



Human Rights Council – 28th session
Item 10 – Interactive Dialogue with the Independent Expert on Central African Republic

Speaker: Albert Hengelaar

Tuesday 24 March 2015

Mr. President,

Caritas Internationalis and the World Evangelical Alliance acknowledge with gratitude the diligent efforts of the Independent Expert on the Central African Republic to monitor and report on the ongoing crises in this country. In her recent visit she noted the systematic obstacles faced by both Muslims and Christians to full integration and participation in the political, social, and economic life of the country. These obstacles have resulted from both the threats posed by armed movements and the continuing need, as was noted by the Independent Expert, for the State to redouble its efforts to promote social cohesion and reconciliation.

We wish to call attention to the dramatic impact of threats, violence, and forced displacement being inflicted on large numbers of the population on a daily basis. The principal religious leaders of Evangelical, Catholic, and Muslim faith traditions in the country have jointly and compellingly witnessed such brutal suffering among their compatriots. This interfaith solidarity and leadership gives ample evidence that the conflict in the Central African Republic is not a religious war, as has been mistakenly claimed by many in the media and even by some UN officials.

We believe that the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in the Central African Republic must work toward more effective disarmament and protection of civilians during the transition process. In this regard, faith-based organizations play a key complementary role in local communities since they work to restore trust and mutual respect among all community members and thus to reduce prejudice, exclusion, and irrational fears that lead to further violence.

Finally we welcome the plans announced by Pope Francis that he will visit the country later this year in order to personally join the dialogue and reconciliation in the Central African Republic.