



Written by [James Heiser](#) on December 2, 2009

## Controversy Over Swiss Minaret Vote

As reported previously, the November 29 decision by the citizens of Switzerland to amend their constitution and ban the future construction of minarets led to an immediate firestorm of reaction from the Muslim world. The constitutional change does not have any effect on the four minarets that have already been built within Switzerland, nor does the action restrict the ability of Muslims in Switzerland to practice their religion. But a substantial majority of the Swiss people clearly understood that the building of minarets is not only a religious matter — but it has political implications, as well.



[As the Prime Minister of Turkey declared in 1998](#), "The mosques are our barracks, the domes our helmets, the minarets our bayonets and the faithful our soldiers."

Despite systematic persecution of Christians and widespread restrictions on the building and repair of Christian churches throughout the Muslim world, the decisive action taken by the Swiss to preserve the Christian heritage of their nation has led to a predictable round of reaction not only from Muslims, but also from multinational corporations and internationalists, all of whom share a common commitment to undermine the distinctive character of sovereign nations and the ability of such nations to formulate and enforce their own laws.

A distinguishing characteristic of many multinational corporations has been a marked disinterest in the future of the nations in which they were born, and the circumstances surrounding the Swiss decision have certainly not disproven that general characteristic.

According to an online *Wall Street Journal* [article](#),

A number of Swiss companies, such as engineering group ABB Ltd. and food maker Nestlé SA, have large interests in Muslim countries. Nestlé has about 50 factories in the Muslim world and is the world's largest producer of halal food, or food permissible under Islamic law. Nestlé has recently begun expanding its halal business in Europe, to cater to the Continent's growing Muslim population. "Nestlé cannot be associated with any form of discrimination," the company said.

Switzerland's main employer's association, Economiesuisse, called for the government to "limit the potential damage" by keeping a dialogue open with Muslim leaders.

At a business conference in Zurich, Hans-Ulrich Meister, head of Switzerland for Credit Suisse Group, played down concerns. Clients in the Muslim countries "typically are huge investors and very professional," he said. "They can differentiate between direct democracy banning minarets and religious freedom, but the political bodies in Switzerland have to explain this."

Nonetheless, the government suggested Swiss business could suffer somewhat as a result of the vote. "I am assuming our trade relations with other countries will become more difficult," said Justice Minister Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf at a news conference.



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Of course, the decision of the Swiss people to amend their constitution was far from discriminatory; arguably, if they had desired to "discriminate" against Islam, far more substantial (rather than symbolic) actions could have been taken. But the apparent desire of Swiss corporations to distance themselves from action which the people of Switzerland took to preserve their culture is quite telling.

At the same time that the internationalists are engaged in handwringing over the Swiss vote, that never seems to take place when the human rights of Christians in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, or a host of other Muslim nations are at stake. Thus, [according to an Associated Press report](#),

The U.N. human rights chief says Switzerland's minaret ban is discriminatory and puts it on a collision course with international law.

Navi Pillay stopped short of declaring the Alpine country's ban on the Islamic towers illegal.

But she condemned Tuesday the "anti-foreigner scare-mongering" that produced the vote, and its "deeply divisive" result....

Europe's top human rights watchdog said Monday that the ban could violate fundamental liberties, and questioned whether human rights ought to be subject to popular votes.

The significance of the Swiss vote thus begins to come into view: It is not that the ban on minarets will necessarily have a significant effect on the future skyline of Geneva — the number of practicing Muslims in Switzerland may be as low as 45,000. What is profoundly significant is the reaction the vote has provoked. In the eyes of the United Nations — and perhaps in the eyes of Swiss corporations, as well — the beliefs and values of the Swiss people are irrelevant if they are perceived to stand in the way of unifying the global economic and political systems. Just as the United Nations has fully committed itself to the climate-change swindle in the hopes of seizing as much political power as possible, so, too, the UN will oppose any nation that attempts to uphold a distinctive national identity.

What remains to be seen is whether the Swiss will have the determination to stand by the principles which they have defended in their recent vote and endure the manufactured outrage that will continued to be hurled against them in the weeks to come.



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