



Oral Statement

Human Rights Council 45th Session

Agenda Item 10

Enhanced interactive dialogue on the report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan

2 October 2020

Delivered by Wissam Al Saliby

Thank you Madam President,

The World Evangelical Alliance welcomes the Independent Expert's report and welcomes the Sudanese transitional government's efforts to improve the situation of human rights in the country.

In July 2020 the transitional government repealed Article 126 of the penal code that prescribed death sentence for leaving Islam. The same reforms, however, did not repeal Article 125 of the Penal Code, which prescribes blasphemy as a criminal offense, but only amended this provision by abolishing flogging as a punishment for insulting religious beliefs. The reforms still retain imprisonment and a fine for such acts.

Flogging was also abolished for crimes prescribed in Article 152 of the Penal Code, also known as public decency law, often used by authorities to target Christian women and girls for alleged indecent clothing, on the basis of not covering their head or wearing trousers. The amended article removed the wording "wears an indecent or immoral dress". However, it still leaves significant room for interpretation by law enforcement officials to assess what they deem to be a breach of modesty, without the protections of an objective standard.

We therefore ask the Independent Expert what further steps does the government of Sudan need to take in order to ensure full respect of the right to freedom of religion or belief?