



40th Session of the UN Human Rights Council

Agenda Item 6, General Debate

Joint Statement: Christian Solidarity Worldwide and World Evangelical Alliance, Alliance Defending Freedom, Centre for Inquiry, Jubilee Campaign, The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, Coordination des Associations et des Particuliers pour la Liberté de Conscience (CAP Freedom of Conscience), VIVAT International, National Council of Jewish Women.

Speaker: Claire Denman

Thank you Mr President,

CSW together with the World Evangelical Alliance and seven other organisations with consultative status¹ wishes to take this opportunity to highlight the fact that the situation of freedom of religion or belief continues to receive insufficient attention during Universal Periodic Review cycles.

While we welcome UPR-info's statistics¹ which show that 78 states have so far raised the right to FoRB during the third cycle, we call on member states to ensure that recommendations given are SMART - specific, measurable, and time-bound enough to enable an assessment of implementation over the four and a half year reporting period.

While it would not be expected that recommendations relating to FoRB would be made for every country, the World Evangelical Alliance estimates that SMART recommendations relating to FoRB only account for 1.6% of all recommendations made to 47 states of particular concern where violations of, and restrictions on FoRB persist.²

For example, despite evidence of continuing violations, during the last UPR cycle Cuba only received four recommendations pertaining to FoRB, none of which were meaningful or specific. Somalia, Yemen, Turkmenistan, Libya and Belarus received either one or no meaningful FoRB recommendations.

We call on member states to pay greater attention to the situation of FoRB around the world and to ensure recommendations are formulated to adequately address violations.

¹ UPR-info, Database of Statistics, Freedom of Religion or Belief in the Third Cycle, https://www.upr-info.org/database/statistics/index_issues.php?fk_issue=18&cycle=3

² World Evangelical Alliance, "UPR Responsiveness to Violations of the Right to Freedom of Religion", 8 February 2019

We also remain concerned that states continue to fail to implement accepted recommendations relating to FoRB. We urge member states to ensure the UPR process is not undermined by states that accept recommendations only to defer implementation indefinitely. Accountability is key to ensuring the process retains its integrity.

Thank you.

ⁱ Final list of signatories (NGOs with ECOSOC Consultative Status):

Alliance Defending Freedom

Centre for Inquiry

Christian Solidarity Worldwide

Coordination des Associations et des Particuliers pour la Liberté de Conscience (CAP
Freedom of Conscience)

Jubilee Campaign

National Council of Jewish Women

The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention

VIVAT International

World Evangelical Alliance