG 2012, 11), in addition to not being on major trading routes.

Two protests took place in the Mādabā Governorate. The first one was held on 14 September 2012 following the Friday prayer, when ‘representatives of the Islamic movement, of the popular and youth movement in the governorate of Madaba and the district Dhībān’ protested against “The Innocence of Muslims.”<sup>1034</sup> The protesters reportedly called for the prosecution of the video’s makers and for limits to be put on anyone ‘who offends the Messenger of God (PBUH).’

*Al-Dustūr* also reported on 18 September 2012, that a number of students from the schools of Mādabā had organized a march to protest against the video.<sup>1035</sup> However, the protests seem to have turned violent.

As far as the governorate of al-Karak is concerned, two protests against the video were reported as taking place there. The first protests happened in the city of al-Karak on Friday 14 2012 and, again, there are two different reports of this event. While *al-Dustūr* asserted that the protest was targeting the video,<sup>1036</sup> *al-Ghad* gave an account of a protest that was mainly directed against the government. *Al-Ghad* reported the protests as having taken place in both the city of al-Karak and in the district of al-Mazār al-Janūbī.<sup>1037</sup> The rather long article suggests that the issue of the video was not the main focus, since the protests, which were organized by hundreds of citizens, activists from political parties, and professional associations, also saw a statement issued demanding complete reforms, the suppression of the previous electoral law, a boycott of the elections in the locality, and prosecution for corruption.

---

<sup>1034</sup> Al-Ghad. 15 September 2012. مادبا: دعوة لوضع حد للإساءات ضد المسلمين. Doi: <http://www.alghad.com/articles/607346-%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%A8%D8%A7-%D8%AF%D8%B9%D9%88%D8%A9-%D9%84%D9%88%D8%B6%D8%B9-%D8%AD%D8%AF-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%A1%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%B6%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%84%D9%85%D9%8A%D9%86> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>1035</sup> Al-Dustour. 18 September 2012. الأردننيون يواصلون التنديد بالفيلم المسيء للرسول.

<sup>1036</sup> Al-Dustour. 15 September 2012. مسيرات واعتصامات تندد بالإساءة للرسول الكريم. Number 16228. Page 29.

<sup>1037</sup> Al-Ghad. 15 September 2012. اعتصامان في الكرك نصره للرسول ومطالبة بالاصلاح. Doi: <http://www.alghad.com/articles/607347-%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%83-%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84-%D9%88%D9%85%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B5%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

Similarly, on 15 September 2012, *al-Ghad* reported on a protest that took place the day before in the district of Faqū‘, in al-Karak Governorate.<sup>1038</sup> These protests comprised ‘dozens of citizens and activists from the political parties, the professional associations, and the general population.’ Besides condemning the video “The Innocence of Muslims,” these protests seemed mostly aimed to condemn the government in the first place. The protests reportedly demanded reforms, rejecting the latest measures undertaken by the government, and sought the withdrawal of the government. Interestingly, the article used a sentence that was also used in the article mentioned above on the protest in al-Karak and al-Mazār al-Janūbī: ‘and the statement issued by the movement insisted on its rejection of what has happened lately on the national level regarding the increase in repression, intellectual, political, and media terror,’<sup>1039</sup> which suggests a certain escalation.

With regards to the central governorate of Tafileh (al-Ṭafila), one protest took place on Friday 14 September 2012 and both the reports of *al-Dustūr* and *al-Ghad* suggest that the protest was only directed against “The Innocence of Muslims.” According to *al-Dustūr*, the protest was organized by ‘the popular movement (*ḥirāk*) in the Tafileh governorate’ and the Islamic Action Front also participated.<sup>1040</sup> During the protest, American and Israeli flags were burnt and Islamic slogans were chanted<sup>1041</sup> (ibid). In addition, *al-Dustūr* wrote that the participants of the protest demanded a boycott of ‘American and Jewish products’ and considered the video a ‘dreadful crime against the truth of humanity’ (ibid). Furthermore, they described Muhammad and Islam as ‘the Lord of all humanity, insisting on Islam being a religion of balance, moderation, and non-violence [underlined by the author] (*dīn al-i‘tidāl wa al-wasāfiyya wa nabdh al-‘unf*)’ (ibid). This definition was also used by the students of Yarmuk University in Irbid. In addition, according to *al-Ghad*, the protesters expressed the idea that this video was not a first offense and that it only displayed ‘the deep hatred of the West and of its stepchild Israel.’<sup>1042</sup>

<sup>1038</sup> Al-Ghad. 16 September 2012. الكرك: اعتصام احتجاجي في ففوع للمطالبة بالاصلاح. Doi: <http://www.alghad.com/articles/607287-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%83-%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%AA%D8%AC%D8%A7%D8%AC%D9%8A-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%81%D9%82%D9%88%D8%B9-%D9%84%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B5%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>1039</sup> Al-Ghad. 16 September 2012. الكرك: اعتصام احتجاجي في ففوع للمطالبة بالاصلاح. Al-Ghad. 15 September 2012. اعتصامان في الكرك نصره للرسول ومطالبة بالاصلاح.

<sup>1040</sup> Al-Dustour. 15 September 2012. مسيرات واعتصامات تندد بالإساءة للرسول الكريم. Number 16228. Page 29.

<sup>1041</sup> “جمعة فداك يا رسول الله،”

<sup>1042</sup> Al-Ghad. 15 September 2012. الطفيلة: الفيلم يجسد الحقد على الإسلام. Doi. <http://www.alghad.com/articles/607352-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85-%D9%8A%D8%AC%D8%B3%D8%AF->

### 5.3.2.4 The South: Ma‘ān

Finally, with regards to the southern part of the country, there were two protests in the city of Ma‘ān. The first protest took place on September 14 September 2012, when hundreds activists joined a protest and expressed various demands.<sup>1043</sup> They appear to have condemned the ‘assault on the symbol of the Islamic community (*umma*) represented by the person of the noble Messenger who came with a message of mercy, justice, and of equality between all religions and races.’ In addition, they demanded the creation of a commission to punish the “thought war” being waged on Islam.

The second protest took place on 19 September 2012, and was organized by the Salafi-jihadi stream. Roughly a few hundred people participated in this protest, among them popular and youth activists.<sup>1044</sup> However, although the protest was staged by the Salafi-jihadi stream, its tone did not vary from that of other protests. It demanded the closure of the US embassy and the expulsion of the US ambassador, as well as the boycott of ‘American and Jewish products.’ In addition, the gathering viewed the video as part of a long series of ‘attacks’ on Islam and Muslims,’ affecting ‘principles and ethics,’ causing ‘strife’ and supported by the West. It called on Muslims to react using all means.

#### *Summary of Section 5.3.2*

These protests were interesting for several reasons. Firstly, there were no reports of protests in Zarqa, a city with a strong Islamist presence. Instead the Salafi(-Jihadi) protests took place in Amman and in Ma‘ān, another traditional hotbed of Islamism. The protests mainly took place in the northern governorates. Many protests did not have any leadership while the other protests were dominated by the Muslim Brotherhood and reform movements that appeared in

---

%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%82%D8%AF-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-  
%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85 (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>1043</sup> Al-Ghad. 15 September 2012. معان: دعوة لحملة لمقاطعة البضائع والمنتجات الأميركية. Doi:

<http://www.alghad.com/articles/607351-%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%AF%D8%B9%D9%88%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%85%D9%84%D8%A9-%D9%84%D9%85%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%B7%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%B6%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%B9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%AC%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%83%D9%8A%D8%A9?s=e3ac7a8af367d7f51c818fe724336e38&search=%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A1> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

<sup>1044</sup> Al-Ghad. 20 September 2012. "سلفيو" معان ينتصرون للرسول في "اسبوع الغضب". Doi:

<http://www.alghad.com/articles/606985-%D8%B3%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%88-%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%A8%D9%88%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%BA%D8%B6%D8%A8?s=e3ac7a8af367d7f51c818fe724336e38&search=%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A1> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

2011. This shows that protests against the regime continued well into 2012. In this regard, while the pro-government newspaper *al-Dustūr* insisted on the protests being directed against the video, *al-Ghad* painted another picture, one of protests condemning both the video and the government. This also shows the active participation by the Muslim Brotherhood in protest movements. Moreover, not a single protest invoked the Christians either as participants or in the speeches.

### *Conclusion to Chapter 5*

A broad range of actors and institutions in Jordan made some reaction to “The Innocence of Muslims.” All of the official state institutions, the churches, the political parties, the professional associations, as well as Christian, Muslims and/or local actors felt compelled to react to this video. Interestingly, the political parties (the IAF), the professional associations and the actors from local civil societies displayed a high level of mobilisation against “The Innocence of Muslims” which also provided an occasion to protest against the government’s policies. Surprisingly, the Salafi(-Jihadi) actors who staged protests in Amman and the South officially appeared to be moderate.

Overall, the video was seen as an “offense” against Islam, Muhammad, and in some cases, Muslims. No actor explicitly stated that he had seen the video. Similarly, the video was accused in many instances of igniting “strife” and in some cases of igniting sectarian strife, as well as promoting destabilization, division, and violence. Interestingly, the majority of the reactions remained very vague concerning the background of “The Innocence of Muslims.” In no instance was Coptic involvement discussed. In some rare cases, however, a Zionist background was ascribed (Orthodox Society, the professional association of the imams, some local protests) or reference was made to the alleged plan of the Americans and the Jews (Council of Churches). Interestingly, these few mentions suggest a level of confusion between Zionism and the Jews because some protests demanded a boycott of “Jewish products.”

In reaction to the video, many actors demanded a prosecution of the video’s producers and an international law prohibiting such offenses against religions. The counter-arguments formulated against the video were very telling. Firstly, many actors and institutions framed their reaction as a defence of Islam. In this regard, on many levels, the reactions showed a high feeling of responsibility for “defending Islam” and promoting a positive and tolerant image of it. The official reactions of the state displayed a structured discourse on Islam that promoted slogans such as “moderation,” “tolerance,” and “balance.” This discourse was also promoted by a number of political actors. Yet key civil society actors, such as the professional

associations, did not make use of this wording. Secondly, the Christian actors, both clerics and lay people, responded by establishing Jordan as a model of Christian-Muslim relationships. In contrast, all the other actors insisted on this model but not in the general framework of the message conveyed by Islam and not in the specific Jordanian context. Thirdly, the two Protestant reactions (Council of Evangelical Churches and JETS) provided the only two instances where Christian reactions could be understood as a strategy of dissociation from the video.

The specificity of this chapter was the absence of joint Christian-Muslim reactions. This absence can be explained by the fact that the video was not connected to any Christian background in Jordan or that the reactions and protests did not need Christian visibility and participation to back their claims of a tolerant Islam. Mention of Christians in the reactions were very rare and if it happened, the allusion was very vague and often limited to the insistence on Islam's recognition of all "revealed messages." Only one reaction, by a professional association, rejected the generalisation of Christians.

In contrast, the attitude of the Christians in Jordan was very interesting. A broad range of actors did react and in their reactions they insisted on their Arab identity. Similarly, the statement by the Council of Churches presented the sole significant recognition of Muhammad as a religious leader for Christians. Thus, Christian-Muslim coexistence in Jordan was mostly dwelt on by these Christian actors. Many insisted on the brotherhood uniting Christians and Muslims as well as on their shared Arab identity, the same (religious) values, and equality. More importantly, these actors developed a theory of the "Jordanian model," which rested on a "virtuous triangle" of close links between Arab Christians, Muslims, and the Hashemite monarchy. Thus, Christian reactions seemed to have been motivated by a genuine display of solidarity as part of social practices in a multi-religious society.

Finally, the issue of "the Jews" in this chapter was very interesting. On the one hand, in some cases the confusion between the Jews and Zionism provided the actors with a clear background for a denunciation. On the other hand, however, the Jews as part of the "revealed messages" served to back Islam's claim as a tolerant religion to counter "The Innocence of Muslims."



### **Conclusion: The Crisis of “The Innocence of Muslims”**

In September 2012, “The Innocence of Muslims” created an uproar over a thirteen-minute poor quality video that needed synchronisation into Arabic, promotion by a Coptic extremist, Mūrīs Šādiq, media coverage in Egypt to attract attention, and finally resulted in condemnation and protests. Although this video denounced a specific situation in Egypt (i.e. the persecution of Copts), the uproar it provoked was not confined to Egypt but also spread throughout the wider region. It became evident that the “crisis” of “The Innocence of Muslims” was a manufactured crisis and was being used politically by (certain) key actors.

At the same time, this video could have had very dangerous consequences for Christians in the region, especially for Egyptian Christians. These consequences could have resulted from the very negative description of Muhammad in the video, the involvement of Copts in the United States in the production of the video, the media coverage in Egypt which connected this dubious video to “Copts” in general (both “in the diaspora” and in Egypt), or the failure of the Egyptian state in providing protection for the US embassy in Cairo. Indeed, violence did take place in two of the countries analysed in this Ph.D. thesis, as there was a violent protest in Tripoli, Lebanon.

Thus, there were several reasons for investigating the question of how and to what extent the issue of Christian-Muslim relations was raised in the reactions to this video. Firstly, the video denounced the state of these very relations in contemporary Egypt. Secondly, this denunciation was framed in the context of a Coptic experience of Islam and expressed through the clichés of Christian apologetics as reformulated by the Coptic priest Zakaryā Buṭrus. Thirdly, many reactions in the Arab world accused the video of actually igniting a conflict between Arab Christians and Muslims (see further below).

As a result, “The Innocence of Muslims” offered an opportunity to analyse the dimension of Christian-Muslim relations through a snapshot taken in a time of acute crisis, and provided examples of the articulation of Christian-Muslim relations at a real and discursive level. Yet overall, the reactions in Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and the Palestinian Territories only dealt with this dimension to varying degrees. The issue was clearly raised in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and the West Bank. Yet in Jordan the issue was actually only raised by Christian actors, whereas in Israel the video was not framed in religious terms at all, but instead in a national, Palestinian terms. Similarly, the issue of Christian-Muslim relations was raised in Egypt to dissociate Christians in Egypt from this video.

### **“The Innocence of Muslims:” A Collective Condemnation**

The reactions to “The Innocence of Muslims” displayed a genuine rejection of such actions as were considered offenses, some elaborate reflections, and also some surprising interpretations and conspiracy theories, given that it was a video few actors had actually watched. In most cases the video was rejected as an “offense” against Islam, the prophet Muhammad, all Muslims, “*muqaddasāt*” and, in some cases, human rights. The word “*muqaddasāt*” recurred in all four chapters covering the reactions (Chapter 2, 3, 4, 5) and was translated differently according to the context. While in Chapter 4 it could clearly be understood as meaning “sacred places,” in the other chapters, the same word was instead translated as “sacred things/items.” Interestingly, in some reactions, the video was considered an attack on the freedom of religion, since respect for religion was equated with respect for the human and his dignity. Therefore, “freedom of creed” was seen as a basic and fundamental human right that is as important as freedom of speech.

In general, the reactions to “The Innocence of Muslims” reflected the specific context in which these reactions were formulated. In Jerusalem and the West Bank the video was eventually connected to the issue of “price-tag” and the Israeli occupation (Chapter 4). In Egypt, in some cases, the video was interpreted in the context of the country having recently chosen an “Islamic path.” Therefore, the video was also understood as a proof of the West fearing the spread of Islam or of Western uneasiness with Islam and religion in general (*shaykh al-Azhar* Aḥmad al-Ṭayyib). Similarly, in Gaza, the video was mostly seen as yet another attack by the West on Islam. Thus, many reactions reflected an essentialising approach to “the West” reportedly brought about by certain interest groups. In addition, the West was strongly accused of practicing double standards by allegedly allowing the “offense” of religions while prohibiting the denial of the Holocaust. In all the countries assessed, the counter-reactions to the video called for an international law prohibiting such “offenses” and prosecution of the video’s producers. Many reactions also focused on promoting another, more positive and tolerant image of Islam (an approach taken especially in Jordan and by the *mufīī* of Egypt). Many actors in Egypt tried to pressure President Mursī into suspending diplomatic relations with the United States. Thus apart from a small number of exceptions, most reactions showed a misunderstanding of the practice of freedom of expression in “the West” where governments have no say in such matters.

Interestingly, while the reactions were very elaborate in their criticism, they did not discuss the content of the video at all, a phenomenon observed especially with regard to the first part (i.e. the persecution of the Copts). Of all the reactions, only three actors actually stated

that they had seen the video (Bishop George Khudr, Lebanon; *al-da'wa al-salafiyya*, and the Coptic organization, *i'tilāf aqbāt miṣr*, Egypt) and did discuss its content. Moreover, the video was very rarely mentioned by its title, but instead was usually referred to as “the offending film” or simply “the offense” (*isā'a*). This shows a high level of denial and an avoidance of sensitive matters at all costs. Yet the reactions were much more vocal in ascribing a specific aim to the video. This means that the reactions did not discuss the potentially dangerous consequences of the video, but rather its supposed goal. Most reactions pointed out that the video aimed to produce “strife,” be it between Christians and Muslims, in the region itself, or just strife in general. In Lebanon in particular, the assumption initially put forward by Hezbollah leader Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh that the video sought to divide Christians and Muslims in the Arab world was widely echoed. Similarly, many reactions in Lebanon pointed to an alleged plan by the West to divide the region along sectarian and religious lines, of which “The Innocence of Muslims” was reportedly yet another proof. These views were often connected to the idea of an “American-Jewish/Zionist” conspiracy (see below). Some reactions also raised the idea of a clash of civilizations which “the West” was promoting through this video. Alternatively, some Christian reactions considered the video to be directly targeting Christians in the region. In particular, former second Speaker of the Lebanese Parliament Īlī Firzīlī drew on the idea of a conspiracy aimed at emptying the Middle East of its Christian inhabitants.

### **Discussing the Background of the Video: The Issue of Zionism**

This daring title will eventually lead to an analysis of the very implicit and disguised way in which the subject of “the Jews/Zionism” was dealt with in the context of the video. Reactions in all five countries suggested that the issue of the video’s background was dealt with differently in each location. In Egypt, the reactions showed a progression from initially discussing the involvement of “a number of Copts” towards mentioning only a vague background, which was sometimes linked to (the idea of) an American and Zionist conspiracy. A Muslim representative of the Christian-Muslim institution *bayt al-‘ā’ila* even quoted *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* to back his claims of a conspiracy (sic!). However, this progression can also be understood as an attempt to divert attention and anger away from the Copts in Egypt towards a vague, unknown background or a far-away and even vaguer enemy, i.e. Zionism. In Lebanon, many actors were well aware of the Coptic background, yet systematically framed their criticism in the context of a fight against Zionism. Importantly, this idea was put forward equally by Christian and Muslim actors, both clerics and lay people, and on a national and local level. This idea was systematically and obsessively uttered from the

beginning of the crisis in Lebanon. Yet the discussion of this alleged background also reflected a confusion between “the Jews,” Zionism, and Israel, and in one instance, an imam even referred to the Jews in the Quran to back his claim. In Israel and the Palestinian Territories, the Coptic involvement was little discussed and the video was eventually connected to the usual bogeymen; Israeli occupation, Zionism, and Western imperialism. It was only in the context of the West Bank that one reaction mentioned Christian-Muslim-Jewish coexistence. In contrast, in Jordan, most reactions only discussed the background of the video very vaguely but a few reactions did connect the video to a Zionist conspiracy. Here again, there was confusion between Zionism and “Jewish products,” of which a boycott was called. Yet the Jordanian case also presented another aspect of this issue: Since many reactions countered the video by emphasising the tolerant and peaceful message of Islam, they were actually referring to Judaism as a “revealed message” recognized by Islam to back their claim. Yet when asserting a Zionist background, few reactions actually used the information initially conveyed in Western media about an American-Israeli named “Sam Bacile.”

These different references to and confusion of Zionism, Israel, the Quranic Jews, and Judaism showed that these claims were not only driven by actual convictions and ideologies but were also used as a means to prevent backlashes against Christians in Egypt and to create unity in Lebanon through appealing to the idea of a society of resistance against Israel. Similarly, in the Palestinian contexts these references were means of creating unity and re-activating the Palestinian struggle. In all of the three cases which mentioned Zionism or the Israeli occupation, this affirmation was used in order to create an “other” and consequently to create a unity, a “we” that includes Arab Christians. The Jordanian case demonstrated another use for this “other,” one who serves to assert one’s own position (i.e. Islam as a tolerant religion).

### **“The Innocence of Muslims:” Pursuing Personal Interests**

This paragraph aims to discuss two closely related issues; the political benefits many actors were able to draw from this video and the attitudes of Islamic actors towards Christians.

In general, the reactions to “The Innocence of Muslims” were not only an authentic outcry of offended religious feelings but also represented an opportunity to further the credentials of the person reacting and to put pressure on opponents. In addition, the ability to mobilise against the video was used as a show of power. In Egypt, all of the official Islamic institutions as well as the Islamist and Salafi political parties and organizations were very vocal in their criticism of “The Innocence of Muslims.” Yet the official Islamic institutions did not

try to mobilise via protests. The (Muslim-only) protests either had no leadership or were dominated by alternative forces to the Muslim Brotherhood. In contrast, the latter dominated in joint Christian-Muslim protests and conferences. Similarly, *al-gamā'a al-islāmiyya*, for instance, tried to mobilise for such joint protests but failed to attract any high-ranking Christian actors. Thus "The Innocence of Muslims" was an opportunity to make an appearance as a moderate and serious political contender. Many Islamist political actors adapted their discourse when needed. In contrast, President Mursī was seen as too passive and was actively pressured by his political contenders (especially by the Nur Party). In Lebanon, although a broad range of (Islamic) actors reacted to the video, there was a sharp discrepancy between Shia and Sunni levels of mobilisation. For Hezbollah and the Amal Movement, "The Innocence of Muslims" offered an opportunity to act as a national, inclusive actor and display a high capacity to mobilise their own followers, as well as high-ranking Christian and Sunni actors. It was also an opportunity for both parties to pressure the rivals of the March 14 Alliance. In contrast, the leaders of the Sunni community (the *mufīī*, the Future Movement) did not try to mobilise at all and the gap was filled by marginal, unofficial elements such as the Salafī preacher Aḥmad al-Asīr, who actively sought to compete with Hezbollah. A similar competition for the lead was visible in Gaza where Hamas competed with other Islamist organizations. In the West Bank, the Palestinian Authority proved particularly adept at mobilising against the video. In Jordan, a broad range of actors not only reacted but also displayed a high level of responsibility in the defence of Islam. In Jordan, protesting against the video was also seen as an opportunity to protest against the government. All in all, apart from in the West Bank, no official Islamic institution tried to mobilise against "The Innocence of Muslims."

The attitudes of Islamic actors towards Christians reflected those actors' different needs and motivations. First of all, one of the most surprising outcomes of this Ph.D. thesis is the remarkably moderate and pragmatic attitude displayed by various Islamist and Salafī actors in Egypt who consistently tried to prevent backlashes against Christians. This was not only motivated by the new context of political competition (and the need to appear as a moderate, serious and inclusive actor) but also by a real concern, as the attitude of *al-da'wa al-salafīyya* suggested. This fear of backlashes was also evident in the attitudes of Hamas and some actors in Lebanon. In addition, the attitude of Islamic actors displayed expectations towards Christians to react, to condemn the video and show solidarity and loyalty. This was evident in the views expressed by some preachers in Egypt, the media, as well as in Hezbollah leader Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh's speech in which he included Christians in the struggle against Zionism. To some extent the Islamic actors needed Christian participation in their protests and a certain level of Christian

visibility, not only to legitimise the protests against the video but also to appear effectively as a moderate and inclusive actor. In contrast, in Jordan there was no need for Christian participation and visibility; the Jordanian case did not show specific attitudes towards Christians. Furthermore, many Islamic reactions simply thanked the Christians for their condemnation of the video.

### **“The Innocence of Muslims:” The Question of Christian-Muslim Relations**

This question will be analysed on three levels; firstly, joint Christian-Muslim reactions; secondly, discussions about Christian-Muslim relations; and thirdly, the extent of mutual assimilation.

The many joint Christian-Muslim reactions represented a key aspect of the reactions to “The Innocence of Muslims.” These reactions varied greatly from one to country to another. In Jordan and in Gaza there were no reactions of the kind at all. This can be explained by the fact that the reactions either did not connect the video to the local Christians or else felt no need for a Christian participation. In general, the reactions resulted from the social practice in a multi-religious society of showing solidarity and from a need for a Christian visibility, as mentioned above. In Egypt, the churches and several Christian actors initiated a number of conferences and protests. In Lebanon, a broad range of Christian-Muslim reactions took place which displayed various modes of religious accommodation. The participation of high-ranking Christian actors in the Hezbollah/Amal protests was merely symbolic, whereas local initiatives, especially in southern and northern Lebanon demonstrated a high level of equality (and no explicit expectation towards Christians to show solidarity). The spiritual summit that brought all the religious representatives of Lebanon together witnessed significant efforts at mutual understanding and rapprochement.

In addition, the reactions to the video also displayed some reflections on Christian-Muslim coexistence. The case of Egypt exhibited a structured discourse of national unity using slogans, such as *abnā’ al-waṭan al-wāḥid*, *yad wāḥida* and especially *al-waṭan al-wāḥid*. Yet these slogans were used reflexively and the actors did not dwell on what this unity consisted of. Instead, the discourse of national unity was pervasive; it was an approach, a means to prevent backlashes against Christians, and, most of all, a means of denial by omission used by both Christians and Muslim actors. Muslim actors used this discourse while systematically distinguishing between Copts and Muslims and insisting on the brotherhood between the “two elements of the united nation,” while church leaders elaborated a little more on this unity. For some bishops, this unity rested on shared values, the same history, the same monotheism, and

close biological unity (the same “woven fabric”). Yet it seemed that it was precisely within this context of a structured and pervasive discourse of national unity that peaceful coexistence and equality was made possible and conceivable for Islamist and Salafi actors in Egypt.

