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

**Religious Conflict**

**1. India: village church attacked, Christians hospitalised**

Several Christians were hospitalised and others forced to reconvert to Hinduism, after a village church in India's central Chhattisgarh state was attacked by Hindu hardliners. Recently, the number of violent attacks on Christians and churches in India has increased.

Keywords: India, Hinduism, Christian

**2. Indian Muslim, Accused of Stealing a Cow, Is Beaten to Death by a Hindu Mob**

A Muslim man, who was accused of stealing a cow, was beaten to death on Monday by a mob of Hindus. Recent killings are occurring against a backdrop of intensifying political conflict over laws and policies aimed at protecting cows from slaughter and consumption.

Keywords: India, Hindus, Muslim, Mob

**Religious Controversies**

**1. Catholic schools to ban Islam from religious GCSE studies**

Catholic schools, which accounts for one in 10 schools in England and Wales, choose Judaism as second religion for GCSE studies after recent reforms to GCSE exam, requiring schools to teach two religions rather than one. Muslim scholars criticise that this decision undermined Pope Francis's message of greater tolerance between the faiths.

Keywords: UK, Catholic school, Judaism, Islam

## **2. PM Hasina asks all to avoid hurting religious sentiments**

Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina, emphasised the government's commitment to defend freedom of express, while criticising the recent attacks on secularists. She called for a greater caution when people express views on religions, underscoring the inter-religious understanding.

Keywords: Bangladesh, Secularist, Freedom of express

## **3. Arundhati Roy returns award in protest against religious intolerance in India**

Dozens of Indian artists and intellectuals return their national awards in protest against the nonchalance of the government on recent religious attacks and its ignorance of the simmering Hindu extremism in the country after Narendra Modi assumed the power. Supporters of the government criticised it as a political vengeance.

Keywords: India, Hindu extremism, Religious attack

## **4. Myanmar: NLD warned to leave race, religion laws alone**

As Aung San Suu kyi's party seems certain to win a landslide victory in the parliamentary election, Wirathu, a notorious anti-Muslim cleric, warned the NLD against attacking a controversial set of "race and religion" laws. Additionally, hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslims were unable to vote on Sunday because the government bowed to calls from ultra-nationalists to exclude them.

Keywords: Myanmar, Parliamentary election, Rohingya, Ultra-nationalist

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

## **1. George Brandis: Catholics and other devout people victims of 'intolerance'**

The federal attorney general of Australia, George Brandis, claims at a roundtable of faith leaders that many religious people, especially Catholics, are exposed to negative consequences of religious intolerance, challenging the gathering to develop strategies to promote mutual respect. Previously, Brandis has defended people's right to show the incitement of racial hatred, while suggesting a plan of law amendment to guarantee religious freedom.

Keywords: Australia, Catholic, Religious freedom, Bigotry

## **2. China says graft fight in Tibet also aimed at religion**

China's ruling Communist Party's fight against corruption is also being applied in Tibet to officials who secretly believe in religion and try to pay pilgrimages to the Dalai. Beijing's fight against corruption may have been welcomed in Tibet at first; however, the recent imprisonment of Tibetan officials following allegation of "secretly having religious belief" demonstrate that the Chinese Communist Party uses anti-graft policies in its fight against religious freedom in Tibet.

Keywords: China, Tibet, Dalai Lama, Anti-corruption, Religious freedom

## **Peace, Reconciliation and Interfaith Dialogue**

### **1. Teenage Muslims in Lahore gather to support persecuted Christians**

Pakistani NGO Bargad organised a demonstration of over 500 young Muslims to campaign for the end of discrimination and prejudice against religious minorities. The NGO also promoted a campaign called "Green for White" which aims to raise awareness of religious persecution among young Muslims in Pakistan.

Keywords: Pakistan, NGO, Religious minority, Muslim

### **2. UK faith leaders unite to challenge welfare penalties on larger families**

An alliance of faith organisations, including Christian and Jewish, has issued a briefing paper to challenge the UK government's welfare reform proposals, calling on members of the House of Lords to throw out clauses that penalise larger families.

Keywords: UK, Christian, Jewish, Faith organisation