



Oral Statement

Human Rights Council 59th Session

Agenda Item 6: Universal Periodic Review

Adoption of the UPR outcome of Italy

30 June 2025

Delivered by Nadia van der Sar

Mr. President,

The World Evangelical Alliance and its national member, the Italian Evangelical Alliance, thank Italy for its constructive participation in the UPR and the open dialogue with civil society.

We welcome Italy's support of the recommendations linked to the rights of religious and ethnic minorities.

Religious communities in Italy are increasingly diverse due to migration and globalization. Thus, there's a need for more inclusive religious freedom legislation.

Opening new places of worship and keeping existing ones open remains difficult due to the unfair nature of zoning regulations.

In June 2024, the Court of Cassation overturned two previous legal decisions in favor of the Breccia evangelical church in Rome, establishing that the church building is not a place of worship since there was no altar, no candles and no statues – attributes of Roman Catholic places of worship. The church has been refused tax-free status and required to pay taxes on a commercial basis.

Since 1997, a Pentecostal church repeatedly asked the municipality of Albano Laziale for available locations for a house of worship. After 15 years without receiving an answer, in 2012 the church purchased appropriate land and requested a change of the "intended use" to allow a church to be built. But the municipality, despite its technical office confirming agreement with the change, continues to ignore the request.

We call on the Italian government to establish a Religious Freedom Act that does not discriminate against religious minorities and to grant State agreements with the religious communities who have made a request and are waiting for approval.

Thank you.