



Mr. President,

Pax Romana and the World Evangelical Alliance express deep concern about the bombings last Monday and Tuesday of churches in Jhapa district in Nepal. According to media reports, bombs planted at Jyoti Church in Damak-10 and Emmanuel Church in Khajurgachi went off on Monday. On Tuesday three police personnel were injured when a bomb exploded at Surunga Police Station in Surunga, Jhapa. The bomb was originally planted at a church at Surunga of Kankai Municipality-3.

These bomb blasts come hours after the Nepal's Constituent Assembly has rejected calls to revert back to a Hindu state, deciding instead to keep its secular system brought in after the abolishment of the monarchy in 2008.

A newly formed fundamentalist group called Hindu Morcha claimed the blasts. Morcha further threaten public not to send their children to school and do not make long trips, stay at home with required provision of household needs, as they will strike again national wide.

Pax Romana and the WEA commend Nepal's efforts to become a secular country. This move is seen as a major progress. However we are very concerned that the newly adopted Constitution of Nepal does not guarantee the right to exercise the freedom of religion and belief of all persons by banning religious conversion. In fact, the new constitution violates Nepal's commitment under international human rights laws to ensure all persons can freely manifest their religious beliefs in worship, observance, practice and teaching.

We call upon the Government of Nepal to ensure freedom of religion is safeguarded for all citizens of Nepal.

Nepal is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious nation as acknowledged in 2007 Interim Constitution. This diversity is a fact and clearly showed in the 2011 national census. Nepal has become a secular state in the new constitution. It is time to allow its citizens to freely choose any religious belief and practice without any objection, as it is the right of every citizen to enjoy guaranteed freedom of religion.

We thank Mr. President.