

Meeting of the **LWF Council**  
Medan, Indonesia

**EXHIBIT 18.1**

12 - 17 June 2014

Public Statements, Letters and  
Documentation in the Area of  
International Affairs and Human Rights  
June 2013 – 15 May 2014



THE  
LUTHERAN  
WORLD  
FEDERATION

A Communion  
of Churches

**MEETING OF THE LWF COUNCIL**

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Public Statements, Letters and Documentation in the Area of International Affairs and Human Rights  
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## 1. BHUTAN

### ***1.1 Stakeholder Submission by the Lutheran World Federation to the Second Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review, 19<sup>th</sup> session. 27 September 2013***

Bhutan: Refugees' Right to Return and Right to Compensation for Arbitrary Deprivation of Property

#### 1. Introduction

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is a global communion of Christian churches in the Lutheran tradition. Founded in 1947 in Lund, Sweden, the LWF now has 142 member churches in 79 representing over 70 million Christians. The LWF strives to put its faith into action within and beyond the communion. LWF acts on behalf of its member churches in areas of ecumenical and interfaith relations, theology, humanitarian assistance, human rights, communication and the various aspects of mission and development. Its secretariat is based in Geneva, Switzerland. The LWF has been in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council since 1952.

In this submission, LWF will touch upon points concerning Bhutan's expulsion of one-sixth of its population and Bhutan's subsequent failure to allow Bhutanese refugees to return or to grant them compensation for the forcible deprivation of their property.

#### 2. Bhutan's Expulsion of One-Sixth of Its Population

Between late 1990 and 1992, the government of Bhutan engaged in a program of oppression and forcible eviction that targeted the Nepali-speaking minority living in the southern part of Bhutan. (Bhutanese of Nepali origins are called Lhotsampas, or Southern Bhutanese.) As a result of this persecution, more than 90,000 people were either expelled or had to flee. They were directed by Indian authorities across the narrow belt of Indian territory that separates Bhutan from Nepal and deposited in southeastern Nepal.

The government of Nepal appealed to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for assistance. The Bhutanese refugees were settled into refugee camps in southeastern Nepal. Their numbers grew to more than 100,000.

The Lutheran World Federation has been working with the Bhutanese refugees since 1991, in partnership with the UNHCR and the government of Nepal. LWF services have included camp administration and management, logistics, water and sanitation, and distribution of food and non-food items, vocational training, and income generating projects.

A program of third-country resettlement for the Bhutanese refugees in Nepal began in 2007. As of September 2013, UNHCR reported that more than 100,000 refugees had registered for resettlement and that more than 81,000 persons had been able to restart their lives in eight different resettlement countries.

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In the more than 20 years since the expulsion of the Bhutanese refugees, to date not a single Bhutanese refugee has been allowed to return home to Bhutan. This is despite extensive rounds of negotiations involving Bhutan, Nepal, and UNHCR, and despite the recommendations made to Bhutan in the First Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review.

### 3. Recommendations

The Lutheran World Federation respectfully suggests these recommendations for adoption by the Universal Periodic Review of Bhutan:

- a) Bhutan should begin to allow Bhutanese refugees to return to Bhutan in safety and dignity. First priority should go to the elderly (some of whom simply want to return to their homeland for their last days) and to close family members who are separated.
- b) Bhutan should provide compensation to those persons whose land and other property was seized by force or coercion in connection with the expulsion of the Southern Bhutanese in the early 1990s.

## 2. CENTRAL AMERICA

### *2.1 Public statement by the LWF Council on Central America, 18 June 2013*

The Council of The Lutheran World Federation expresses its deep concern about the continuing situation of violence and violations of human rights in Central America, especially in Honduras and Guatemala. These are countries with exceptional social insecurity—the homicide rate in Honduras is the highest in the world, and Guatemala is in the top ten. These crimes are mainly associated with gangs and organized crime, but they affect all people, especially those who are the poor and weak.

We believe it is urgent to seek peace, and that it is our duty as churches to be supportive of the peace initiatives that are being attempted in response to the cries of the people of Guatemala and Honduras. They ask for our prayers and expressions of love and solidarity.

The LWF Council:

Calls for concrete actions to help bring calm to the region--actions to address the continuing situation of violations of human rights and the high levels of violence. In particular, the Council:

Repeats the LWF's appeal for the establishment of a Honduras Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), to complement the OHCHR's existing Guatemala Office, and urges both these offices to redouble the UN's efforts to overcome the current impunity of those who commit murders and who attack human rights defenders.

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Gives thanks for the peace processes that have started in Honduras and El Salvador between the gangs and the government authorities, with the important participation of the churches and civil society. We call upon the international community to redouble efforts in support of these processes, with an aim to consolidate a lasting peace for the benefit of all citizens.

