



Oral Statement

Human Rights Council 57th Session

Agenda Item 4: General Debate on the human rights situations that require the Council's attention

23-24 September 2024

Delivered by Markus Hofer

Mr. President,

The World Evangelical Alliance would like to bring to the Council's attention the deteriorating situation of religious minorities in India.

In July 2024, the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly amended its 2021 anti-conversion law by making its provisions more stringent. The new 'Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion (Amendment) Bill' introduced higher fines and increased the maximum punishment from the previous 10 years to life imprisonment for severe offenses.

In Uttar Pradesh, since the anti-conversion law was passed in 2021, there have been at least 321 cases against Christians.

Unlike the previous law, which allows only "aggrieved persons" or their close relatives to file complaints, the new bill permits "any person" to lodge a First Information Report (FIR) regarding unlawful conversions.

We urge the government of India to advise states to repeal their anti-conversion laws, including in Uttar Pradesh. These laws are in violation of India's constitutional guarantees. We also call on India to foster inter-religious harmony as the key to a peaceful, pluralistic society.

Thank you.