In contrast, in Lebanon, Christian-Muslim coexistence was seen as part of a struggle against Israel. There were a few reflections on this unity; for Bishop George Khuḍr, Christians and Muslims constituted the *umma* of God. Other (Christian) actors insisted on shared monotheistic values. The Palestinian cases were very interesting, as the video afforded an opportunity to define Palestine as a model of Christian-Muslim relations. Historic and religious events were used to back these claims. This unity was also explained by the same plight and the ongoing Israeli occupation, a shared Arab Palestinian identity and a deep solidarity and mutual respect. However, the fact that lay actors dominated the reactions in Israel, vividly displayed the absence of a sectarian approach that distinguished between Christians and Muslims. As explained in Chapter 4, the sectarian approach was rejected in the Palestinian context. For instance, Bishop ‘Atā’ Allāh Ḥannā rejected the very idea of distinction between Christian and Muslims martyrs. Yet many Palestinian reactions referred to this exact distinction. In contrast, leftist Arab-Israeli lay actors did not use religious or sectarian wording at all but simply established a national Arab Palestinian framework.

In Jordan, the reflections on Christian-Muslim relations were solely undertaken by Christian actors. Interestingly, both clerics and lay actors established Jordan as a model of coexistence and defined a “virtuous triangle” between Christians, Muslims and the Hashemite monarchy. These actors insisted in particular on their shared Arab identity, the same religious values and a history of equality.

As a result, these different reflections displayed how religious diversity is felt and expressed.

Finally, an important aspect was the extent of religious assimilation or absence of it. For instance, in all contexts, a number of Christian reactions – interestingly mostly cleric reactions –, made use of Islamic wording. Jesus Christ was defined as a messenger and prophet and his specific Christian meaning was silenced. Similarly, the Gospel was defined as a revealed message like the Quran, which it is not quite correct. In particular, in the Egyptian context, this practice can be understood as an attempt to delegitimise any offenses against Christian religious symbols. In addition, Muhammad was mostly mentioned as the prophet or messenger of Islam. Yet in a very few cases in Lebanon, Muhammad was mentioned as *the* messenger, with Bishop George Khuḍr referring to him as the “Arab messenger” and “Arab prophet.” In a more explicit manner, the council of Churches in Jordan acknowledged that Muhammad was even relevant

for Christians. On the other hand, Muslim actors mostly referred to Jesus as the Islamic prophet ʿĪsā. Yet the reference to Jesus Christ was also an attempt to appear an inclusive and moderate actor. For instance, Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh spoke of ʿĪsā al-Masīḥ, and a leader of the Nur Party, Nādir Bakkār alluded to *al-sayyid* al-Masīḥ. Islam does recognize Jesus Christ as the anointed (al-Masīḥ), yet most Muslim actors state that Islam recognizes Jesus Christ as a prophet in order to underline Islam’s tolerance. Thus, referring to Jesus as al-Masīḥ displays even more of an effort at religious accommodation since in, this instance, Nādir Bakkār stated that an offense against Jesus Christ was also an offense against Muhammad. Most actors also referred to Christians as *masīḥiyyūn* or *aqbāṭ*. Only in very few instances, mostly in Egypt, did Islamist actors also refer to Egyptian Christians as *naṣārā*. There are two similar cases in Lebanon, yet in one of them, Māhir Ḥammūd was well aware of the fact that this word is a Quranic word and no longer used. The use of *naṣārā* instead of *masīḥiyyūn* or *aqbāṭ* is very telling because it rejects the self-appellation the Christians currently use and is felt to be offensive by many Christians (Khoury 25 March 2015). Interestingly, in Egypt, Christian diversity tended to be reduced to one Egyptian church, which was mostly nationalised as the “Egyptian church” (*mufṭī*). Finally, an interesting case was Palestine where, in one instance, a kind of religious pantheon was established with Muhammad as the “prophet of mercy” and Jesus Christ as the “prophet of love.”

### **Christian Reactions: Identity, Belonging, Loyalty**

In Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and the Palestinian Territories, a broad range of Christian actors all reacted. Apart from the churches, a number of Christian institutions, organizations, politicians, and key actors also reacted. The content of the reactions varied in some cases and sometimes there was also a discrepancy between clerical and lay reactions. Yet all “Christian” reactions condemned “The Innocence of Muslims.”

There were many factors motivating these reactions. First of all, in the Arab world there is a general rejection of any art production or action that reportedly offends religion. As was mentioned, *The Da Vinci Code* was forbidden in Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon. Similarly, there was a controversy surrounding the novel *Azazel* by Egyptian author Yusif Zaydān. The condemnations were also understood as a necessary display of solidarity in these multi-religious societies. Yet some reactions illustrated the uneven relevance of this issue for the various Christian actors. In some cases, the condemnation was merely symbolic, while in other cases there was a real degree of reflection and sincerity behind the positions. Most importantly, a key drive behind many Christian reactions was the fear of backlashes, especially in Egypt. In most



reactions, this fear was not openly expressed, but was evident in the number of reactions and the diversity of actors who reacted. Similarly, this factor also seems to have been of significance in other countries, since the Latin bishop of Amman, Mārūn Laḥḥām, and the former general secretary of the Council of Churches in Jordan, Father Ḥannā Kildānī, alluded to the potentially violent reactions by Muslims as being a motivation behind their reactions in interviews later on with the author.

Two further key aspects of the Christian reactions to “The Innocence of Muslims” were the questions of whether strategies were used to dissociate Christians from this video and thus prevent backlashes, and whether the Christian actors and institutions offered criticisms.

Firstly, strategies used to dissociate Christians from this video were very evident in Egypt overall and also in the case of Protestant reactions in Egypt and Jordan. As was shown in Chapter 2, the Coptic Orthodox Church in particular and a number of Christian actors displayed a several strategies aiming to completely dissociate Christians from “The Innocence of Muslims.” Such strategies consisted of defining the church as the sole legitimate spokesman of Christians, taking a pro-active role in Christian-Muslim reactions, the way the background of the video was discussed and questioned, and the using of the discourse of national unity. Similarly, Protestant reactions in Egypt and Jordan made concerted efforts at dissociating local Protestant Christians from this video and at root them in these countries. To some extent, the repeated assertions by Christian Jordanian actors and institutions establishing Jordan as a model for Christian-Muslim relations can be interpreted as a strategy and as a reminder of the siding with the Muslims. In contrast, there were few efforts to dissociate Christians in Israel from the video and the Palestinian Territories, and fewer still in Lebanon. This suggests that there was no fear of backlashes, although such events had previously had an impact on local Christian symbols (see introduction; the so called Danish cartoons and the speech of Pope Benedict XVI in Regensburg).

Secondly, a key question was whether Christians formulated any criticism in response to “The Innocence of Muslims.” Interestingly, it was mostly in Lebanon that such criticism was formulated. In particular, the churches, the president and a number of organizations and parties all criticized the violent reactions to the film. Furthermore, political actors such as the Lebanese Forces or *ḥizb al-katā'ib al-lubnāniyya* criticised these violent reactions for actually tarnishing the image of Islam, and criticised Hezbollah for manufacturing this crisis. In Egypt, some actors also formulated criticism. Young Coptic organizations in particular denounced the double standards in Egyptian society. Yet, there were few criticisms of the violent reactions to the film and most of the criticisms that were made were implicit. For instance, the Coptic Catholic

Church criticised the role of the media in creating the crisis surrounding “The Innocence of Muslims.” All these criticisms, both implicit and explicit, are very symptomatic of the self-confidence Christian actors and institutions felt.

Finally, one of the main issues was the question of identity raised by this video. Interestingly, Christian actors in Israel, the Palestinian Territories, and Jordan very much insisted on their Arab identity, as did Greek Orthodox actors in Lebanon. In contrast, the designation mostly used in Egypt was “Copt” (by Coptic Orthodox Christians and church) and “Christian.” Overall, the Christian reactions to “The Innocence of Muslims” were evidence of a desire for equality, to remind the Muslims of their shared identity, values, and even their shared destiny, be it as part of the “united nation” or against “Zionism.” To some extent, “The Innocence of Muslims” was a very dangerous moment for the Christians, especially in Egypt, and yet it seemingly fostered Christian-Muslim relations and made for a better level of understanding, especially in Egypt.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources in Arabic

Abouna. 14 September 2012. بيان شجب واستنكار من مجلس رؤساء الكنائس في الأردن. Doi:

<http://www.abouna.org/node/1164> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

Al-Ahed. 27 September 2012. المطران عطا الله حنا لـ"الانتقاد": جهات مشبوهة تقف وراء الإساءة للنبي الأكرم .. ولا سبيل لردعها إلا بتوحد المسيحيين والمسلمين. Doi:

<http://www.alahednews.com.lb/essaydetails.php?eid=66137&cid=76#.Vv0kpEerfIW> (retrieved May 16, 2016).

Al-Ahram. 12 September 2012. غضب شعبي من الإساءة للرسول. Number 45936. Year 137. Pages 1 and 5.

Al-Ahram. 13 September 2012. الغضب يجتاح مصر احتجاجا على الفيلم المسيء للرسول. Number 45937. Year 137. Page 5.

Al-Ahram. 13 September 2012. مصر تطالب أمريكا باتخاذ الإجراءات القانونية ضد الإساءة إلى الرسول. Number 45937. Year 137. Page 1.

Al-Ahram. 13 September 2012. النواب يطالبون أمريكا لاعتذار احتراماً لمشاعر مليار ونصف مسلم. Number 45937. Year 137. Page 4.

Al-Ahram. 14 September 2012. مئات المصابين في حرب شوارع بحيط السفارة الأمريكية. Number 45938. Year 137. Page 3.

Al-Ahram. 14 September 2012. البرادعي يدين الفيلم المسيء للرسول. Number 45938. Year 137. Page 3.

Al-Ahram. 14 September 2012. استمرار ردود الفعل الغاضبة على الفيلم المسيء: الأزهر يطالب بالالتزام بضوابط. الاحتجاج والبعد عن العنف. Number 45938. Year 137. Page 6.

Al-Ahram. 15 September 2012. مظاهرة حاشدة أمام مسجد القائد ابراهيم والمحلاوي يطالب بالفصاح. Number 45939. Year 137. Page 4.

Al-Ahram. 15 September 2012. ومسيرات عارمة لنصرة الرسول في المحافظات. Number 45939. Year 137. Page 4.

Al-Ahram. 16 September 2012. الأزهر يطالب الأمم المتحدة بتجريم المساس للأديان. Number 45940. Year 137. Page 5.

Al-Ahram. 16 September 2012. هدوء حذر يسود محيط السفارة بعد اشتباكات عنيفة. Number 45940. Year 137. Page 5.

Al-Ahram. 16 September 2012. قوات الأمن تحكم سيطرتها على ميدان التحرير. Number 45940. Year 137. Page 5.

Al-Ahram. 17 September 2012. رموز إسلامية ومسيحية تطالب بتجريم ازدراء الأديان. Number 45941. Year 137. Page 5.

Al-Ahram. 17 September 2012. شباب مصر يطلق مبادرة عالمية تجريم دولي ... لازدراء الرموز الدينية. Number 45941. Year 137. Page 14.

Al-Ahram. 19 September 2012. عرب يرفض الإساءة للأديان والمعتقدات. Number 45943. Year 137. Page 4.

Al-Ahram. 19 September 2012. البناء والتنمية يحذر من مخطط لإثارة فتنة طائفية. Number 45943. Year 137. Page 4.

Al-Ahram. 19 September 2012. متظاهر يحاصرون منزل أحد منتجي الفيلم المسيء للرسول الكريم 200. Doi:

<http://www.ahram.org.eg/archive/The-First/News/171900.aspx> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Ahram. 20 September 2012. "الإنجيلية" تدين الإساءة للمعتقدات .. Number 45948. Year 137. Page 5.

Al-Ahram. 20 September 2012. الأزهر يستنكر إعادة نشر رسوم مسيئة للرسول بصحيفة فرنسية. Number 45944. Year 137. Page 5.

Al-Ahram. 20 September 2012. علماء الدين: دماء الأجانب المقيمين في البلاد ... معصومة. Number 45944. Year 137. Page 20.

Al-Ahram. 21 September 2012. وزير الأوقاف يطالب بتغليب صوت العقل في التعامل مع ازدراء الأديان. Number 45945. Year 137. Page 5.

Al-Ahram. 21 September 2012. بديع: الإساءة للرسول وحدت المصريين. ولا نحمل المسيحيين وزر سفهاء الخارج. Number 45945. Year 137. Page 7.

Al-Ahram. 21 September 2012. الحرية والعدالة يطالب فرنسا بإجراءات رادعة .. والإخوان تقاضى المجلة. Number 45945. Year 137. Page 7.

- Al-Ahram. 21 September 2012. مفتي الجمهورية للأهرام: نصره النبي تتحقق باتباع منهجه ... والإسلام يرفض العنف. وإرهاب الأمنيين. Number 45945. Year 137. Page 40.
- Al-Ahram. 22 September. باخوميوس: التعدي على الأديان يحتاج لموقف حازم. Number 45946. Year 137. Page 3.
- Al-Ahram. 22 September 2012. أصلاح "المثلث الأسود" لصناعة الفيلم المسيء. Number 45946. Year 137. Page 21.
- Al-Ahram. 22 September 2012. (تصاعد الغضب الشعبي تجاه الرسوم المسيئة للرسول (ص). Number 45946. Year 137. Page 4.
- Al-Ahram. 25 September 2012. الأزهر والكنيسة بقرار دولي لتجريم الإساءة للأديان. Number 45949. Year 137. Page 1.
- Al-Ahram. 25 September 2012. "سواسية": حملة ممنهضة ضد الإسلام ... Number 45949. Year 137. Page 5.
- Al-Ahram. 26 September 2012. نصره النبي باتباع منهجه والإسلام يرفض ترويع الأمنيين. Number 45950. Year 137. Page 20.
- Al-Ahram. 27 September 2012. المفتي: أزمة الفيلم المسيء وحدت المصريين ولن يفلح أحد في إثارة الطائفية. Number 45951. Year 137. Page 24.
- Al-Ahram. 27 September 2012. شيخ الأزهر يطالب القوى السياسية بالتوافق والبحث عن حلول حقيقية للأزمات. Number 45951. Year 137. Page 24.
- Al-Ahram. 28 September 2012. شيخ الأزهر: الغرب لا يزال يفكر بمنطق عصور الظلام. Number 45952. Year 137. Page 4.
- Al-Ahram. 28 September 2012. بطريك عموم الأرمن يستنكر الإساءة للأنبياء. Number 45952. Year 137. Page 4.
- Al-Ahram. 29 September 2012. المرشد: الإساءة للرسول صدرت من قلوب يملؤها الحقد. Number 45952. Year 137. Page 4.
- Al-Ahram. 29 September 2012. مؤتمر لمناقشة جريمة إزدراء الأديان وتشديد عقوبتها. Number 45953. Year 137. Page 4.
- Al-Ahram. 30 September 2012. اليوم أولى جلسات محاكمة "الأبو إسلام" المتهم بحرق الإنجيل أمام السفارة الأمريكية. Number 45954. Year 137. Page 22.
- Al-Ahram. 11 October 2012. مفتي الجمهورية: محاولات نشر التشيع في مصر من تفلح. Number 45965. Year 137. Page 22.
- Al-Ahram. 18 October 2012. المواجهة الفكرية أفضل سبيل الرد على الإساءة إلى الإسلام ورموزه. Number 45942. Year 137. Page 25.
- Gate al-Ahram. 12 September 2012. Doi: http://gate.ahram.org.eg/News/250354.aspx accessed 2 November 2015). مطرانية الأقباط الأرثوذكس ببورسعيد تستنكر الفيلم المسيء للرسول الكريم.
- Gate al-Ahram. 15 September 2012. راعي الكنيسة الإنجيلية بالإسكندرية: من قاموا بإنتاج الفيلم المسيء ليسوا أقباطاً ولا مصريين. Doi: http://gate.ahram.org.eg/News/251392.aspx (retrieved May 22, 2016).
- Gate al-Ahram. 15 September 2012. الأنبا بولا: الفيلم المسيء فكرة شيطانية صهيونية لضرب الأديان.. وبطله عميلا. Doi: http://gate.ahram.org.eg/News/251298.aspx (retrieved May 21, 2016).
- Al-Akhbar. 15 September 2012. غضب طرابلس على أميركا: قتل وهجوم على البابا. Doi: https://www.al-akhbar.com/node/167257 (retrieved May 17, 2016).
- Al-Akhbar. 18 September 2012. «KFC» حزب الله (سلمياً) على أبواب ال. Doi: http://al-akhbar.com/node/167412 (retrieved May 17, 2016).
- Al-Akhbar. 22 September 2012. الأسير في بيروت لنصرة الرسول: We love you. Doi: https://www.al-akhbar.com/node/167809 (retrieved May 17, 2016).
- Al-Akhbar al-Yawm. 14 September 2012. المطران بو جوده دان الفيلم المسيء للإسلام. Doi: http://www.akhbaralyawm.com/article-40358/2012/9/14/index.php (retrieved May 17, 2016).
- Al-Anwar. 14 September 2012. مواقف تدين الفيلم الأميركي المسيء إلى الرسول العربي المفتي قباني يدعو إلى صوت. Number 18141. Year 53. Doi: http://www.archive.alanwar.com/article.php?articleID=172214&issuedate=20120914 (retrieved May 17, 2016).
- Al-Anwar. 15 September 2012. هل الحرية تبيح الإساءة إلى مشاعر الملايين؟ Number 18142. Year 53. Doi: http://www.archive.alanwar.com/article.php?articleID=172298&issuedate=20120915 (retrieved May 17, 2016).

- Al-Anwar. 15 September 2012. حردان: الإساءة الى الإسلام جزء من مخطط أميركي - صهيوني للفتنة. Number 18142. Year 53. Doi: <http://www.archive.alanwar.com/article.php?articleID=172297&issuedate=20120915> (retrieved May 17, 2016).
- Al-Anwar. 15 September 2012. اعتصامات ومواقف منددة بالفيلم الأميركي المسيء الى الإسلام احراق مطعم في طرابلس. ومحاولة اقتحام السراي... وسقوط قتيل وجرحى. Number 18142. Year 53. Doi: <http://www.archive.alanwar.com/article.php?articleID=172301&issuedate=20120915> (retrieved May 17, 2016).
- Al-Anwar. 18 September 2012. مزيد من المواقف الشاجبة للفيلم المسيء للإسلام. Number 18144. Year 53. Doi: <http://www.archive.alanwar.com/article.php?articleID=172569&issuedate=20120918> (retrieved May 17, 2016).
- Al-Anwar. 18 September 2012. الجميل استنكر في مؤتمر صحافي الإساءة للإسلام وخطف مواطن: خطاب نصر الله بتوقيته. Number 18144. Year 53. Doi: <http://www.archive.alanwar.com/article.php?articleID=172576&issuedate=20120918> (retrieved May 17, 2016).
- Al-Anwar. 18 September 2012. الحوت تمنى مناقشة الاستراتيجية الدفاعية الخميس وإعلاء صوت الدولة على مشاريع. Number 18144. Year 53. Doi: <http://www.archive.alanwar.com/article.php?articleID=172564&issuedate=20120918> (retrieved May 17, 2016).
- Al-Anwar. 19 September 2012. بيان للمجلس الشيعي يدعو الى بلورة خطاب يرسم صيغ مواجهة حضارية لظاهرة الإساءة. Number 18145. Year 53. Doi: <http://www.archive.alanwar.com/article.php?articleID=172655&issuedate=20120919> (retrieved May 17, 2016).
- Al-Anwar. 19 September 2012. اجتماع لفعاليات طرابلس برئاسة المفتي الشاعر. Number 18145. Year 53. Doi: <http://www.archive.alanwar.com/article.php?articleID=172659&issuedate=20120919> (retrieved May 17, 2016).
- Al-Anwar. 20 September 2012. تظاهرة حاشدة في صور استنكارا للفيلم المسيء الى الإسلام. Number 18146. Year 53. Doi: <http://www.archive.alanwar.com/article.php?articleID=172811&issuedate=20120920> (retrieved May 17, 2016).
- Al-Anwar. 20 September 2012. صدقت مشروع التعليم العالي وتوصية تتعلق بالإساءة الى الأديان. Number 18148. Year 53. Doi: <http://www.archive.alanwar.com/article.php?articleID=172796&issuedate=20120920> (retrieved May 17, 2016).
- Al-Anwar. 22 September 2012. الأحرار: الفيلم المسيء للمسلمين عمل طائش وللحوار شروط كي لا يصبح ملهاة وغطاء. Number 18148. Year 53. Doi: <http://www.archive.alanwar.com/article.php?articleID=173042&issuedate=20120922> (retrieved May 17, 2016).
- Al-Anwar 22. September 2012. المجلس المذهبي الدرزي يناشد المسلمين عدم الانجرار لمخططات وقتن المسيئين. Number 18148. Year 53. Doi: <http://www.archive.alanwar.com/article.php?articleID=173072&issuedate=20120922> (retrieved May 17, 2016).
- Al-Anwar. 25 September 2012. القمة المسيحية - الإسلامية في بكركي: ارتياح لزيارة البابا التاريخية. Number 18150. Year 53. Doi: <http://www.archive.alanwar.com/article.php?articleID=173244&issuedate=20120925> (retrieved May 17, 2016).
- Al-Anwar. 27 September 2012. المجلس الشيعي ينوه بزيارة البابا وبدعوته للحوار والتعايش. Number 18152. Year 53. Doi: <http://www.archive.alanwar.com/article.php?articleID=173538&issuedate=20120927> (retrieved May 17, 2016).
- Al-Anwar. 29 September 2012. تحت شعار مسلمون ومسيحيون دفاعاً عن كرامة الأنبياء والمقدسات. Number 18154. Year 53. Doi: <http://www.archive.alanwar.com/article.php?articleID=173782&issuedate=20120929> (retrieved May 17, 2016).
- Al-Arab. 14 September 2012. الأب جيرانييل نداف يعلن عن رفضه التام للفيلم المسيء للرسول: انه عمل غير اخلاقي. Doi: <http://www.alarab.com/Article/485435> (retrieved May 16, 2016).

Al-Ayyam. 21 September 2012. مسيرة في جنين احتجاجاً على الفيلم المسيء للرسول. Doi: [http://www.al-ayyam.ps/ar\\_page.php?id=b55f22by190181931Yb55f22b](http://www.al-ayyam.ps/ar_page.php?id=b55f22by190181931Yb55f22b) (retrieved May 16, 2016).

Aztabarabic. 25 September 2012. الكاثوليكوس آرام الأول يحضر القمة الروحية المسيحية -الإسلامية في بركي ويقول: "المسيحية والإسلام تعايشتا في الشرق الأوسط لقرون طويلة". Doi: <http://www.aztagarabic.com/archives/6419> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Aztagarabic. 28 September 2012. البيان الختامي لسينودس الكنيسة الأرمنية الكاثوليكية: نأمل أن يعم السلام ويوحّد. Doi: <http://www.aztagarabic.com/archives/6441> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Balad. 10 September 2012. حركة "أقباط بلا قيود" ترفض الإساءة للمقدسات الإسلامية.. ونطالب بوضع حد للإساءات. Doi: <http://www.el-balad.com/261182> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Balad. 11 September 2012. شباب ماسبيرو: الفيلم المسيء للإسلام لا يعبر عن الأقباط وهدفه تقسيم مصر. Doi: <http://www.el-balad.com/261674> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Balad. 12 September 2012. انتلاف أقباط مصر " يدين الفيلم المسيء للنبي الكريم.. ويطالب بأحكام دولية تعاقب ازدرء ". Doi: <http://www.el-balad.com/261883> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Balad. 15 September 2012. "مطرائية المنوفية تستنكر الإساءة للرسول.. وترفع لافتة "مسلم مسيحي إيد واحدة". Doi: <http://www.el-balad.com/265222> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

Calam 1. 4 October 2012. خاص: المطران عطالله حنا يوجه رسالة عبر موقع كلام الاول في مؤتمر - معاضد العنصرية. Doi: <http://www.calam1.org/a/4431/%D8%AE%D8%A7%D8%B5-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B7%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%B9%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%87-%D8%AD%D9%86%D8%A7-%D9%8A%D9%88%D8%AC%D9%87-%D8%B1%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%B1-%D9%85%D9%88%D9%82%D8%B9-%D9%83%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%84-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B1-%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A7-%D8%B6%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%AA-%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%85/> (retrieved May 16, 2016).

Copts Today. 10 September 2012. على الجفري: " الفيلم المسيء للرسول ورائه أيادي صهيونية لإثارة الفتنة في مصر ". Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Egypt-News/Detail.php?Id=32282> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Copts Today. 11 September 2012. لأول مرة.. اقباط وسلفيين في مظاهرة واحدة امام السفارة الامريكية احتجاجا علي الفيلم. Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=32345> (retrieved March 3, 2014).

Copts Today. 11 September 2012. بيان من نيافة الأنبا موسى ردا على الفيلم المسيء للرسول. Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=32480> (retrieved March 3, 2014).

Copts Today. 11 September 2012. مجمع القاهرة الانجيلي يدين الفيلم المسيء للإسلام. Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=32438> (retrieved March 3, 2014).

Copts Today. 11 September 2012. مطالبات بطرد السفير الهولندي بسبب الفيلم المسيء للرسول بسوهاج. Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Egypt-News/Detail.php?Id=32354> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Copts Today. 12 September 2012. وصول مسيرة قبطية الي السفارة الامريكية وهتافات.. مسلم مسيحي ايد واحدة. Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=32628> (retrieved March 3, 2015).

