

## Weekly Report (17 -24 September 2015)

### Religious Conflict

#### 1. Insurgents fired 370 rockets at two Syrian Shiite villages

Insurgents detonated at least five car bombs and fired 370 rockets at two Shiite villages in northwestern Syria on Friday. The coalition of insurgents, including Al-Qaeda's Al-Nusra Front, attacked government-held al-Foua and Kefraya villages in Idlib province, an area bordering Turkey that is mostly held by insurgents.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2015/09/18/Insurgents-attack-two-Syrian-Shi-ite-villages-with-5-car-bombs-370-rockets-.html>

#### 2. Christians under threat in Nepal as anti-conversion law passed

Nepal has passed and inserted an "anti-conversion" law into its Constitution. While maintaining that Nepal is a secular state and is neutral towards all religions, "any act to convert another person from one religion to another or any act or behaviour to undermine or jeopardize the religion of another." is prohibited. Religious minorities like the Christians fear that the new law would make it illegal for them to discuss their faiths with other religions' believers.

[http://www.christiantoday.com/article/christians\\_under\\_threat\\_in\\_nepal\\_as\\_anti\\_conversion\\_law\\_passed/65366.htm](http://www.christiantoday.com/article/christians_under_threat_in_nepal_as_anti_conversion_law_passed/65366.htm)

#### 3. Too Many Across the Globe Live Under Threat Because of their Religion

U.S. Representative to the UN Human Rights Council, Ambassador Keith Harper stated that the United States is "concerned" that certain groups of people around the world are persecuted for their religious faiths due to government restrictions on religious faiths.

<http://www.humanrights.gov/dyn/2015/09/too-many-across-the-globe-live-under-threat-because-of-their-religion/>

#### 4. ISIS Using Churches as Torture Chambers, Forcing Christians to Convert or Be Killed

The ISIS is using captured Churches as torture chambers to force Christians to renounce their faith and convert to their brand of Islam. ISIS is reported to be removing Christian relics from ancient holy sites and smuggling them to fund their terrorist activities.

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/isis-using-churches-as-torture-chambers-forcing-christians-to-convert-or-be-killed-145814/>

#### 5. Pakistani Mob Sets Christian Family's Home on Fire to Burn Them Alive

A mob of Muslim radicals attempted to set a Christian family's home on fire after locking them inside in Islamabad, Pakistan. In the recent months Pakistan has witnessed a number of attacks on Churches and Christians.

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/pakistani-mob-sets-christian-home-on-fire-tries-to-kill-family-members-by-burning-them-alive-145809/>

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## Religious Controversies

### 1. Palestinians, Israeli police clash at Jerusalem shrine for third day

Violence between Palestinians and Israeli police at the Al-Aqsa mosque continued for the third-straight day with the former hurling flares and stones and the latter firing stun grenades and tear gas against each other.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/09/15/us-israel-palestinians-idUSKCN0RF11G20150915>

### 2. Muslim student arrested for building a clock mistaken for a bomb

A 14-year old Muslim student, Ahmed Mohamed, was accused and arrested for building a bomb when he brought his homemade electronic clock to school to show an engineering teacher. Many believed that the boy was arrested for being a Muslim.

<http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/9/16/muslim-student-arrested-for-building-a-clock-mistaken-for-a-bomb.html>

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

### **1. Canada court rules women may wear veils during citizenship oath**

The Canadian Federal Court of Appeal ruled against the Canadian government's case to prohibit a Muslim woman from wearing her niqab during the citizenship oath-swearing ceremony.

<http://jurist.org/paperchase/2015/09/canada-court-rules-women-may-wear-veil-during-citizenship-oath.php>

### **2. Indonesian Government Needs to Do More to Prevent Persecution of Religious Minorities, Says Report**

"A new report released by World Evangelical Alliance said that not enough has been done in Indonesia to curb persecution of religious minorities at the hands of Islamic radicals", in particular the "non-compliance" by local appointed leaders for fear of retaliation by radicals or their own religious biases.

<http://www.christianitydaily.com/articles/5993/20150915/world-evangelical-alliance-report-indonesia-needs-enforce-rule-law-prevent.htm>

### **3. Uzbek government restricts pilgrimage to Mecca**

Uzbekistan limits the number of pilgrims seeking to make the hajj in Mecca to just over 2015 in 2015, out of its 27.5 million Muslim population. Applications require many supporting documents and testimonials. Restrictions are also imposed on the currency for the journey.

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Uzbek-government-restricts-pilgrimage-to-Makkah-35355.html>

### **4. Charlie Hebdo stirs new controversy with migrant cartoons**

French Weekly Charlie Hebdo published controversial cartoons mocking the drowning of a Syrian child who attempted to seek refuge with his family in Greece. The cartoons drew global attention and criticism.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/09/15/us-europe-migrants-charliehebdo-idUSKCN0RF1PQ20150915>

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

### **1. Niger's Muslims and Christians join forces for peace**

Religious leaders for Christianity and Islam in Niger are committed to rebuilding community bonds through inter-religious dialogues and a plan known as "Renew the Value of Living Together" (REVE). "Committees for dialogue" have been set up in the country's eight regions comprising members of different religions.

<http://news.yahoo.com/nigers-muslims-christians-join-forces-peace-052421514.html>

### **2. Senior religious leaders in Nigeria call for dialogue to build peace**

A delegation from the International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID) met with more than 20 senior religious leaders, government officials and civil society representatives during a week-long trip to Abuja, Nigeria, to explore opportunities for inter-religious dialogue.

<http://pressreleases.religionnews.com/2015/09/15/senior-religious-leaders-in-nigeria-call-for-dialogue-to-build-peace/>