



NETWORKING THE BAPTIST FAMILY TO IMPACT THE WORLD FOR CHRIST

Statement by the Baptist World Alliance
Human Rights Council 45th session
Agenda Item 4: Human rights situations that require the Council's attention
25 September 2020
Speaker: Wissam Al Saliby

Thank you, Madam President,

The Baptist World Alliance and the World Evangelical Alliance wish to address the situation of freedom of religion or belief in Nepal.

Nepal's Constitution states that "Every religious denomination shall have the right to operate and protect its religious sites and religious trusts."

Since the enactment of the constitution in 2015, the Nepalese government has not enacted any legislation for registration of churches and their properties such as worship centers, institutions, schools, Bible colleges, burial grounds or social organizations. Currently, church property is registered either under Associations Registration Act of 1977, or in the name of individuals.

However, in recent years, churches in Nepal have been repeatedly denied registration. Christian leaders have been denied the right to own or to build buildings for use as churches or by churches.

The most recent such case took place in July of this year in Galkot Municipality in Baglung District. Municipal officials ordered pastor Manish Bohra to stop the construction of a temporary structure for worship, stating that it was against Nepalese laws.

Churches and Christian charities that had been registered under Associations Registration Act of 1977, are now being denied renewal of permission for their activities, and have received requests to remove all religious wording or signs from their official documents.

We call on the Government of Nepal to protect religious minorities and their places of worship, to enact legislation that enables the registration of all religious communities as trusts as per the Constitution. And until such legislation is passed, we call on the Government of Nepal to allow all NGOs to perform religious activities as stated in their registration documents, and to receive funding from within Nepal and from abroad.