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Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, follow-up to and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

Written statement submitted by Coordination des Associations et des Particuliers pour la Liberté de Conscience, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status*

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement, which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[22 January 2026]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



Systematic Persecution and Erosion of Minority Rights: The Case of the Christian Gospel Mission (Providence)

Coordination des Associations et des Particuliers pour la Liberté de Conscience (CAP-LC) submits this statement to highlight the urgent and growing persecution of members of the Christian Gospel Mission (CGM), also known as Providence, between 2023 and 2026. The founder of this group has been sentenced in the Republic of Korea on various sexual abuse charges. Members of CGM firmly believe in his innocence, but it is not the role of CAP-LC to take a position on this issue. Our focus is on the discrimination, stigma, and violence faced by ordinary believers who are not accused of any crimes and whose fundamental rights are being violated.

The crisis worsened significantly after the release of a commercial documentary series on Netflix in early 2023, followed by a sequel in 2025. These productions, created for entertainment and profit, sparked a wave of hostility that crossed national and social borders. What started as a media event quickly escalated into a digital witch hunt. Algorithmic boosting, sensational framing, and unchecked online harassment led to real-world discrimination, family breakdown, and severe psychological trauma. CAP-LC's sources show a stark clash between commercial free expression and the protections outlined in the UDHR and the ICCPR. The presumption of innocence, the right to privacy, the right to work, the right to education, and the right to freedom of religion have all suffered systematic and devastating losses.

A recurring pattern from testimonies reveals guilt by association. Ordinary members—students, civil servants, small business owners, caregivers—have been held accountable for allegations against their leader. This collective punishment has led to what sociologists call “social death,” where individuals lose their social identity, dignity, and safety. On the island of Taiwan (Province of), China, where the CGM community has about 4,500 members, persecution has spread quickly. Online doxxing, driven by anonymous forums and social media algorithms, results in harassment in real life. Members see their names, photos, workplaces, and addresses shared without permission, putting them at risk of threats, vandalism, and public shaming.

In the Republic of Korea, over 160 sworn statements show a widespread exclusion that ignores the presumption of innocence and gives way to the judgment of the digital mob. The “court of public opinion,” without due process, has become a parallel justice system—convicting without evidence and punishing without limits.

Economic marginalization is one of the harshest effects of this persecution. Victims describe the “digital scarlet letter” as a tool used by online vigilantes. People in both regions have made digital maps of businesses owned by CGM members, encouraging the public to boycott, harass, and ruin livelihoods. The testimonies are distressing. A café owner in Taiwan (Province of), China, K.M.J., lost her business after coordinated efforts filled her online pages with one-star ratings and hostile comments. A restaurant owner, K.T.H., who served his community for sixteen years, saw his work fall apart when online users posted his address and labeled him a “cultist.” In the Republic of Korea, a crafts instructor with twenty years of experience lost her students and job roles solely due to her religious faith. A caregiver, K.G., was fired and has not found work since. A skincare shop owner, L.J.H., had to close her store after customers, swayed by media stories, stopped visiting. Even in academia, an assistant professor on the island regarded by his colleagues as an outstanding teacher did not have his contract renewed after his affiliation was revealed on an anonymous platform, a violation of academic freedom based on fear rather than facts.

The persecution has also affected women, particularly. Female members experience an overlap of discrimination that mixes misogyny, religious bias, and sexual slander. The media often portrays CGM women as “victims,” “brides,” or “sexual slaves,” taking away their agency and turning them into objects for public consumption. In Taiwan (Province of), China, anonymous platforms like Dcard have become hotspots for cyber-violence. Female pastors have faced offensive captions, altered images, and degrading comments about their bodies. Women are often called “stupid,” “brainwashed,” or “gullible,” language that strips them of their rationality and independence.

In the Republic of Korea, the trauma resonates in personal accounts. A marketer, K.S., recounted receiving humiliating inquiries from strangers asking if she had been “exploited.” Another member, K.M., developed severe stomach pain from stress after her husband, influenced by media reports, called her a “sex slave” and monitored her communications. These situations show how commercial media narratives can empower abusive partners, turning homes into places of control and emotional violence.