Copts Today. 12 September 2012. بيان من المتظاهرين أمام السفارة الامريكية يشكر الأقباط المشاركين في وقفة ضد الفيلم. Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=32501> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Copts Today. 12 September. بيان من المجمع المقدس يدين الفيلم المسيء للإسلام ويؤكد انه جزء من حملة خبيثة. Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=32605> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

Copts Today. 12 September 2012. وقفة احتجاجية لأقباط أمام الكاتدرائية لإدانة الفيلم المسيء للرسول.. الجمعة. Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=32596> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Copts Today. 12 September 2012. فادي يوسف: أيادي يهودية وراء الفيلم المسيء.. وموريس وزلقة في حجم النمل. Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=32495> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Copts Today. 12 September 2012. مؤامرة شيطانية.. الفيلم المسيء للرسول.. بقلم القس فيلوباتير جميل عزيز. Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=32517> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Copts Today. 13 September. قساوسة بورسعيد يدعون لوقفة احتجاجية غدا لرفض الفيلم المسيء. Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=32752> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

- Copts Today. 13 September 2012. عناصر وسط متظاهرين السفارة تدعو لحرق الكنائس في مصر ردا علي الفيلم المسيء . للرسول Moheet. Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=32751> (retrieved May 23, 2016).
- Copts Today. 13 September 2012. القمص مرقس عزيز : لسئ الأب يوتا ولا علاقة لى بالفيلم المسيء .. وأرفض هذا . العمل الذي يسبب الفتن . Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=32754> (retrieved May 23, 2016).
- Copts Today. 13 September 2012. بيان بخط يد الانبا موسى بشأن المتورطين في الفيلم المسيء . Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=32712> (retrieved May 21, 2016).
- Copts Today. 13 September 2012. "فيديو .. حرق منزل مورييس صادق بالقاهرة في وجود الشرطة المصرية". Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=32652> (retrieved March 3, 2014).
- Copts Today. 14 September 2012. برهامى : لا يجوز حرق "الإنجيل الحالى" ولو كان محرفا .. وتمزيقه إهانة لشيء فيه . ذكر الله . Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=32915> (retrieved May 23, 2016).
- Copts Today. 14 September 2012. الإخوان : لا يمكن أن ننجرّ إلى حرق الإنجيل . Al-Tahrir. Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=32807> (retrieved May 23, 2016).
- Copts Today. 16 September 2012. Doi: الأنبا مرقس يطالب الأمم المتحدة بسن قوانين ضد الإساءة للأديان . <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=33167> (retrieved May 21, 2016).
- Copts Today. 17 September 2012. نادر بكار: اتصلنا بالسفارة الأمريكية قبل التظاهر أمامها لمناهضة الفيلم المسيء . Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Egypt-News/Detail.php?Id=33286> (retrieved May 23, 2016).
- Copts Today. 17 September 2012. Doi: جمال أسعد : صناع "الفيلم المسيء" لم يفلحوا في توريث أقباط مصر بالفتنة . <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=33398> (retrieved May 23, 2016).
- Copts Today. 18 September 2012. Doi: "السلفيون يتجمعون أمام منزل " جوزيف نصر الله " صاحب قناة الطريق". <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=33564> (retrieved March 3, 2014).
- Copts Today. 20 September 2012. Doi: السلفية" تتهم 3 قساوسة بالتورط فى الفيلم المسيء .. وتطالب النائب العام بسماع أقوال " . الانبا باخوميوس . <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=33811> (retrieved May 23, 2016).
- Copts Today. 22 September 2012. Doi: " أمن الدولة" تحقق في واقعة تمزيق الإنجيل أثناء أحداث السفارة الأمريكية". <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=34184> (retrieved May 23, 2016).
- Copts Today. 25 September 2012. Doi: الانبا هدرأ: من غير المعقول أن يُسئل الأنبا سراييون عن تصرفات فرد من إبيارشيته . MCN Broadcast. <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=34699> (retrieved May 23, 2016).
- Copts Today. 26 September 2012. Doi: الانبا هدرأ: الانبا سراييون عاشق لمصر وشعبها ومشهود له بوطنيته وليس له اى علاقة . بالفيلم المسيء . Watani. <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=34773> (retrieved May 23, 2016).
- Copts United. 6 September 2012. Doi: أقباط المهجر ينتجون فيلماً مسيئاً ضد الإسلام وسيرة الرسول الكريم . <http://www.copts-united.com/article.php?I=1284&A=69401> (retrieved May 2, 2016)
- Copts United. 10 September 2012. Doi: الكنيسة الأرثوذكسية ترفض الفيلم المسيء للإسلام، وتؤكد: هذا يخالف تقاليد المسيحية . <http://www.copts-united.com/Article.php?I=1288&A=69777> (retrieved May 21, 2016).
- Copts United. 14 September 2012. Doi: بالفديو والصور الانبا كيرلس اسقف نجع حمادى : لا لازدراء الاديان ... واحترسوا . من الثعالب الصغيرة . <http://www.copts-united.com/article.php?I=1292&A=70190> (retrieved May 21, 2016).
- Al-Dustour. 14 September 2012. Number 16227. Page 3. الحكومة تعرب عن ادانتها الشديدة ورفضها القاطع للإساءة لرسول الله ص .
- Al-Dustour. 14 September 2012. Number 16227. Page 3. حملة "رسول الله يواحدون" : يد العدالة الشعبية الإسلامية ستطال كل من يتناول على . رسولنا الكريم .
- Al-Dustour. 15 September 2012. Number 16228. Page 16. رؤساء الكنائس: « مكونات مجتمعاتنا أوعى من الخديعة وأقوى أمام الافتراء» .
- Al-Dustour. 15 September 2012. Number 16228. Page 29. مسيرات واعتصامات تندد بالإساءة للرسول الكريم .
- Al-Dustour. 16. September 2012. Number 16229. Page 9. تواصل الإدانة والاستنكار للفيلم المسيء لرسول الله .
- Al-Dustour. 17 September 2012. Doi: تواصل الإدانة والاستنكار للفيلم المسيء لرسول الله . <http://www.addustour.com/16611/%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B5%D9%84+%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%A9+%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%86%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%B1+%D9%84%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85+%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D>

8%A1+%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84+%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%87.html (retrieved May 21, 2016).

Al-Dustour. 18 September 2012. الفعاليات الرسمية والشعبية تواصل التنديد بالفيلم المسيء لرسول الله. Number 16231. Page 6.

Al-Dustour. 18 September 2012. الأردننيون يواصلون التنديد بالفيلم المسيء للرسول. Doi:

<http://www.addustour.com/16612/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B1%D8%AF%D9%86%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%86+%D9%8A%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B5%D9%84%D9%88%D9%86+%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%AF+%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85+%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A1+%D9%84%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84.html> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

Al-Dustour. 19 September 2012. فعاليات الوسطية و«عشائر الطفيلة» تستنكر الإساءة إلى النبي الكريم. Number 16231. Page 29.

Al-Dustour. 22 September 2012. مختصون مسلمون ومسيحيون: الفيلم المشبوه مؤامرة على التعايش السلمي بين الأديان. Doi:

<http://www.addustour.com/16616/%D9%85%D8%AE%D8%AA%D8%B5%D9%88%D9%86+%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D9%86+%D9%88%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%AD%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%86+%3A+%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85+%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B4%D8%A8%D9%88%D9%87+%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%A9+%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89+%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%B4+%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%84%D9%85%D9%8A+%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%86+%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%A7%D9%86.html> (retrieved May 21 2016).

Al-Ghad. 15 September 2012. مسيرتان في إربد نصره للنبي وللمطالبة بالافراج عن المعتقلين. Doi:

<http://www.alghad.com/articles/607360-%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A5%D8%B1%D8%A8%D8%AF-%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D9%84%D9%84%D9%86%D8%A8%D9%8A-%D9%88%D9%84%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AC-%D8%B9%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%AA%D9%82%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%86> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

Al-Ghad. 15 September 2012. مسيرة بالرمثا واعتصام بالكرة نصره للرسول الكريم. Doi:

<http://www.alghad.com/articles/607354-%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D9%85%D8%AB%D8%A7-%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%85?s=e3ac7a8af367d7f51c818fe724336e38&search=%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A1> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

Al-Ghad. 15 September 2012. مادبا: دعوة لوضع حد للإساءات ضد المسلمين. Doi:

<http://www.alghad.com/articles/607346-%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%A8%D8%A7-%D8%AF%D8%B9%D9%88%D8%A9-%D9%84%D9%88%D8%B6%D8%B9-%D8%AD%D8%AF-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%A1%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%B6%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%84%D9%85%D9%8A%D9%86> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

Al-Ghad. 15 September 2012. الطفيلة: الفيلم يجسد الحقد على الإسلام. Doi. <http://www.alghad.com/articles/607352-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85-%D9%8A%D8%AC%D8%B3%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%82%D8%AF-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

Al-Ghad. 15 September 2012. معان: دعوة لحملة لمقاطعة البضائع والمنتجات الأميركية. Doi:

<http://www.alghad.com/articles/607351-%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%AF%D8%B9%D9%88%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%85%D9%84%D8%A9-%D9%84%D9%85%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%B7%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%B6%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%B9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%AC%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%83%D9%8A%D8%A9?s=e3ac7a8af367d7f51c818fe724336e38&search=%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A1> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

Al-Ghad. 15 September 2012. اعتصامان في الكرك نصره للرسول ومطالبة بالإصلاح. Doi:

<http://www.alghad.com/articles/607347-%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%83-%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84-%D9%88%D9%85%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B5%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

Al-Ghad. 15 September 2012. الجرشيون ينددون بالفيلم المسيء للرسول. Doi: <http://www.alghad.com/articles/607348-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%B1%D8%B4%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%AF%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85>



%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A1-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84 (retrieved May 21, 2016).

Al-Ghad. 15 September 2012. **عجلون: فعاليات شعبية تنتصر للرسول وتطالب بالاصلاح**. Doi:

<http://www.alghad.com/articles/607357-%D8%B9%D8%AC%D9%84%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%81%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%B4%D8%B9%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%B1-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84-%D9%88%D8%AA%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B5%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD?s=e3ac7a8af367d7f51c818fe724336e38&search=%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A1> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

Al-Ghad. 15 September 2012. **حراك السلط يؤكد مقاطعته للانتخابات**. Doi: <http://www.alghad.com/articles/607350-%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%83-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%B7-%D9%8A%D8%A4%D9%83%D8%AF-%D9%85%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%B7%D8%B9%D8%AA%D9%87-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%AE%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%AA> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

Al-Ghad. 16 September 2012. **الكرك: اعتصام احتجاجي في فقوع للمطالبة بالاصلاح**. Doi:

<http://www.alghad.com/articles/607287-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%83-%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%AA%D8%AC%D8%A7%D8%AC%D9%8A-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%81%D9%82%D9%88%D8%B9-%D9%84%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B5%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

Al-Ghad. 17 September 2012. **لجنة بلدية الطفيلة تستنكر الفيلم المسيء للرسول الكريم**. Doi:

<http://www.alghad.com/articles/607214-%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%86%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%86%D9%83%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A1-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%85?s=e3ac7a8af367d7f51c818fe724336e38&search=%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A1> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

Al-Ghad. 18 September 2012. **السلط: فاعليات شعبية ورسمية ترفض المساس بقيم الإسلام...** Doi:

<http://www.alghad.com/articles/607138-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%B7-%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%B4%D8%B9%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%81%D8%B6-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%B3-%D8%A8%D9%82%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85?s=e3ac7a8af367d7f51c818fe724336e38&search=%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A1> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

Al-Ghad. 19 September 2012. **وقفه احتجاجية في جامعة اليرموك نصره للرسول الكريم**. Doi:

<http://www.alghad.com/articles/607055-%D9%88%D9%82%D9%81%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%AA%D8%AC%D8%A7%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%85%D9%88%D9%83-%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%85?s=e3ac7a8af367d7f51c818fe724336e38&search=%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A1> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

Al-Ghad. 20 September 2012. **"سلفيو" معان ينتصرون للرسول في "اسبوع الغضب"**. Doi:

<http://www.alghad.com/articles/606985-%D8%B3%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%88-%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%A8%D9%88%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%BA%D8%B6%D8%A8?s=e3ac7a8af367d7f51c818fe724336e38&search=%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A1> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

Al-Hayat. 15 September 2012. **جنبلات يدين الفيلم المسيء والرد عليه: لا يمكن تنزيه اسرائيل عن التخطيط له**. Number 18061. Page 9.

Al-Hayat. 18 September 2012. **..و نصر الله يظهر علنا ... داعيا إلى غضبة شاملة سليمان يطلب توضيح تصريحات جعفري**. Number 18064. Pages 1 and 6.

Al-Hayat. 22 September 2012. **غضب من بيروت وصيدا إلى بعلبك نصره للرسول**. Number 18068. Page 7.

Al-Hayat. 22 September 2012. **إجراءات أمنية كثيفة لحماية المؤسسات الفرنسية والأميركية والأوروبية في لبنان. غضب من بيروت وصيدا إلى بعلبك نصره للرسول** Doi:

[http://daharchives.alhayat.com/issue\\_archive/Hayat%20INT/2012/9/22/%D8%A7%D9%95%D8%AC%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A1%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%94%D9%85%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%83%D8%AB%D9%8A%D9%81%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D9%94%D8%B3%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%AA-](http://daharchives.alhayat.com/issue_archive/Hayat%20INT/2012/9/22/%D8%A7%D9%95%D8%AC%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A1%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%94%D9%85%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%83%D8%AB%D9%8A%D9%81%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D9%94%D8%B3%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%AA-)

%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D8%B1%D9%86%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A9-  
%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%94%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%83%D9%8A%D8%A9-  
%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%94%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A9-  
%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%BA%D8%B6%D8%A8-%D9%85%D9%86-  
%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%AA-%D9%88%D8%B5%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%A7-  
%D8%A7%D9%95%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%A8%D8%B9%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%83-  
%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%B1.html (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Hayat. 25 September 2012. قباني: المسيون إلى الإسلام يستفروننا لنفعل الأذى كما حدث في بلداننا. Number 18061. Page 9.

Al-Hayat. 1 October 2012. اشتباكات بين إسلاميين وأقباط في محاكمة سلفي أحرق الإنجيل. Number 18077. Page 6.

Al-Hayat al-Jadida. 14 September 2012. الأب مصلح: الفيلم المسيء للإسلام جريمة تثير الاشمزاز. Number 6059. Page 19.

Al-Hayat al-Jadida. 15 September 2012. مسيرات جماهيرية في محافظات الوطن تندد بالفيلم المسيء للنبي الكريم. Number 6060. Page 4.

Al-Hayat al-Jadida, 16 September 2012. مسيرة في نابلس نصره للرسول الأعظم. Number 6061. Page 3.

Al-Hayat al-Jadida. 18 September 2012. الهباش يطالب العالم باستنكار الفيلم المسيء للسلام ويدعو لسن قوانين تجرم انتهاك الأديان. Number 6067. Page 13.

Al-Hayat al-Jadida. 22 September 2012. د. غنام خلال مهرجان نصره رسول الله: فلسطين ستظل نموذجاً للتأخي الإسلامي المسيحي. Number 6067. Page 6.

Al-Hurra. 19 September 2012. Doi: الفيلم المسيء للإسلام.. الأقباط في دائرة الاتهام. <http://www.alhurra.com/content/video-islam-copts-situation-egypt/212035.html> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Ittihad. 14 September 2012. جريس يندد بانتاج الفيلم القذر الذي يسيء إلى النبي محمد والدين الإسلامي. Page 5.

Al-Ittihad. 14 September 2012. الفيلم المنحط ضد الرسول صناعة المذبذبة الأمريكية. Page 5.

Al-Ittihad. 16 September 2012. شفاعمرو موحدة في التنديد بالفيلم المسيء للنبي العربي والإسلام. Page 5.

Al-Ittihad. 21 September 2012. Malhaq al-Jum'a. الاستفزاز و الفتنة و الاستفزاز. الحزب الشيوعي و الجبهة في حيفا يستنكران فيلم الفتنة و الاستفزاز. Page 6.

Lebanon Files. 13 September 2012. Doi: أسد عاصي استنكر الفيلم المسيء للإسلام. Doi:

<http://www.lebanonfiles.com/news/437254> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Lebanon Files. 14 September. Doi: حسين الموسوي ندد بالفيلم المسيء إلى الإسلام. Doi:

<http://www.lebanonfiles.com/news/437729> (retrieved October 24, 2015).

Lebanon Files. 18 September 2012. Doi: امام سلفي مصري يصدر فتوى لقتل فريق الفيلم المسيء للإسلام. Doi:

<http://www.lebanonfiles.com/news/439079> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Liwa. 14 September 2012. ميقاتي والحريري وقيادات دينية وسياسية نددوا بالفيلم الأميركي المسيء للإسلام.. وبالغضب. Doi: <http://www.aliwaa.com.lb/Article.aspx?ArticleId=137215> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Liwa. 24 September 2012. مهرجان في صيدا ومسيرة في صور دفاعاً عن النبي الأكرم الجماعة: أين حلفاء عون من الرد على إساءته لظهور الإسلام؟ Doi: <http://aliwaa.com/Article.aspx?ArticleId=138322> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Manar. 21 September 2012. Doi: قباني للمنار: الفيلم المسيء لإثارة فتنة مسيحية-إسلامية وغير قلق من فتنة طائفية. Doi: <http://www.almanar.com.lb/adetails.php?fromval=1&cid=21&frid=21&eid=312001> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Markaz al-Sharq al-Arabi. Wasat. Doi: ردود فعل شعبية وعربية ودولية على فيلم الإساءة للنبي صلى الله عليه وسلم. Doi: <http://asharqalarabi.org.uk/barq/b-qiraat-92.htm> (retrieved May 16, 2016).

Masress. 12 September 2012. آخر الاخبار المصرية اليوم: الحقوق المدنية للمسيحيين: نرفض الإساءة للأديان ونطالب. Doi: <http://www.masress.com/akhbartoday/36211> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Masry al-Youm. 10 September 2012. «صباحي»: الفيلم المسيء للرسول «جريمة».. وحرية الإبداع مرتبطة باحترام «المقدسات». Doi: <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/162860> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

النور» و«الجبهة السلفية» ينضمون لوقفه أمام السفارة الأمريكية ضد الفيلم « Doi: <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/162864> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Masry al-Youm. 11 September 2012. الكنيسة تتبرأ من صانعي الفيلم المسيء للرسول وتؤكد: نرفض المساس Doi: <http://today.almasryalyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=352975> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Masry al-Youm. 11 September 2012. انتلاف «أقباط مصر» يرفض الفيلم المسيء للرسول.. ويطالب بمحاكمة دولية Doi: <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/162944> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Masry al-Youm. 11 September 2012. «الحرية والعدالة»: الفيلم المسيء للرسول «محاولة دينية لإثارة الطائفية» Doi: <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/163110> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Masry al-Youm. 12 September 2012. عمرو موسى: من أعد «الفيلم المسيء» فئة حاقدة وباغية ومريضة Doi: <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/163163> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Masry al-Youm. 13 September 2012. «وفد من أقباط الإسماعيلية يزور مقر «الإخوان» للتضامن ضد «الفيلم المسيء» Doi: <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/163581> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Masry al-Youm. 14 September 2012. المئات يحرقون علم أمريكا أمام القنصلية بالإسكندرية احتجاجاً على «الفيلم المسيء» Doi: <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/163708> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Masry al-Youm. 13 September 2012. «طائفة الأقباط «الأدفنتست» بمصر تدين وتشجب «الفيلم المسيء» Doi: <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/163409> (retrieved May 22, 2016).

Al-Masry al-Youm. 11 September 2012. مؤسس تنظيم الجهاد: رد مرسي على «الفيلم المسيء» ليس على مستوى الحدث Doi: <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/163211> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Masry al-Youm. 14 September 2012. جورج إسحاق يُدين «الفيلم المسيء» ويؤكد: مصر سالمة بنسجها القوي Doi: <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/163642> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Masry al-Youm. 14 September 2012. وفود كنسية تشارك «الإخوان» ووقفهم رفضاً لـ«الفيلم المسيء» أمام «مصطفى» Doi: <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/163696> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Masry al-Youm. 14 September 2012. اتحادات الكُتّاب العربية تدين «الفيلم المسيء» وتصفه بـ«محاولات مججوة» Doi: <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/163698> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Masry al-Youm. 15 September 2012. تواصل الاحتجاجات ضد «الفيلم المسيء» بأحاء مصر.. ومحافظ المنيا أبرز المتظاهرين Doi: <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/163947> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Masry al-Youm. 16 September 2012. لاعبو الزمالك بتي شيرت «نصرة الرسول» تعبيراً عن غضبهم تجاه الفيلم Doi: <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/164148> (retrieved March 3, 2014).

Moheet. 20 September 2012. الأنبا بسنتي: المُنتجون للفيلم المُسيء للرسول لا يمثلون أقباط المهجر Doi:

<http://moheet.com/2012/09/20/1668478/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%86%D8%A8%D8%A7-%D8%A8%D8%B3%D9%86%D8%AA%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85-%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%AC%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%84%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85-%D8%B3%D9%8A.html#.VjeIWm5OfIV> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

Al-Nahar. 13 September 2012. جذب الله: الفيلم عن الرسول يهدف إلى الفتنة و الفريق العربي للحوار يدعو لتجاهله. Number 24847. Year 80. Page 27.

Al-Nahar. 14 September 2012. اعتصام ومسيرة في طرابلس واجراءات احترازية. Number 24848. Year 80. Page 5.

Al-Nahar. 14 September 2012. الحريري التقى معارضين سوريين: العنف يسوء إلى الإسلام كما الفيلم. Number 24848. Year 80. Page 4.

Al-Nahar. 14 September 2012. قباني وقبلان وحسن ولحام يستنكرون الفيلم المسيء الى النبي. Number 24848. Year 80. Page 5.

Al-Nahar. 14 September 2012. الراعي: زيارته دعوة للسلام في شرق الحديد والنار. الحضور المسيحي في هذه المنطقة يعطيها هوية ومعنى. Number 24848. Year 80. Page 7.

Al-Nahar. 14 September 2012. ميقاتي عزى كلبنتون بحادثة بنغازي: الرد الدموي ليس للدفاع عن الإسلام. Number 24848. Year 80. Page 3.

Al-Nahar. 15 September 2012. ميقاتي رفض تحميل أميركا الصديقة المسؤولية كونيلى: فيلم مقرّر ولا مبرر لمقابلته. بالعنف. Number 24849. Year 80. Page 7.

Al-Nahar. 15 September 2012. طرابلس: قتل و25 جريحاً بعد حرق ال"كي.أف.سي". .. تظاهرات في عين الحلوة وتعلانيا. "نددت بأميركا وفيلم "براءة المسلمين". Number 24849. Year 80. Page 7.

Al-Nahar. 15 September 2012. جنبلاط: الفيلم المسيء إلى الإسلام هدفه التشويش على الثورات العربية. Number 24849. Year 80. Page 7.

Al-Nahar. 16 September 2012. الحاج حسن: الدوائر الامريكية تثير الفتن معنيون بمكافحة الأقسام والتكفير. Number 24850. Year 80. Page 5.

Al-Nahar. 16 September 2012. "كي اف سي" ... الجسر: ما حدث اساء الى المدينة و. Number 24850. Year 80. Page 5.

Al-Nahar. 17 September 2012. دعا إلى مسيرات في المناطق تبدأ في الضاحية ... نصر الله: الفيلم المسيء عدوان أميركي. Number 24851. Year 80. Page 3.

Al-Nahar. 18 September 2012. من زيارة البابا إلى تصاعد الاتجاجات تظاهرة الضاحية تتردد في السفارة الأميركية. Number 24852. Year 80. Pages 1 and 12.

Al-Nahar. 18 September 2012. مزيد من الردود على "براءة المسلمين" قبلان: اعتقال المسيئين ومحاكمتهم. Number 24852. Year 80. Page 4.

Al-Nahar. 19 September 2012. لحدود: تزامن مشبوه للفيلم مع زيارة البابا. Number 24853. Year 80. Page 5.

Al-Nahar. 19 September 2012. مفتي الجمهورية: زيارة البابا شهادة للبنان. Number 24853. Year 80. Page 2.

Al-Nahar. 19 September 2012. الراعي الى الهند: لقرار يمنع الإساءة الى الديانات. Number 24853. Year 80. Page 5.

Al-Nahar. 19 September. بري يرفع رأسه ب"التظاهرات الحضارية" في الضاحية. منصور غزد و لم يتفرد "و لماذا هذا الغباء الأميركي"؟ Number 24853. Year 80. Page 5.

Al-Nahar. 19 September 2012. "المستقبل": سلاح المقاومة إيراني بوظائف إقليمية يهدد بضرب الميثاق الوطني والعيش". Number 24853. Year 80. Page 4.

Al-Nahar. 19 September 2012. ترو: الغوغائية تحقق ما يريده مطلقو الفيلم. "تجمع العلماء": أميركا مسؤولة أولى عن الإساءة. Number 24853. Year 80. Page 5.

Al-Nahar. 20 September 2012. أمانة 14 آذار: ظاهرات "حزب الله" لحرف الأنتظار عن جرائم النظام السوري. Number 24854. Year 80. Page 5.

Al-Nahar. 21 September 2012. اجتماع بدعوة من قباني دان "براءة المسلمين": لن يفيد أميركا التنصل من مسؤولياتها. Number 24855. Year 80. Page 6.

Al-Nahar. 22 September 2012. مشيخة العقل والهيئة الدينية والمحاكم الدرزية: مواجهة عقلانية ومعالجة جادة للإساءات. Number 24856. Year 80. Page 5.

Al-Nahar. 22 September 2012. المجمع السرياني دعا إلى تفعيل الحوار اللبناني واستنكار كل أعمال العنف والتدخل في سوريا. Number 24856. Year 80. Page 6.

Al-Nahar. 22 September 2012. "لقاء عكاري جمع قيادات سياسية ودينية: الفيلم "إساءة إلى المسيحيين والمسلمين. Number 24856. Year 80. Page 6.

