

Mosque stirs uproar

Pictures of candidates for Belgium Beauty Queen 2013 taken at Morocco's largest mosque!!!

The mosque's administration was granted the permission by the Moroccan Cinema Center (MCC)

By AL ARABIYA

Pictures of candidates for Belgium Beauty Queen 2013 taken at Morocco's largest mosque have stirred controversy in the North African kingdom, whose government is led by an Islamist party that won an election last year.

The pictures, being circulated online, raised questions about the responsible government agencies that granted the license for the photo shoot of the belles of Belgium in their tank tops and short shorts in the square of Casablanca's Hassan II Mosque.

Popular Moroccan news website Hespress quoted a source from the ministry of Islamic affairs denying any role for the ministry in the incident and pointing fingers at the mosque's administration, which is in charge of the overall management of one of the world's largest Islamic landmarks.

Casablanca's city council has also distanced itself from the incident. One of its members said the council did not authorize the photo shoot at the mosque.

A newspaper close to the opposition Socialist Union Party quoted a source at the mosque's administration as saying that a company behind the photo shoot was granted the permission by the Moroccan Cinema Centre (MCC).

The Ittihad (union) newspaper reported that the centre gave the license to the Radio Television Belge Francophone (RTBF), the public broadcasting body of the French Community of Belgium.

Hespress quoted prominent religious preacher Sheikh Abdul-Bari Zamzami as holding the interior ministry responsible for the incident.

Some people saw the incident as unacceptable and called for the responsible parties to be held accountable. Others expressed disinterest stressing the mosque lacks serious religious significance because it was built as "tourist destination not as a house of worship."

"I have never prayed in this Mosque and I do not qualify it as a real Mosque. We all know that this mosque has been forcefully built by robbing and stealing the pockets of million Moroccans under various authority threats," one person commented on Hespress.

"Also, I see that this "Mosque" is a sheer touristic building made for display and international propaganda. So no doubt that these beautiful European chicks were allowed to take pictures near this purely touristic Moroccan building."

Another one said, "Farce after farce; does it make sense that such moral crimes take place in Morocco, especially under the rule of the Islamist Justice and Development Party."



Candidates for Belgium Beauty Queen 2013 in controversial photo shoot at Morocco's largest mosque. (Photo courtesy Hespress)