Welcomes the upcoming visit of the LWF General Secretary to the Central American region in October, with the hope that he can make the respective governments aware of the concerns of the Communion about the violations of human rights and urge them to take immediate action to manage an end to the violence.

On behalf of the Communion, we extend our prayers and solidarity with the churches and people of Central America. May they be encouraged in their continuing struggle for peace and for the defense of the human rights of the weak and the most vulnerable in society.

### 3. CLIMATE CHANGE

#### 3.1 *Public Statement by the LWF Council on Climate Change, 18 June 2013*

It was voted

- to recall the Public Statement of the Tenth Assembly in 2003 on the United States and the Kyoto Protocol, the Resolution adopted by the LWF Council in 2008 on Climate Change, and the Resolution adopted by the Eleventh Assembly in 2010 on Climate Change; and
- to endorse the recommendations from the LWF Delegation to the December 2012 UN Climate Conference in Doha, calling upon the LWF and its member churches to:
  - a) Develop or update a holistic climate change strategy that addresses advocacy, carbon emissions, training and awareness raising, and humanitarian assistance;
  - b) Engage with civil society to continuously advocate and lobby governments towards increased action and ambition on mitigation and adaptation;
  - c) Further explore the issue of climate change through theological reflection in Lutheran, ecumenical and interfaith frameworks;
  - d) Commit to becoming carbon-neutral at the communion, national, congregational and individual level;
  - e) Influence the culture to live in sustainable ways and address the negative impacts of social inequality and unsustainable consumerism;
  - f) Continue to engage in United Nations processes related to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, particularly through ecumenical, interfaith and youth networks.

**Note:** Member Churches and National Committees will recommendation "Climate Change: A Challenge to our Church" in a separate letter.

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**3.2 Interfaith Representatives at COP 19 call to fast for Climate Justice, 15 November 2013**

We, as delegates and representatives of various faiths and faith based organizations, in solidarity with our brothers and sisters from the Philippines and all over in the world have decided to embark on a fasting chain that will last until the end of COP 19 on November 22nd.

Fasting unites us as a common practice in our different religious traditions. Although we may be relying on different spiritual backgrounds we can all join in the common experience of voluntary fasting.

For us, Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Jews, Hindus, indigenous spiritual traditions and other faith traditions, fasting has a strong spiritual meaning. It first and foremost allows to us to meet our God. In the midst of necessary technical and political discussions, we step back, pray and reflect. Through the concrete sensation of hunger we do not only declare ourselves in solidarity with suffering people, but we are actually in solidarity with them.

As we engage in COP19, it reminds us to relate the negotiations with our responsibility as a believer. We cannot live in isolation, but we must care for each other. As a principle of equity we fast and reduce because we can for others who cannot.

The fast marks our commitment to the principles of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change - inter-generational equity, the precautionary principle, common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. We fast now because we are able to. There are many who live in poverty and who are vulnerable who cannot have these choices. This is our message to the global leaders and COP19 - those who can reduce Greenhouse gas emissions must do so for the sake of the future generations and the vulnerability of the poor.

More than ever, it is time for us to all work together to be good stewards of the creation.

That is why

we are fasting in solidarity with the poor and vulnerable

who are disproportionately affected by extreme weather events;

we are praying and fasting for the victims and survivors of typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, as well as other people affected by extreme weather events all around the world, which are increasing in frequency and intensity due to climate change;

we are fasting, praying and meditating for a tangible and ambitious outcome to the climate change negotiations;

we are calling for urgent action to bring sanity and ethics in the international climate negotiations.

Together,

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we call to the members of delegations and organisations at the 19th UN Conference on Climate Change (COP19) and people of faith around the world to join us in this fasting for one day.

We encourage all people of faith to contribute to this journey of public awareness and action for global climate justice. We need you to engage with your congregation and national leaders to inspire a commitment to change our current model to one that is sustainable and just. We invite those who are capable to fast for a meaningful outcome here in Warsaw as we head to COP20 in Lima, Peru in 2014 and the urgent cut off date for a binding emissions agreement for all countries at COP21 in Paris, France.

This initiative is supported by the following organisations and faith communities who are present at COP19

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF)

Act Alliance

The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society

Kenya Youth Climate network

Southern African Faith Communities Environment Institute (SAFCEI)

We have Faith - Act now for Climate Justice Campaign

The Orthodox Church

International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB)

Interreligious Climate and Environment Network (ICE)

National Islamic Council of Norway

Brahma Kumaris- World Spiritual University

Church of Norway - Council on Ecumenical and International Relations

Christian Council of Tanzania



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#### 4. DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

##### ***4.1 Stakeholder Submission for the Democratic Republic of the Congo by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), World YWCA, YWCA DRC and RAFEJE to the Second Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review, 19<sup>th</sup> session. 27 September 2013***

