

*Human Rights Council – 38th session  
Item 3 – General Debate*

*Speaker: Albert Hengelaar*

*Monday 25 June 2018*



Mr. President,

The World Evangelical Alliance is concerned about the minorities in nations. We consider this the litmus test for peaceful societies, SDG16. Restricting minority rights is used by governments to secure majority support.

A disturbing influence happens between India and Nepal. India has tried several times over the years to influence Nepal when it took heed on secular governance. This foreign influence does have a backward influence. Recently the Nepal Foreign affairs minister Pradip Gyawali has spoken about bible distribution via food aid. Why is this misinformation so important for the minister? A better example was shown by his colleague of Home Affairs, Ram Bahadur Thapa. He confirmed that a secular state does not discriminate between different religions. This shows a perception that divide and rule in the end does not pay.

An example that makes one wonder whether we live in the 21<sup>st</sup> century comes from Mauritania. Conversion out of Islam can lead there to death penalty. New legislation even removed the possibility for coming back on the conversion. This seems far worse than the examples of India and Nepal, but it is the same tendency. In the end all of this ducks SDG16. To the detriment also of the government, the country and the human rights of the citizens.

We thank you Mr. President.