



6.12.2012

## SRI LANKA | Religious liberty partnership calls for greater religious freedom

---

The Religious Liberty Partnership (RLP), an international coalition of religious liberty organizations including Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), has released a statement supporting the right of all Sri Lankans to full religious freedom, including the rights to freely change one's beliefs and freely propagate those beliefs without governmental interference or permission.

In the Colombo Statement, the RLP also pledges to stand in solidarity with the evangelical Christian community as they seek to obtain equal rights alongside other religious constituencies in Sri Lanka.

The RLP supports "the appeal issued by 31 Bishops of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Sri Lanka, including the Bishop of Mannar, calling for the implementation of the Lessons Learned Reconciliation Commission," and encourages the Sri Lankan Government "to address unresolved issues of accountability as a natural process of reconciliation and nation building." The statement also adds the RLP's voice to the calls of 63 additional Catholic leaders and others who have urged an end to the intimidation of the bishops as a result of their calls for reconciliation.

In a submission to Sri Lanka's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) at the United Nations in April, CSW recommended that "Sri Lanka should ensure that all religious denominations which act in a lawful and peaceful manner are granted equal treatment under the law, and should ensure that all citizens are able to enjoy the right to FORB irrespective of their religious affiliation".

Mervyn Thomas, Chief Executive of CSW and Chairman of the RLP, said, "As Sri Lanka continues to come to terms with the implications of the long-running conflict and its end in 2009, we believe that a culture of inclusiveness is needed which includes full religious freedom for all. CSW expressed its concern about the attack on a mosque in Dambulla on April 20, and we are also concerned about forced closures of churches and violent attacks on clergy and churches. The RLP is calling for Christians everywhere to pray for national reconciliation and full religious freedom in Sri Lanka."

### Notes to Editors:

1. The RLP Colombo Statement on the Church in Sri Lanka is available [here](#).