

Human Rights Council - 30th session
Agenda Item 2, Sri Lanka
Speaker: Albert Hengelaar
Wednesday 30 September 2015
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Mr President,

The World Evangelical Alliance, representing 600 million Christians worldwide, would like to highlight some concerns regarding the freedom of religion or belief in Sri Lanka and the issue of accountability during the final stages of the country's civil war.

Mr President, the government of Sri Lanka accepted recommendations put forward by the Holy See,¹ Italy,² and Spain³ on the promotion of religious freedom during its UPR review in 2012. However, since then over 250 incidents of violence, Christians.⁴

Also, in contravention of the law, local government authorities claim that churches are unauthorised, demanding churches to register with the state. A misapplication of a discriminatory circular issued by the Religious Affairs Ministry in 2008, serves as the basis for such demands. Also, evangelical protestant Christian community continue to face discrimination when dealing with the state.

Mr President, victims of religious persecution are often denied legal recourse owing to negative judicial attitude concerning religious liberty. The courts, in most instances, when adjudicating matters of religious discrimination against minorities pressurise victims and lawyers to settle cases. As a result, there are very few orders given that set a positive precedent in relation to religious freedom.

Therefore, Mr President, we urge the government to withdraw Circular 2008, ensure justice to victims of religious persecution and take necessary steps to recognise evangelical protestant Christian Community.

Mr President, with regard to an inquiry on the final stages of Sri Lanka's civil war: victims, calling on the state's failure to address issues 6 years following the conflict,

¹ Recommendation 127.56

² Recommendation 127.57

³ Recommendation 128.91

⁴ National Christian Evangelical Alliance of Sri Lanka

are concerned that a local inquiry would not effectively deal with issues of accountability.

Mr President, we urge the government of Sri Lanka, therefore, to support an inquiry with the adequate involvement of the international community that investigates issues of accountability during the final stages of the war.

Thank you, Mr President