Al-Nahar. 22 September 2012. إعتصام إمام مسجد بلال بن رباح قطع أوصال بيروت. Number 24855. Year 80. Page 5.

Al-Nahar. 22 September 2012. مسيرات احتجاج تحت شعار "إبيك يا رسول الله". في بعلبك و كفر كلا و صور و عكار و. Number 24856. Year 80. Page 5.

Al-Nahar. 23 September 2012. الموسوي ويزي في مسيرة بنت جبيل: الائتلاف الإسلامي - المسيحي رد مباشر. Number 24856. Year 80. Page 5.

Al-Nahar. 24 September 2012. ختام مسيرات الاحتجاج على الفيلم المسيء. Number 24857. Year 80. Page 6.

Al-Nahar. 24 September 2012. عناوين في القمة الروحية اليوم و الحضور مكتمل إسلامياً 3. Number 24857. Year 80. Page 2.

Al-Nahar. 25 September 2012. لبنان: المطران درويش ندد بالإساءات إلى الأديان. Number 24859. Year 80. Page 6.

Al-Nahar. 25 September 2012. فضل شاكر يعتزل الفن وينصرف للعبادة. Nahar al-Kafif. Number 24859. Year 80.

Al-Nahar Shabab. 27 September 2012. مشاركون نصره للأسير أم للرسول؟. In al-Nahar. Number 24861. Year 80. Page 22.

Al-Nahar. 27 September. لقاء تشاوري "إسلامي ومسيحي: ليتبع الفاتيكان ملف الإساءة الى النبي. Number 24861. Year 80. Page 5.

Al-Nahar Egypt. 14 September 2012. Doi. بالصور.. بورسعيد تستنكر إساءة الإسلام ومسيرات بمشاركة الكنيسة. <http://www.alnaharegypt.com/t~86089> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Naharnet. 18 September 2012. Doi: الأسير ينتقد دعوة نصر الله الى التظاهر: "براءة المسلمين" اساء الى الاسلام بكامله. <http://www.naharnet.com/stories/ar/53922> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Nashra. 18 September 2012. Doi: فيصل الداود: الفيلم المسيء للإسلام وصمة عار على أميركا والعالم الغربي. <http://www.elnashra.com/news/show/524506/%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%B5%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%88%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85->

%D9%88%D8%B5%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-  
%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B1 (retrieved April 22, 2014).

Al-Nashra. 19 September 2012. "المطران الحاج: الفتنة المرادة من الفيلم المسيء للإسلام تطال المسيحيين". Doi:  
<http://www.elnashra.com/news/show/525135/news/> (retrieved May 5, 2014).

Al-Nashra. 20 September 2012. Doi: نبييل رحيم: من احرقوا مطعم كي أف سي ليسوا من الاسلاميين في طرابلس.  
[www.elnashra.com/news/show/525274/%D9%86%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%84-%D8%B1%D8%AD%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%82%D9%88%D8%A7-%D9%85%D8%B7%D8%B9%D9%85-KFC-%D8%B7%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%84%D8%B3-%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%A7-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A%D9%8A%D9%86](http://www.elnashra.com/news/show/525274/%D9%86%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%84-%D8%B1%D8%AD%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%82%D9%88%D8%A7-%D9%85%D8%B7%D8%B9%D9%85-KFC-%D8%B7%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%84%D8%B3-%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%A7-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A%D9%8A%D9%86) (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Nsrawy. 8 October 2012. القيادات الدينية الاسلامية والمسيحية ترفض التطاول على الرموز الدينية وعلى دور العبادة. Doi:  
<http://nsrawy.net/den/Article/1011/.html> (retrieved May 16, 2016).

Nsrawy Net. ?? . الناصرة بلد المحبة: شخصيات مسيحية تستنكر المس برسول الله محمد (ص). Doi:  
<http://nsrawy.net/NewArticle/538/.html> (retrieved May 16, 2016).

Petra. 14 September 2012. التجمع العربي للتصدي لهجرة المسيحيين العرب يستنكر الفيلم المسيء للرسول الكريم. Doi:  
[http://www.petra.gov.jo/public\\_news/Nws\\_NewsDetails.aspx?Menu\\_ID=&Site\\_Id=2&lang=1&NewsID=83990&CatID=14](http://www.petra.gov.jo/public_news/Nws_NewsDetails.aspx?Menu_ID=&Site_Id=2&lang=1&NewsID=83990&CatID=14) (retrieved May 21, 2016).

Petra. 16 September 2012. لجنة بلدية الطفيلة الكبرى تستنكر الاساءة للرسول الكريم. Doi:  
[http://www.petra.gov.jo/Public\\_News/Nws\\_NewsDetails.aspx?Site\\_Id=2&lang=1&NewsID=84176&CatID=12&Type=Home&GType=1](http://www.petra.gov.jo/Public_News/Nws_NewsDetails.aspx?Site_Id=2&lang=1&NewsID=84176&CatID=12&Type=Home&GType=1) (retrieved May 21, 2016).

Al-Quds. 12 September 2012. حاخام اسرائيلي يندد بفيلم اميركي مسيء للاسلام. Doi:  
<http://www.alquds.com/news/article/view/id/384285> (retrieved April 3, 2016).

Al-Quds. 13 September 2012. اسرائيل تندد بالفيلم المسيء للإسلام وتنفي اي علاقة لها به. Number 15477. Page 20.

Al-Quds. 13 September 2012. تظاهرة في غزة احتجاجا على الفيلم المسيء للسلام. Number 15477. Page 2.

Al-Quds. 13 September 2012. منتج ومخرج الفيلم المسيء يهودي إسرائيلي. Number 15477. Page 2.

Al-Quds. 15 September 2012. الدكتور حنا فراج ل"القدس": الفيلم مس مشاعر المسيحيين قبل إخواننا المسلمين. Number 15479. Page 7.

Al-Quds. 15 September 2012. تظاهرة غاضبة في القدس ضد الاساءة للرسول وللإسلام الشرطة الاسرائيلية تتصدى لها. Number 15479. Page 3.

Al-Quds. 15 September 2012. مفاجأة ... الفيلم المسيء للرسول غير موجود أصلاً. Number 15479. Page 16.

Al-Quds. 19 September 2012. اشتباكات في مخيم شعفاط احتجاجا على الفيلم المسيء للإسلام. Number 15483. Page 7.

Al-Quds. 22 September 2012. مسيرة ومهرجان في البيرة تنديدا بالفيلم السيء وإطلاق حملة نصره للنبي محمد. Number 15486. Page 3.

Al-Quds. 24 September 2012. Doi: مطران السريان: الحوادث الفردية لا تؤثر على علاقات المسلمين والمسيحيين.  
<http://www.alquds.com/news/article/view/id/386996> (retrieved June 29, 2014).

Al-Quds, 30 September 2012. في إطار الجهود الرامية لوقف الاعتداء على الأديان و المقدسات عقدت وزارة الأوقاف و الشؤون الدينية مؤتمرا دينيا اسلاميا مسيحيا بعنوان: مقدستنا ... رمز كرامتنا و عنوان هويتنا و الاعتداء عليها تهديد لوجودنا.  
Number 15494. Page 20.

Al-Quds. 30 September 2012. Doi: وفد مسيحي يزور أوقاف القدس ويستنكر الفيلم المسيء للنبي.  
<http://www.alquds.com/news/article/view/id/388326> (retrieved May 16, 2016).

Al-Quds. 30 September 2012. الإساءة إلى الإسلام وتضاؤل المسيحيين العرب وتعثر السلام. Number 15494. Page 44.

Al-Quds. 3 October 2012. رسالة عاجلة إلى العاهل الأردني التدخل لوقف هذه الانتهاكات. اعتداء على المقدسات الإسلامية. والمسيحية في القدس.  
Number 15497. Pages 1 and 34.

Al-Quds. 3 October 2012. نسرة الرسول: الاتحاد الفلسطيني للفنون القتالية نجح بامتياز في المخرجان الختامي الكرمي.  
Number 15497. Page 26.

Al-Quds. 4 October 2012. وفد مقدسي إسلامي مسيحي يزور دير جبل صبيهون متضامنا. Number 15498.

Al-Quds. 5 October 2012. رجال الجين المسيحي يتضامون مع المسجد الأقصى في زيارة أخوية. Number 15499. Page 5.

Al-Quds. 5 October 2012. مؤتمر بيت لحم يدين التطاول على الرسل والأنبياء والاعتداء على المقدسات. Number 15499. Page 5.

Al-Quds. 9 October 2012. لقاء اسلامي - مسيحي لنصرة الأنبياء والمقدسات في جمعية اللد الخيرية،. Number 15503. Page 20.

Al-Quds. ? .بيت لحم: مسيرة ضد غلاء الاسعار واستنكارا للفيلم المسيء . Doi:  
<http://www.alquds.com/news/article/view/id/384656> (retrieved March 12, 2015).

Al-Rai. 14 September 2012. ردود فعل غاضبة تستنكر الفيلم المسيء إلى الرسول. Number 15304. Page 3.

Al-Rai. 15 September 2012. مجلس ومجمع الكنائس يستنكران الفيلم المسيء. Doi:  
[http://www.alrai.com/article\\_m/539017.html](http://www.alrai.com/article_m/539017.html) (retrieved May 21, 2016).

Al-Safir. 12 September 2012. القاهرة فيلم يفجر غضباً اقتحام السفارة الأمريكية. Number 12281. Year 39. Pages 1 and 17.

Al-Safir. 13 September 2012. الإسلاميون يحرقون سفير واشنطن في ليبيا ... وكلينتون تتهمهم بقلّة الوفاء. Number 12282. Year 39. Page 1.

Al-Safir. 14 September 2012. الراعي: البابا سيدين العنف في سوريا وانتشار السلاح والمال. Number 12283. Year 39. Page 2.

Al-Safir. 14 September 2012. سليمان عزّي أوياما بالسفير في ليبيا. ونّدّد بالفيلم المسيء إلى الإسلام. Doi:  
[https://www.lexisnexis.com/uk/nexis/results/docview/docview.do?docLinkInd=true&risb=21\\_T19655778972&format=GNB FULL&sort=BOOLEAN&startDocNo=51&resultsUrlKey=29\\_T19655760993&cisb=22\\_T19655778974&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=383614&docNo=53](https://www.lexisnexis.com/uk/nexis/results/docview/docview.do?docLinkInd=true&risb=21_T19655778972&format=GNB FULL&sort=BOOLEAN&startDocNo=51&resultsUrlKey=29_T19655760993&cisb=22_T19655778974&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=383614&docNo=53) (retrieved April 11, 2014).

Al-Safir. 15 September 2012. طرابلس: إحراق "كنتاكى" و "هارديز" يوقع قتيلاً و 25 جريحاً. Number 12284. Year 39. Page 6.

Al-Safir. 15 September 2012. جنبلط: إسرائيل خلف العمل المسيء للرسول. ميفاتي. الأميركيون لا يتحملون مسؤولية الفيلم. Number 12284. Year 39. Page 6.

Al-Safir. 18 September 2012. الأب ضو ... والمشاركة المميزة. Number 12286. Year 39. Page 4.

Al-Safir. 18 September. أين "المستقبل" و "الجماعة" من الإساءة للنبي محمد؟. Number 12286. Year 39. Page 4.

Al-Safir. 18 September 2012. استمرار الإدانات للإساءة إلى الرسول. Number 12286. Year 39. Page 4.

Al-Safir. 19 September 2012. حرب بيدي استعداده لتقديم دعوى قضائية. لحدود: بالوحدة الوطنية نرد على الفيلم المسيء إلى حرب بيدي لتقديم دعوى قضائية. لحدود: بالوحدة الوطنية نرد على الفيلم المسيء إلى النبي. Number 12287. Year 39. Page 4.

Al-Safir. 22 September 2012. مسيرات في بعلبك وصور وصيدا وبراليس ضد الإساءة. Number 12290. Year 39. Page 4.

Al-Safir. 22 September 2012. قباني يدعو إلى سن قانون دولي يمنع إهانة الدين. Number 12290. Year 39. Page 4.

Al-Safir. 22 September 2012. أقباط مصر متضامنون ... لكنهم قلقون. Number 12290. Year 37. Page 13.

Al-Safir. 25 September 2012. قمة يركي الروحية تناشد الدولية اتخاذ اجراءات لمنع الانهيار الإقتصادي. Number 12292. Year 39. Page 2.

Al-Safir. 26 September. حقوق الإنسان "تتبنى بيان بكركي الراض للإساءة. Number 12293. Year 39. Page 4.

Al-Safir. 4 October 2012. لقاء إسلامي مسيحي ضد العنصرية. Number 12300. Year 39. Page 5.

Saida Online. ? . إعتصام الشيخ أحمد الأسير وأنصاره نصره للنبي في ساحة الشهداء (55 صورة). Doi:  
<http://www.saidaonline.com/newsapp.php?go=fullnews&newsid=49807> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Sharq al-Arabi. 12 September 2012. أسقف طنطا يستنكر الأفلام المسيئة ويدعو لعدم ازدياد الأديان. Doi:  
<http://asharqalarabi.org.uk/barq/b-qiraat-92.htm> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

Al-Sharq al-Arabi. 12 September 2012. أعضاء المجلس الملي بأسبوط: الفيلم المسيء للرسول ذريعة للفتنة الطائفية. Doi:  
<http://asharqalarabi.org.uk/barq/b-qiraat-92.htm> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

Al-Sharq al-Awsat. 17 September 2012. مسلمون ومسيحيون مصريون يحاولون تجاوز حقل ألغام الفيلم المسيء. Doi:  
<http://archive.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&issueno=12347&article=695645&search=%25C7%25E1%25DD%25ED%25E1%25E3%2520%25C7%25E1%25E3%25D3%25ED%25C1&state=true#.VjIaI25OfIV> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Sharq al-Awsat. 18 September 2012. نصر الله في ظهور علني نادر يدعو إلى مواصلة الاحتجاج حول الفيلم المسيء. Doi:  
<http://archive.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&issueno=12348&article=695788&search=%25C7%25E1%25DD%25ED%25E1%25E3%2520%25C7%25E1%25E3%25D3%25ED%25C1&state=true#.VulBWEfFbIV> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Sharq al-Awsat. 20 September 2012. ردود فعل ضد الرسوم: مطالب للتعامل مع الإساءة للإسلام مثل «إنكار محارق النازي». Doi:  
<http://archive.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&issueno=12350&article=696104&search=%25C8%25D1%25C7%25C1%25C9%2520%25C7%25E1%25E3%25D3%25E1%25E3%25ED%25E4&state=true#.VkB7T15OfIV> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Sharq al-Awsat. 18 September 2012. منير: تعميم اتهام أقباط المهجر بالمسؤولية عن الفيلم المسيء للإسلام خطأ. Doi:  
<http://archive.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&issueno=12348&article=695789&search=%25C7%25E1%25DD%25ED%25E1%25E3%2520%25C7%25E1%25E3%25D3%25ED%25C1&state=true#.VjIeMW5OfIV> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Sharq al-Awsat. 18 September 2012. منير: تعميم اتهام أقباط المهجر بالمسؤولية عن الفيلم المسيء للإسلام خطأ. Doi:  
<http://archive.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&issueno=12348&article=695789&search=%25C7%25E1%25DD%25ED%25E1%25E3%2520%25C7%25E1%25E3%25D3%25ED%25C1&state=true#.VjIeMW5OfIV> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Sharq al-Awsat. 18 September 2012. منير: تعميم اتهام أقباط المهجر بالمسؤولية عن الفيلم المسيء للإسلام خطأ. Doi:  
<http://archive.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&issueno=12348&article=695789&search=%25C7%25E1%25DD%25ED%25E1%25E3%2520%25C7%25E1%25E3%25D3%25ED%25C1&state=true#.VjIeMW5OfIV> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Sharq al-Awsat. 18 September 2012. منير: تعميم اتهام أقباط المهجر بالمسؤولية عن الفيلم المسيء للإسلام خطأ. Doi:  
<http://archive.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&issueno=12348&article=695789&search=%25C7%25E1%25DD%25ED%25E1%25E3%2520%25C7%25E1%25E3%25D3%25ED%25C1&state=true#.VjIeMW5OfIV> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Sharq al-Awsat. 18 September 2012. منير: تعميم اتهام أقباط المهجر بالمسؤولية عن الفيلم المسيء للإسلام خطأ. Doi:  
<http://archive.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&issueno=12348&article=695789&search=%25C7%25E1%25DD%25ED%25E1%25E3%2520%25C7%25E1%25E3%25D3%25ED%25C1&state=true#.VjIeMW5OfIV> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

- Al-Shuruq. 11 September 2012. الكنيسة المصرية تنتقد الفيلم المسيء الأمريكي للمسيء للرسول ... وبولس يقاضى أقباط. Number 1319. Year 4. Page 3.
- Al-Shuruq. 12 September 2012. ثورة غضب "إسلامية مسيحية ضد الإساءة للرسول. Number 1320. Year 4. Page 5.
- Al-Shuruq. 12 September 2012. قوى سياسية إسلامية تستنكر اقتحام السفارة الأمريكية. Number 1320. Year 4. Page 5.
- Al-Shuruq. 12 September 2012. السفارة الأمريكية تحت الحصار. Number 1320. Year 4. Page 1.
- Al-Shuruq. 13 September 2012. زقلمة وموريس ... رأسا حربه إسرائيلية للهجوم على مصر. Number 1321. Year 4. Page 6.
- Al-Shuruq. 13 September 2012. أسقف الكنيسة القبطية في "الوس أنجلوس": صامعو الفيلم المسيء للرسول خرجوا عن. Number 1321. Year 4. Page 5.
- Al-Shuruq. 13 September 2012. "تطالب بمحاكمة منتجي الفيلم و تطلب مرسي بإعادة تشكيل, تأسيسية, ". Number 1321. Year 4. Page 5.
- Al-Shuruq. 13 September 2012. أن أكون فتاة مسيحية في شارع مسلم غاضب. Number 1321. Year 4. Page 5.
- Al-Shuruq. 14 September 2012. تواصل الاشتباكات والعنف بين المتظاهرين وقوات الأمن بمحيط السفارة الأمريكية. Number 1322. Year 4. Page 5.
- Al-Shuruq. 15 September 2012. مسلمون وأقباط "أيدي واحدة" في مظاهرات محدودة أمام مساجد القاهرة. Number 1323. Year 4. Page 5.
- Al-Shuruq. 15 September 2012. حرق البعض للإنجيل تصرف غير محسوب ومحرم. Number 1323. Year 4. Page 8.
- Al-Shuruq. 15 September 2012. الأنبا مرقس: على الأمم المتحدة سن قوانين تجرم الإساءة للأديان. Number 1323. Year 4. Page 7.
- Al-Shuruq. 15 September 2012. الأنبا مرقس: على الأمم المتحدة سن قوانين تجرم الإساءة للأديان. Number 1323. Year 4. Page 7.
- Al-Shuruq. 18 September 2012. شيخ الأزهر: المسيحيون يهاجرون لتحسين أحوالهم الاقتصادية وليس هرباً من اضطهاد ديني. Number 1326. Year 4. Page 4.
- Al-Shuruq. 19 September 2012. "شيخ الأزهر: الفيلم المسيء يهدف لعرقلة التحول الديمقراطي في دول "الربيع العربي". Number 1327. Year 4. Page 6.
- Al-Shuruq. 22 September 2012. الشحات: الرد السياسي على الفيلم المسيء أفضل من السابق لكنه دون المطلوب. Doi: [http://www.shorouknews.com/news/view.aspx?cdate=22092012&id=92bd0af0-bd3f-4cfb-9f68-694050713061&fb\\_comment\\_id=342930759131357\\_11601678#f316156a38d8306](http://www.shorouknews.com/news/view.aspx?cdate=22092012&id=92bd0af0-bd3f-4cfb-9f68-694050713061&fb_comment_id=342930759131357_11601678#f316156a38d8306) (retrieved May 23, 2016).
- Al-Shuruq. 23 September 2012. حرب البيانات بين الكنيسة والجهة السلفية. Number 1331. Year 4. Page 3.
- Al-Shuruq. 25 September 2012. « ترسم خريطة المعارضة المصرية في الولايات المتحدة » الشروق. Number 1333. Year 4. Page 5.
- Al-Shuruq. 25 September 2012. أمن الدولة "تستدعي", أبو إسلام " المتهم بتمزيق الإنجيل, ". Number 1333. Year 4. Page 6.
- Al-Shuruq. 26 September 2012. إحالة "أبنة إسلام" وابنه للجنح بتهمة تمزيق الإنجيل. Number 1334. Year 4. Page 1.

Sky News. 17 September 2012. دعت الحكومة اللبنانية إلى اجتماع طارئ لمجلس وزراء الخارجية العرب لبحث أزمة الفيلم. Doi: <http://www.skynewsarabia.com/web/article/45627/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A1-%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

- Wafa PS. 13 September 2012. Doi: <http://www.wafa.ps/arabic/index.php?action=detail&id=138488> (retrieved July 18, 2014).
- Wafa PS. 13 September 2012. Doi: <http://www.wafa.ps/arabic/index.php?action=detail&id=138479> (retrieved July 18, 2014).
- Wafa PS. 19 September 2012. Doi: <http://www.wafa.ps/arabic/index.php?action=detail&id=138838> (retrieved July 18, 2014).
- Wafa PS. 25 September 2012. المؤتمر الإسلامي المسيحي يدعو رجال الدين والحاخامات اليهود لرفض الاعتداءات على المقدرات Doi: <http://www.wafa.ps/arabic/index.php?action=detail&id=139189> (retrieved July 18, 2016).

Al-Watan al-Arabi. 20 September 2012. إطلاق نار على مطعم "كي اف سي" في النبطية. Doi:  
<http://www.alwatanalarabi.com/index.php?url=news/display/article/11681> (retrieved March 4, 2016).

Watani. 11 September 2012. تظاهرات أمام السفارة الأمريكية لإدانة الفيلم المسيء للرسول. Doi:  
<http://www.wataninet.com/%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D9%85%D8%AA%D9%86%D9%88%D8%B9%D8%A9/%D8%AA%D8%B8%D8%A7%D9%87%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A3%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%83%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86/142794/> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Watani. 14 September 2012. إبريل بني سويف تؤكد علي وطنية المسيحيين وإخلاصهم وحبهم للوطن. Doi:  
<http://www.wataninet.com/%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%B8%D8%A7%D8%AA/6-%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%84-%D8%A8%D9%86%D9%8A-%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%8A%D9%81-%D8%AA%D8%A4%D9%83%D8%AF-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%8A-%D9%88%D8%B7%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%AD%D9%8A%D9%8A/142641/> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Watani. 15 September 2012. الأنبا غبريال : الفيلم المسيء لعبه صهيونية وأسلوب رخيص يهدف لبث الفرقة. Doi:  
<http://www.wataninet.com/%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1/%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%B3%D8%A9/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%86%D8%A8%D8%A7-%D8%BA%D8%A8%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A1-%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A8%D9%87-%D8%B5%D9%87%D9%8A%D9%88/85570/> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

Watani. 16 September 2012. المصريون "يدينون" الفيلم المسيء للرسول. Number 2647. Year 54/Number 613. Year 12. Page 9.

Watani. 16 September 2012. الكنائس المصرية تندد بالإساءة إلى الإسلام. Number 2647. Year 54/Number 613. Year 12. Page 1.

Watani. 16 September 2012. الفيلم المسيء للرسول .. صناعة خارجية لتقسيم الوطن. Number 2647. Year 54/Number 613. Year 12. Page 8.

Watani. 16 September 2012. مشاركة قبطية واسعة في مظاهرات رفض الفيلم المسيء للرسول بالمحافظة. Number 2647. Year 54/Number 613. Year 12. Page 1.

Watani. 23 September 2012. حزب البناء والتنمية. Number 2648. Year 54/Number 614. Year 12. Page 9.

Watani. 4 October 2012. محافظ السويس : المسلمون والمسيحيون نسيج واحد هدفهم الارتقاء بمصر. Doi:  
<http://www.wataninet.com/%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%B8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%AD%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%86%D8%B3%D9%8A/141208/> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Watani. 12 June 2013. الحكم بالسجن لايو إسلام 11 سنة ولاينه ثمان سنوات. Doi.

<http://www.wataninet.com/%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D9%85%D8%AA%D9%86%D9%88%D8%B9%D8%A9/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%85-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%AC%D9%86-%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%88-%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85-11-%D8%B3%D9%86%D8%A9-%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%86%D9%87-%D8%AB%D9%85/121024/> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 7 September 2012. عبد الوارث: الفيلم المسيء للرسول تحرش نصراني بتيار الإسلام السياسي. Doi:  
[http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/7/%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%AB--%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%89%D8%A1-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84-%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%B4-%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%89-%D8%A8%D8%AA%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%A7/778969#.VjI\\_Nm5OfVJ](http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/7/%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%AB--%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%89%D8%A1-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84-%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%B4-%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%89-%D8%A8%D8%AA%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%A7/778969#.VjI_Nm5OfVJ) (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 8 September 2012. الكنائس المصرية ترفض فيلماً يسيء للإسلام والرسول ويهاجمون صناعة.. الأنبا. Doi:  
[http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/8/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%B3\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9\\_%D8%AA%D8%B1%D9%81%D8%B6\\_%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85%D9%8B%D8%A7\\_%D9%8A%D8%B3%D9%89%D8%A1\\_%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84\\_%D9%88%D9%8A%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AC%D9%85%D9%88%D9%86\\_%D8%B5%D9%86/779002#.VjHqy25OfVJ](http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/8/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%B3_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9_%D8%AA%D8%B1%D9%81%D8%B6_%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85%D9%8B%D8%A7_%D9%8A%D8%B3%D9%89%D8%A1_%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84_%D9%88%D9%8A%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AC%D9%85%D9%88%D9%86_%D8%B5%D9%86/779002#.VjHqy25OfVJ) (retrieved May 21, 2016).

Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 8 September 2012. سياسيون ينتقدون صناعات الفيلم المسيء للرسول ويهاجمون القس المتطرف تيرى جونز وزقلمة وموريس صادق.. رضوان: لن نسمح لهم بإهانة الدين.. باسل عادل: الأديان السماوية خط أحمر.. السادات: هؤلاء دعاة فتنة وتقسيم. Doi:  
[http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/8/%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%86\\_%D9%8A%D](http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/8/%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%86_%D9%8A%D)



9%86%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%86\_%D8%B5%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%B9\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%89%D8%A1\_%D9%84%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84\_%D9%88%D9%8A%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AC%D9%85%D9%88%D9%86\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%B3\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AA/779069#.VjHXf25OfVJ (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 9 September 2012. نادر بكار: قرار البرلمان الهولندي تدخل غير مقبول في الشأن المصري. Doi:

<http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/9/%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%A8%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%B1--%D9%82%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%B1%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%87%D9%88%D9%84%D9%86%D8%AF%D9%89-%D8%AA%D8%AF%D8%AE%D9%84-%D8%BA%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D9%85%D9%82%D8%A8%D9%88%D9%84-%D9%81%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%A3%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84/779989#.VkGos15OfVJ> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 9 September 2012. أقباط المهجر يشعلون الفتنة بإنتاج فيلم مسيء للرسول .. سياسيون يهاجمون القس. «صادق» و«زقلمة» ويطالبون بالملاحقة القانونية للفيلم.. رضوان: المسيحيون المصريون قبل المسلمين ضد الفيلم. Doi: <http://www.youm7.com/story/0000/0/0/-/780136#.Vjhs7m5OfVI> (retrieved May 22, 2016).

Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 10 September 2012. التعرض للأنبياء والصحابة لا يمت لحرية الرأي بأية صلة. Doi:

<http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/10/%D8%A8%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%B1--%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%B6-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%86%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B5%D8%AD%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%A7-%D9%8A%D9%85%D8%AA-%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%A3%D9%89-%D8%A8%D8%A3%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%B5%D9%84%D8%A9/781106#.VkGvMF5OfVJ> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 10 September 2012. " يطالب بإسقاط الجنسية عن المتورطين بالفيلم المسيء للرسول". Doi:

<http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/10/%D8%A8%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D9%8A%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8-%D8%A8%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%B7-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%86%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%B9%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%B7%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%89%D8%A1-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84/781967#.VkGpWV5OfVJ> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 10 September 2012. Doi: "المعدانية": منتج الفيلم المسيء للإسلام لا يعبرون إلا عن أنفسهم".

<http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/10/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%85%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9--%D9%85%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%AC%D9%88-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%89%D8%A1-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85-%D9%84%D8%A7-%D9%8A%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%A5%D9%84%D8%A7-%D8%B9%D9%86-%D8%A3%D9%86%D9%81/781694#.Vjs2HF5OfVJ> (retrieved May 22, 2016).

Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 11 September 2012. انتفاضة المؤسسات الدينية ضد الفيلم المسيء للرسول.. "الأزهر": الداعون لإنتاجه هدفهم إشعال الفتنة.. "الإفتاء": ليس من الحرية ويمس أقدس رموز للمسلمين.. و"أقباط المهجر": ننبأ من موريس صادق وزقلمة

Doi: [http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/11/%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AA%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%B6%D8%A9\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%B3%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%AA\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9\\_%D8%B6%D8%AF\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%89%D8%A1\\_%D9%84%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B2%D9%87%D8%B1\\_\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF/782099#.VjDa3G5OfVJ](http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/11/%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AA%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%B6%D8%A9_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%B3%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%AA_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9_%D8%B6%D8%AF_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%89%D8%A1_%D9%84%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B2%D9%87%D8%B1__%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF/782099#.VjDa3G5OfVJ) (retrieved May 22, 2016).

Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 11 September 2012. الحركات القبطية تنقسم بشأن المشاركة في تظاهرات الفيلم المسيء للرسول.. "الإخوان المسيحيين": لسنا مطالبين بالتظاهر لتبرئة ساحتنا.. و"أقباط مصر وماسبيرو": نرفض شق الصف ونطالب بمحاكمة دولية للمسيئين Doi:

[http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/11/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%AA\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%A8%D8%B7%D9%8A%D8%A9\\_%D8%AA%D9%86%D9%82%D8%B3%D9%85\\_%D8%A8%D8%B4%D8%A3%D9%86\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A9\\_%D9%81%D9%89\\_%D8%AA%D8%B8%D8%A7%D9%87%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%89%D8%A1/782863#.Vjx7ZV5OfVJ](http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/11/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%AA_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%A8%D8%B7%D9%8A%D8%A9_%D8%AA%D9%86%D9%82%D8%B3%D9%85_%D8%A8%D8%B4%D8%A3%D9%86_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A9_%D9%81%D9%89_%D8%AA%D8%B8%D8%A7%D9%87%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%89%D8%A1/782863#.Vjx7ZV5OfVJ) (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 12 September 2012. بكار: قتل السفير الأمريكي بـ"بنى غازى" عمل إجرامى وبربرى. Doi:

<http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/12/%D8%A8%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%B1--%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%83%D9%89-%D8%A8%D9%80%D8%A8%D9%86%D9%89-%D8%BA%D8%A7%D8%B2%D9%89-%D8%B9%D9%85%D9%84-%D8%A5%D8%AC%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%89-%D9%88%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%A8%D8%B1%D9%89/784088#.VkGv-15OfVJ> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 13 September 2012. مطالب بشطب موريس صادق من نقابة المحامين.. مؤتمر "لا لإثارة الفتنة".

Doi: [http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/13/%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B1\\_%D9%84%D8%A7\\_%D9%84](http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/13/%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B1_%D9%84%D8%A7_%D9%84)

%D8%A5%D8%AB%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%A9\_%D9%8A%D8%B7%D8%B1%D8%AD\_%D9%88%D8%AB%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%A9\_%D9%84%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%AF%D9%89\_%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B2%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A1\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%A7%D9%86/784864#.VjszJF5OfVJ (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 13 September 2012. القمص "ساويرس" يتصل ببنادر بكار لحذف ما نشرته مواقع سلفية ضده. Doi:

<http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/13/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D9%85%D8%B5-%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%B3-%D9%8A%D8%AA%D8%B5%D9%84-%D8%A8%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%A8%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%B0%D9%81-%D9%85%D8%A7-%D9%86%D8%B4%D8%B1%D8%AA%D9%87-%D9%85%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%B9-%D8%B3%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%B6%D8%AF%D9%87/784996#.VjDYa25OfVJ> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 13 September 2012. بكار: قيادات سلفية تتوجه لاحتواء أحداث السفارة الأمريكية. Doi:

<http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/13/%D8%A8%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%B1--%D9%82%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%B3%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%AC%D9%87-%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%A3%D8%AD%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AB-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%83%D9%8A%D8%A9/785142#.VkgWgF5OfVJ> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 13 September 2012. مطالب بشطب موريس صادق من نقابة المحامين.. مؤتمر "لا لإثارة الفتنة". Doi:

Doi: يطرح وثيقة للتصدي لآزدرء الأديان

[http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/13/%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B1\\_%D9%84%D8%A7\\_%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%AB%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%A9\\_%D9%8A%D8%B7%D8%B1%D8%AD\\_%D9%88%D8%AB%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%A9\\_%D9%84%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%AF%D9%89\\_%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B2%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A1\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%A7%D9%86/784864#.VjszJF5OfVJ](http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/13/%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B1_%D9%84%D8%A7_%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%AB%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%A9_%D9%8A%D8%B7%D8%B1%D8%AD_%D9%88%D8%AB%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%A9_%D9%84%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%AF%D9%89_%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B2%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A1_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%A7%D9%86/784864#.VjszJF5OfVJ) (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 15 September 2012. ننشر أكبر ملف عنهم ونكشف مصادر تمويلهم.. رحلة أقباط المهجر من الرحيل

Doi: "إلى المؤامرة.. عقدوا سنة مؤتمرات وخططوا للتقسيم.. وانتهوا بالفيلم المسيء.. و"زقلمة وموريس.. الرئيس المزعوم والشيطان

[http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/15/%D9%86%D9%86%D8%B4%D8%B1\\_%D8%A3%D9%83%D8%A8%D8%B1\\_%D9%85%D9%84%D9%81\\_%D8%B9%D9%86%D9%87%D9%85\\_%D9%88%D9%86%D9%83%D8%B4%D9%81\\_%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1\\_%D8%AA%D9%85%D9%88%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%87%D9%85\\_%D8%B1%D8%AD%D9%84%D8%A9\\_%D8%A3%D9%82%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B7\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%87%D8%AC%D8%B1\\_%D9%85%D9%86\\_/786353#.VjJGxG5OfVJ](http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/15/%D9%86%D9%86%D8%B4%D8%B1_%D8%A3%D9%83%D8%A8%D8%B1_%D9%85%D9%84%D9%81_%D8%B9%D9%86%D9%87%D9%85_%D9%88%D9%86%D9%83%D8%B4%D9%81_%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1_%D8%AA%D9%85%D9%88%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%87%D9%85_%D8%B1%D8%AD%D9%84%D8%A9_%D8%A3%D9%82%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B7_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%87%D8%AC%D8%B1_%D9%85%D9%86_/786353#.VjJGxG5OfVJ) (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 15 September 2012. صفوت حجازي لـ "حصاد الأسبوع": مرسي سيطبق الشريعة الإسلامية.. شرف

Doi: للمجلس القومي لحقوق الإنسان أن أكون عضوا به.. عاطفتي تدفعني لقتل موريس صادق

<http://www.youm7.com/story/0000/0/0/-/786326#.VjIzK25OfVI> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Yawm al-Sabi. 17 September 2012. في مؤتمر "الإرسول الله".. عضو تأسيسية الدستور: الإساءة لن تكون الأخيرة..

رئيس حركة أقباط من أجل مصر: موريس صادق يسئ لنا.. نائب رئيس هيئة قضايا الدولة: الغضب نصرته النبي لا تكون بالتعدى

Doi: على الأمن

[http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/19/%D9%81%D9%89\\_%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B1\\_%D8%A5%D9%84%D8%A7\\_%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%87\\_%D8%B9%D8%B6%D9%88\\_%D8%AA%D8%A3%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A9\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%B1\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%A1%D8%A9\\_%D9%84%D9%86\\_%D8%AA%D9%83%D9%88%D9%86\\_/790366#.Vkrh-l5OfVJ](http://www.youm7.com/story/2012/9/19/%D9%81%D9%89_%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B1_%D8%A5%D9%84%D8%A7_%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%87_%D8%B9%D8%B6%D9%88_%D8%AA%D8%A3%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A9_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%B1_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%A1%D8%A9_%D9%84%D9%86_%D8%AA%D9%83%D9%88%D9%86_/790366#.Vkrh-l5OfVJ) (retrieved May 23, 2016).

YouTube. 9 September 2012. مناظرة وسام عيد الوارث وجمال أسعد الفيلم المسيء للرسول. Doi:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sqhRj3ArQRQ> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

YouTube. 15 September 2012a. الشيخ يوسف ابو عبيد في التظاهرة الاحتجاجية بحق الرسول عليه السلام. Doi:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0kjc94x4rSw> (retrieved May 16, 2016);

YouTube. 15 September 2012b. كلمة الرئيس ناهض خازم في التظاهرة الاحتجاجية بحق الإساءة للرسول. Doi:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oVt0GbbBZs4> (retrieved May 16, 2016);

YouTube. 15 September 2012c. كلمة النائب محمد بركة في التظاهرة الاحتجاجية للإساءة للرسول عليه السلام. Doi:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZ40KovCWGc> (retrieved May 16, 2016);

YouTube. 15 September 2012d. كلمة القس فؤاد داغر في التظاهرة الاحتجاجية للإساءة للرسول عليه السلام. Doi:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H5DTrsIE62g> (retrieved May 16, 2016);

YouTube. 15 September 2012e. الاب بسام الدير في التظاهرة الاحتجاجية للإساءة للرسول عليه السلام. Doi:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZI\\_QbWqJw4Q#t=60](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZI_QbWqJw4Q#t=60) (retrieved May 16, 2016).

YouTube. 17 September 2012a. كلمة نصر الله عن الفيلم المسيء للرسول (ص). Doi:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EjGIC1LbZHE> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Youtube. 17 September 2012b. السيد حسن نصرالله: مسيرة الولاء للنبي محمد (ص). Doi:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Tv8YGVZycY> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

YouTube. 22 September 2012. 2012 09 21 I انتصاراً للنبي الإسلام . Doi:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EPetsalWSgQ> (retrieved May 17, 2016).  
Youtube. 23 September 2012. 2012 09 21 الأستاذ فريد الدكان . Doi:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TqcBCpE7oVw> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Zaman. 21 September 2012. أقباط مصر بين معركة حقوقهم وتداعيات الفيلم المسيء . Doi:  
<http://www.azzaman.com/?p=14174> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Zenit. 20 September 2012. الاساقفة اللاتين يستنكرون بقوة الفيلم المسيء للإسلام ويدعون لمعاقبة المسؤولين عنه . Doi:  
<https://ar.zenit.org/articles/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%82%D9%81%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%8A%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%86%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%A8%D9%82%D9%88%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A1-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85-%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%B9%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%A8%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D8%A4%D9%88%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%B9%D9%86%D9%87>  
(retrieved October 3, 2013).

Zenit. 28 September 2012. المطران عصام يوحنا درويش في تقييم لزيارة قداسة البابا الى لبنان: الزيارة ناجحة أكثر مما كنا نتصور . Doi:  
<http://www.zenit.org/ar/articles/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B7%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%B9%D8%B5%D8%A7%D9%85-%D9%8A%D9%88%D8%AD%D9%86%D8%A7-%D8%AF%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%B4-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%AA%D9%82%D9%8A%D9%8A%D9%85-%D9%84%D8%B2%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D9%82%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%A7-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%89-%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B2%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%AD%D8%A9-%D8%A3%D9%83%D8%AB%D8%B1-%D9%85%D9%85%D8%A7-%D9%83%D9%86%D8%A7-%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%B5%D9%88%D8%B1> (retrieved October 6, 2013).

### Primary Sources in English

Ahram Online. 14 September 2012. In letter to New York Times, Egypt Brotherhood's Shater voices sorrow for slain US diplomats. Doi:  
<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContentPrint/1/0/52873/Egypt/0/In-letter-to-NYTimes,-Egypt-Brotherhoods-Shater-vo.aspx> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Akhbar English. 21 September 2012. Salafi leader draws over 1,000 at Beirut rally. Doi:  
<http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/salafi-leader-draws-over-1000-beirut-rally> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Akhbar English. 21 September 2012. A "day of rage" spreads across Lebanon. Doi:  
<http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/day-rage-spreads-across-lebanon> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

BBC. 13 September 2012. Obama: Egypt is not US ally, nor an enemy. Doi:  
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-19584265> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

The Guardian. 11 September 2012. Protests in Cairo and Benghazi over American film. Doi:  
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/sep/11/egypt-protest> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

The Guardian. 12 September 2012. Muhammad film: director goes into hiding after protests. Doi:  
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/sep/12/ant-islam-israeli-film-protests?INTCMP=SRCH>  
(retrieved May 2, 2016).

The Guardian. 12 September 2012. Mystery surrounds 'Sam Bacile', maker of controversial anti-Muhammad film. Doi:  
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/sep/12/mystery-sam-bacile-innocence-muslims?INTCMP=SRCH> (retrieved May 2, 2016).

The Guardian. 13 September 2012. Anti-Islamic film search leads to Coptic Christian in California. Doi:  
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/sep/13/anti-islamic-film-us-nakoula?INTCMP=SRCH>  
(retrieved May 2, 2016).

Haaretz. 5 September 2012. Monastery near Jerusalem torched; Catholics blame Israeli 'hatred.' Number 28380. Volume 92. Pages 1 and 2.

Haaretz. 14 September 2012. Jerusalem police brace for protests over anti-Islam movie. Number 28386. Volume 92. Page.

Al-Jazeera. 15 September 2012. Who is Nakoula Basseley Nakoula? Doi: <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2012/09/2012915181925528211> (retrieved May 2, 2016).

Los Angeles Times. 13 September 2012. Christian charity, ex-con linked to film on Islam. Doi: <http://articles.latimes.com/2012/sep/13/local/la-me-filmmaker-20120914> (retrieved May 2, 2016).

The New York Times. 12 September 2012. Origins of Provocative Video Are Shrouded. Doi: <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/13/world/middleeast/origins-of-provocative-video-shrouded.html?ref=innocenceofmuslimsriots> (retrieved May 2, 2016).

The New York Times. 12 September 2012. Updates on Rage Over Anti-Islam Film. Doi: <http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/09/12/latest-updates-on-rage-over-anti-islam-film/> (retrieved May 2, 2016).

The New York Times. 13 September 2012. Man of Many Names Is Tied to a Video. Doi: [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/14/us/origins-of-provocative-video-are-shrouded.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/14/us/origins-of-provocative-video-are-shrouded.html?_r=0) (retrieved May 2, 2016).

RT. 13 September 2012/October 2012. Law enforcement confirms convicted fraudster behind anti-Muslim movie. Doi: <https://www.rt.com/usa/nakoula-confirmed-anti-muslim-movie-063/> (retrieved May 2, 2016).

RT. 21 September 2012. Muslim fury: LIVE anti-US protest timeline (PHOTOS). Doi: <https://www.rt.com/news/anti-american-protests-live-updates-053/> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

### **Primary Sources in French**

Al-Ahram Hebdo. 19-25 September 2012. Morsi ne sait pas sur quel pied danser. Number 940. Year 18. Page 6.

L'Orient Le Jour. 14 September 2012. De Bkerke, Siniora remercie le pape and dénonce le "meutre d'innocents" après le film scandale. Number 13553. Page 2.

L'Orient le Jour. 14 September 2012. Sleiman condamne le film sur le Prophète et les réactions inacceptables qui ont suivi. Number 13553. Page 3.

L'Orient le Jour. 15 September 2012. Dénonciation politique des "objectifs douteux" du film, mais aussi des violences. Number 13554. Page 5.

L'Orient le Jour. 18 September 2012. Geagea: Le Hezbollah n'est pas prêt au dialogue et utilise le film islamophobe pour se créer la dimension politique qu'il espère. Number 13557. Page 3.

L'Orient le Jour. 18 September 2012. Mikati favorable à des mesures internationales pour déjouer les plans à l'origine du film. Number 13557. Page 4.

L'Orient Le Jour. 22 September 2012. Cheikh Hammoud appelle, de Saida, au meurtre des acteurs du film islamophobe. Number 13561. Page 4.

Le Monde. 20 September 2012. Dans la diaspora copte, des extrémistes minoritaires mais très actifs.

Doi:

[https://univpn.univie.ac.at/+CSCO+10756767633A2F2F6A6A6A2E79726B766661726B76662E70627A3A3830++/de/business/results/docview/docview.do?start=35&sort=BOOLEAN&format=GNBFULL&risb=21\\_T17466346303](https://univpn.univie.ac.at/+CSCO+10756767633A2F2F6A6A6A2E79726B766661726B76662E70627A3A3830++/de/business/results/docview/docview.do?start=35&sort=BOOLEAN&format=GNBFULL&risb=21_T17466346303) (retrieved May 24, 2013).

### **Primary Sources with an Author**

14 March. 18 September 2012. "الفيلم المسيء للإسلام" في خدمة النظام السوري. Doi: <http://14march.org/news-details.php?nid=NDAwMTQ3> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

- Arab West Report. 12 September 2012. Hatemongers, deliberately inciting hate and misinformed politicians. Doi: <http://arabwestreport.info/en/year-2012/week-37/42-hatemongers-deliberately-inciting-hate-and-misinformed-politicians> (retrieved May 23, 2016).
- Arab West Report. 15 September 2012. عبد الغفور في خطبة الجمعة بالاسكندرية : حرق البعض للإنجيل تصرف غير محسوب ومحرم. Al-Shuruq al-Jadir. Doi: <http://arabwestreport.info/ar/lsn-2012/lsbw-37/76-bd-lgfwr-f-khtb-ljm-blskndry-hrq-lbd-llnjyl-tsrf-gyr-mhswb-wmhrm> (retrieved January 29, 2016).
- Arab West Report. 17 September 2012. أسقف بنى مزار يعتذر للمسلمين عن الإساءة مؤكدا مخالفتها لسماحة المسيحية. Al-Shuruq al-Jadid. Doi: <http://www.arabwestreport.info/ar/lsn-2012/lsbw-37/73-sqf-bn-mzr-ytdhr-llmslmyn-n-ls-mwkd-mkhlft-h-lsmh-lmsyhy> (retrieved May 23, 2016).
- Bayt al-Aila. 16 September 2012. بيان بيت العائلة المصرية بخصوص الفيلم المسيء للنبي الكريم. Doi: [http://aymanamerprees.blogspot.co.at/2012/09/blog-post\\_16.html](http://aymanamerprees.blogspot.co.at/2012/09/blog-post_16.html) (retrieved May 23, 2016).
- Bkerki. 24 September 2012. بيان القمة الروحية بترك - الثاني 24 ايلول 2012. Doi: [http://www.bkerkelb.org/arabic/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1714:-----24--2012-&catid=263:2011-09-07-08-04-38&Itemid=66](http://www.bkerkelb.org/arabic/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1714:-----24--2012-&catid=263:2011-09-07-08-04-38&Itemid=66) (retrieved December 9, 2013).
- Blumenthal, Max. 13 September 2012. Inside the strange Hollywood scam that spread chaos across the Middle East. The Guardian. Doi: <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/sep/13/egypt-libya-hollywood-film> (retrieved May 2, 2016).
- Buṭrus, Zakariyā. 2009. Les épouses du Messenger. Episode 39. NotreDamedeKabylie.net & jesusmarie.com. Doi: [http://jesusmarie.free.fr/islam\\_zakaria\\_boutros\\_39\\_femmes\\_du\\_messenger.html](http://jesusmarie.free.fr/islam_zakaria_boutros_39_femmes_du_messenger.html) (retrieved May 3, 2016).
- Buṭrus, Zakariyā. 2009. Les preuves de la Révélation dans l'Islam et dans le Christianisme. Episode 28. NotreDamedeKabylie.net & jesusmarie.com. Doi: [http://jesusmarie.free.fr/islam\\_zakaria\\_boutros\\_28.html](http://jesusmarie.free.fr/islam_zakaria_boutros_28.html) (retrieved May 3, 2016).
- Buṭrus, Zakariyā. September 2012. Fr Zakaria Statement concerning his relationship to the making of Mohamed movie. Doi: <http://www.fatherzakaria.net/main/fr-zakaria-mohamed-movie.htm> (retrieved May 3, 2016).
- Buṭrus, Zakariyā. ? Mohammed confronté aux grands principes de la morale, et l'assassinat de ses adversaires. Episode 37. NotreDamedeKabylie.net & jesusmarie.com. Doi: [http://jesusmarie.free.fr/islam\\_zakaria\\_boutros\\_37\\_Mohamed\\_et\\_ses\\_adversaires.html](http://jesusmarie.free.fr/islam_zakaria_boutros_37_Mohamed_et_ses_adversaires.html) (retrieved May 3, 2016).
- Casper, Jayson 2012b. A Sense of Belonging. 11 September 2012. Salafis, Muslim Youth Protest anti-Muhammad Film at US Embassy. Doi: <http://asenseofbelonging.org/2012/09/11/salafis-muslim-youth-protest-anti-muhammad-film-at-us-embassy/> (retrieved May 23, 2016).
- Coptic Catholic Patriarchate. 11 September 2012. بيان الكنيسة الكاثوليكية بشأن ما تنشره وسائل الإعلام عن ظهور فيلم يسىء للاسلام. Doi: <http://copticatholic.net/p12776/> (retrieved May 22, 2016).
- Daw, Antoine. 22 September 2012. مسيحيون ومسلمون معاً ضد الإساءة إلى الأديان. *Al-Safir*. Number 12290. Year 39. Page 4.
- Al-Dawa al-Salafiyya. 11 September 2012. بيان من "الدعوة السلفية" بشأن الفيلم المسيء "الرسول الله" - صلى الله عليه وسلم. Doi: <http://www.anasafy.com/play.php?catsmktba=35834> (retrieved May 23, 2016).
- Fadhallah, Ali. 24 September 2012. أسمى من الأحقاد. *Al-Safir*. Number 12291. Year 39. Page 4.
- Ferzli, Elie. 26 September 2012. Elie Ferzli Blog. Doi: [http://elieferzli.blogspot.co.at/2012\\_09\\_01\\_archive.html](http://elieferzli.blogspot.co.at/2012_09_01_archive.html) (retrieved May 17, 2016).
- Gemayel, Nadim. ? MP. Nadim Gemayel visits Metropolitan Elias Audi النائب نديم الجميل بعد زيارة المطران عوده. Doi: <http://www.nadimgemayel.com/newsInformation.asp?NewsId=432> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Gomaa, Ali. 18 September 2012. Egypt's mufti: To Muslims, prophet Muhammad is 'the mercy to all worlds'. *Washington Post*. Doi: <http://www.faithstreet.com/onfaith/2012/09/18/prophet-muhammad-is-the-mercy-to-all-worlds-to-muslims-egypts-mufti/10018> (retrieved May 22, 2016).

Greek Catholic Patriarchate. 13 September 2012. البطريرك غريغوريوس الثالث. احترام إيمان الآخر، بيان تنديد بالفيلم المسيء للإسلام. Doi: <http://www.pgc-lb.org/ara/gregorios/view/Respect-for-the-faith-of-others-Condemnation-of-the-film-defamatory-to-Islam> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Institut d'Études Islamo-Chrétiennes, Université Saint-Joseph. 2014. *Déclarations communes islamo-chrétiennes*. "Études et documents islamo-chrétiens," Number 16, Beirut, Page 263.

