



Oral Statement

Human Rights Council 50th Session

Agenda Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association

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Delivered by Wissam Al Saliby

The World Evangelical Alliance welcomes the report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

Across the world, we have witnessed governments depriving religious, ethnic, and other minority groups from access to financial resources, undermining their right to freedom of association.

In India, the government has used the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act to limit access to funding of NGOs advocating for the rights of religious minorities, as a reprisal measure.

In Algeria, Foudhil Bahloul, a Christian, was sentenced last year to six months' imprisonment for, I quote, "collecting donations or accepting gifts without a license from the authorized authorities" and "illegally accepting donations for proselytizing."

In India and Algeria, the restrictions on access to funding cannot be deemed necessary in democratic societies.

Therefore, we echo the call of the Special Rapporteur for States to ensure that associations – registered and unregistered – can fully enjoy their right to seek, receive and use funding. And we call on the governments of India and Algeria to repeal laws that put stringent requirements and restrictions on access to funding and require additional burdensome and overly intrusive reporting.

And we ask the Special Rapporteur if his research identified how restrictions on foreign funding particularly affect vulnerable minority groups.

Thank you.