



**BAPTIST
WORLD
ALLIANCE**



Oral Statement

Human Rights Council 49th Session

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

General Debate

Monday, March 21

Speaker: Wissam Al Saliby

The World Evangelical Alliance continues to be gravely concerned about freedom of religion or belief in Algeria.

To date, Algerian authorities have forcibly closed 17 out of the 43 churches that are members of the umbrella organization, the Protestant Church of Algeria. More have received closure orders. The Protestant Church of Algeria is a member of the World Evangelical Alliance.

We are especially concerned that 12 Christians have been brought before a court in the last 18 months for the peaceful exercise of their religious beliefs. They have been sentenced to varying prison sentences and fines for blasphemy, for the practice of unauthorized non-Muslim worship, for accepting donations for proselytizing, for distributing Bibles, or for "agitating the faith of Muslims."

Despite repeated requests, no Evangelical Protestant church in Algeria has received authorization for non-Muslim worship.

We call on Algerian authorities to end their persecution of Protestant and Evangelical Christians, rescind the unjust court sentences, and allow the churches forcibly closed to reopen.