Jordanian Government. لمعالى الدكتور عبد السلام العبادى السيرة الذاتية. Doi: [http://www.pm.gov.jo/arabic/index.php?page\\_type=photo\\_gallery&part=1&catid=6&image\\_id=61](http://www.pm.gov.jo/arabic/index.php?page_type=photo_gallery&part=1&catid=6&image_id=61) (retrieved September 10, 2015).

Khodr, George. 29 September 2012. الحملة على الإسلام. *Al-Nahar*. Number 24863. Year 80. Pages 1 and 12.

Latin Patriarchate. 20 September 2012. بيان صادر عن مؤتمر أساقفة اللاتين في الدول العربية ومجلس رؤساء الكنائس الكاثوليك في الأراضي المقدسة. Doi: <http://ar.lpj.org/2012/09/20/%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%B9%D9%86-%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B1-%D8%A3%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%82%D9%81%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84/> (retrieved May, 16 2016).

Moqawama. 13 September 2012. إدانات واسعة في لبنان للفيلم المسيء للنبي محمد(ص) والإسلام. Doi: <http://www.moqawama.org/essaydetails.php?eid=26394&cid=199#.Vhzwam6ZTIV> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Mustaqbal. 23 September 2012. مزيد من المسيرات والمواقف المنددة بالتطاول على الإسلام. لقاء ديني إسلامي - مسيحي رفضاً للفيلم المسيء في بيبين. Doi: <http://almustaqbal.com/v4/Article.aspx?Type=np&Articleid=539975> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Nour. 2012. الدورة التاسعة والأربعون للمجمع الأنطاكي المقدس. Number 7. Year 68. Pages 384-385.

Noursat. 19 September 2012. رابطة الروم الكاثوليك استنكرت الفيلم المسيء الى المسلمين. Doi: <http://www.noursat.tv/ar/news-details.php?cid=13&id=4038> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Ortho News. 19 September 2012. بيان صادر عن مطرانية الروم الأرثوذكس. Doi: <http://www.jordanorthodoxchurch.org/ar/node/1752> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

Al-Rabita al-Marouniya. 13 September 2012. بيان صدر عن الرابطة المارونية البيان الآتي. Beirut. Doi: <http://maronite-league.org/%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%AA/%D8%AA%D8%A8%D8%AF%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%B7%D8%A9-%D8%A5%D8%B1%D8%AA%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AD%D9%87%D8%A7-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%8A-%D8%A5/> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Sadek, Moris. Twitter. Doi: <https://twitter.com/morrissadek/status/244998938401308672> (retrieved May 2, 2016).

El-Shater, Khairat. 13 September 2012. 'Our Condolences,' the Muslim Brotherhood Says. *The New York Times*. Doi: [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/14/opinion/our-condolences-the-muslim-brotherhood-says.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/14/opinion/our-condolences-the-muslim-brotherhood-says.html?_r=1) (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Swayd, Hanna. 21 September 2012. الدفاع عن الاسلام والعروبة: ليس مهمة المسلمين وحدهم. Al-Ittihad. Malhaq al-Jum'a. Pages 4-5.

Tajamo. 13 September 2012. Doi: "تجمع العلماء المسلمين" زار المفتي الجعفري الشيخ أحمد قبلان. <http://tajamo.net/tajamon/acts/115> (retrieved April 22, 2014).

Tajamo. 13 September 2012. Doi: "وفد" "تجمع العلماء المسلمين" زار المفتي الجعفري الشيخ أحمد قبلان. <http://tajamo.net/tajamon/acts/115> (retrieved April 22, 2014).

Tajamo. 13 September 2012. Doi: "تجمع العلماء يلتقى سماحة الشيخ عبد الأمير قبلان". <http://tajamo.net/tajamon/acts/116> (retrieved April 22, 2014).

Tajamo. 26 September 2012. Doi: "لقاء تشاوري اسلامي مسيحي للبحث في الإساءة للرسول محمد (ص)". <http://tajamo.net/tajamon/acts/124> (retrieved April 22, 2014).

Al-Tawhid. 13. September 2012. لبنان: سلسلة واسعة من المواقف المنددة من الأحزاب والجمعيات والشخصيات الإسلامية. Doi: "المسيحية والوطنية بالإساءة للنبي محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم". <http://www.altawhid.org/2012/09/13/%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%82%D9%81-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%86%D8%AF%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D9%85/> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Tawhid. 14 September 2012. Doi: "الشيخ الشاعر دان الفيوم المسيء للاسلام وطالب بسحبه/ الشيخ حمود: ردات الفعل الطبيعية التي طالت السفارات الاميركية في العالم العربي كانت هبة رباتية". <http://www.altawhid.org/2012/09/14/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D9%8A%D8%AE-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A6-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7/> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Tawhid. 17 September 2012. Doi: "مواقف لعلماء ولجان وجمعيات واحزاب في لبنان منددة بالفيلم المسيء للاسلام". <http://www.altawhid.org/2012/09/17/%D9%85%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%82%D9%81-%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D9%88%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%88%D8%AC%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%84/> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Tawhid. 18 September 2012. Doi: "تواصل المواقف المنددة والغضب في المجتمع المدني والسياسي في لبنان جراء بث الفيلم المسيء للاسلام". <http://www.altawhid.org/2012/09/18/%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B5%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%82%D9%81-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%86%D8%AF%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A1/> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Tawhid. 20 September 2012. Doi: "سلسلة واسعة من المواقف لنواب ووزراء وسفراء وشخصيات وهيئات واحزاب في لبنان". <http://www.altawhid.org/2012/09/20/%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%82%D9%81-%D9%84%D9%86%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D9%88%D8%B2%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D9%88%D8%B3/> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Tawhid. 22 September 2012. Doi: "تواصل المواقف المستنكرة للإساءة الغربية للاسلام في لبنان: أئمة المساجد وقوى واحزاب". <http://www.altawhid.org/2012/09/22/%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B5%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%82%D9%81-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%86%D9%83%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%A1%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%BA%D8%B1/> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Tawhid. 22 September 2012. Doi: "لقاء تضامني في عكار ندد بالفيلم المسيء الى الرسول: للتمسك بالوحدة والعروبة الجامعة". <http://www.altawhid.org/2012/09/22/%D9%84%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%AA%D8%B6%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%86%D9%8A-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%B9%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D9%86%D8%AF%D8%AF-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A1/> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Tawhid. 29 September 2012. Doi: "السنيرة: لا شيء يبرر قتل السفير الاميركي في ليبيا... نودة في الهرمل تنديدا". <http://www.altawhid.org/2012/09/29/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%86%D9%8A%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%A7-%D8%B4%D9%8A%D8%A1-%D9%8A%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%B1-%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A/> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Tawhid. 29 September 2012. Doi: "كلمة للنائب سكرية". <http://www.altawhid.org/2012/09/29/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%86%D9%8A%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%A7-%D8%B4%D9%8A%D8%A1-%D9%8A%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%B1-%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A/> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Tawhid. 29 September 2012. Doi: "كلمة للنائب سكرية". <http://www.altawhid.org/2012/09/29/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%86%D9%8A%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%A7-%D8%B4%D9%8A%D8%A1-%D9%8A%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%B1-%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A/> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Tawhid. 29 September 2012. Doi: "كلمة للنائب سكرية". <http://www.altawhid.org/2012/09/29/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%86%D9%8A%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%A7-%D8%B4%D9%8A%D8%A1-%D9%8A%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%B1-%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A/> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Tawhid. 29 September 2012. Doi: "كلمة للنائب سكرية". <http://www.altawhid.org/2012/09/29/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%86%D9%8A%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%A7-%D8%B4%D9%8A%D8%A1-%D9%8A%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%B1-%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A/> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Tawhid. 29 September 2012. Doi: "كلمة للنائب سكرية". <http://www.altawhid.org/2012/09/29/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%86%D9%8A%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%A7-%D8%B4%D9%8A%D8%A1-%D9%8A%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%B1-%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A/> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

## Secondary Sources: Monographies and Journals

Alon, Y. 2009. *The Making of Jordan. Tribes, Colonialism and the Modern State*. London, New York: I.B. Tauris.

Anderson, B. 2005. *Nationalist Voices in Jordan. The Street and the State*. Austin: University of Texas.

al-Attiyat, I.; Shteivi, M.; Sweiss, S. 2005. *Building democracy in Jordan: Women's Political Participation, Political Party life and Democratic Elections*. Stockholm: International IDEA, Beirut: Arab NGO Network for Development.

Aubin-Boltanski, E. 2012. "Samir Geagea: le Guerrier, le martyr et le *za'im*." In Mermier, F.; Mervin, S. (ed.) *Leaders et Partisans au Liban*. Paris: Karthala, IFPO, ISSMM.

Awwad, J. 2009. "Who is my God and Who is my Neighbour? A Response to "A Common Word Between Us and You"." In *NEST Theological Review*. 30:1, 78-88.

Al-Azhar. 1971. *The Fifth Conference of the Academy of Islamic Research*. Cairo: General Organization for Government Printing.

Bishoy, Metropolitan. 2005. "Revival of the Egyptian Church since the Middle of the Nineteenth Century." In Badr, H. (ed.). *Christianity. A History in the Middle East*. Beirut: MECC.

Boulby, M. 1999. *The Muslim Brotherhood and the Kings of Jordan 1945-1993*. Atlanta: Scholars Press.

Carey, J. (ed.) 2001. *The New Intifada. Resisting Israel's Apartheid*. London, New York: Verso.

Casper, J. 2011. "Interview with the Maspero Youth Union." September 29. *A sense of Belonging*. Doi: <http://asenseofbelonging.org/2011/09/29/interview-with-the-maspero-youth-union/> (retrieved June 1 2016).

-2012a. "How MB-Evangelical Dialogue Began." May 31. *A Sense of Belonging*. Doi: <http://asenseofbelonging.org/2012/05/31/how-mb-evangelical-dialogue-began/> (retrieved June 1 2016).

-2012c. "Solemn Ceremony and Contentious Politics Surround the Papal Throne." November 20. *A Sense of Belonging*. Doi: <https://asenseofbelonging.org/2012/11/20/solemn-ceremony-and-contentious-politics-surround-the-papal-throne/> (retrieved June 1 2016).

-2013. "Mapping the Coptic Movements. Coptic Activism in a Revolutionary Setting." May 11. *Arab West Report*. Doi: <http://www.arabwestreport.info/sites/default/files/pdfs/AWRpapers/paper44.pdf> (retrieved June 1 2016).

-2014. "Coptic activist dissolves movement ahead of Sisi's electoral triumph. June 4. *Lapido Media*. Doi: <http://www.lapidomedia.com/node/4284> (retrieved June 1 2016).

Chatelard, G. 2004. *Briser la mosaïque. Les tribus chrétiennes de Madaba, Jordanie, XIX-XXe siècles*. Paris: CNRS.

-2009. "Les chrétiens en Jordanie, dynamiques identitaires et gestion du pluralisme." *Les Cahiers de l'Orient*, 41-56.

Chaoul, M. 2012. "Zahlé: de la *za'ama* nationale à la *za'ama* dépendante." In Mermier, F. ; Mervin, S. (ed.) *Leaders et Partisans au Liban*. Paris: Karthala, IFPO, ISSMM.

Corbon, J. 1997, 2007. *L'Église des Arabes*. Paris: Cerf.



- Corm, G. 1969. *Contribution à l'étude des sociétés multi-confessionnelles. Effets socio-juridiques et politiques du pluralisme religieux*. Paris: Université de Paris, Ph.D. thesis.
- 1992. *Conflits et identités au Moyen-Orient (1919-1991)*. Paris: Arcantère.
- 2003. *Le Liban contemporain*. Paris: La Découverte.
- Daher, A. 2012. "Le Hezbollah face aux clans et aux grandes familles de la Bekaa-Nord: les élections municipales de 2004 dans la ville de Baalbek." In Mermier, F. ; Mervin, S. (ed.) *Leaders et Partisans au Liban*. Paris: Karthala, IFPO, ISSMM.
- Dana, N. 2003. *The Druze in the Middle East. Their Faith, Leadership, Identity, Status*. Brighton: Sussex Academia Press.
- De Clerck, D. 2008. "La Montagne: un espace de partage et de rupture." In Mermier, F. (ed.) *Liban: espaces partagés et pratiques de rencontre*. Paris, Beirut: Ifpo.
- Dietrich, R. 1999. *Transformation oder Stagnation? Die jordanische Demokratisierungspolitik seit 1989*. Hamburg: Deutsches Orient Institut.
- Douayhi, C. 2012. "Réflexions autour de la za'ama Maronite au Liban-Nord." In Mermier, F. ; Mervin, S. (ed.) *Leaders et Partisans au Liban*. Paris: Karthala, IFPO, ISSMM.
- Dumper, M. 1994. *Islam and Israel: Muslim Religious Endowments and the Jewish State*. Washington, D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies.
- Elsässer, S. 2014. *The Coptic Question in the Mubarak Era*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- El-Husseini, R. 2012. *Pax Syriana. Elite Politics in Postwar Lebanon*. New York: Syracuse University Press.
- Faschinger, N. 2014. *Zur Wahrnehmung des Christentums in Jordanien*. Vienna: University of Vienna, Master's thesis.
- Fleyfel, A. 2011. *La théologie contextuelle arabe. Modèle libanais*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- 2013. *Géopolitique des Chrétiens d'Orient. Défis et avenir des chrétiens arabes*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Gandolfo, L. 2012. *Palestinians in Jordan. The Politics of Identity*. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Gervais, V. 2006. *La crise d'une communauté: les sunnites libanais après la mort de Rafiq Hariri*. Paris: IEP Paris, Master's thesis.
- 2012. "L'ascension politique de Rafic Hariri: ampleur et limite de l'émergence d'un leadership sunnite unifié." In Mermier, F.; Mervin, S. (ed.) *Leaders et Partisans au Liban*. Paris: Karthala, IFPO, ISSMM.
- Guirguis, L. 2012 *Les Coptes d'Égypte: Violences communautaires et transformations politiques (2005-2012)*. Paris: Paris, Karthala.
- Hasan, S.S. 2003. *Christians versus Muslims in Modern Egypt. The Century-long Struggle for Coptic Equality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hager, A. 2016. "Lebanon is more than a Nation, more than a Country. It is a Message." Lebanon as a Model of Christian-Muslim Relations." In *Journal of Beliefs and Values* (not published yet).
- Henley, A.D.M. 2008. "Politics of a Church at War: Maronite Catholicism in the Lebanese Civil War." *Mediterranean Politics*, 13:3, 353-369.

- Hermann, K. 2000. *Aufbruch von Unten. Möglichkeiten und Grenzen von NGOs in Jordanien*. Hamburg: Lit.
- Heyberger, B. 1994. *Les Chrétiens du Proche-Orient au temps de la réforme catholique*. Rome: Ecole française de Rome.
- 2003. "Alep, capitale chrétienne (XVIIe-XIXe siècle)." In Heyberger, B. (ed.) *Chrétiens du monde arabe: un archipel en terre d'Islam*. Paris: Autrement.
- 2013. *Les chrétiens au Proche-Orient. De la compassion à la compréhension*. Paris: Manuels Payot.
- Hoyland, R. 1997. *Seeing Islam as Others saw it: a Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam*. Princeton: Darwin Press.
- Hroub, K. 2000. *Hamas: Political Thought and Practice*. Washington D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies.
- Ibrahim, V. 2013. *The Copts of Egypt. The Challenges of Modernisation and Identity*. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Ignatius IV. Hazim. 2005. "Christianity in Ummayyad Era." In Badr, H. (ed) *Christianity. A History in the Middle East*. Beirut: MECC.
- Iskander, E. 2012. "The "Mediation" of Christian-Muslim Relations in Egypt: The Strategies and Discourses of official Egyptian Press during Mubarak's Presidency." In *Islam & Christian-Muslim Relations*. 23:1, 31-44.
- Kårtveit, B. H. 2014. *Dilemmas of Attachment. Identity and Belonging among Palestinian Christians*. Leiden: Brill.
- Kassir, S. 1994. *La guerre du Liban. De la dissension nationale au conflit régional*. Paris: Karthala.
- Katz, K. 2005. *Jordanian Jerusalem: Holy Places and National Spaces*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.
- El-Khawaga, D. 1992. "L'affirmation d'une identité chrétienne copte. Saisir un processus en cours." In Décobert, C. (ed.) 1992. *Itinéraires d'Égypte. Mélanges offerts au père Maurice Martin, s.j.* Cairo : Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire.
- Kelly, T. 2006. *Law, Violence and Sovereignty among West Bank Palestinians*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Khoury, A.T. 1972. *Polémiques byzantines contre l'Islam (VIII.-XIII.e siècles)*. Leiden: Brill.
- Khoury, R. 1993. *Das Palästinensische Christentum. Erfahrungen und Perspektiven*. Trier: Kleine Schriftenreihe, 7.
- Knudsen, A.; Kerr, M. (ed.) 2012. *Lebanon after the Cedar Revolution*. London: Hurst.
- Krämer, G. 1995. "Dhimmi ou citoyen. Réflexions réformistes sur le statut des non-musulmans en société islamique." In Roussillon, A. 1995. *Entre réforme sociale et mouvement national. Identité et modernisation en Égypte (1882- 1962)*. Actes du colloques "Reforme sociale en Égypte" 10-13/12/1992. Cairo: Institut Français d'archéologie.
- Labévière, R. 2009. *La tuerie d'Ehden ou la maldédiction des Arabes chrétiens*. Paris: Fayard.
- Lacroix, S. 2012. "Sheikhs and Politicians: Inside the New Egyptian Salafism." Brookings Doha Center. Doi: <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2012/6/07-egyptian-salafism-lacroix/stephane-lacroix-policy-briefing-english.pdf> (retrieved June 1, 2016).

Lahham, M. 2012. "Called by Destiny, not by Chance." December. *OASIS*. Number 16. Year 8. Pages 92-96.

Louër, L. 2007. *To be an Arab in Israel*. London: Hurst.

Luizard, P.-J. 1995. "Al-Azhar. Institution Sunnite réformée." In Roussillon, A. 1995. *Entre réforme sociale et mouvement national. Identité et modernisation en Egypte (1882- 1962)*. Actes du colloque "Reforme sociale en Egypte" 10-13/12/1992. Cairo: Institut Français d'archéologie.

Makdisi, U. 2000. *The Culture of Sectarianism. Community, History and Violence in Nineteenth Century Ottoman Lebanon*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: California University Press.

Maier, Thomas. 2004. "L'église syriaque orthodoxe de Jérusalem. Regard sur son histoire et sa présence actuelle en Terre Sainte." *Proche-Orient Chrétien*. 54: 3-4, 305-312.

Maïla, Joseph. 2004. "Les Arabes chrétiens: de la question d'Orient à la récente géopolitique des minorités." *Proche-Orient Chrétien*. 54: 1-2, 35-57.

Mansour, J. 2012. الحضور المسيحي في فلسطين والشتات: احصائيات تحديات أفاق. September. *Al-Rabita al-Jadida*, Journal of the Greek Catholic Melkite Eparchy of Acre, Haifa, Nazareth and Galilea. Number 10, Pages 21-23 Mansour.

Massad, J. 2001. *Colonial Effects. The Making of National Identity in Jordan*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Massouh, Georges. 2013. "الله الناطق بالعربية." October 9. *Lebanon Files*. Doi: [lebanonfiles.com/news/612054](http://lebanonfiles.com/news/612054) (retrieved February 7, 2016).

Mayeur-Jaouen, C. 2005. *Pèlerinages d'Egypte. Histoire de la piété copte et musulmane. XVe – XXe siècles*. Paris: EHESS.

McCallum, F. 2012. "Christian Political Participation in the Arab World." In *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*. 23:1, 3-18.

Meinardus, F.A. 2006. *Christians in Egypt. Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant Communities Past and Present*. Cairo: American University Cairo Press.

Mermier, F. 2012. "À l'ombre du leader disparu: Antoun Saadé et le Parti syrien national social." In Mermier, F. ; Mervin, S. (ed.) *Leaders et Partisans au Liban*. Paris: Karthala, IFPO, ISSMM.

Mervin, S. 2008. *Le Hezbollah. Etat des lieux*. Arles: Actes Sud.

-S. 2012. "Charisme et distinction: l'élite religieuse chiite." In Mermier, F. ; Mervin, S. (ed.) *Leaders et Partisans au Liban*. Paris: Karthala, IFPO, ISSMM.

Migliorino, N. 2008. *(Re)constructing Armenia in Lebanon and Syria. Ethno-cultural Diversity and the state in the aftermath of a Refugee Crisis*. New York: Bergham.

Mikdashi, M. 2011. "What is Political Sectarianism?" March 25. *Jadaliyya*. Doi: <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/1008/what-is-political-sectarianism> (retrieved June 1 2016).

-2012. "Blaming Others: A History of Violence in Lebanon." June 5. *Jadaliyya*. Doi: [http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/5854/blaming-others\\_a-history-of-violence-in-lebanon-](http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/5854/blaming-others_a-history-of-violence-in-lebanon-) (retrieved June 1 2016).

Mokrani, A. 2009. *Lebanese Christians' Point of View on Muslim-Christian Relations*. Beirut: Université Saint-Joseph, CEDRAC, Librairie Saint-Antoine.

- Mouchref, A. 2008. *Forgotten Akkar. Socio-Economic Reality of the Akkar Region*. Beirut: Mada Association.
- Neveu, N. 2004-2005. *La Prince Hasan, Hérault du rapprochement islamo-chrétien en Jordanie*. Paris: Paris IV-Sorbonne, Master's thesis.
- Nga Longva, A.; Roald, A.S. (ed.) 2012. *Religious Minorities in the Middle East. Domination, Self-Empowerment*. Leiden: Brill.
- Noble, S. 2013. "The Non-Sectarian Sect." April 4. Doi: <http://araborthodoxy.blogspot.co.at/2013/04/orthodox-anti-sectarianism-in-lebanon.html> (retrieved June 1 2016).
- Noe, N. (ed) 2007. *Voice of Hezbollah. The Statements of Hasan Nasrallah*. London, New York: Verso.
- Noth, A. (2004) "Früher Islam," In Haarmann, U. (ed.) *Geschichte der Arabischen Welt*. Munich: C.H. Beck.
- Pall, Z. 2013. *Lebanese Salafis Between the Gulf and Europe. Development, Fractionalization and Translational Networks of Salafism in Lebanon*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Paonessa, C.. 2013. "Le rôle des confréries soufies durant les élections législatives de 2011 en Égypt: quelques réflexions préliminaires." December 19. *Égypte/Monde arabe*. 10:3. Doi: <http://ema.revues.org/3144> (retrieved June 1 2016).
- Philipp, T. 1985. *The Syrians in Egypt 1725-1975*. Wiesbaden : Franz Steiner Verlag, Berliner Islamstudien, 3.
- Picaudou, N.; Rivoal, I. (ed.) 2006. *Retours en Palestine. Trajectoires, rôle et expériences des returnees dans la société palestinienne après Oslo*. Paris: Karthala.
- Rabbath, E. 1986. *La formation historique du Liban politique et constitutionnel. Essai de synthèse*. Beirut: Université Libanaise, Librairie Orient.
- Raheb, M. 1995. *I am a Palestinian Christian*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press.
- al-Qass Collings, R.; Kassis, R.O (ed) 2012. *Palestinian Christians in the West Bank. Facts, Figures and Trends*. Bethlehem: Diyar.
- Rashwan, D. 2007. *The Spectrum of Islamist Movements. Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies and the Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung, Egypt Office*. Berlin: Hans Schiler Verlag.
- Reiss, W. 1998. *Erneuerung in der Koptisch-Orthodoxen Kirche: die Geschichte der koptisch-orthodoxen Sonntagsschulbewegung und die Aufnahme ihrer Reformansätze in den Erneuerungsbewegungen der Koptisch-Orthodoxen Kirche der Gegenwart*. Hamburg: Lit.
- Kriener, J.; Hock, K. 2012. *Die Darstellung des Christentums in Schulbüchern islamisch geprägter Länder. 3. Libanon und Jordanien*. Berlin: EB-Verlag.
- 2013. "Die Situation der Kopten in der Gegenwart." In Hölscher, A.; Middelbeck-Varwick, A.; Thurau, M. (ed). *Kirche in Welt. Christentum im Zeichen kultureller Vielfalt*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang Verlag.
- Rivoal, I. 2012. "Intimité, mise en scène et distance dans la relation politique au Liban." In Mermier, F.; Mervin, S. (ed.) *Leaders et Partisans au Liban*. Paris: Karthala, IFPO, ISSMM.
- Robson, L. 2011. *Colonialism and Christianity in Mandate Palestine*. Austin: University of Texas.

