

Offices of French magazine that published cartoons mocking Prophet Mohammed guarded by riot police as it plans to release new satirical image

- **Charlie Hedbo's Paris HQ was firebombed last year after it published an issue it claimed had been guest-edited by Mohammed**

By Peter Allen

Riot police were guarding the offices of a satirical magazine in Paris last night as it prepared to publish cartoons mocking the Prophet Mohammed. Charlie Hedbo's HQ in the French capital was firebombed last year after it published an issue it claimed had been guest-edited by Mohammed. Despite the attack, it has now decided to print further drawings, including one of the Prophet in a wheelchair being pushed by a Jewish Rabbi.



The offices satirical magazine Charlie Hedbo after they were firebombed last year. They are now preparing to publish cartoons mocking the Prophet

It comes three days after unauthorised demonstrations by Muslims threatened to get out of hand on the Champs Elysee.

All were campaigning against what they view as unjustified attacks against their religion by artists and film makers around the world.

A spokesman for the prefecture of Paris police confirmed he had made contact with Charlie-Hebdo, and provided increased patrols around the offices, while Interior Minister Manuel Valls had also been informed about the situation.

'Security has been stepped up to try and avoid any attacks,' said a police spokesman.



The magazine's decision comes three days after unauthorised demonstrations by Muslims threatened to get out of hand on the Champs Elysee

The magazine, meanwhile, insists it has the right to caricature what it likes, with a spokesman saying they would not be intimidated 'by the handful of extremists who stir up trouble around the world.'

Molotov cocktails were used to burn down the Charlie Hebdo offices in November last year.

Yet despite the firebomb attack, the magazine went on to print the image of Mohammed in a special four-page supplement.



Satire: The editor of Charlie Hebdo was prosecuted after reprinting cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed in 2005, but was later acquitted

The weekly, known for its irreverent treatment of the political establishment and religious figures, bore the headline 'Charia Hebdo', in a reference to Muslim sharia law, and said that the issue had been guest-edited by Mohammed.

The incident pits Europe's tradition of free speech and secularism against Islam's injunction barring any depictions seen as mocking the Prophet.

The publication of cartoons of Mohammed in a Danish newspaper in 2005 sparked

unrest in the Muslim world in which at least 50 people were killed.

While French Muslim groups criticised Charlie Hebdo's work, they also condemned the firebomb attack.

The head of the Paris Mosque, Dalil Boubakeur, said at the time: 'I am extremely attached to freedom of the press, even if the press is not always tender with Muslims, Islam or the Paris Mosque. French Muslims have nothing to do with political Islam.'

Last week an anti-Islam movie produced by Nakoula Basseley Nakoula - also known as Sam Bacile - inflamed tensions throughout the Muslim World, including the Middle East and North Africa.