The Protection and Promotion of Women's and Young Women's Rights in DRC: A Fundamental Requirement for Peace Building

The World Young Women's Christian Association (World YWCA) is a global network of women leading social and economic change in over 120 countries worldwide. The World YWCA advocates for peace, justice, human rights and care for the environment and develops women's leadership to find local solutions to the global inequalities women face. Each year, the World YWCA reaches more than 25 million women and girls through work in over 20,000 communities, through advocacy, training and development to empower women, including young women, to lead social change. Violence against women (VAW) has been a long standing priority for local advocacy, programmes and services across the YWCA movement. In almost 70 countries YWCA's provide support for survivors of violence and those at risk of violence, as well as emergency accommodation, legal services and community education. Through YWCA work on violence against women, the movement seeks to ensure that the rights of women, young women and girls are promoted and protected through advocacy, programmes and services. The World YWCA focuses on women's rights and violence against women at the UN Human Rights Council, and the UN Commission for the Status of Women.

The YWCA of DRC is a member of the World YWCA, and its priorities include the prevention of sexual violence and gender-based violence. The YWCA of DRC is supporting women and girls survivors of sexual violence with psycho-social and legal services.

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is a global communion of Christian churches in the Lutheran tradition. The LWF is a global communion of 142 churches in the Lutheran tradition, representing over 70 million Christians in 79 countries. We strive to put our faith into action within and beyond the communion. This witness takes a variety of forms: ecumenical and interfaith relations, capacity building, advocacy, humanitarian assistance, theology, mission, development and many others. As a member of the FLM, The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Congo has contributed to the information in this document as part of its pastoral action for women's rights.

RAFEJE is a network of Associations of Women Lawyers in the East of DRC. The network is composed of four organisations: Dynamique des Femmes Juristes de Goma (DFJ) who acts as the coordinator for the network ; Association des femmes Juristes pour les Droits de la Femme et de l'Enfant de Béni-Butembo in the north Province du Nord Kivu (AFJDF) ; Association des Femmes Juristes du Congo de Bukavu dans le Sud Kivu (AFEJUCO Bukavu) and Association des Femmes Juristes de Kisangani in the East Province. The network's priority is the promotion and protection of women's and children's rights at national and global levels, as well as strengthening women's capacities at all levels. In this submission, our coalition will touch upon points concerning the protection and promotion of women and girls human rights in the Democratic Republic of Congo, particularly in the areas of sexual violence,

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impunity and the lack of implementation of the Resolution 1325, adopted by DRC in 2010, as a major obstacle to overcome the vulnerability of women and girls in the context of the armed conflict in the country.

### The Situation of Women in DRC

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has been for more than twenty years the stage of a deadly conflict, which has already claimed more than 5.4 million lives<sup>1</sup>. Sexual violence and gender-based violence have scarred the lives of millions, especially women and girls over the course of the conflict, and peace agreements have failed to stop the armed groups from continuing to threaten the lives of innocent civilians.

The status of women in the Congolese society makes them particularly vulnerable to violence in the context of the on-going conflict. According to Ms. Delphine Brun, from GenCap (Norwegian Refugee Council/IASC sub-working group on gender and humanitarian action), who presented results of her research at a side-event on DRC during the 55th session of CEDAW, women and girls do not enjoy an equal status in society. This is reflected in terms of the time division of labour and resting times for men and women, lower access to training and to income generating activities, the inequality in terms of power of making decisions in the household.

Furthermore, the situation of young women in DRC deserves particular attention. Ms. Pricilla Magamba, a young leader of the Young Christian Women's Association (YWCA) of DRC, stated at the same side-event above mentioned, that the situation for young women is worrying, especially due to sexual violence, prostitution, early marriage and school dropout and primary health care.

The principle of equality and the promotion of women's rights are enshrined in DRC's national constitution in articles 11, 14 and 15. Certain national laws aim at the promotion of women's rights, which is the case with the draft law on implementation of gender mainstreaming, the law on sexual violence, the law on the status of staff in public service, and the labour code. However, these laws are neither respected in appointed positions nor in decision-making bodies.

In addition, certain laws remain discriminatory and are not updated, as is the case with the revision of the Family code, which has been under review for 10 years. If the law protects a woman within the framework of the family, she will be better equipped to face abuse in the public sphere and the authorities' response will be adapted to her needs of care, remedies and sanctions for perpetrators within a legal framework.

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1 INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE. **Mortality in the Democratic Republic of Congo: An Ongoing Crisis**, page 2.

[http://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/migrated/resources/2007/2006-7\\_congomortalitysurvey.pdf](http://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/migrated/resources/2007/2006-7_congomortalitysurvey.pdf)

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**Sexual Violence and Impunity**

The aspect of the armed conflict in DRC which has received the most media attention is the sexual violence that Congolese women of all ages have suffered. However, this media attention has not however decreased the extent of the violence, nor pushed the Government to ask itself the right questions as per the root causes of rape as a weapon of war, of sexual slavery, of forced prostitution or of HIV infection by the squadrons created for this purpose.

