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

Religious Conflicts

1. Muslim mob in Egypt strips 70-year-old Christian woman

A 70-year old Egyptian Christian woman was assaulted and stripped naked before being paraded on the streets by a Muslim mob in Minya province after rumours of the woman's son having had an affair with a Muslim woman circulated. Seven Christian homes were also ransacked in the process. The police were criticized for their delayed action even though they had been notified by the family of threats received against them.

Keywords: Egypt, Minya, Islam, Christianity, religious violence

2. Suspected al Shabaab fighters kill 3 village elders in Kenya - police

Three village elders of a village in Kenya's Kwale County, including the Village Chairman and a Muslim cleric, were shot and killed by suspected militants of the radical Islamist group, Al Shabaab. The police believed that the suspects were young recruits who had returned to Kenya and suspected that the village elders were providing the security agencies with information to fight the insurgents.

Keywords: Kenya, Kwale, Al-Shabaab, extremism

Religious Controversies

1. Couple Files Religious Discrimination Complaint against Inn

A couple in Wisconsin has filed a complaint against an Illinois inn with the Illinois Department of Human Rights for its refusal to allow non-religious (Christian) weddings to be held in its premises. They were not comfortable with a Christian wedding as the bride is a Jew. The owner denied the allegations blaming a city rule but the Galena authorities commented that they do not get involved in religious matters.

Keywords: United States, Illinois, Christianity, Judaism, religious discrimination

2. Outrage in multi-ethnic Malaysia as government backs Islamic law

The ruling government unexpectedly submitted to parliament a hudud bill that allows for the Islamic penal code to be implemented in Kelantan state that had been proposed by the Islamist group Parti Islam se-Malaysia's (PAS). This move shocked the Barisan Nasional's Chinese and Indian coalition partners who fear that such a move could lead to further strains in relations between Malaysia's various ethnic communities if the penal code is to be expanded to other states.

Keywords: Malaysia, Hudud Law, constitutional concerns, multi-ethnicity

Secularism, Religious Freedom and New Religious Movements

1. 'I knew it would be an uproar,' says student caught in The Citadel hijab dispute

A Muslim student accepted into the Citadel military college sparked an out roar after she requested for the college to grant her a religious accommodation to wear the hijab as part of the uniform. Sana Hamze's case made national headlines and generated debate about religious freedom, corps unity and the ideals of a system that requires uniforms to encourage cadets to work together and judge one another on character and leadership rather than individual preferences, habits and surface traits.

Keywords: United States, Islam, religious freedom, corps unity

Peace, Reconciliation and Interfaith Dialogue

1. Pope Francis meets top Egyptian cleric, ending five-year freeze in relations

Pope Francis has met the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Egypt's highest Islamic Authority to improve relations after the mosque and university center criticized former Pope Benedict for his "repeated insults" on Islam. The Vatican said the two men had discussed the problems of violence and terrorism, and the situation of Christians in the Middle East, including how best to protect them.

Keywords: Egypt, Vatican, Pope Francis, Grand Imam, Catholicism, Islam, Inter-religious relations

2. Seeing radical Muslims everywhere you look? Try 'Islamophobin'!

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) has decided to take a humorous approach to heighten awareness about Islam and denouncing anti-Islam bigotry by offering spoof medication (sugar-free chewing gums) "Islamophobin" that it believes can relieve multiple symptoms of Islamophobia. The CAIR hopes to highlight the harm that Islamophobia does to ordinary American Muslims and to the American foundational values of equality and religious freedom.

Keywords: United States, Islamophobia, Islam, religious discrimination