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

Religious Conflicts

1. Two suicide bombers kill 22 at mosque in northeast Nigeria's Maiduguri

22 people were killed and a further 18 injured when two female suicide bombers detonated their bombs at a mosque in Maiduguri during morning prayers. Although no group has claimed responsibility for the attack yet, the modus operandi of the attack is characteristic of the Boko Haram which has been using female suicide bombers in its attempt to carve out an Islamic state in the region.

Keywords: Nigeria, Maiduguri, Islam, Boko Haram, Suicide Terrorism

2. Five held after two Muslim cowherds hanged to death in India

Two Muslim Cowherds were hanged to death by suspected Hindu radicals in India's Jharkhand state, sparking violent protests. Opponents of the Bharatiya Janata Party have accused them of stoking religious tensions to polarise voters in view of the upcoming state assembly elections, and not doing enough to protect the religious minorities engaged in cowherding.

Keywords: India, Jharkhand, Hinduism, Islam, Communal Violence, Cowherding

3. Brussels attacks: Zaventem and Maelbeek bombs kill many

Three explosions hitting Brussels' Zaventem airport and Maelbeek airport have killed at least 31 people. The Islamic State (ISIS) has claimed responsibility for the attacks. These attacks come within days of the arrest of the main surviving suspect of the November 2015 Paris attacks, Salah Abdeslam and has sparked concern regarding the efficient organising abilities of the terrorists if these attacks were retaliatory in nature.

Keywords: Belgium, Brussels, ISIS, suicide bombing, Paris attacks

Religious Controversies

1. Breaking taboo, Hindu widows celebrate festival of colors

Widows in most of India were unable to participate in religious festivals and were shunned by even families as their presence was considered inauspicious. However, with the assistance of aid groups like Sulabh International, they were able to participate in Holi, the Hindu festival of colours, in Vrindavan in Uttar Pradesh without discrimination.

Keywords: India, Hinduism, Holi, Vrindavan, Widows, Sulabh International

2. Chief Rabbi Urges Israeli Soldiers to Kill Palestinian Assailants, Not Worry About Court or Chief of Staff

Israel's Chief Sephardi Rabbi urged Israeli soldiers to take decisive action to kill Palestinian assailants as it was a "religious imperative" and acts as useful deterrence against the Palestinian assailants. He also commented that the soldiers should not be overly concerned about scrutiny from the judiciary or military since this was a religious imperative and also important for self-defence.

Keywords: Israel, Judaism, Palestinian Assailants, Israel Defence Force

Secularism, Religious Freedom and New Religious Movements

1. Kaduna govt defends controversial bill banning outdoor religious music

The Kaduna State Government in Nigeria had proposed a Religious Preaching Bill in front of the House of Assembly to curb religious extremism and hate speech. The Bill prohibits playing of evangelical music in public places and limits the use of loud speakers to the interior of Mosques and Churches. However, this Bill has generated intense debate, with some representatives of Christianity and Islam, the two main religions in Nigeria as they have perceived in as an infringement on the right of religious freedom.

Keywords: Nigeria, Kaduna, Religious Freedom, Christianity, Islam

Peace, Reconciliation and Interfaith Dialogue

1. Faith leaders pray for peace and harmony

Religious leaders and representatives from the Inter-Religious Organisation gathered at the Lorong Koo Chye Sheng Hong temple to pray for continuing peace and harmony in Singapore. The event was

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held to remember the efforts of Singapore's founding Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, in creating a harmonious multi-racial and multi-religious society here.

Keywords: Singapore, Multi-faith, Interfaith harmony, Lee Kuan Yew