



Oral Statement

Human Rights Council 46th session

Item 3: Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur minority issues regarding report on hate speech, social media and minorities

15 March 2021

Delivered by Gloria Leccese

Madam President,

The World Evangelical Alliance welcomes the report of the Special Rapporteur and its focus on how hate speech is used as a tool to target minorities.

In India, Christians and Muslims are increasingly portrayed as “foreigners”, anti-nationals, and “enemies of the country” on social media.

Conspiracy theories accusing Christians of having an agenda to convert the Hindu majority by force or fraud are spreading on WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, fostering hatred, discrimination and heinous acts of violence against them.

Along with being branded anti-nationals, Muslims are also accused of “love jihad”, forcing young Hindu women and girls to marry and convert to Islam. These dangerous conspiracy theories ran in parallel to the enactment last year of more stringent anti-conversion legislation in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradeshⁱ.

In Sri Lanka, online advocacy of religious hatred against minorities is also increasing. In February 2021, a prominent Buddhist monk encouraged people to attack Christians who come to their villages with a widely watched video on YouTube.ⁱⁱ

We urge governments and all elected official to be the role models for inclusion and embrace of their minorities, in word and deed, and on their social media accounts.

We would like to ask Special Rapporteur how can states ensure that laws addressing advocacy of religious hatred are not turned against minorities?

Thank you.

- i <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/et-explains/the-up-prohibition-of-unlawful-conversion-of-religion-ordinance-2020-explained/articleshow/79717402.cms> and
<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/madhya-pradeshs-anti-conversion-ordinance-gets-governors-nod-becomes-law/article33537746.ece>
- ii <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i9J4XIESR1k&t=407s>