Children, who bear no blame for their parents’ religious choices, have also become victims of this hostile environment. Their rights to education, dignity, and safety have been repeatedly violated. In Taiwan (Province of), China, an elementary school teacher in Taoyuan showed a restricted trailer of the documentary to third graders, an act of malpractice that created fear and enabled bullying against children from CGM families. In the Republic of Korea, students have been forced to leave their schools after being mocked by their peers and educators about their faith. One father, K.H., reported that his first-grade daughter came home frightened after seeing defamatory banners on her way to school. Many children now refuse to go to school out of fear of being labeled “cult kids.” A father, M.J.M., shared how his children were called “heretics” and shunned by classmates. A high school freshman, G.S.J., described how her excitement for the new school year was shattered when classmates verbally abused her and labeled her group “disgusting.” These incidents expose a serious breakdown in societal protections meant to shield minors from discrimination and emotional harm.

The collapse of private life has been equally concerning. The documentary series has weaponized family anxieties, turning household relationships into battlegrounds. Following the 2023 and 2025 broadcasts, domestic disputes rose sharply in both regions. Adult members reported being cut off by family members who insisted they abandon their faith. Parents and children became estranged due to social prejudice. In the Republic of Korea, one family believed that their son had been “brainwashed” and subjected him to physical confinement and assault, referring to it as an “exorcism.” Another member, K.U.J., endured abuse from her parents after they misunderstood media reports.

Marriages have deteriorated as well. One woman, K.M.O., claimed that her husband now forbids her from going to church and verbally abuses her, pushing the family towards divorce. Another woman, K.Y.S., explained how her husband’s constant shouting and insults regarding CGM have made family life unbearable. These cases illustrate how media narratives can penetrate private spaces, damaging trust, dignity, and the right to a family life.

The psychological impact of this persecution has been enormous, and the suffering has also led to physical health issues. Members report high rates of depression, generalized anxiety disorder, and insomnia. The intense stress has resulted in severe medical conditions. A woman in her forties, Y.S.I., developed widespread pityriasis rosea on her torso; her dermatologist called it the worst case they had ever seen. Another member, K.E.H., experienced benign paroxysmal positional vertigo—an ongoing condition—along with panic disorders. Young adults have reported sudden hearing loss and shingles, both closely linked to extreme stress. A mother of four, H.G., faced a life-threatening autoimmune flare-up after the 2023 broadcast. Many others report symptoms like heart palpitations, chest tightness, nausea, and migraines. These physical issues serve as clear evidence of the crisis’s severity and underscore the breach of the right to health.

The treatment of CGM members clearly violates the right to freedom of religion under Article 18 of the UDHR, the right to privacy under Article 12, and the right to protection from discrimination under Article 7. The crisis also reveals a lack of regulatory oversight in the digital age. Traditional broadcasters are bound by ethical guidelines concerning the presumption of innocence, while global streaming platforms face fewer restrictions. The release of a sequel in August 2025, despite known risks of inciting violence and discrimination, raises urgent concerns about what the media system and regulatory agencies should do to prevent human rights abuses. Victims describe this “cold-blooded, cruel form of media violence” as “worse than war,” as it encourages the public to act as judge, jury, and executioner.

CAP-LC urges to look into reports of institutional discrimination on the island of Taiwan (Province of), China and in the Republic of Korea, especially regarding the rights to work

and education. It denounces the use of guilt by association and the online witch hunts targeting ordinary believers over claims made against their leadership. It calls to address the ethical duties of global streaming platforms in stopping the incitement of discrimination and violence against religious minorities. Fair procedures should be promoted, ensuring that media narratives do not taint legal processes or disregard the dignity of minority groups.

The hate fostered by commercial media now poses a risk of leaving lasting scars on thousands of innocent individuals. The scarlet letter of religious affiliation should not become a tool for social and economic destruction in the twenty-first century.
