

Oral Statement

Human Rights Council 58th Session

Agenda Item 2: Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea

27 February 2025

Delivered by Janet Epp Buckingham

Mister President,

The World Evangelical Alliance is deeply concerned about the number of detained Christians held without being charged with an offence in Eritrea. These detainees are held in appalling conditions, including overcrowding and torture. They do not have access to legal representation or due process of law.

Only four religious groups are officially recognized in Eritrea. In 2002, the government imposed a registration system for all other religious groups. However, after the churches and religious organisations submitted the required documents, the government did not register them. Thereafter, Church leaders and those sharing their faith or religious literature from other Christian traditions, have been subject to being arrested and detained.

The Chair of our national alliance, the Eritrean Evangelical Alliance, Dr. Kiflu Gemremeskel has been in prison in Eritrea since May 2004. That is more than 20 years in prison without charge.

We urge the government of Eritrea to comply with its human rights obligations, to invite the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea and other special procedures for a country visit to allow investigation and to assist the government to move towards compliance with international law in its application of the rule of law, freedom of religion and other human rights.

Thank you.