

Religious intolerance on the rise

22nd May, 2013



A report from the U.S. State Department has highlighted the rise of religious intolerance worldwide. U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry gave reporters a summary of the "International Religious Freedom" report. He said: "[It] shines light on the challenges people face as they seek nothing more than

basic religious freedom and the right to worship as they wish." Kerry said a particularly worrying trend was the increased discrimination against Jews and Muslims around the world. The report highlighted a rise in anti-Islamic sentiment in Europe and Asia, and an increase in anti-Semitism in other parts of the world. Kerry warned that: "When countries undermine or attack religious freedom, they threaten their country's own stability."

The report opened with a quote from President Barack Obama, who said religious freedom was, "an essential part of human dignity, and without it our world cannot know lasting peace". The report outlined how nations were repressing religious freedom. It said: "Numerous governments imposed...undue and inappropriate restrictions on religious groups and abused their members, in some cases as part of formal government law and practice." The report also warned that denying freedom of worship increased the danger of political and societal instability. It said such a policy: "Undercuts society's ability to counter and combat the biased and warped interpretations of religion that violent extremists propagate."

Sources: www.christianpost.com / www.state.gov

Writing

Religious intolerance is one of the biggest dangers to our security. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

report / highlighted / intolerance / challenges / discrimination / religious freedom / human dignity / lasting peace / restrictions / instability / interpretations / extremists

True / False

- The Vatican in Rome has published a report about religious freedom. T / F
- John Kerry talked about challenges for people to worship freely. T / F
- Kerry said there was an increasing intolerance against Muslims & Jews. T / F
- Kerry said attacking religious freedom did not affect a nation's stability. T / F
- The report opened with words from a Hindu teacher. T / F
- Obama said there could be no lasting peace without religious freedom. T / F
- The article mentions three nations where there is no religious freedom. T / F
- The report suggests religious intolerance creates extremism. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. highlighted | a. encounter |
| 2. summary | b. refusing |
| 3. face | c. security |
| 4. trend | d. overview |
| 5. stability | e. needless |
| 6. essential | f. spread |
| 7. lasting | g. pointed out |
| 8. undue | h. vital |
| 9. denying | i. long-term |
| 10. propagate | j. shift |

Discussion – Student A

- Why aren't people tolerant toward other religions?
- What role does religion play in your life?
- Do you accept and respect people from all religions?
- Why do some countries see religion as something dangerous?
- Why are there so many different religions?
- Why is there an increase in discrimination against Jews and Muslims?
- Does greater religious freedom lead to a more peaceful society?
- What do you like and dislike about religion?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. It shines light on the | a. anti-Islamic sentiment |
| 2. a particularly | b. of human dignity |
| 3. a rise in | c. own stability |
| 4. undermine or | d. interpretations of religion |
| 5. they threaten their country's | e. worrying trend |
| 6. an essential part | f. challenges people face |
| 7. ...how nations were repressing | g. extremists |
| 8. the danger of political and | h. attack religious freedom |
| 9. biased and warped | i. religious freedom |
| 10. violent | j. societal instability |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think of people who do not believe in God?
- Which countries do you think repress religion or religions?
- If all religions promote love for all, why is there so much hate in the world?
- Is fighting a war in the name of God a contradiction?
- Does religion bring the world together?
- What would Jesus, the Prophet Mohamed, Buddha, etc. think of our world today?
- Are religious people happier than non-religious people?
- What questions would you like to ask the author of the report?

Spelling

- tghhighdiel the rise
- the eeshnalglc people face
- a crriyaluatpl worrying trend
- increased mditiinonscari
- a rise in anti-Islamic etntnsime
- nthaerte their country's own stability
- an lstsneaei part
- human itdingy
- oprtarepaniip restrictions
- giyendn freedom of worship
- ibedas and warped interpretations
- violent sirtmesxte

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. d	3. a	4. j	5. c
6. h	7. i	8. e	9. b	10. f

Role Play

Role A – Religious freedom

You think religious freedom is the most important. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their freedom. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): freedom of speech, freedom to marry who you choose or freedom to wear what you want.

Role B – Freedom of speech

You think freedom of speech is the most important. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their freedom. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): religious freedom, freedom to marry who you choose or freedom to wear what you want.

Role C – Freedom to marry who you choose

You think freedom to marry who you choose is the most important. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their freedom. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): freedom of speech, religious freedom or freedom to wear what you want.

Role D – Freedom to wear what you want

You think freedom to wear what you want is the most important. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their freedom. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): freedom of speech, freedom to marry who you choose or religious freedom.

Speaking - Freedoms

Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the most important at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- religious freedom
- freedom to be creative
- freedom to travel
- freedom of speech
- freedom to join a union
- choice of who to marry
- freedom to wear anything
- freedom to work anywhere

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	T	d	F	e	F	f	T	g	F	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.