



## **Oral Statement**

Human Rights Council 59th Session

Agenda Item 4: Interactive dialogue on the oral update of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Burundi

26 June 2025

Delivered by Janet Epp Buckingham

Mr. President,

The World Evangelical Alliance is deeply concerned by increasing restrictions on the right to freedom of religion or belief in Burundi.

A 2014 law established by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and amended in 2022 imposes stringent requirements on religious groups, such as:

- needing to have 300 members to register;
- preventing one place of worship from being built too close to another; and
- restricting where and when worship services can be held.

Penalties for non-compliance include prison sentences and fines of up to 1 million Burundian francs.

In April 2024, police arrested 61 members of the World's Glory Church on charges of worshipping in an unauthorized location.

In February 2024, a letter was issued to all religious groups detailing further requirements, including the number of parking spaces for worship centers.

There is a lack of transparency around the registration process, and registration has been unexpectedly denied, hindering small and new churches from establishing a legal presence.

We urge the Government of Burundi to:

1. Review and revise the law to align it with international human rights standards;
2. Conduct a genuine, thorough and inclusive consultation with religious leaders; and
3. Suspend implementation of the regulation until consensus has been reached.

Thank you.