



Oral Statement

Human Rights Council 48th session

Agenda Item 4 – Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

General Debate

24 September 2021

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The World Evangelical Alliance, the World Council of Churches and the Baptist World Alliance express grave concern over increasing violations of the right to freedom of religion or belief in Algeria in the course of 2021¹.

On 7 July, the authorities sealed three Protestant churches in the province of Oran, based on Oran administrative court's decision. This brought the number of the forcibly closed Protestant churches to 16.

Between March and July 2021, at least four local Christians faced court sentences under charges violating their right to freedom of religion or belief.

- On 22 March, Hamid Soudad was sentenced to the maximum 5-year imprisonment under a blasphemy law.
- On 6 June, Pastor Rachid Seighir and his assistant Nouh Hamimi received one-year suspended sentences for "proselytising" and were fined.
- On 7 July, Foudhil Bahloul was sentenced to six months in prison and a fine for supposedly accepting "illegal" donations for proselytizing.

We reiterate our appeal to the government of Algeria to bring its legal framework, in particular Ordinance 06-03, in line with Article 18 of the ICCPR, to allow re-opening of all Protestant churches, and overturn convictions of individual Christians.

Thank you.

¹ See: Joint Written Statement of 20 August 2021, Submitted to the Human Rights Council Forty-eighth session 13 September–1 October 2021 by the World Evangelical Alliance, the Protestant Church of Algeria and Middle East Concern: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G21/240/39/PDF/G2124039.pdf?OpenElement>