

Thousands protest in Mali over 'blasphemous' video

Bamako ([AFP](#)) via [France 24](#) – Thousands of demonstrators thronged Mali's capital Bamako on Friday to protest the publication of a video on social media deemed blasphemous against Islam.

Six people were held on Thursday accused of complicity in circulating a "blasphemous" video showing a man making "derogatory comments" and "insulting acts" against Muslims, the Koran and the Prophet Mohammed, the Bamako prosecutor's office said.

Police said the protest, called by the High Islamic Council of Mali (HCM), gathered thousands of people, although organisers estimated their numbers at more than one million.



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Slogans including "No to blasphemous comments" and "no more attacks on Islam and the Prophet Mohammed" were visible on the

protesters' banners. "No to blasphemy", "don't touch my religion", "the Koran is untouchable" are some of the slogans shouted by the protesters, as reported by the [daily Kati 24](#).

"What happened is unforgivable. The author of the blasphemous comments must be arrested and tried," imam Abdoulaye Fadiga told AFP.

The video that has raised controversy among the Muslim community in Mali begins with "Hotep", a greeting for the followers of Kemetism, a religion born recently and inspired by ancient Egypt – which is also considered by some as a sect – that defends African culture against monotheistic religions such as Islam or Christianity. The protagonist of the video records himself in a small tent when he begins to insult the Koran and shortly after begins to trample the book, according to RFI radio station.

The six people were put in pre-trial detention notably for refusing to tell authorities where the man – who is still on the run – was hiding, a source in the prosecutor's office told AFP.

The affair has caused uproar in Mali, where nearly 95 percent of the population is Muslim and the right to blaspheme does not exist.

The leader of the Malian military junta, Assimi Goita, condemned "with the utmost rigor the blasphemies" uttered by the man, expressing his solidarity and that of the government with the Muslim community. He also instructed the Minister of Justice and Human Rights to "do everything possible" to apprehend "the author of these blasphemies against Islam, as well as his accomplices, so that they may answer for their actions",

The HCM – a grouping of religious leaders and associations and Mali's highest Islamic body – has called for the man behind the video to be "killed".