

## **Oral Statement**

Human Rights Council 54<sup>th</sup> Session

Agenda Item 2: Interactive dialogue on the report of OHCHR on promoting reconciliation, accountability, and human rights in Sri Lanka

11 September 2023

Delivered by Markus Hofer

Mister President,

The World Evangelical Alliance welcomes the High Commissioner's report.

In Sri Lanka, minority religious communities, including Christians, continue to face discrimination, intimidation, hate speech, and violence. Local authorities continue to arbitrarily obstruct worship activities. The government is pursuing legislation for compulsory registration for places of worship.

Recently, disputes over Hindu sacred sites in the North and East have intensified, triggering fears of communal tensions. Meanwhile, dozens of Muslims remain in detention under the PTA and the ICCPR Act.

Justice continues to evade victims of Easter Sunday attacks.

The repeated postponement of local government elections, originally scheduled for March 2022, raises concern of a democratic deficit in the country.

Despite the government's proposal for a National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, skepticism has prevailed due to past failures, a lack of victim confidence, and ongoing human rights violations.

We urge the government of Sri Lanka to conduct a comprehensive investigation into the Easter Sunday attacks, to refrain from mandating compulsory registration for places of worship, to ensure state actors are not complicit in religious freedom violations, to promptly hold local government elections, and deliver a transitional justice process that's in line with international standards.

Thank you.