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The Associated Press

Afghan demonstrators burn cars, throws stones at US base in protest against anti-Islam video

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Afghan protesters burn tyres on a street during a demonstration in Kabul September 17, 2012. Thousands of protesters took to the streets of the Afghan capital on Monday, setting fire to cars and shouting "death to America", the latest in demonstrations that have swept the Muslim world against a film mocking the Prophet Mohammad. REUTERS/Omar Sobhani

Hundreds of Afghans burned cars and threw rocks at a U.S. military base as a demonstration against an anti-Islam film that ridicules the Prophet Muhammad turned violent in the Afghan capital early Monday.

The air was thick with smoke on the Jalalabad road — a main thoroughfare into the city center where the crowd burned shipping containers and tires. Sirens wailed as fire engines rushed to the scene. At least one police vehicle was burned by the mob, according Daoud Amin, the police chief for Kabul province.

Men grabbed rocks from the roadside and lobbed them at Camp Phoenix, a U.S. military base that lies along the road.

The protesters shouted “Death to America!” and “Death to those people who have made a film and insulted our prophet!”

Police officers shot into the air to hold back the surging crowd of 800-some people and prevent them from pushing toward government buildings downtown, said Azizullah, a police officer at the site who, like many Afghans, only goes by one name. By late morning, the core protest on Jalalabad road appeared to be dying down, but there were reports of demonstrations starting up elsewhere in the city.

The film, which denigrates Islam’s Prophet Muhammad, has sparked violent protests in many Muslim countries in recent days, many of them outside U.S. diplomatic posts around the world. The U.S. Ambassador to Libya was killed during an attack on the consulate in Benghazi; protesters have also stormed the U.S. Embassy in Tunis and held violent demonstrations outside posts in Egypt and Sudan.

The U.S. has responded by deploying additional military forces to increase security in certain hotspots.

In Afghanistan, it was the fourth day of protests against the film, though the previous demonstrations have been peaceful. The Kabul demonstration appeared difficult to rein in because hundreds of protesters later split into small groups in different areas.

Mohammad Humayun, a 28-year-old protester, called on President Barack Obama to bring those who have insulted the prophet to justice.

“This is not the first time,” he said. “All of the time, they (Americans) are creating so much anger among the Muslims by insulting the Quran, insulting Muslims and the prophet of the Muslims.”

“People around the world are angry,” he added. “It is the responsibility of all Muslims to show reaction whenever they hear any disregard and disrespect.”

Wahidullah Hotak, another protester, said the rallies will continue “until the people who made the film go to trial.”

The Afghan government blocked video-sharing web site YouTube to prevent Afghans from viewing a clip of the anti-Muslim film. Officials have said it will remain blocked until the video is taken down. Other Google services, including Gmail, were also blocked in Afghanistan during much of the weekend and the block continued on some providers Monday.

The wave of international violence began Tuesday when mainly Islamist protesters climbed the U.S. Embassy walls in the Egyptian capital of Cairo and tore down the American flag from a pole in the courtyard.

Chris Stevens, the U.S. ambassador to Libya, was killed Tuesday along with three other Americans, as violent protesters stormed the consulate in Benghazi. Obama has vowed that the attackers would be brought to justice but also stressed that the U.S. respects religious freedom.