Instability and precariousness has been exacerbated by population displacements, poverty and the fragmentation of families. In this context, gender based social inequalities have made women and girls the target of these destabilising strategies within a context where the authority of the State is very weak or sometimes even absent in certain regions.

In addition, the armed conflict-related abuse faced by women and young women comes in addition to other forms of violations of women's rights, such as discrimination and domestic violence, violence in the work place and in decision-making circles. These violations are linked to inequalities in daily life and which are legitimized by customary law whereby women have to be subordinate to men in private and public spheres.

One of the pernicious effects of this imbalance in gender relations is the existence of general impunity for sexual crimes. The case of North Kivu is a flagrant example – of its 8,000 victims of rape between 2010 and 2011, only 960 were taken to court. The impunity is even more concerning as statistics give an estimated 1 million cases of rape up to the year 2009 (source: Ministry of Gender, Family and Children) and of which, according to UNFPA, 65% of the victims were children under the age of 18 and 10% under the age of 10.

**Recommendations**

- Specific measures should be taken to target young women as a specific group. Measures of psychological support to overcome trauma and legal assistance for young women survivors of sexual and other forms of violence would be crucial to this population group.
- Accelerate legislative reform to align laws adopted by DRC with the principle of gender equality and ensure that the Family Code, which is still discriminatory towards women, be revised as soon as possible. The vote on the law on gender mainstreaming, which has not yet taken place, leaves much room for customary law and the exclusion of women in decision-making.
- Network with civil society organisations who have expertise in the promotion of women and young women's leadership, and take into consideration their experiences and knowledge in order to formulate coherent public policies and achieve real impact for the benefit of women and girls.

**The lack of implementation of UNSCR1325**

In 2010 the DRC signed and ratified UNSCR1325 on the crucial role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and peace building. According to UNSCR1325, women must participate equally to men in all efforts towards maintaining and promoting peace and security.

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The Government of DRC elaborated an action plan that is to be executed by a national steering committee as well as steering committees at provincial level. The steering committee's mission is the political orientation, conceptualisation, planning, monitoring and evaluation of the whole process at national level. However, the majority of these structures do not function properly, which makes UNSCR1325 remain almost token.

The challenges with women's participation in the peace process which hamper implementation of UNSCR1325

Regarding women's participation and representation in the peace and security field, some progress has been made, namely in peace keeping missions where there is an increased involvement of women within the police and military observers. The MONUSCO has equally adopted a policy that gives priority to women candidates. The proportion of women in all missions is currently at 26.08% of the national and international civilian personnel. One of these women is the Deputy Special Representative to the Secretary General of the United Nations and three women, together with fourteen men, hold positions at the highest level of decision-making of the mission.

Women officers, of which some are at the head of the Special Police for the protection of women and children (PSPEF) operating in the east of the country (case of Kisangani). However, the number of women remains insufficient in these institutions in general and even more so at decision-making levels. In the East, women represent 10% in Government, 8% in Parliament and 5% in the Senate. However, there are no women Governors in the 11 provinces. Statistics also show that on average there are 1.5 women per provincial Government.

There is an even more pronounced situation of inequality in the recruitment and training of high level military personnel: no women have been recruited so far. Currently, there are 0% women in the national intelligence agency (ANR), in the provincial security committees in North Kivu, South Kivu or in the eastern province, where implementation of UNSCR1325 would be instrumental in responding to instability and all forms of aggressions on women and young women.

Women are also excluded from the peace processes and agreements. The stabilisation and reconstruction programme (Programme de Stabilisation et de Reconstruction des Zones sortant des Conflits Armés - STAREC), which was established in 2009 to target North Kivu, South Kivu and Maniema, the regions of Haut-Uele, Bas Uele, and Tanganyika, has only 3 women out of the 14 members on its decision-making body and only 23 women out of a total of 66 were on the steering committee for the implementation of the 23 March 2009 Peace Agreements. There was only one woman in the government delegation and one woman in the M23 rebel delegation for the peace talks held in Kampala.

The experience of the network « Réseau de Femmes Juristes de l'Est de la RDC » has shown that there is a resistance of women to access justice, given that the rulings are often biased and justify the behaviour of the perpetrators. With a view of strengthening the legal protection of women, the DRC created a special police for the protection of women, but only 3% of women were effectively part of this body. The number of women among judicial authorities remains insufficient. In North Kivu women make up 2% and in eastern province and South Kivu women make up 3%. Not only is there gender inequality

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striking, but the low sensitivity of the judicial authorities for the respect of women's rights is also notable. In addition, there is a lack of trial courts in many of the territories of the eastern provinces (2 in North Kivu for a population of 4.5 million in 2005, 3 in South Kivu for a population of 3.9 million in 2005, 4 in the Eastern Province for a population of 6.6 million in 2005).

