

Holy hoax: Radical Islamists call on Egypt to destroy pyramids
By RT News
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Calls from a Bahraini Sunni cleric to destroy Egypt's Great Pyramids have been revealed as a hoax. The demands were made from a Twitter account which claimed to be owned by Bahrain's President of National Unity, Abd al-Latif al-Mahmoud.

In the post, a person masquerading as al-Mahmoud labeled the pyramids "idolatrous" and asked Egypt's new president to destroy them, as Egypt's Daily News reports.

Several conservative websites used the news to raise alarm over the rise of Egypt's Islamist government.

According to rumors, al-Mahmoud encouraged Cairo to "accomplish what the Sahabi Amr bin al-As could not."

This was a reference to the Muslim Prophet Mohammed's companion, Amr bin al-As, and his ancient tribesmen who invaded and conquered Egypt in 641.

An Islamization process was begun under his rule – which saw many Egyptian monuments destroyed as "relics of infidelity."

However, demolishing the pyramids was prohibited during the 7th century – so the structures remained untouched.

The parody tweet was published on June 25 – the same day Muhammed Morsi was announced president of Egypt. However, it wasn't picked up by media until today.

The fake tweet that sparked frenzy in the Arab Media coincided with a genuine attack on cultural heritage objects by radicals.

On Tuesday, Islamist fighters destroyed two tombs at the famous Djingareyber mosque in the Malian city of Timbuktu. Witnesses say militants shot into the air to warn people away while they smashed the shrines.

The mosque is a UNESCO World Heritage site and contains shrines dedicated to Islamic saints.

The Al-Qaeda-linked Ansar Dine group claimed responsibility for the act, saying the shrines were idolatrous.

The International Criminal Court has condemned the destruction of the tombs, and warned that it could constitute a war crime.

The act has led many to ask why Islamic militants would choose to demolish their own religious heritage.

A spokesman for the Ansar Dine group, Oumar Ould Hamaha, told AP that the organization has "divine orders" to destroy any grave that is over 20cm tall, because anything taller encourages people to direct their prayer toward the deceased, rather than to God.

Hamaha says residents of Timbuktu need to get their priorities straight and stop confusing the saints with Allah. He claims the destruction is for their own good.

But the militants aren't solely focused on demolishing Muslim heritage; other religions have fallen victim to destruction, as well.

In 2001, the Taliban's supreme leader issued an order against un-Islamic graven images.

The edict resulted in members using explosives, tanks, and anti-aircraft weapons to blow apart two images of Buddha in eastern Afghanistan.

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