

World Evangelical Alliance
Human Rights Council - 43rd Session



**Item 4: Interactive dialogue with the
Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic**

10 March 2020

Speaker: Albert Hengelaar

Thank you Mr/Madam President,

The World Evangelical Alliance appreciates the Syria report of the commission of Inquiry. We are deeply concerned for the ongoing conflict and the way it is affecting religious communities. After nine years of violence, the country has faced massive persecution, atrocities, and forced displacement. Religious communities have been taken hostage; faith leaders assassinated; homes, businesses and places of worship destroyed; women and girls raped and forced into sexual slavery. Syria is currently at risk of losing its historic religious plurality and the stability this provides for the country.

In the midst of the crisis, Christian communities have provided impartial assistance to their compatriots. Many Christians emphasize that they want to be identified as Syrian nationals rather than through their religious affiliation. As such they are driven to provide for all individuals without discrimination. Faith leaders have played a distinguished role for generations in conflict resolution and mediation. We therefore ask the International Community to recognize the key role of Local Faith Actors, increase and expand their funding for capacity building and channel assistance through Faith Actors.

Thank you.