**Recommendations:**

- Continue to strengthen the participation of women and young women in the conflict resolution efforts, as they have a meaningful contribution to make to peace.
- Abide by the principle of equality between men and women and make gender mainstreaming effective within the army, police force, and all peace talks. The establishment of concrete and efficient mechanisms to increase women's representation in decision-making bodies must become inevitable.
- Increase the number of female judges that are recruited and implement concrete initiatives to raise their awareness and train them, as well as their male counter-parts, to ensure that justice is accessible to the most vulnerable populations to violence, especially in remote areas that are most affected by the conflict.

Gender mainstreaming in the planning, the programme structure and the budgeting of peace and security actions

The DRC government has attempted an implementation of RSCN 1325's provisions by putting together a gender national policy, an action plan and a national strategy to overcome gender based violence. However, the policies and programmes towards the disarmament, the demobilization and the reinsertion processes remain discriminatory. The slogan: "A MAN, A GUN" discriminates against the women fighters and those who play different roles in the armed groups (i.e. cooks, nurses, sexual slaves, luggage porters).

The budget allocated to incorporate a gender analysis to these actions is almost inexistent as it is the budget granted to the Ministry of Gender, Women and Family. With regards to the Ministry of Defence, it has not even designed a gender policy.

**Recommendations**

- To vote a realistic budget to implement the gender policy and the plan to overcome gender based violence.
- To raise awareness and to provide training on gender sensitive issues to all the women and men who are key actors in the processes of disarmament, demobilization and reinsertion. In this way they will be able to incorporate the gender perspective to their programmes and actions and to take into consideration issues such as the status of women in the military structures.

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**Analysis of Recommendations from the last UPR Review of DRC<sup>1</sup>**

Of the one hundred and twenty four (124) recommendations formulated during the interactive dialogue that enjoyed the support of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), twenty-five (25) were specifically referring to sexual violence, including the impunity that exists around sexual violence in DRC. Of those twenty-five (25), the Government of DRC considered that eleven (11) were already implemented or in the process of implementation.

Five (5) recommendations were specifically on impunity in general. Of those five (5), the Government of DRC considered that two (2) were already implemented or in the process of implementation.

Five (5) recommendations mentioned specifically violence against women and girls and an additional two (2) were specifically on the protection of women and girls. Of these seven (7), the Government of DRC considered that four (4) were already implemented or in the process of implementation.

There were no recommendations specifically on UNSCR 1325, nor on young women's participation in the peace process.

The following recommendation did not enjoy the support of DRC:

“Significantly increase its commitment to fight impunity, specifically that it (a) suspend, investigate and prosecute as appropriate FARDC soldiers who have been identified as perpetrators of serious human rights abuses or crimes, including the FARDC's 213<sup>th</sup> Brigade, as well as the five members of the FARDC who were credibly accused of serious human rights abuses by MONUC and United Nations Security Council over the past year; and (b) establish an effective screening mechanism to vet the past **human rights records of officers, particularly for important posts in the military**”.

**Recommendations**

The World YWCA and LWF urges the Government of DRC to reconsider the following recommendations from the previous UPR review:

- 1) Effectively implement the 2006 law on sexual violence and the “zero tolerance policy”
- 2) Ensure the effective investigation, including allegations of rape being used as a weapon of war, and prosecution of perpetrators of sexual violence, including FARDC soldiers, without exception and without regard to rank
- 3) Strengthen efforts to combat impunity of all forms of violence against women

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## 5. FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF

### 5.1 Public Statement by the LWF Council on Freedom of Religion or Belief, 18 June 2013

- 1) From its founding in 1947 to the present day, the Lutheran World Federation has supported the freedom of religion or belief and been concerned about violations of it. The first resolution of the First Assembly of the LWF (Lund 1947) focused on advocacy for “homeless and displaced persons and refugees without regard to their origin, language, nationality, or status.” It included this call to national governments and to the United Nations:

... above all to defend the sacred right of refugees and minorities to conduct their Church affairs in their mother tongue and according to their own Confession.

- 2) The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948. A Lutheran pastor, Frederick Nolde, represented the World Council of Churches in the deliberations that led to the Universal Declaration. He is credited as being the main drafter of Article 18, which reads as follows:

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his (*sic.*) religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his (*sic.*) religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

This freedom has been elaborated in two major United Nations documents: Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) and the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief (1981).

