

Human Rights Council – 27th session

Item 3 – General debate Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Speaker: Albert Hengelaar

Tuesday 15 September 2014

Mr. President,

The way minorities are treated in a nation is a litmus test for human rights. As it is beautifully put in the Preamble of the Swiss Constitution, “the strength of a people is measured by the well-being of its weakest members.” The World Evangelical Alliance is concerned by the high number of countries around the world where minorities are repressed and even sometimes suppressed.

The WEA condemns the systematic violence against minority communities in Irak and Syria. There can never be any justification whatsoever for this indiscriminate persecution of minority communities which have lived in the region for 2000 years or considerably more, and which have consistently contributed to the welfare of their neighbors of all religious convictions. We welcome the decision of the Human Rights Council to dispatch a mission to Iraq to investigate alleged violations and abuses of international human rights law committed by ISIS and call upon the international community to stand with the minorities of Irak and Syria, in words and in action.

WEA also notes with concern that in Malaysia, in a decision dating back to June 23, the Federal Court has refused leave for The Roman Catholic Church to appeal against the decision of the Court of Appeal in The Herald case, banning the use of the word “Allah” from a non-Muslim newspaper despite the fact that this generic word for “God” in arabic has been used for centuries in Malay-language literature to refer to the Christian God.

Finally, Mr. President, WEA is concerned with the situation of over 25 places of worship used mainly by evangelical migrant communities in Italy, in the region of Lombardia, which have been forcibly closed down by the police since the summer 2012. The city councils of this region apply a discriminatory regional law on territorial planning¹. It is our hope that the upcoming UPR of Italy will raise this situation and that Italy will take measures to redress the situation.

We thank you Mr. President

¹ law n. 12/2005