



Human Rights Council 37th session

Agenda item 4: Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Speaker: Wissam al-Saliby

Date: 14 March 2018

Mr. President,

The World Evangelical Alliance would like to highlight our concerns regarding increasing government restrictions on freedom of religion or belief in three countries.

In Algeria, in the past 3 months, at least 3 churches have been closed, as well as two Bible schools and a Christian library. Many others are threatened with closure. Two Algerian Christians were informed that they had been convicted and sentenced in absentia for 'proselytism' and 'illegal importation of Christian materials.' We urge Algerian authorities to end their current campaign against the Christian minority, and allow churches to re-open.

In Nepal, who is a member of this council, a recent law strictly prohibits religious conversions and criminalizes speech that "hurts religious sentiment." This legislation effectively institutes blasphemy and anti-conversion laws, affecting the religious freedom of the minority groups. We urge the government of Nepal to reform or repeal this legislation.

Finally, in India, seven states have enacted anti-conversion legislation. There's an increase in the number of documented religiously-motivated violence against Christians. We appeal to the Indian government to declare unconstitutional anti-conversion laws that are being used to vilify Christians and Muslims.

Mr. President,

Human rights law gives every citizen the freedom to profess, practise and propagate his or her religion without fear of reprisal. Freedom of Religion or Belief is a foundation for the rule of law and for the integration of minority communities, and is the way ahead for peace and prosperity.

Thank you, Mr. President.