- 3) Over the years, LWF Assemblies and Councils have adopted numerous resolutions touching on human rights in general and freedom of religion in particular. These include:
  - a) Fourth Assembly of the LWF (Helsinki 1963), Statement of Principle on Freedom to Attend Religious Meetings:

The Lutheran World Federation believes that the right given by God to every man (*sic.*) to exercise religious freedom ought to include the right to attend an international assembly of Christian churches to which his church has designated him as a delegate.

- b) Sixth Assembly of the LWF (Dar es Salaam 1977), Statement on Human Rights, contains this paragraph:

We affirm that it is our task as Christians to promote, together with those who have different beliefs, the realization of full freedom of thought, conscience and religion; and we emphasize the right to practice the community of faith across national borders. We explicitly declare that freedom of conscience includes the right not to adhere to any religion.

- c) Seventh Assembly of the LWF (Budapest 1984), Statement on Human Rights. The first observation in that broad statement was the following:

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In recent years, the world community has been especially concerned about ... The denial of religious freedom, be it in the form of private or public worship, open witness to the faith, the education of the young, or the right to live according to one's conscience ...

- d) Eighth Assembly of the LWF (Curitiba, 1990). The Assembly Message contains this paragraph:

This fostering of respect for and tolerance of religious beliefs different from our own is possible only if we are willing to listen and share in the hopes and aspirations of others. This does not mean watering down our own faith but rather, by listening to the faith and convictions of others, we have the opportunity to deepen our own commitments and to define our identity in relation to others and not over against them.

- e) Ninth Assembly of the LWF (Hong Kong 1997), Statement on Freedom of Religion. The Assembly called upon member churches (and in the first case, the ecumenical community):

to redouble their efforts and to cooperate widely in promoting and defending religious freedom in their own societies and internationally.

... to focus on religious freedom in the context of their economic, social, cultural, civil and political human rights:

- through prayers and intercessions, Bible studies and worship;
- through educational materials, seminars and public manifestations;
- by participating in programs of cooperation with people of other faiths; and
- by interceding with state authorities and religious authorities wherever necessary in defense of individuals or groups whose rightful religious freedoms are being curtailed or denied.

- f) LWF Council (Turku 2000) received a report on "The Involvement of LWF Member Churches in Promoting and Defending Religious Freedom." This report concluded in part:

Religious intolerance has been a source of untold violence and immeasurable human suffering over the ages, up to this very day. It is, in one form or another, a feature of the day-to-day experience of many member churches of the LWF. The right to religious freedom, on the other hand, provides a source and basis for peaceful co-existence. It also mirrors a respect for the dignity of every human person, which the churches are committed to promote.

- g) Tenth Assembly of the LWF (Winnipeg 2003), the Assembly Message stated in regard to The Mission of the Church in Multifaith Contexts:

With the world mission conferences in San Antonio (USA) and Salvador (Brazil), we affirm that "we cannot point to any other way of salvation than Jesus Christ; at the same time we cannot set limits to the saving power of God." In light of this, we must continue to ... affirm religious freedom ...

- 4) Since 1986, the United Nations has had a Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief. (This mandate was at first entitled, "on the Elimination of All Forms of Religious Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief.") The Special Rapporteur makes thoughtful and very



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helpful reports to the UN Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly. These reports address current critical issues relating to freedom of religion. The Special Rapporteur also makes country visits and communicates to the relevant countries urgent concerns relating to the violation of the right to freedom of religion or belief.

5) Current scholarship<sup>2</sup> as well as the reports of the Special Rapporteur, finds that “to the extent that governments deny religious freedoms, violent religious persecution and conflict will increase.”<sup>3</sup> And, “when social and government restrictions on religion are reduced, violent religious persecution is reduced.”<sup>4</sup> Evidence of these assertions is found in many places in the world today. For example, in Indonesia, the government fails to enforce national laws which guarantee freedom of religion with the result that church buildings have been forcibly closed or even destroyed (including from the Huria Kristen Batak Protestan / Batak Christian Protestant Church) following the demands of extremist Muslim groups. In Iran and Syria we hear reports of the imprisonment and abuse of Christian clergy. In Pakistan the laws of blasphemy are used by some to take revenge on their enemies or to exploit weak persons and communities. In Tanzania we note with concern the burning of several houses of worship in the aftermath of violent riots, including one church building of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. In Nigeria, we grieve the many deaths caused by continuing violence that is clothed in religion, especially attacks on churches and other houses of worship.

6) The LWF Council:

- 6.1 Reaffirms the strong support of The Lutheran World Federation for the universal right of all persons to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
- 6.2 Calls upon member churches and the ecumenical community to redouble their efforts and to cooperate widely in promoting and defending religious freedom in their own societies and internationally, including the freedom of public and private worship in the form and language of their choice.
- 6.3 Calls upon the LWF and its member churches to intercede with state authorities and religious authorities wherever necessary in defense of individuals or groups whose rightful religious freedoms are being curtailed or denied, including the right to change religions and the right to wear or display religious symbols.
- 6.4 Pledges the cooperation and support of the LWF for the United Nations mechanisms that promote and protect religious freedom, and in particular the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief.
- 6.5 Calls upon Lutherans and other people of faith around the world to pray for all people who suffer because of the lack of freedom of religion or belief.

