



Oral Statement

Human Rights Council 58th Session

Agenda Item 6: Universal Periodic Review

Adoption of the UPR outcome of Portugal

24 March 2025

Delivered by Markus Hofer

Mr. President,

The World Evangelical Alliance, together with our national member, the Aliança Evangélica Portuguesa (AEP) thank the government of Portugal for its commitment to the UPR process.

We welcome Portugal's acceptance of the recommendation to 'Intensify efforts to ensure effective responses to tackle discrimination, Islamophobia, hate speech and other related intolerance against ethnic and religious minorities'.

As highlighted in our written submission, we remain concerned by the ongoing political instability in the country, the increasing sympathy for populist political groups, and the rise of xenophobic and racist extremism.

We commend Portugal's acceptance to 'Protect the right to freedom of religion and conscience of patients, health care professionals and others notably protecting conscientious objection in the medical field'.

We look forward to the implementation of these recommendations.

However, we regret that Portugal did not accept the recommendation to 'Ensure appropriate safeguards to fully protect freedom of religion, conscience and expression in the implementation of the law criminalizing so-called conversion therapies'.

Teaching religious views to believers according to their theology should never be considered a crime, but the way Portuguese law is worded can give rise to interpretations along these lines, which can lead to serious limitations on freedom of religion and expression.

We call on Portugal to review all legislation regarding gender self-determination to ensure recognition of social and religious perspectives that do not accept personal gender self-determination.

Finally, we encourage Portugal to promote more widespread training in various ministries and government departments so that all public servants can effectively comply with the Religious Freedom Law without discrimination, and to Integrate through legislation evangelical theological schools and seminaries into the national education system.

Thank you.