

KYRGYZSTAN: Kyrgyz cemeteries to be divided into sectors for various religions groups

Interfax Religion (13.03.2017) – <http://bit.ly/2mn5mFH> – Osh, March 13, Interfax – The Kyrgyz State Commission for Religious Affairs (SCRA) has decided to divide the country's cemeteries into sectors depending on the religion of the deceased.

The decision was made in order “not to infringe on the rights of citizens who during their lifetime adhered to different religious views,” the SCRA told *Interfax*.

“According to a study, 90% of the population, by ethnicity and religious views, profess Islam, therefore, a bigger part of a cemetery will be allocated for it, division into Islamic as well as other religions is envisaged,” the SCRA representative said.

Cemeteries will be divided based on local community applications, the dividing itself will be marked either naturally – trees or bushes – or by artificial fences, he said.

Niyazaly Aripov, a theologian, told *Interfax* that such a decision was made because disputes over which religion the person being buried belonged to have been occurring more and more recently in Kyrgyzstan.

In late 2016 one woman was re-buried three times, because during her lifetime she became a Baptist, Aripov recalled. The

woman was buried at a common cemetery but local residents dug her body up and demanded that her relatives collect it. The conflict was only resolved after law enforcement authorities stepped in. Eventually, the woman was buried in the mountains and the exact location of her grave is kept secret to prevent its desecration by locals.

At present, burials are performed at common cemeteries divided into nominal sectors.

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