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<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Grim and Finke, *The Price of Freedom Denied: Religious Persecution and Conflict in the Twenty-First Century* (2011)

<sup>3</sup> Op. cit., p. 212.

<sup>4</sup> Op. cit., p. 210.

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***5.2 Concluding Remarks by Ralston Deffenbaugh, Assistant General Secretary for International Affairs and Human Rights of the Lutheran World Federation at the Sixth Session of the UN Forum on Minority Issues. 27 November 2013***

“Beyond Freedom of Religion or Belief: Guaranteeing the Rights of Religious Minorities”

Madame Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen:

In October 2010, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the first week of February every year to be World Interfaith Harmony Week between all religions, faiths and beliefs. The General Assembly recognized that the moral imperatives of all religions, convictions and beliefs call for peace, tolerance and mutual understanding. It encouraged the spread of the message of interfaith harmony and goodwill, “based on love of God and love of one’s neighbor or on love of the good and love of one’s neighbor, each according to their own religious traditions or convictions.”

This afternoon, we have heard many examples of people from around the world who are expressing their love for God and love for the neighbor. In doing so, they are living out human solidarity and compassion. And in doing so they are making our world a better place.

I have been particularly impressed by the voices of members of religious minorities who are determined to continue to live out their faith and carry on their traditions—in other words, to love God and to love the neighbor as their conscience leads them—despite pressures and even persecutions that may come from the state or from the wider society.

I personally come from the Lutheran Christian tradition. At the close of World War II, one out of every six Lutherans in the world was a refugee or a displaced person. Since then, service with refugees and others in need has been very important for the global Lutheran communion. Today, the Lutheran World Federation is working with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in helping to care for one and a half million refugees around the world.

Indeed, one of the important ways that that the Lutheran World Federation engages in inter-faith dialogue is in practice—a dialogue in service. We call this type of dialogue diapraxis.

So today, the LWF—a Christian faith-based organization—is working to provide humanitarian and development services with Somali Muslim refugees in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti; with Bhutanese Hindu refugees in Nepal; with Buddhist victims of flooding and Muslim internally displaced persons in Myanmar; with rural Muslim populations in community development in Bangladesh; against desertification and with Muslim Malian refugees in Mauritania.

This afternoon, we heard two powerful examples of religion being a force for peace. From Sierra Leone, we heard how faith leaders—Muslim and Christian—worked together to help bring an end to the brutal civil war and to help reconcile the nation. From UNHCR, we heard about the High Commissioner’s Dialogue on Faith and Protection, where the High Commissioner convened faith leaders from the major religions to explore how the notion of “protecting the other” springs from long

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and widely shared religious values and traditions. The world's major religions share a common goal of welcoming and protecting the world's forcibly displaced.

As the General Assembly stated, the moral imperatives of all religions, convictions and beliefs call for peace, tolerance and mutual understanding. We can draw the conclusion that protecting freedom of religion is one way of making for peace. Freedom of religion allows space for people of faith to express their love for the neighbor, their human compassion for those in need.

Respecting the rights of religious minorities gives them the space to live their lives in peace—loving God and loving the neighbor. The entire society becomes a happier and better place thereby.

## 6. NELSON MANDELA

### ***6.1 Statement of the LWF President, Rev. Dr. Munib A. Younan, and the LWF General Secretary, Rev. Martin Junge, on the Death of Former South African President Nelson Mandela, 6 December 2013***

The Lutheran World Federation gives thanks to God for the life and witness of Nelson Mandela. We join with his family, the people of South Africa, and people all across the world in prayer and mourning, but also in celebration of the character and accomplishments of this great man.

Nelson Mandela was one of the most inspiring persons of our time. He stood for principle, he fought for justice, he made for peace. Convinced of the equal humanity and dignity of all people, he devoted his life to building a new South Africa—a country in which all are equal under the law, a country in which racial discrimination and apartheid have no place, a country in which, in the words of Martin Luther King, people are judged by the content of their character, not by the color of their skin.

Mandela bore the consequences of the fight against apartheid. In his case, 27 years' imprisonment, isolation from family, friends, and comrades. Throughout this time he remained resolute. He never wavered in his confidence in the justice of the struggle and in its final victory.

When finally the pressures mounted so high that the apartheid regime knew that it could no longer persist in its ways, Mandela was there as an honest, principled, and effective negotiating partner. He taught the white South Africans—indeed, all South Africans—that all have a place in the new South Africa. All would be treated with dignity, all would be protected by the constitution, all would be full citizens. And for himself, although he was in a position of great power, he understood that he was not above the law either. At the end of his term as president, he voluntarily stepped down and allowed the democratic system to confer power on others.