- Rogan, E. 1999. *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan, 1850-1921*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Rondot, P. 1947. *Les institutions politiques du Liban. Des communautés traditionnelles à l'État moderne*. Paris: Institut d'études de l'Orient contemporain.
- Rougier, B. 2004. *Le jihad au quotidien*. Paris: PUF.
- 2007. *Everyday Jihad. The Rise of Militant Islam among Palestinians in Lebanon*. Cambridge, London: Harvard University Press.
- 2011. *L'Oumma en fragments. Contrôler le sunnisme au Liban*. Paris: PUF.
- Roussillon, A. 1994. "Égypte, plus d'un demi-siècle d'activisme islamiste." In Lahouari, A.; de Bièvres, C; Botiveau, B. *L'islamisme*. Paris: La Découverte.
- Saad-Ghorayeb, A. 2012. "Khamenei and Hezbollah: Leading in Spirit." August 8. *Al-Akhbar English*. Doi: <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/khamenei-and-hezbollah-leading-spirit> (retrieved May 17, 2016).
- Sabbah, M. 2005. "L'Église en Terre Sainte. Engagement et attentes des Chrétiens," In *Eglises au Moyen-Orient: défis et espérances*. CEDRAC, Cahiers de l'Orient 3.
- Sabra, George. 2014. "A Response to "Christianity in a Culture marked by Islam: Facts and Visions," *The N.E.S.T. Theological Review*, 35:1-2, 145-148.
- Sanbar, E. 2004. *Figures du Palestinien: identité des origines, identité de devenir*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Sankari, J. 2005. *Fadlallah: The Making of a Radical Shi'ite Leader*. London: Saqi.
- Sayegh, S. 2009. "A special Flowering from very Ancient Roots." July. *OASIS* V: 9, 83-85.
- Schölch, A. 2004. "Der arabische Osten im neunzehnten Jahrhundert 1800-1914." In Haarmann, U. (ed.) *Geschichte der arabischen Welt*. Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck.
- Schwedler, J. 2006. *Faith in Moderation. Islamist Parties in Jordan and Yemen*. New York. Cambridge University Press.
- Sedra, P. (2007) "Class Cleavages and Ethnic Conflict: Coptic Christian Communities in Modern Egyptian politics." In *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 10:2, 219-235.
- 2012a. "The Pope's Predicament." March 17. *Jadaliyya*. Doi: <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/4711/the-popes-predicament> (retrieved June 1, 2016).
- 2012b. "The Church, Maspero, and the Future of the Coptic Community." May 19. *Jadaliyya*. Doi: <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/4735/the-church-maspero-and-the-future-of-the-coptic-co> (retrieved June 1, 2016).
- Shanahan, R. 2005. *The Shi'a of Lebanon. Clans, Parties and Clerics*. London: I. B. Tauris.
- Shenoda, A. 2011. "Reflections on the (In)visibility of Copts in Egypt." May 18. *Jadaliyya*. Doi: <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/1624/reflections-on-the-%28in%29visibility-of-copts-in-egypt> (retrieved June 1, 2016).
- Shweihat, J. 1992. *La constitution des tribunaux selon la législation jordanienne*. Rome: Pontificia Univeristas Lateranensis.
- Sidhom, Y. 2011. "Code Name: Sectarian Strife." May 15. *Watani*. Number 2577, Year 53/Number 543, Year 11.

-2012. رئيس الجمهورية: لا مشاكل طائفية في مصر!! October 7. *Watani*. Number 2650. Year 54/Number 616. Year 12. Page 1.

Tadroz, M. 2012. *The Muslim Brotherhood in Contemporary Egypt. Democracy Redefined or Confined?* London, New York: Routledge.

Tsimhoni, D. 2010. *Christian Communities in Jerusalem and the West Bank since 1948. An Historical, social and Political Study*. London: Praeger Westreport.

Verdeil, E., Faour, G., Velut, S. (ed.) 2007. *Atlas du Liban. Territoires et société*. Beirut: Ifpo, CNRS.

Voile, B. 2004. *Les coptes d’Egypte sous Nasser. Sainteté, miracles, apparitions*. Paris: CNRS éditions.

Wiktorowicz, Q. 2001. *The Management of Islamic Activism. Salafis, the Muslim Brotherhood and State Power in Jordan*. Albany, New York. State University of New York.

Yazbeck Haddad, Y.; Smith, J.I. 2009. “The Quest for ‘A Common Word’: Initial Christian Responses to a Muslim Initiative.” In *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*. 20: 4, 369-388.

Ye’or, B. 1996. *The Decline of Eastern Christianity under Islam*. Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press.

Younis, S. 2011. “The Maspero Massacre: The Military, the Media, and the 1952 Cairo Fire as Historical Blueprint. October 17. *Jadaliyya*. Doi: [http://podcast.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/2882/the-maspero-massacre\\_the-military-the-media-and-th](http://podcast.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/2882/the-maspero-massacre_the-military-the-media-and-th) (retrieved June 1 2016).

Zaborowski, J.R. (2005) *The Coptic Martyrdom of John Phanijōit. Assimilation and Conversion to Islam in Thirteenth Century Egypt* (Leiden, Brill)

Zahran, F. 2014. “Copts and Political Action before the 1919 Revolution.” June 3. *Daily News Egypt*. Doi: <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2014/06/03/copts-political-action-1919-revolution/> (retrieved June 1 2016).

### **Other Scientific Secondary Sources**

Carnegie Endowment. 20 September 2012. Building and Development Party. Doi: <http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/09/20/building-and-development-party/h3ct> (retrieved May 23, 20216).

-20 September 2011. Wafd Party Doi: <http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/09/20/wafd-party/h2n2> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

-21 September 2011. Free Egyptians Party. Doi: <http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/09/21/free-egyptians-party/h2r2> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

-11 October 2011. Muslim Brotherhood. Doi: <http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/10/11/muslim-brotherhood/h3hf> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

International Crisis Group. 2005. “Jordan’s 9/11. Dealing with Jihadi Islamism.” November 23. Middle East Report Number 47. Doi: [http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/Middle%20East%20North%20Africa/Iran%20Gulf/Jordan/Jordans%209-11%20Dealing%20With%20Jihadi%20Islamism.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/Middle%20East%20North%20Africa/Iran%20Gulf/Jordan/Jordans%209-11%20Dealing%20With%20Jihadi%20Islamism.pdf) (retrieved May 21 2016).

-2007. “Inside Gaza: The Challenge of Clans and Families.” December 20. Middle East report Number 71.

([http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/Middle%20East%20North%20Africa/Israel%20Palestine/71\\_inside\\_gaza\\_the\\_challenge\\_of\\_clans\\_and\\_families.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/Middle%20East%20North%20Africa/Israel%20Palestine/71_inside_gaza_the_challenge_of_clans_and_families.pdf) retrieved April 20 2016).

-2012. "Popular Protest in North Africa and the Middle East (IX): Dallying with Reform in a Divided Jordan." March 12. Middle East/North Africa Report Number 118. Doi: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/Middle%20East%20North%20Africa/Iran%20Gulf/Jordan/118-popular-protest-in-north-africa-and-the-middle-east-ix-dallying-with-reform-in-a-divided-jordan.pdf> (retrieved May 21 2016).

OASIS. December 2011. "On the crest of the Tahrir Square. Interview with Antonios Naguib." Number 14. Year 8. Pages 24-27.

Proche-Orient Chrétien. 1997. "Dynamiques communautaires et socio-politiques des chrétiens arabes en Jordanie, en Israël and dans les territoires autonomes palestiniens." 47. 1-3. 285.

Proche-Orient Chrétien. 2009. 59. 1-2. 165.

Proche-Orient Chrétien. 2011. 61. 1-2. 167.

Proche-Orient Chrétien. 2011. 61. 3.4. 399.

Proche-Orient Chrétien. 2012. 62. 3-4. 394.

Proche-Orient Chrétien. 2013. 63. 1-2. 195 ; 170-171.

Proche-Orient Chrétien. 2014. 1-2. 167-169.

Pro-Oriente. Koptisch-Katholische Kirche. Doi: [http://www.pro-orient.at/Koptisch\\_Katholische\\_Kirche/](http://www.pro-orient.at/Koptisch_Katholische_Kirche/) (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies. 2008. نصيب فؤاد الطوال بطريركياً للكنيسة الكاثوليكية اللاتينية في الأردن و. الأراضى المقدس. *Al-Nashra*, 42: 1, Year 11. Amman.

### **Encyclopedia:**

*Who's Who in Lebanon 2007-2008*. 2007. Munich: Publicted Publications in co-edition with K.G. Saur:

"Arslane, Talal, Majid Emir," "Fares, Marwan," "Ferzli, Elie Najib," "Mgr Nabil Hajj," "Harb, Butros," "Rai," "Atallah, Semaan, Tanios Mgr."

Dammen McAuliffe, J (ed.) 2006. *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*. Leiden: Brill:

"Nuṣayriyya"

### **Interviews**

Afram, Habib. 23 October 2014. Lecture at the NEST. Beirut.

Anonymous. 22 March 2015. Personal Interview. Jerusalem.

Beaulieu, Marie-Armelle. 23 March 2015. Personal Interview. Jerusalem.

Casper, Jayson. 17 January 2015. Personal Interview. Cairo.

Chehab, Hares. 9 December 2014. Personal Interview. Beirut.

Farraj, Bassem. 27 April 2015. Personal Interview. Amman.

Gabriel, Bishop. 11 September 2015. Personal Interview. Vienna.

Al-Gaziri, Hani. 23 January 2015. Personal Interview. Cairo.

Habash, Jiryis. 28 April 2015. Personal Interview. Amman.

Al-Hafi, Amir. 9 April 2015. Personal Interview. Amman  
Khoury, Rafiq. 25 March 2015. Personal Interview. Jerusalem.  
Lahham, Maroun. 20 April 2016. Personal Interview. Amman.  
Magdi, Mina. 21 January 2015. Personal Interview. Cairo.  
Murqus, Bishop. 29 January 2015. Personal Interview. Cairo.  
Sabra, George. 21 November 2014. Personal Interview. Beirut.  
Yussef, Fadi. 20. January 2015. Personal Interview. Cairo.

### **Secondary Sources: Newspapers and Websites in Arabic, English and French**

Al-Ahram. 12 September 2012. عماد عبد الغفور مساعد رئيس الجمهورية. Number 45939. Year 137. Page 4.

Al-Ahram Hebdo. 22-28 December 2010. Encourager l'esprit de citoyenneté. Number 850. Year 17. Pages 3-4.

Al-Ahram Hebdo. 11-17 January 2012. Prêtres, généraux et barbus. Number 904. Year 18. Page 7.

Al-Ahram Hebdo. 11-17 January 2012. Procès en suspense. Number 904. Year 18. Page 8.

Al-Ahram Hebdo. 27 February-5 March 2012. Egypte: La frémisation, toujours plus loin. Number 963. Year 19. Page 3.

Al-Ahram Hebdo. 7-13 March 2012. Un deuxième bastion islamisé. Number 912. Year 18. Page 6.

Al-Ahram Hebdo. 28 March-3 April 2012. Les tentacules se déploient. Number 915. Year 18. Page 3.

Al-Ahram Hebdo. 18-24 July 2012. Garder le positif, oublier le négatif. Number 931. Year 18. Page 5.

Al-Ahram Hebdo. 18-24 July 2012. Une démarche symbolique. Number 931. Year 18. Page 8.

Al-Ahram Hebdo. 8-14 August 2012. Les demandes des salafistes ignorées. Number 934. Year 18. Page 5.

Al-Ahram Hebdo. 1-7 September 2012. Un premier ministre qui suscite la méfiance. Number 933. Year 18. Page 4.

Al-Ahram Hebdo. 10-16 October 2012. Le succès des islamistes se poursuit malgré leurs différends internes. Number 943. Year 19. Page 3.

Al-Ahram Hebdo. 17-23 October 2012. Georges Ishaq: "une fois que les Egyptiens auront appris l'exercice démocratique, les choses iront pour le mieux." Number 944. Year 19. Page 8.

Al-Ahram Hebdo. 12-18 December 2012. Crise politique: Les agissements problématiques de Morsi. Number 952. Year 19. Page 4.

Al-Ahram Hebdo. 27 February-5 March 2013. Les Waqfs se politisent en faveur des Frères. Number 963. Year 19. Page 4.

Al-Ahram Hebdo. 9-15 January 2013. Chaînes islamiques: un outil de propagande politique. Number 956. Year 19. Pages 30-31.

Al-Ahram Hebdo. 10-14 April 2013. Sectarisme : Les « mains invisibles » frappent encore. Number 969. Year 19. Page 6.

Al-Ahram Hebdo. 17-23 April 2013. Al-Azhar: Le jeu de la politique et de la religion. Number 970. Year 19. Page 3.

Al-Ahram Hebdo. 17-23 April 2013. Samir Morcos « Les conflits interconfessionnels ». Number 970. Year 19. Page 17.

Al-Ahram Hebdo. 17-23 July 2013. 5 partis religieux, vers une dissolution? Number 983. Year 19. Page 5.

Al-Ahram Hebdo. 13-20 October 2013. Interview avec Laure Guirguis "La révolution a exacerbé le tiraillement des coptes entre le repli et l'engagement." Number 996. Year 20. Page 8.

Ahram Online. 18 November 2011. Egyptian Social Democratic Party. Doi: <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/33/104/26700/Elections-/Political-Parties/Egyptian-Social-Democratic-Party.aspx> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Ahram Online. 3 December 2011. Freedom and Justice Party. Doi:



<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/33/104/24939/Elections-/Political-Parties/Freedom-and-Justice-Party.aspx> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Ahram Online. 28 December 2011. Reform and Development. Doi:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/33/104/30395/Elections-/Political-Parties/Reform-and-Development.aspx> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Ahram Online. 20 October 2012. Egypt's Salafist Front launches 'People Party'. Doi:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/56087/Egypt/Politics-/Egypt-Salafist-Front-launches-People-Party.aspx> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Ahram Online. 18 November 2012. Church-state relations yet to change in Morsi's Egypt Doi:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/58089/Egypt/Politics-/Churchstate-relations-yet-to-change-in-Morsis-Egy.aspx> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

Al-Akhbar English. 26 August 2011. The Syrian Social Nationalists: In the Hurricane of Revolt. Doi:

<http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/syrian-social-nationalists-hurricane-revolt> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Akhbar English. 8 November 2011. Lebanon's Alawi: A Minority Struggles in a 'Nation' of Sects.

Doi: <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/lebanon%E2%80%99s-alawi-minority-struggles-%E2%80%98nation%E2%80%99-sects> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Akhbar English. 14 February 2012. Tripoli Clashes: Keeping Conflict Alive. Doi: <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/tripoli-clashes-keeping-conflict-alive> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Akhbar English. 2 March 2012. Al-Assir: A New Guardian of "Sunni Interests" in Lebanon. Doi: <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/al-assir-new-guardian-sunni-interest-lebanon> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Akhbar English. 6 March 2012. Ahmad al-Assir: A Salafi with a Difference. Doi: <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/ahmad-al-assir-salafi-difference> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Akhbar English. 18 March 2012. Geagea and the Maronite Church: A Battle for Patriarchy Doi:

<http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/geagea-and-maronite-church-battle-patriarchy> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Akhbar English. 29 March 2012. The Maronite Patriarch: Staying the Course One Year After His Election. Doi: <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/maronite-patriarch-staying-course-one-year-after-his-election> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Akhbar English. 5 May 2012. Lebanon-Syria Border: A Weapons Market Boom. Doi:

<http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/lebanon-syria-border-weapons-market-boom> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Akhbar English. 15 May 2012. Tripoli, North Lebanon: The Forgotten City. Doi: <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/tripoli-north-lebanon-forgotten-city> (retrieved May 18, 2016).

Al-Akhbar English. 16 May 2012. A Sunni Emirate in the North. Doi: <http://english.al-akhbar.com/node/7396> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Akhbar English. 11 July 2012. Lebanese Crisis (III): Christian Rapprochement or Just a Game? Doi: <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/lebanese-crisis-iii-christian-rapprochement-or-just-game> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Akhbar English. 8 August 2012. Druze Spiritual Council: Another Lebanese Divide. Doi: <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/battle-over-druze-spiritual-council-reveals-major-splits-community> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Akhbar English. 11 August 2012. Future Movement: When Will We Get Paid? Doi:

<http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/future-movement-when-will-we-get-paid> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Akhbar English. 16 August 2012. Lebanon's Mufti: The Future Movement Wants My Turban. Doi: <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/lebanons-mufti-future-movement-wants-my-turban> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Akhbar English. 9 October 2012. A Shadow State in Lebanon for the Syrian Opposition. Doi: <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/shadow-state-lebanon-syrian-opposition> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Akhbar English. 25 November 2012. Salafi Cleric's Militia Ambitions Curtailed. Doi: <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/salafi-cleric%E2%80%99s-militia-ambitions-curtailed> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Arabiya English. 25 June 2013. Breaking down Ahmad al-Assir: the Man behind the Beard. Doi: <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/perspective/profiles/2013/06/25/Breaking-down-Ahmad-al-Assir-the-man-behind-the-beard.html> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Arab Orthodoxy. 21 March 2010. +Georges Khodr on the Orthodox in Lebanese Politics Doi: <http://araborthodoxy.blogspot.co.at/2010/03/georges-khodr-on-orthodox-in-lebanese.html> (retrieved May 17 2016).

Arab Orthodoxy. 20 February 2012. Another View of Orthodoxy, Sectarianism, and Secularism in Lebanon. Al-Nahar. Doi: <http://araborthodoxy.blogspot.co.at/2012/02/another-view-of-orthodoxy-sectarianism.html> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Arab Orthodoxy. 4 October 2012. Al-Safir Gives Some Background on the 'Civil Commission' Plan. Al-Safir. Doi: <http://araborthodoxy.blogspot.co.at/2012/10/al-safir-gives-some-background-on-civil.html> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Arab Orthodoxy. 3 October 2012. The Youth Movement Rejects the Plan for a "Civil Commission". Al-Akhbar. Doi: <http://araborthodoxy.blogspot.co.at/2012/10/the-youth-movement-rejects-plan-for.html> accessed (retrieved May 17, 2016).

BBC. 21 January 2012. Egypt's Islamist parties win elections to parliament. Doi: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-16665748> (retrived May 23, 2016).

BBC Arabic. 2 January 2011. "مصر: متظاهرون أقباط يهاجمون سيارات وفد شيخ الأزهر". Doi: [http://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2011/01/110102\\_egypt\\_alex\\_church\\_attack.shtml](http://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2011/01/110102_egypt_alex_church_attack.shtml) (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Copts Today. No date. النصارى كفره بشهادة القرآن هل تكذب القرآن لنرضيهم لعنة الله عليهم. Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Archive/Detail.php?Id=12091> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Daily News Egypt. 6 October 2012. Families of Maspero victims attack Maspero Youth Union. Doi: <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2012/10/06/families-of-maspero-victims-attack-maspero-youth-union/> (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Diocèse Jounieh. 28 September 2012. بيان اجتماع الاساقفة الموارنة - الجمعة 28 ايلول. Doi: <http://www.diocesejounieh.org.lb/index.php/2013-02-01-21-33-38/59-2012-01-25-18-44-14/384-28-2012> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

The Guardian. 17 August 2015. Fugitive Lebanese cleric Ahmad al-Assir fails to avoid arrest with '70s makeover'. Doi: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/aug/17/fugitive-lebanese-cleric-ahmad-al-assir-arrest-70s-makeover-beirut> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Haaretz. 23 March 2005. Christian Arabs Second in a Series - Israel's Christian Arabs Don't Want to Fight to Fit in. Doi: <http://www.haaretz.com/christian-arabs-second-in-a-series-israel-s-christian-arabs-don-t-want-to-fight-to-fit-in-1.153786> (retrieved May 16, 2016).

Haaretz. 28 February 2012. Muslims and Christians Must Also Serve in IDF. Doi: <http://www.haaretz.com/muslims-and-christians-must-also-serve-in-idf-1.415273> (retrieved May 16, 2016).

Al-Hayat. 17 September 2012. حزب الله: كلمات البابا التقت مع تطلعتنا. Number 18063. Page 7.

Al-Hayat. 15 March 2014. أحمد الأسير بين التنصّل والتفهم: إته سحر الساحر الملتبس. Doi: <http://www.alhayat.com/Articles/1139661/%D8%A3%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%B5%D9%91%D9%84-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%81%D9%87%D9%91%D9%85--%D8%A5%D9%86%D9%91%D9%87->

%D8%B3%D8%AD%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%B1-  
%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%A8%D8%B3 (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Independent. 18 September 2014. Israel goes back 4,000 years in 'attempt to divide and rule' its Arab minority. Doi: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-goes-back-4000-years-in-attempt-to-divide-and-rule-its-arab-minority-9742175.html> (retrieved May 16, 2016).

Al-Jazeera. محمد بركة. Doi: <http://www.aljazeera.net/specialfiles/pages/62C188B4-C62B-41D3-B1E3-B7AF9BF716E8> (retrieved May 16, 2016).

Al-Jazeera. 20 February 2007. انتخاب أول مسيحي في قيادة الحزب الإسلامي الأبرز بالأردن. Doi: <http://www.aljazeera.net/news/reportsandinterviews/2007/2/20/%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%AE%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D8%A3%D9%88%D9%84-%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%AD%D9%8A-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%82%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%B2%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%B2-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B1%D8%AF%D9%86> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

Al-Jazeera English. 27 October 2010. Profile: Islamic Movement in Israel. Doi: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2010/10/20101027121259776547.html> (retrieved May 16, 2016).

Al-Jazeera. 12 May 2015. دور النقابات المهنية في الحياة السياسية بالأردن. Doi: <http://www.aljazeera.net/programs/arab-present-situation/2015/5/12/%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%87%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B1%D8%AF%D9%86> (retrieved May 21, 2016).

Al-Kiraza. 1 April 2011. الكنيسة وسط التغييرات والأحداث. Number 1-2. Year 39. Page 1.

Al-Kiraza. 30 December 2012. مصر يلاذنا المحبوبة... إلى أين. Number 15-16. Year 39. Page 1.

Muntada. July-September 2006. بيان من رؤساء الكنائس المسيحية بمصر حول فيلم شيفرده دافسي. Middle East Council of Churches, Page 26.

Al-Nahar. 2 December 2005. البطريركية الأرثوذكسية في القدس انتخب الارشمندريت عطا الله مطرانا. Number 22501. Year 73. Page 10.

Al-Nahar. 20 March 2009. رئيس ونائب رئيس بالتزكية للمجلس الإسلامي العلوي. Number 23644. Year 76. Page 7.

Al-Nahar. 29 September 2010. سينودس الكنيسة الكاثوليكية الخاص من أجل الشرق الأوسط. ممثلون من 5 كنائس غير كاثوليكية سَجَلُوا ملاحظات السينودي وعَبَّرُوا عن آمالهم. Number 24177. Year 77. Page 13.

Al-Nahar. 30 December 2010. وفد من "حزب الله" زار لحام والمطرانين قصارجي ومنصور. Number 24262. Year 78. Page 4.

Al-Nahar. 28 September 2011. الراعي في القمة يتخوف من حرب سنية-علوية. Number 24520. Page 4.

طائفة الموحدون الدروز انتخبت مجلسها المذهبي: مقاطعة إرسلانية... الأكتريية لجنبلاط وحصه لوهاب. . September 2012. وحياء ارسلان دعمت النساء. Number 24843. Year 80. Page 6.

Al-Nahar. 30 December 2012. السينودس الإنجيلي كزّم القس صهيوني وكلمات نوهت ب 56 عاماً خدمة. Number 24262. Year 80. Page 5.

The New York Times. 5 February 2006. Protesters in Beirut Set Danish Consulate on Fire. Doi: [http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/05/international/middleeast/05cnd-beirut.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/05/international/middleeast/05cnd-beirut.html?_r=0) (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Al-Nahar 10

New York Times. 16 September 2012. Cultural Clash Fuels Muslims Angry at Online Video. Doi: [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/17/world/middleeast/muslims-rage-over-film-fueled-by-culture-divide.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/17/world/middleeast/muslims-rage-over-film-fueled-by-culture-divide.html?_r=0) (retrieved May 23, 2016).

New York Times. 19 May 2013. Hezbollah Aids Syrian Military in a Key Battle. Doi: [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/20/world/middleeast/syrian-army-moves-to-rebel-held-qusayr.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/20/world/middleeast/syrian-army-moves-to-rebel-held-qusayr.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0) (retrieved May 17, 2016).

New York Times. 4 November 2012. Coptic Church Chooses Pope Who Rejects Political Role. Doi: [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/05/world/middleeast/coptic-church-chooses-pope-who-rejects-politics.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/05/world/middleeast/coptic-church-chooses-pope-who-rejects-politics.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1) (retrieved May 23, 2016).

Al-Safir. 17 February 2011. لقاء علمائي يدعو قباني إلى الاستقالة والسنيرة إلى إعادة المال السروق. Number 11816. Year 37. Page 2.

Al-Safir. 13 September 2011. 63% من العكاريين محرومون من التعليم ... و مثلهم تحت خط الفقر. Number 11985. Page 5.

Al-Safir. 16 September 2011. هكذا تتطور العلاقة بين "حزب الله" والبطيركية المارونية. Number 11988. Year 38. Page 2.

Al-Safir. 5 September 2012. اعتصام صيداوي ضد زيارة "القوات" للأسير. Number 12275. Year 39. Page 4.

Al-Safir. 11 September 2013. المطران درويش ل"السفير". إسرائيل المستفيد الأكبر من تفريغ الشرق من مسيحييه. Number 12576. Year 40. Page 13.

Al-Safir. 18 December 2013. المطران عطا الله حنا ل"السفير": أنا عربي فلسطيني مسيحي من الشرق. Number 12655. Page 14.

Al-Safir. 11 September 2013. المطران درويش ل"السفير". إسرائيل المستفيد الأكبر من تفريغ الشرق من مسيحييه. Number 12576. Year 40. Page 13.

Al-Salah. 2012. لماذا يهاجم الأقباط. Number 6-7. Year 9. Pages 39-41.

Al-Shuruq. 10 September 2012. الفنون والمواقع القبطية.. منابر خاصة جداً. Number 1318. Year 4. Page 17.

Al-Shuruq. 12 September 2012. "البابا" الذي يرده "الإخوان". Number 1320. Year 4. Page 8.

Al-Shuruq. 28 September 2012. شركاء,,النور" ... رفاق على طريق الله فرقتهم السياسة. Number 1336. Year 4. Page 5.

Terre Sainte Magazine. January-February 2015. Etre arabe et israélien : une gageure ? Number 635/7. Pages 392-393/32-33.

Terre Sainte Magazine. January-February 2015. Chrétiens et musulmans : des arabes unis? Number 635/7. Pages 400/401/40/41.

