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Race to the big screen: Qatar, Iran rival to make Prophet Mohammed movies



Movies depicting the life of Islam's Prophet Mohammed are at a competing production stage by filmmakers in Iran and Qatar, racing to bring the movie to the big screen.

The Qatari production is set to be shown as a series of films aiming to target a worldwide audience. With a spending budget of \$1 billion, the movie is funded by Qatar-based Alnoor Holdings. The film's production will be led by Muslim scholar Yusuf al-Qaradwai to ensure that events in the movie are parallel to the Quran.

"They are being understandably very cautious," said The Lord of the Rings producer Barrie Osborne, who was hired as the project advisor.

Now, Iranian director Majid Majidi is competing with Qatar's production, beginning to film another story of the Prophet in October, with a set budget of \$30 million.

The character of the Prophet will be shown in Majidi's production; his figure shown without revealing his face.

However, it is unlikely that the prophet's figure will be shown in the Qatari production, in accordance to Sunni Islamic laws stating prophets cannot be depicted on screen or in print.

Last year, protests swept the Muslim world in September following the release of the U.S. produced movie, Innocence of Muslims, which depicted the image of Prophet Muhammad as a womanizer.

Following the protests, the United Arab Emirates held an event in Dubai, as part of global campaign, named "The True Message of the Prophet," involving a group of young Muslims offering roses with a message of "peace and good manners" inspired by the sayings of Prophet Mohammed.