

The First Week of the UPR process Ends



Pastor Keshav from Nepal pictured together with his wife and children. Police arrested him in the wake of Covid-19 lockdowns in March 2020. He was released on bail in June but is still facing charges under the anti-conversion legislation in Nepal. Please pray for his full release. Read the letter sent out to

22 January 2021 Geneva, Switzerland | The first week of the United Nations, 37th Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process has come to an end. We followed the reviews of Nepal and Mauritania especially closely as we have submitted two reports for their review, you can read them [here](#) → [Nepal](#) and [here](#) → [Mauritania](#). You have also been a part of advocating for the release of prisoners of conscience from both countries. Below are the key recommendations made by states and adopted by the UPR process.

MAURITANIA □□

6

The rights of ex-Muslims and Christian converts were raised in the recommendations of states made during the UPR of Mauritania. Six states recommended that

Mauritania **decriminalise apostasy and cease the practice of rescinding citizenship** from Christian converts. The numerous recommendations forced Mauritania to respond, however they merely towed their line, saying that their apostasy law is in "perfect harmony" with their legislation and international law commitments while saying that non-muslim foreigners were free to practice their religion as long as it followed "national moral values."

At the #UPR37 review of #Mauritania, #KingdomNL raised the right to apostasy and called on #Mauritania to cease criminalisation of those who change or leave a religion or belief. #FoRB #humanrights @NLinGeneva



An additional **three states** made recommendations in regards to religious freedom



Jubilee Campaign USA @JubileeC · Jan 19
 #UPR37 #Mauritania H.E. Mr Mohamed El Hassen Boukhreiss says, "Since 1997 the capital punishment has not been used." But in 2014 Police arrested blogger Cheikh Mkhteir and the court sentenced him to death for #apostasy. Only after international pressure was the penalty overturned

Mkhaitir was arrested in 2014 and charged with apostasy over a Facebook post that condemned the use of religion to justify discrimination against his caste. It was the first **death** sentence handed down for apostasy in Mauritania since the African nation's independence in 1960.

An appeals court in 2017 changed that sentence to a fine and to two years in prison after the supreme court said it accepted his repentance, despite calls for his execution by thousands of demonstrators. While the blogger had already served the



more generally, urging Mauritania to "amend legislative provisions" in line with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and that ensure that the "fundamental right to religious freedom is practiced freely."

By the Human Rights Council in June - Mauritania - will have to respond more definitely to all the recommendations.

Several recommendations also urged Mauritania to address the widespread slavery that exists in the country, including hereditary slavery, and to increase efforts to investigate and prosecute.

This brave anti-slavery activist in Mauritania explains the situation clearly. Unfortunately, those who speak out against slavery are often targeted with blasphemy or apostasy laws and imprisoned.

Jubilee Campaign USA @JubileeC · Jan 19
 #UPR37 #Mauritania | Thank you to all states who made recommendations on the ongoing slavery in Mauritania.
 @JubileeC recommended 🇺🇸
 📌 Take effective measures to enforce the anti-trafficking law + focus on the prosecution of perpetrators.



Slavery in #Mauritania
 #UPR37 #Mauritania Jubilee Campaign raised concerns over the widespread acceptance of slavery in Mauritania and recommended t...
 facebook.com

Please pray ☐ that Mauritania will recognise the right of those born into a Muslim family to choose their religion or belief and that Christians, Christian converts and others can practice their beliefs freely.

NEPAL ☐☐



Jubilee Campaign USA
 @JubileeC

#UPR37 #Denmark 🇩🇰 recommends #Nepal 🇳🇵 repeal or amend sections 155, 156 and 158 of the Penal Code so it is consistent with ICCPR. Stating that the new penal code restricts the right to freedom of religion or belief. Tak @DKUNmisgva! #FoRBforall

11:04 AM · Jan 21, 2021 · Twitter Web App

Haiti, Denmark and The Netherlands specifically made recommendations to Nepal to reform their penal code to guarantee freedom of religion or belief in law and in practice, in accordance with international human rights law.

The Netherlands explicitly mentioned, "**Amend Article 26 of the Constitution** to include the right to choose or change one's religion or belief, in accordance with Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights." Article 26(3) of the constitution of Nepali, as it is worded, effectively criminalizes nearly all speech or actions that lead to conversion. [Read more](#)

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