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**Weekly Report of  
Studies in Inter-Religious Relations in Plural Societies (SRP) Programme**

**Religious Conflicts**

**1. Two suicide bombers kill 15 at Shi'ite mosque in Baghdad**

15 people were killed and 50 more injured when two suicide bombers detonated bombs inside a Shi'ite mosque in a Shi'ite-dominated neighbourhood in Baghdad. The attack was claimed by the Islamic state militants who regarded Shia Muslims as apostates.

Keywords: Iraq, Baghdad, Islam, Sunni, Shia, ISIS

**2. Suicide bombing kills 27 at Shi'ite funeral in east Iraq**

At least 27 people were killed and 55 injured by bombs detonated by suicide bombers at a funeral for the relative of a Shi'ite militia commander. The targets of the attack were two local commanders of the Hashid Shaabi umbrella group who were attending the funeral of one of their relatives. While no group has claimed responsibility for the attack yet, such attacks are characteristic of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) militants who regard Shia Muslims as apostates.

Keywords: Iraq, Muqdadia, Islam, Sunni, Shia, ISIS

**Religious Controversies**

**1. She was asked to switch seats. Now she's charging El Al with Sexism.**

An elderly woman was requested by Israeli national carrier El Al to change seats after an ultra-orthodox man who was allocated the seat beside her refused to have her sitting with him, citing religious reasons. Ms. Renee Rabinowitz was disappointed that the airline chose to side with the male passenger who discriminated her for her gender, when the religious justification for such discrimination was unclear.

Keywords: Israel, Judaism, Haredi, El Al, Gender Discrimination

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## **2. New clip from Danish mosque: Hit kids who don't pray**

The Grimhøj mosque in Denmark, known for its conservative stance and purported support for the Islamic state militants, is embroiled in controversy again when it was exposed by documentary that one of its imams had advocated the “educational beating” of children who refuse to pray. The mosque responded by saying that the message was taken out of its original context.

Keywords: Denmark, Aarhus, Islam, Grimhøj mosque, ISIS

# **Secularism, Religious Freedom and New Religious Movements**

## **1. Pastor in China Who Resisted Cross Removal Gets 14 Years in Prison**

A pastor and his wife from Zhejiang provinces' Jinhua city were handed sentences of 14 and 12 years respectively after being convicted of “corruption, financial crimes and gathering people to disturb social order”. However, a house church preacher now living in the United States believes that Mr. Bao Guohua was being persecuted for his resistance to removing the Christian Cross of his church on the provincial government's order. Zhejiang province has started a campaign to limit the influence of Christianity and Churches since two years ago.

Keywords: China, Zhejiang, Protestant Christianity, Christian Cross

## **2. Human rights group calls for the release of detained Sudanese pastors**

Two Sudanese pastors have been detained by the Sudanese government since December 2015, with no information on their whereabouts. Pastors Hassan Kodi and Telal Ngosi have been detained after returning from a Christian conference in Ethiopia. Human rights and Christian groups in Sudan are calling for their release as both are at risks of torture by a pro-Muslim government. It is also not the first time that Sudanese Christians have been detained for charges of apostasy which analysts believe is an attempt by the government to remove Christianity from Sudan.

Keywords: Sudan, Christianity, Religious Persecution

# **Peace, Reconciliation and Interfaith Dialogue**

## **1. Najib: Strengthen interfaith understanding, tolerance and respect for national harmony**

Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak called for the strengthening of the “pillars and fabric of multi-faith” to maintain the country's national harmony and for the country's progress. He urged different communities to engage in dialogue and to focus on similarities between different communities than their differences. He also highlighted the role that the Committee to Promote

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Understanding and Harmony Among Religious Adherents (JKMPKA) played to forge closer relations between different cultural and religious groups.

Keywords: Malaysia, Multi-faith, Interfaith harmony

## **2. Azerbaijan's promotion of interfaith dialogue hailed**

Azerbaijan has been commended by the members of the Legislature of the U.S. State of Oregon for its efforts in promoting interfaith dialogue, religious tolerance and inclusions. The proclamation issued by the Legislature also acknowledged the Azerbaijan government's efforts in the creation of an environment where religions in the country can flourish without persecution.

Keywords: Azerbaijan, interreligious tolerance, interreligious harmony, inclusion