

Ambassador Ali Hafrad
Embassy of Algeria in Norway
Sigurd Syrs gate 2
0273 Oslo

Your Excellency,

I am writing to express my concern regarding the closing of Christian places of worship in Algeria. According to Middle East Concern, churches affiliated with the Protestant Church of Algeria (EPA) have been required to provide licences according to Ordinance 06-03 of 2006 regulating non-Muslim worship, which stipulates that all such places need formal approval. However, the government has not issued any licence at all for a church building under this ordinance. Several churches have been ordered to cease all activities or they have been sealed.

The Protestant Church of Algeria is officially recognized by your government, and they meet the requirements for minimum representation introduced in 2012. Still, the government has delayed applications for approvals required under Algerian law.

Algeria has ratified Article 18 in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which stipulates freedom of religion or belief for all. Furthermore, the 2016 revisions made to the Algerian Constitution strengthen the rights to individual freedoms by mentioning “freedom of religious worship”. In coherence with its international obligations and national legal framework, Algeria is obliged to ensure that Christians can practice their faith and that churches may operate peacefully without interference.

I, therefore, humbly petition your intervention to ensure that:

- the authorities will end the closing of churches in Algeria
- churches that have been closed will be permitted to re-open, and no further action will be taken against those churches under investigation; and
- the regulations governing non-Muslim worship will be amended and justly implemented, so that all religious minorities will be able to worship freely.

I thank you in advance for using your influence as ambassador and conveying this message to the relevant authorities in your home country.

Yours sincerely,