Washington Post. 14 October 2004. Anti-Semitism office planned at State Department. Doi: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/2004/oct/14/20041014-121528-8981r/> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

Watani. 13 February 2011. الأقباط والمسلمون أقاموا صلوات واحدة من أجل مصر. Number 2564, Year 53/Number 530, Year 11, Page 4.

Watani. 15 May 2011. Surrounded and attacked. Number 2577. Year 53/Number 543. Year 11. Page 3.

Al-Yawm Al-Sabi. 10 May 2011. موريس صادق يدعو لاحتلال مصر ويطالب باعتماد "القبطية" لغة رسمية. Doi: [http://www.youm7.com/story/2011/5/10/%D9%85%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B3\\_%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%82\\_%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%B9%D9%88\\_%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%AA%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%84\\_%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B1\\_%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8\\_%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AF\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%A8%D8%B7%D9%8A%D8%A9\\_%D9%84%D8%BA%D8%A9\\_%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%A9/409140#.Vi9l5m5OfVJ](http://www.youm7.com/story/2011/5/10/%D9%85%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B3_%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%82_%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%B9%D9%88_%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%AA%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%84_%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B1_%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8_%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AF_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%A8%D8%B7%D9%8A%D8%A9_%D9%84%D8%BA%D8%A9_%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%A9/409140#.Vi9l5m5OfVJ) (retrieved May 3, 2016).

Al-Yawm Al-Sabi. 17 June 2011. رئيس قناة الطريق: المسيحيون ليسوا قلة ونطالب بالمشاركة السياسية للأقباط. Doi: [http://www.youm7.com/story/2011/6/17/%D8%B1%D8%A6%D9%8A%D8%B3\\_%D9%82%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%A9\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%82\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%AD%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%86\\_%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%A7\\_%D9%82%D9%84%D8%A9\\_%D9%88%D9%86%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8\\_%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A9\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A7/436930#.Vi-cHm5OfVJ](http://www.youm7.com/story/2011/6/17/%D8%B1%D8%A6%D9%8A%D8%B3_%D9%82%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%A9_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%82_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%AD%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%86_%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%A7_%D9%82%D9%84%D8%A9_%D9%88%D9%86%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8_%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A9_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A7/436930#.Vi-cHm5OfVJ) (retrieved May 3, 2016).

YouTube. 11 September 2011. Joseph Nasrallah Speaks at the FDI/SIOA Rally 9/11/2010. Doi: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bEJMRDqsMCE> (retrieved May 2, 2016).

YouTube. Up-loaded 29 January 2012. Part 2 - BBC Iran and the West 2/3 The Man who Changed the World - إيران و غرب. Doi: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=91xuueQ7RmI> (retrieved May 17, 2016).

## **Other**

Yousef, M. H.; with Brackin, R. 2011. *Son of Hamas*. Carol Stream, Israel: Tyndale Momentum.

Zaydān, Y. 2008. عزازيل. Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq.

Brown, D. 2003, 2004. *Da Vinci Code*. Paris: JC Lattès.

## Attached Documents 1: Primary Sources

Some of the statements that are no longer available on the internet or were given personally to the author are listed below.

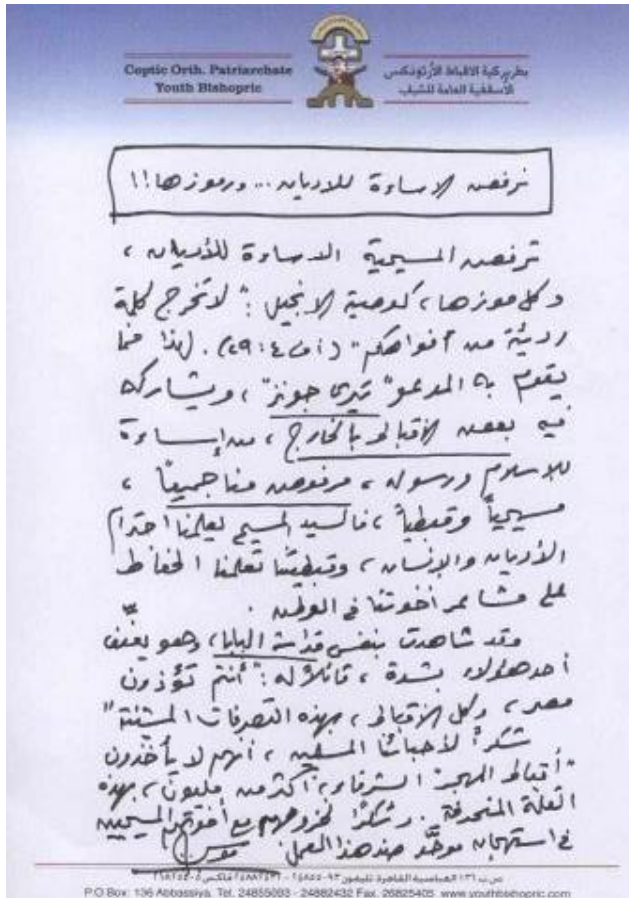
### Chapter 1.1.1.1 The Reaction of Bishop Mūsā

Copts Today. 11 September 2012. بيان من نيافة الأنبا موسى ردا على الفيلم المسئ للرسول.

Doi: <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=32480> (retrieved March 3, 2014).

#### بيان من نيافة الأنبا موسى ردا على الفيلم المسئ للرسول

تحت عنوان "نرفض الإساءة للأديان ورموزها" ..أصدر الأنبا "موسى" أسقف الشباب بيانا قال خلاله : ترفض المسيحية ( لهذا فما يقوم به المدعو 4:29 للإساءة للأديان، وكل رموزها، كوصية الإنجيل: "لا تخرُج كلمة رديّة من أفواهكم" (أف تييرى جونز" ، ويشاركه فيه بعض الأقباط بالخارج، من إساءة للإسلام ورسوله، مرفوض منا جميعا، مسيحيا وقبطيا، فالسيد المسيح يعلمنا احترام الأديان والإنسان، وقبطيتنا تعلمنا الحفاظ على مشاعر أخوتنا فى الوطن. وقد شاهدت بنفسى قداسة البابا، وهو يعنف أحد هؤلاء بشدة، قائلاً له: "أنتم تؤذون مصر، وكل الأقباط، بهذه التصرفات المشينة". شكراً لأحبائنا المسلمين، أنهم لا يأخذون "أقباط المهجر" الشرفاء، أكثر من مليون، بهذه القلة المنحرفة. وشكراً لخروجهم مع أخوتهم المسيحيين فى استهجان موحد ضد هذا العمل



#### Chapter 2.1.1.4 The Evangelical Synod of Cairo

Copts Today. 11 September 2012. مجمع القاهرة الانجيلي يدين الفيلم المسئ للاسلام. Doi:

<http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=32438> (retrieved March 3, 2014).

#### مجمع القاهرة الانجيلي يدين الفيلم المسئ للاسلام

أدان مجمع القاهرة الانجيلي، في بيان صادر عنه صباح اليوم، الفيلم المسئ للإسلام معلنا تبرأه من كل الأفعال التي تنطوي عن اساءه مباشرة او غير مباشرة للأديان وقال القس نادى لبيب، رئيس المجمع، في تصريحات لـ"الأقباط متحدون"، أن المجمع كلف القس "رفعت فكرى"، رئيس لجنة الاعلام والنشر بالسندوس، للرد على المقال المسئ للمسيحية الذي كتبه الأستاذ محمد خراجة رئيس تحرير جريدة "الأهرام المسائي"، تحت عنوان "المدنية". وقال فيه "الدولة الدينية التي يزعمونها، إنما ظهرت في العصور 2012 سبتمبر 2 وتخاريف الدولة الدينية"، بتاريخ الوسطي في أوروبا لسيطرة الكنيسة وطغي رجالها بدينها المحرف علي الشعوب فظلموا العباد واستعبدهم وأقاموا المذابح للمخالفين، لذا عانت تلك المجتمعات في ذلك الحين أفظع ألوان العذاب، وهو ما انتهى بثورة الشعوب، وكان أبرزها الثورة الفرنسية". الأقباط متحدون

#### Chapter 3.6.1 The Statement of the Spiritual Summit in Bkerké

Bkerki. 24 September 2012. بيان القمة الروحية برك - الثاني. Doi:

[http://www.bkerkelb.org/arabic/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1714:-----](http://www.bkerkelb.org/arabic/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1714:-----)

24--2012-&catid=263:2011-09-07-08-04-38&Itemid=66 (retrieved December 9, 2013).

#### بيان القمة الروحية بركي

بدعوة من غبطة البطريرك الماروني مار بشاره بطرس الراعي، عقد أصحاب الغبطة والسماحة والسيادة رؤساء الطوائف اللبنانية المسيحية والاسلامية وممثلوهم قمة روحية في الصرح البطريركي في بركي شارك فيها اصحاب السماحة مفتي الجمهورية اللبنانية الشيخ محمد رشيد قباني، نائب رئيس المجلس الاسلامي الشيعي الاعلى الامام الشيخ عبد الامير قبلان، شيخ عقل طائفة الموحدين الدروز الشيخ نعيم حسن، رئيس المجلس الاسلامي العلوي الشيخ اسد عاصي، وصاحب الغبطة كاثوليكوس بيت كيليكيا للأرمن الأرثوذكس آرام الاول كيشيشيان، بطريرك الكنيسة السريانية الكاثوليكية مار اغناطيوس يوسف الثالث يونان، القس الدكتور سليم صهيوني رئيس المجمع الاعلى للطائفة الانجيلية في لبنان وسوريا، اصحاب السيادة المطارنة لباس عودة متروبوليت بيروت للروم الاورثوذكس، بولس دحدح النائب الرسولي للاتين، ميشال قصري النائب البطريركي للكلدان، جورج صليبيا ممثلاً بطريرك السريان الأرثوذكس زكا الاول عيواص، المونسنيور باتريك موراديان ممثلاً بطريرك الارمن الكاثوليك نرسيس بدروس التاسع عشر، الارشمندريت رويس الاورشليمي ممثلاً الكنيسة القبطية الاورثوذكسية والارشمندريت عمانوئيل يوحنا ممثل الكنيسة الاشورية.

تناول المجتمعون ثلاثة مواضيع: ثمار زيارة قداسة البابا بندكتوس السادس عشر إلى لبنان، وإدانة الفيلم "براءة المسلمين"، والدعوة إلى مواجهة الأزمة الاقتصادية والاجتماعية في لبنان. وبعد النقاش اصدروا البيان التالي

أولاً: أعرب أصحاب الغبطة والسماحة والسيادة عن شكرهم العميق وتقديرهم وارتياحهم الكبير للزيارة التاريخية التي قام (أيلول)، والتي انت في وقتها، وللنتائج البناءة التي أسفرت عنها، 16-14 بها قداسة البابا بندكتوس السادس عشر الى لبنان ) وأعلنت شأن لبنان كبلد آمن ومنفتح على جميع الثقافات والأديان، وكالمكان الأفضل لتوقيع الارشاد الرسولي: "الكنيسة في الشرق الأوسط، شركة وشهادة" وإعلانه، وإطلاق الدعوة إلى السلام في بلدان الشرق الأوسط. وأعربوا عن تأييدهم لما تضمنته هذا الإرشاد وكلمات قداسته في المناسبة، وبخاصة لجهة التأكيد على أصالة وعمق العلاقات التاريخية بين المسلمين والمسيحيين في الشرق الأوسط، وعلى أن لبنان نموذج لسلامة هذه العلاقات والتعاون المسيحي – الاسلامي على كل المستويات. واعتبروا أن تشديده على رسالة لبنان في العيش المشترك هو بمثابة تجديد للثقة برسالة لبنان التي سبق أن نادى بها الطوباوي البابا يوحنا بولس الثاني. إن رسالة قداسة البابا إلى اللبنانيين هي تذكير قبل كل شيء بأن لبنان مساحة تفاعل وحوار من أجل حضارة قائمة على السلام والتنوع في الوحدة، وليس ساحة صراع؛ ورغم واقعنا اللبناني الداخلي والقلق

من التطورات الجارية في المنطقة، لا يزال قداسة البابا يعتبر أنّ لبنان يحمل رسالة تاريخية وحضارية الى العالم بأسره  
لاسيما في الحوار الدائم بين الحضارات والأديان لصالح البشرية جمعاء

وتوافق أصحاب الغبطة والسماحة والسيادة على العمل معاً من أجل تعميم هذه الرسالة الأخوية وتعميق مفاهيمها في العائلة  
والمدرسة والمجتمع بين المواطنين اللبنانيين، وعلى نقلها إلى القيادات الروحية الشقيقة في الدول العربية الأخرى. وحثوا  
المواطنين المسيحيين والمسلمين على الثبات في أرضهم، والتصديّ لموجة الهجرة التي تفقد الشرق خيرة أبنائه وقواه  
الحية، وتضعف وحدة النسيج الوطني اللبناني، وتعرّض الهوية الوطنية إلى التصدّع. ودعوا إلى إجراء ما يلزم من  
اصلاحات في كل بلد، عن طريق الحوار والتفاهم، بعيداً عن العنف والحرب، وإلى احترام الحريات الدينية وحقوق الانسان  
ومبدأ المساواة في المواطنة كأساس للعيش المشترك الذي يتمسكون به جميعاً. وأشادوا بحكمة رئيس الجمهورية العماد  
ميشال سليمان ومثابرته على عقد طاولة الحوار الوطني، وناشدوا كل المعنيين بهذا الحوار، الذي لا بديل عنه، للخروج من  
دائرة المناقشات الاتهامية المتبادلة، والتصديّ معاً للتحديات الخطيرة التي يواجهها لبنان الوطن والرسالة

ثانياً، أدان أصحاب الغبطة والسماحة فيلم "براءة المسلمين" المسيء للإسلام ولنبيّه ورسوله محمد كذباً وافترافاً وتضليلاً،  
وقد سبق وادانوه منفردين. وأكدوا على أنّ الانتهاك لحرمة أي دين هو انتهاك لحرمة الأديان جميعها، كما ندّدوا بردات  
الفعل العنيفة التي أوقعت ضحايا بريئة واساءت الى المسيحيين ودور العبادة في بعض البلدان. ودعوا الأمم المتحدة ومجلس  
الأمن وجامعة الدول العربية وسائر المنظمات والهيئات المعنية إلى اتخاذ قرارات تحول دون التعسف في استغلال حق  
حرية التعبير، ودون الإساءة إلى الأديان ورموزها المقدسة، وانعكاسها سلباً على العلاقات الاسلامية – المسيحية، والتسبب  
بقيام فتنة واسعة لها ارتداداتها على السلم الأهلي المحلي والسلام العالمي. وقرّروا تشكيل لجنة من القانونيين المتخصّصين  
في القانون الدولي لصياغة النصّ الملائم ولدراسة الاجراءات التي تصون الأديان السماوية وعائدها من الإساءة والتجريح  
تحت طائلة الملاحقة القانونية، وعهدوا إلى اللجنة الوطنية المسيحية – الاسلامية للحوار وضع ومتابعة آلية تنفيذ هذه  
التوصية ورفعها الى المرجعيات الروحية مجتمعة

إنّ هذا المطلب يؤكّد على وحدة الايمان بالله والعمل بوصاياه وبالقيم الروحية والاخلاقية في الحياة الشخصية والعائلية  
والاجتماعية، وعلى مكان الانسان ودوره في تدبير الله


ثالثاً: تباحث المجتمعون في الازمة الاقتصادية وانعكاساتها الاجتماعية التي تزداد معالمها سوءاً يوماً بعد يوم، وخاصة  
لجهة تفاقم الدين العام وارتفاع نسبة البطالة، وغلاء المعيشة، وتدني الدخل واتساع دائرة الفقر وتزايد عدد الفئات المحرومة  
ما يدفع ببعضها الى حركات التطرف، ويزور ظاهرة الاعتداء والسلب والخطف التي يدينونها بشدة، وهم في هذا السياق  
يثبتون على جهود القوى الامنية ويحثونها على التشدد في تطبيق القوانين والانظمة. وأعربوا عن تأييدهم لنداءات الهيئات  
الاقتصادية والصناعية وتحذيراتها من الأخطار المحدقة، وطالبوا الدولة باتخاذ الاجراءات اللازمة التي تنقذ من خطر  
الانهيار الكبير. وهم يرون أن المناخ السياسي والأمني هو الشرط الأول والأساسي للاستقرار والنمو الاقتصادي. في ظل  
الظروف الدقيقة التي تمرّ بها البلاد والمنطقة، بات مطلوباً من الجميع، ومن السياسيين بنوع خاص، العمل على إزالة  
التشنجات السياسية والأمنية، وتوفير جوّ من الطمأنينة والثقة بمستقبل الوطن

ودعا المجتمعون الى انتهاج سياسة اجتماعية – اقتصادية تعتمد نظاماً ضريبياً أكثر عدالة، وتوفّر الخدمات الاجتماعية  
والصحية والانمائية للفئات والمناطق المحرومة، وتستحدث فرص عمل لمنخرجي الجامعات، وتشجّع على الاستثمار في  
المشاريع الإنتاجية، الزراعية منها والصناعية والخدماتية، وتعمل على توسيع رقعة تصدير الانتاج اللبناني، وتعزّز الانماء  
الشامل، وتحدّ من البطالة والهجرة

كما دعوا الى تشديد الرقابة من أجل حماية المستهلك اللبناني من كل انواع الجشع والتلاعب بالنوعية والأسعار، حفظاً  
لحقوق المواطن وسلامته، ولقيام شفافية في التعامل بين المنتج والمستهلك والتزام الأخلاقيات في علاقتهما

وفي الختام يناشد أصحاب الغبطة والسماحة والسيادة اللبنانيين جميعاً أن يعملوا بوعي من ضميرهم على تعزيز وحدتهم  
الداخلية، الضامن الأساس لقيام دولة الحق التي تكون على مستوى الآمال المعقودة عليها، وهم يسألون الله القدير أن  
يعضدهم في مسؤولياتهم للحفاظ على جوّ الاخوة والتضامن في مجتمعنا، وناشدوا المسؤولين السياسيين التعاون على تحقيق  
الخير العام وإعلاء شأن لبنان، وطن الرسالة في احترام التعددية والحرية المسؤولة



THE ORTHODOX SOCIETY  الجمعية الأرثوذكسية

---

بيان  
شجب و إدانة

الجمعية الأرثوذكسية في الأردن تدن وتشجب عرض الفيلم الذي يسمى للإسلام والإخوة المسلمين والذي يتناول على المقامات الدينية والعقيدة الإسلامية وتؤكد بان عرض هذا الفيلم في مثل هذه الأوقات التي تمر بها المنطقة العربية يهدف إلى زرع بذور الفتنة بين أبناء الأمة العربية الواحدة ويجيء هذا الاعتداء على الإخوة المسلمين بعد فترة ليست بعيدة من اعتداء الضهانية على دير الطرون في القدس مما يؤكد بان هناك مخطط صهيوني يستهدف العرب مسيحيين ومسلمين .

وبدورنا نطالب المجتمع الدولي والحكومات العربية للضغط لإيقاف عرض هذا الفيلم المسيء لمشاعر المسلمين والمسيحيين ونؤكد باننا في هذا البلد الطيب أخوة متحابين يجمعنا العيش المشترك في ظل قيادة جلالة الملك عبد الله الثاني ابن الحسين المعظم .

---

هاتف: ١٥٦٦٦٦٦ فاكس: ١٥٦٦٦٦٦ ص.ب ٩١٠٦٥ عمان ١١١٩١ الأردن  
Tel: 4651666 Fax: 4651669 P.O. Box:91065 Amman 11191 Jordan

D.C

## Attached Documents 2: Abstracts

### Abstract in German

Im September 2012 löste das Video „The Innocence of Muslims“ Proteste in der islamischen und arabischen Welt aus und hätte das Potenzial gehabt, bereits bestehende interreligiöse Spannungen, vor allem in Ägypten zu verschärfen. Das Video war von extremistischen Kopten in den USA produziert und verbreitet, durch ägyptische Medien thematisiert worden, und stellte den Propheten Muhammad sehr negativ dar. In einem ersten Schritt zeigte „The Innocence of Muslims“ wie ein Gruppe von Muslimen Kopten angreift, ohne dass dies von der Polizei verhindert wird. Im zweiten Teil wurde die „Ursache“ für diese Verfolgung anhand des Lebens und der Person von Muhammads erklärt, der als Frauenheld, Kinderschänder und blutrünstiger Krieger dargestellt wurde.

Diese Dissertation untersucht die Frage, ob und inwiefern sich die Frage nach den christlich-muslimischen Beziehungen im Kontext des Videos „The Innocence of Muslims“ in Ägypten, Israel, Jordanien, Libanon und den Palästinensischen Gebieten stellte. Durch diesen Fokus können mehrere wissenschaftliche Lücken gefüllt werden. Erstens haben sich bisherige wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zu ähnlichen Themen – vorrangig die sogenannten dänische Mohammed Karikaturen (2006) – vor allem mit der Berichterstattung westlicher Medien auseinandergesetzt und nicht mit dem Inhalt der Reaktionen. Außerdem ist diese Dissertation gewissermaßen eine Momentaufnahme der (arabisch) christlich-muslimischen Beziehungen auf einer realen und diskursiven Ebene – ein Thema, das vom Video angeprangert wurde. Das Video warf zudem tiefgreifende Fragen über die Identität, die Zugehörigkeit und die Loyalität der Christen in diesen Ländern auf. Nicht zuletzt kann davon ausgegangen werden, dass die christlichen Reaktionen auf dieses Video nicht nur durch Angst vor Gewalt motiviert waren.

Die Dissertation analysiert die christlichen und die muslimischen Reaktionen auf dieses Video, das gemeinsame christlich-muslimische Vorgehen (Proteste, Konferenzen), sowie den Inhalt und den Hintergrund von „The Innocence of Muslims“. Im Rahmen einer kontextuellen Quellenkritik und eines philologischen und historischen Ansatzes wurden diese Reaktionen analysiert. Dafür wurden mündliche und schriftliche Texte aus arabischen Zeitungen, Kirchenzeitungen, einschlägigen Webseiten und Videos herangezogen. Dieses Material wurde vor allem im Rahmen eines Forschungsaufenthaltes in Beirut, Kairo, Jerusalem und Amman zwischen September 2014 und Mai 2015 dank des Marietta Blau-Stipendiums gesammelt.

Diese Arbeit hat in erster Linie aufgezeigt, dass das Video sowohl von christlichen als auch von muslimischen Akteuren als Verletzung religiöser Gefühle verurteilt wurde. Außerdem gab es keine bis kaum Repressalien gegen Christen in diesen Ländern. Vor allem islamistische und salafistische Akteure in Ägypten waren um eine Deeskalation bemüht und traten überraschend moderat gegenüber den Christen auf. Bis zu einem gewissen Grad wurde die Krise um „The Innocence of Muslims“ produziert, weil dadurch manche Akteure ihre Position stärken und ihre politischen Rivalen unter Druck setzen konnten, vor allem in Ägypten (Nur Partei) und im Libanon (die Hisbollah und die Amal Bewegung). In diesem Zusammenhang zeigte sich, dass es einen Bedarf nach der christlichen Beteiligung an und Sichtbarkeit bei den Portesten gab, um letztere zu legitimieren, und dass Christen gewissermaßen ein Instrument des politischen Pragmatismus waren. Im Gegensatz dazu zeigten die christlichen Reaktionen den Willen zur Gleichheit.

## **Abstract in English**

In September 2012, a video entitled “The Innocence of Muslims” provoked on YouTube an uproar in the Arab and Muslim worlds and clearly had the potential to damage already fragile interreligious relations, especially in Egypt. “The Innocence of Muslims” had been produced and promoted by extremist Copts living in the United States, extensively covered by Egyptian media and depicted the prophet Muhammad in a very negative way. In particular, the video showed how a group of Muslims attacked Copts while the police did not interfere. In a second part, the video explained the “cause” for this persecution through the character and life of Muhammad. Resorting to clichés of Christian apologetics in early Islam, Muhammad was depicted as a womanizer, child-molester and ruthless killer.

This Ph.D. thesis focuses on the question how and to what extent the question of Christian-Muslim relations was raised in the context of this video in Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and the Palestinian Territories. This focus allows to fill several gaps. Firstly, previous scholarly work on similar events – for instance the so called Danish cartoons (2006) – were limited to the coverage of Western media and did not investigate the content of the reactions. Secondly, since “The Innocence of Muslims” denounced the very state of (Arab) Christian-Muslim relations, this thesis is a snap-shot of these relations both on a real and discursive level. Thirdly, the video raised far reaching questions about the identity, the belonging and even the loyalty of Christians in the Arab world. Finally, it can be assumed that the Christian reactions to the video were not only motivated by the fear of backlashes.

This Ph.D. thesis investigated the Christian and Muslim reactions in Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and the Palestinian Territories, the joint Christian-Muslim reactions against the video (conferences, protests) as well as the content and background of the video. Overall, this thesis is “text-based,” meaning that all these reactions were analysed by means of a contextual analysis, and a philological and historical approach. The material comprised written and oral texts drawn from Arabic newspapers, ecclesiastical magazines, websites and videos. The thesis is largely based on a field research carried out between September 2014 and May 2015 in Beirut, Cairo, Jerusalem and Jordan thanks to the Marietta Blau Grant.

The thesis had many outcomes. Firstly, it has shown that both Christian and Muslim actors strongly condemned this video for being an “offense.” In addition, there were limited, nay no, anti-Christian backlashes. Especially, Islamist and Salafi actors in Egypt displayed a strong effort to prevent backlashes against Christians and appeared surprisingly moderate. Yet, to some extent, the crisis of “The Innocence of Muslims” was manufactured by some actors to further their political credentials and pressure their contenders, especially in Egypt (Nur Party) and Lebanon (Hezbollah/Amal Movement). The findings suggested a need for the Christian participation and visibility in the protests, and the status of Christians as “political assets.” In contrast, the Christian reactions showed a desire for equality.