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

### Religious Conflict

#### 1. Rise in anti-Semitic incidents in UK

Data from the UK Community Security Trust revealed that incidents of anti-Semitism rose by 11% in the first six months of the year, the second highest ever recorded during this period. The biggest year-on-year increase was recorded from April-June, when antisemitism in the Labour Party received significant media coverage.

Keywords: United Kingdom, Jewish, Anti-Semitism

### Religious Controversies

#### 1. French town tells halal supermarket to diversify and sell non-halal food products

Local authorities in the Paris suburb of Colombes claimed that a Good Price mini-market has violated French republican principles by selling only halal products and prioritising the Muslim community instead of catering to all communities. Mayor of Colombes Nicole Goueta had asked the store owner to include non-halal meat and alcohol or risk closing down the store, following public complaints that the store did not serve the full range of products available at Good Price. The Colombes housing authority has taken legal action to bring an end to the lease of the store.

Keywords: Paris, France, Islam, Halal

#### 2. Swedish church plans to drop Bibles over ISIS-controlled areas

An evangelical church in Sweden, the Livets Ord Church, has announced its plans to use drones to drop electronic copies of the Bibles onto areas of Iraq under ISIS control. Representatives of the church dismissed claims that the move was intended to be provocative. However, the church has been frequently criticised for operating like a cult.

### Secularism, Religious Freedom and New Religious Movements

#### 1. Mixed views over more prominent “No religion” option in 2016 Census

The Australian Bureau of Statistics' decision to move the "No religion" option to the top of the list of responses to the question on a person's religion in the 2016 Census has sparked numerous campaigns in the country. The Atheist Foundation of Australia strongly advocated for citizens to 'Mark No Religion', arguing that this will have a huge impact on the Government's spending on religious-based facilities and services. On the other hand, some right-wing Christian groups have been circulating emails to warn citizens against marking no religion, over fears that Australia could become a 'Muslim country' if all Australian Muslims were to declare their religious affiliation.

Keywords: Australia, Secularism, Islam, Christianity

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

### **1. A month to acknowledge contributions of Muslim Americans**

California's State Assembly has passed a resolution that declared August 2016 as Muslim Appreciation and Awareness Month. The resolution was introduced by assembly member Bill Quirk, who recognised Muslim Americans' invaluable contributions in various fields and spoke out against Islamophobia.

Keywords: California, United States, Islam, Islamophobia