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

Religious Conflicts

1. Annihilation of Christianity: ISIS blow up historic church in onslaught on Christians

The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria continued to destroy symbols of Christianity in the territories that they held, with the latest casualty being the historic Clock Church, an iconic sight in Mosul. The 1870s church was laden with explosives and blown up by the extremists.

Keywords: Iraq, Mosul, Islam, Christianity, ISIS

2. Plot to blow up Aventura synagogue ends with man's arrest

A Muslim-convert extremist had plotted to destroy the Aventura synagogue in Sunny Isles with a FBI undercover agent to "express his current hatred for the Jewish people" and to inspire other Muslims to follow suit. Although he was not affiliated to any terrorist groups, he was keen to act in the name of groups like Al-Qaeda-linked Shabaab and ISIS.

Keywords: United States, Miami, Judaism, Muslim Extremism

3. Bombs in Baghdad kill 14, including some Shi'ite pilgrims

Three bombs exploded in Baghdad and its nearby towns of Tarmiya and Khalisa, killing at least 14 people. The Islamic State claimed responsibility for the Baghdad attack which killed several Shi'ite pilgrims but no group have assumed responsibility for the smaller attacks yet. Baghdad has fallen victim to a string of bombings despite increased security.

Keywords: Iraq, Baghdad, Muslim militants, ISIS

Religious Controversies

1. Indian police, Hindu hardliners halt church wedding

A church wedding at the Church of God in India's Madhya Pradesh state was stopped midway as members of the fringe Hindu group Bajrang Dal barged into the Church with police, who arrested ten people on charges of forced conversion. This once again sparked an outcry from the Christian minority who have been the targets of religious attacks and casted further doubt on the practice of religious freedom in India.

Keywords: India, Hinduism, Christianity, Religious Persecution, Religious Hardliners

Secularism, Religious Freedom and New Religious Movements

1. Muslim footballers on French Riviera risk suspension if they pray on the pitch

The right-wing mayor of Nice, Christian Estrosi, has warned Muslim footballers and their clubs that they face suspensions and loss of state subsidies if the footballers were caught praying beside the football pitches. The mayor based his statement on the new "secularism charter" introduced by the football authorities on the French Riviera that seeks to prohibit religion being practised in the game. However, the French Education Minister Najat Vallaud-Belkacem had warned last year that militant secularism could end up alienating young Muslims and pushing them towards radicalisation.

Keywords: France, Nice, Islam, Religious Freedom, Secularism in Sport

1. Religious freedom in India on 'negative trajectory': US panel

The annual report of the Congress-mandated US Commission for International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) proclaimed that religious tolerance in India had deteriorated and religious violations increased in 2015. It urged India's leaders to rebuke leaders who have made religious-insensitive comments in public and to urge states that have enacted anti-conversion laws to repeal them or to ensure that they are aligned to human rights standards.

Keywords: India, Religious Freedom, Religious Persecution, Religious Minorities