

# ORAL STATEMENT TO UNHRC:

## CHINA & SUDAN

AGENDA ITEM 4  
GENERAL DEBATE

JUNE 2017

**Topic: Demolition of Places of Worship in China and Sudan**  
**Organisation: Christian Solidarity Worldwide**  
**Speaker: Sini Maria Heikkilä**

Thank you Mr President.

Christian Solidarity Worldwide would like to draw Human Rights Council's attention to the demolition of places of worship in China and Sudan.

In China, Tibetan Buddhist institutes have been targeted, including the Larung Gar Buddhist institute in Sichuan Province. The institution is one of the largest Buddhist teaching centres in the world, with a population of over 10,000. A 'renovation' campaign has resulted in the demolition of hundreds of homes and demolition order issued by the Chinese authorities details plans to reduce the number of residents by half before 30 September 2017. The relatively large Christian population in Zhejiang province has also been targeted. Since early 2014, the authorities in Zhejiang have removed hundreds of crosses from Catholic and Protestant, registered and unregistered churches in the province - in some cases destroying part or all of the church.

CSW remains deeply concerned by recent developments in Sudan regarding the confiscation and demolition of Christian places of worship. In 2016 the Khartoum State government earmarked 27 churches for demolition citing 'irregularities' with the use of the land. On 7 May the Sudan Church of Christ building in Soba Aradi was partially demolished by state authorities. The church was the only Christian place of worship in the district, as twelve churches had been demolished or closed since 2011, leaving the entire Christian community without a place of worship. Tragically, on 3 April an elder of the Sudan Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Omdurman was killed during a peaceful protest against the illegal sale of church property.

The right to freedom of association and assembly is vital for the full enjoyment of the right to freedom of religion or belief. We remain concerned that both the right to freedom of religion or belief and right to freedom of association and assembly have continued to deteriorate both in China and in Sudan.

CSW calls on the government of China and the government of Sudan to immediately cease the demolition of religious buildings. We urge the government of China to establish a complaints mechanism for religious buildings which have had their request for permission to build or extend refused, or which have had their religious symbol or building forcibly removed or demolished. We also urge the government of Sudan to suspend all pending demolition orders and issue re-building permits to the churches that have already been confiscated or demolished.

Thank you Mr President.