

Oral Statement

Human Rights Council 49th Session
Agenda Item 2: General Debate
8 March 2022
Delivered by Markus Stefan Hofer

The World Evangelical Alliance is gravely concerned to witness armed conflict and the tragic loss of human lives in Ukraine. We call on Russia to end its attack on Ukraine and respect international law and the sanctity of human life.

We would like now to address human rights violations that are certainly less deadly and tragic than those in Ukraine but necessitate the attention of the High Commissioner nonetheless.

The World Evangelical Alliance expresses concern about legislation that criminalizes so-called forcing, inciting, or encouraging religious conversion.

In Nepal, in November 2021, an Evangelical Pastor was sentenced to two years imprisonment for violating Nepal's anti-conversion law.

In India, more states have adopted and plan to adopt anti-conversion legislation. Myanmar and Bhutan also severely regulate religious conversion, and there are calls in Sri Lanka to enact such laws.

Governments use these laws to harass religious minorities. And they serve as a pretext for mob violence.

We appeal to the High Commissioner to include the enactment and misuse of anti-conversion laws, in addition to apostasy and blasphemy laws, in future updates to this esteemed Council.

Thank you.