

Political motives as causes of violence and atrocities against religious minorities: The case of the Church of God Ministry of Jesus Christ International and the Political Movement MIRA in Colombia

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Understanding the root causes of violence and atrocities

I would like to thank Asociación MIRAismo Internacional for giving me the opportunity to be here, as a leader of a religious minority that originated in Colombia (South America), with presence in over forty countries around the world, recognized as the Church of God Ministry of Jesus Christ International, I put forward the case of the persecution of 2014 that members of the two communities have undergone, for reasons based on our consciousness.

The persecution began in January 2014, with the distortion of a part of the doctrine of the Church (founded in the Bible) by various media. There occurred the disqualification of our spiritual leader, Sister Maria Luisa Piraquive and the congregation that meets in the world which has just over two and a half million believers, who were called discriminators of people with disabilities, based on the disclosure of an edited and incomplete, biased and unauthorized pastoral training video recorded in 2008.

Numerous publications against the Church, made in television, radio, written or through social networks present on the Internet, and also promoted by public servants such as congressmen who were themselves candidates in the elections, constituted a manifestation of hate speech and they incited violence against our Church and the political organization in which some of its members participate in. The expressions of violence included bullying in schools and universities against children, adolescents and young people who make up the congregation; dismissals from jobs of different people due to belonging to the Church; physical attacks on the places of worship of the Church; threats against our religious minority by groups working outside the law, such as the guerrillas and criminal gangs; among other acts which shed more than 750 victims auto recognised as such.

The discriminatory motives against the Church, fed by political interests, generated serious suffering to the victims, infringing their physical and mental health, which configure in crimes against humanity, against which state protection was weak and almost non-existent.

Based on the case above, I respectfully suggest that the recommendations issued by this forum, after paragraph 17, States be called upon to:

- To the Human Rights Council to make recommendations on the harmonious exercise of religious freedom and expression, in order to contribute to that hate speech against religious minorities cannot be sustained in the wrong understanding of the media's freedom of expression. (Resolution 60/251) (It is proposed to include it in the recommendations to prevent violence and atrocities, directed toward regional and international actors).
- To the UN, to adopt 2016 as a memorial to the defence of religious freedom and the

abolition of religious hatred, to disseminate worldwide this right, and advance procedures and leadership training for the defence of their communities. (It is proposed to include it in the recommendations to prevent violence and atrocities, directed toward regional and international actors).

Also in accordance with the powers conferred by Resolution 60/251 adopted by the General Assembly on March 15, 2005, and based on the work of its special procedures, to develop a global report on respect for religious freedom and beliefs of minorities in the world, and determine alarming countries early on, and evaluation.

Thank you.