



Oral Statement

UN Human Rights Council 54th session

Item 6: Universal Periodic Review

Adoption of the UPR outcome of France

Date: 29 September 2023

Speaker: Markus Hofer

Mr. President,

The World Evangelical Alliance thanks the French government for its commitment to the Universal Periodic Review, and we look forward to the implementation of the accepted recommendations concerning the fight against racism, anti-Semitism and the protection of ethnic and religious minorities.

We would, however, like to point out that the law of August 24, 2021 reinforcing respect for the principles of the Republic has substantially altered the regime governing religious worship in France, with a shift towards a "surveillance secularism" of worship that could undermine freedom of religion.

We call on France to revise the implementing decrees, if in practice the conditions of application are too restrictive or constraining for associations, to ensure that the application of the measures is harmonized across the country, particularly in the (regional) departments, by guaranteeing an identical level of competence in the prefectures, and to pay particular attention to religious communities from the diasporas, in order to support them in learning about and applying the reform.

In addition, we call on France to add the fight against anti-religious hatred to the mandate of the Interministerial Delegation for the Fight against Racism, Anti-Semitism and Anti-LGBT Hatred (DILCRAH), to also cover offenses and discrimination against individuals or groups on the basis of their religious affiliation.

Finally, with regard to the freedom of conscience of healthcare professionals, we recommend that France amend the Public Health Code to respect the freedom of conscience of healthcare professionals in the context of developments in science and technology, particularly in the fields of procreation and the end of life, and to provide for a general conscientious objection clause for all healthcare professionals, or specific clauses, depending on the professions and areas of care concerned.

Thank you.