Thank you, Mr. President.

In India, religious minorities continue to be targeted by means of physical violence, anti-conversion legislation, and media narratives of nationalistic and majoritarian ideology.

Our member in India, the Evangelical Fellowship of India has documented 325 incidents against Christians in 2018. These incidents take the form of disruption of Church or worship service, physical violence, detention of church members and of pastors as a form of harassment. The States of Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu had the most cases of such incidents. Most perpetrators enjoy impunity.

In Pakistan, following the acquittal of Asia Bibi of blasphemy charges, religious and political leaders instigated their supporters against Bibi and other Christians. Pakistan’s anti-blasphemy legislation can be sanctioned by the death penalty. There are many cases of anti-blasphemy legislation in Pakistani court, with accusations levelled against Muslims and against Christians, often to settle personal scores or disputes related to money and property.

We call on both India and Pakistan to repeal anti-conversion and anti-blasphemy legislation respectively, to hold accountable their law enforcement officials when they fail to protect religious minorities, and to counter the stigmatization and hate against religious minorities.