



NETWORKING THE BAPTIST FAMILY TO IMPACT THE WORLD FOR CHRIST

BWA General Council Resolution 2014.3

### **Myanmar, Violence and Religious Liberty**

The General Council of the Baptist World Alliance, meeting in Izmir Turkey, July 9-11, 2014:

AFFIRMS the many significant steps taken by President Thein Sein's government in Myanmar in recent years to relax restrictions and permit a more open society. In particular we welcome the release of many political prisoners and the opening up of greater freedoms in civil society and the media;

EXPRESSES grave concern regarding the proposed Religious Conversion Law, published in state media, on May 27, 2014, that places severe restrictions upon the exercise of religious liberty. We note, with concern, the proposal to deny the right of an individual to choose a faith other than the faith of the community into which they were born. We also observe the intrusive role the law provides for government officials, including the right to apply fines or imprisonment in instances of religious conversion. The impact of these developments especially on minority religions in Myanmar, including the Christian community, will be devastating;

CALLS on President Thien Sien and his government to abandon the proposed law and to adhere to the principles of religious liberty spelled out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

APPLAUDS the peace-building initiatives taken which have reduced decades of fighting and displacement of people from homes and villages across Myanmar;

LAMENTS the fact that, after three years, the military continues the conflict in the Kachin state, earlier addressed in BWA Resolution 11 of 2013: "Kachin Crisis;"

CONDEMNS the forceful displacement of the Kachin by the military for the economic exploitation of the natural resources of the Kachin state;

GRIEVES over the violence being suffered by Muslim communities across Myanmar, most acutely in Rakhine state, where the Rohingyas have lived for generations. Thousands of Muslims have been displaced, their homes and shops looted and burned. Hundreds have been killed; and

REAFFIRMS its commitment as Baptists to religious freedom for all; and calls for the elections scheduled for November 2015 to be free and fair.

## Keywords

BWA; Kachin; Myanmar; Peace; Religious Liberty; Rohingyas.

## Citations

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*Since its formation in 1905, the Baptist World Alliance has networked the global Baptist family to impact the world for Christ with a commitment to strengthen worship, fellowship and unity; lead in mission and evangelism; respond to people in need through aid, relief, and community development; defend religious freedom, human rights, and justice; and advance theological reflection and leadership development.*