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

Religious Controversies

1. Bosnia women protest at ban on headscarf

About 2,000 women in Bosnia have protested against a ban on wearing Islamic headscarves in courts and other legal institutions. The protest came in response to a decision by Bosnia's high judicial council, which supervises the functioning of the judiciary, to ban "religious signs" in judicial institutions. Muslims make up about 40% of Bosnia's 3.8m population. The others are mostly Orthodox or Catholic Christians.

Keywords: Bosnia, Muslims, Hijab Ban, Protests

2. Sikh Kicked Off Plane Because Of His Turban

AeroMexico did not allow a well-known Sikh man to board a plane Monday because of his beard and turban. The airlines confirmed that the actor and designer Waris Ahluwalia, was removed from his flight as he did not remove his turban for a security screening. The turban in Sikhism is a central religious symbol and is not removed in public. The incident has raised concerns about racial profiling and religious ignorance with Mr Ahluwalia demanding a public apology from the airlines.

Keywords: Sikh, Turban, Airlines, AeroMexico

Secularism, Religious Freedom and New Religious Movements

1. Province in Muslim Pakistan passes landmark Hindu marriage bill

Pakistan's southern province of Sindh on Monday became the country's first region to give its small Hindu minority the right to register their marriages officially. Non-Muslims comprise nearly 3% of Pakistan's population but Hindus have had no legal mechanism to register their marriages. Thus, the aim of the legislation is legally recognize Hindu marriages and address many of the concerns faced by

the group. Over the past many years minority communities in the country have been targeted by terrorist groups.

Keywords: Hindus, Pakistan, Marriage Law, Religious Minority

2. Israel's Supreme Court: Public ritual baths must accept non-Orthodox, too

Israel's Supreme Court has ruled that public ritual baths must accept all prospective converts, including those undergoing conversion through the Reform and Conservative movements. By tradition, converts to Judaism must immerse in a ritual bath, called a mikvah, at the conclusion of their conversion process. Until now, the Orthodox officials who administer all government-funded mikvahs have barred non-Orthodox converts, claiming their traditions do not conform to Jewish law and the people they convert are therefore not Jews.

Keywords: Israel, Supreme Court, Public Baths, Jews, Orthodox, non-Orthodox

Peace, Reconciliation and Interfaith Dialogue

1. Christians Protect Mosques on Fri., Muslims Guard Churches on Sunday

With the terrorist group Boko Haram targeting both churches and mosques, Cameroon has set up volunteer "vigilance committees" to patrol villages and the capital of Yaounde, to watch for possible terrorists. As a result Muslims and Christians are coming to protect each other. The worshipers in West Africa are protecting every place of prayer, no matter religion. On Fridays in Cameroon, Christians guard the mosques as Muslims pray. Muslims return the favor by protecting churches during Sunday services.

Keywords: Cameroon, Boko Haram, Muslims, Christians