Mandela also understood that in order for there to be lasting peace, there had to be reconciliation. And in order for there to be reconciliation, there had to be truth. There was no room, on the one side, for vengeance; neither, on the other side, for erasing the past and pretending that nothing wrong had happened. In the Latin American phrase, he understood that a people without memory is a people without a future. South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, whatever its imperfections,

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proved to be a healthy and cleansing instrument that has allowed for confession and forgiveness and for South Africa to move forward.

Thanks be to God for Nelson Mandela!

## 7. MALAYSIA

### *7.1 LWF letter to Member Church Leaders in Malaysia on Allah Ruling. 27 November 2013*

Dear Bishop Rajah, dear Bishop Tsen, dear Rev. Mojuin, dear Bishop Yap

Grace and peace to you!

We in the Lutheran World Federation are deeply troubled at the recent ruling of the Court of Appeal of Malaysia that a Roman Catholic Christian weekly publication may not use the Malay-language word for "God", "Allah".

This ruling, in our view, goes against the centuries-old, well-accepted use of the word "Allah" by Arab Christians in the Middle East and other parts of the world; violates the freedom of religion and freedom of expression of Christians in Malaysia; and threatens to create unnecessary division and discord between Christians and Muslims in Malaysia.

One of us, LWF President Munib Younan, is the Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, an Arabic-speaking Christian church with its head office in the holy city of Jerusalem. In my church, and indeed throughout the Arabic-speaking Christian world, we use the name "Allah" in our Bible, in our worship, in our prayers and in our publications.

Christians have been using the word "Allah" for 2,000 years, even before the advent of Islam. If we, the Arab Christians, can use the word "Allah" in the heart of the Muslim and Arab world, peacefully and without any controversy, it is very difficult for me to understand why Malaysian Christians cannot use it.

In addition, we understand that the word "Allah" has been used by Christians in the Malay language for centuries. Similarly, it has long been used in the neighboring Indonesian language, without any conflict or controversy.

The attempt to ban the word by which Malay-speaking Christians refer to God is a fundamental violation of freedom of religion and of freedom of expression. The right to freedom of religion is enshrined in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It includes the "freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest [one's] religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance." If Malay-speaking Christians would be forbidden to address God as "Allah," then their teaching, practice, worship and observance would no longer be free.

Similarly, the right to freedom of opinion and expression is enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This right "includes freedom to hold opinions without interference". For centuries, Malay-speaking Christians have held the opinion that the word for "God" is "Allah." The Court of Appeal's ruling interferes with these opinions of the Malay-speaking Christians, and with their actual practice.

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We understand that these fundamental rights of freedom of religion and freedom of expression are also enshrined in the Constitution and laws of Malaysia.

Furthermore, we are astonished that the Court of Appeal asserts that it, as a secular national court, has the authority and competence to rule on what is or is not “an integral part of the faith and practice of Christianity.” This is a clear interference in matters of faith and religion.

Lastly, we are deeply concerned that this attempt to restrict the use of the word “Allah” to a particular religious group—in this case, Muslims—will lead to increased division and discord among the population of Malaysia. With all respect to the Court of Appeal’s finding that the usage by Christians of “Allah” will “inevitably cause confusion within the community,” it is in fact the attempt to suppress freedoms (in this case, freedoms of religion and expression) that may lead to confusion, resentment, and discord. As the LWF Council has noted (Geneva 2013), while religious intolerance is a source of violence and suffering, religious freedom provides a source and basis for peaceful co-existence.

Examples from around the world show that “the welfare of the community” is best served by promoting human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights makes this point in its opening words: “recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world”.

Know that you and your churches, and indeed all the churches and all the people of Malaysia, are in our thoughts and prayers. We pray that you may practice your faith freely, that the rights of all Malaysians will be protected, and that your country may be one of freedom, justice and peace.

## 8. PALESTINE-ISRAEL

### *8.1 Council Resolution on Christian presence and witness in the Middle East, 18 June 2013*

Current developments in the region place Arab and Middle Eastern Christians in an existential crisis. Some Christian communities do not know if they will be able to remain in the geographic areas their people have inhabited since the beginning of Christianity.

We recognize that Arab and Middle Eastern Christians often feel misunderstood and even abandoned by their sisters and brothers around the world.

While lesser in number than their neighbors, Christians are not less in their contribution to the countries and societies in which they live. They are, instead, part of the fabric of their societies. We especially pay heed to the reality that many Muslims share the same perspectives and concerns expressed by our Christian companions.

Arab and Middle Eastern Christians warn against western forms of Islamophobia that simply dismiss Arab and Islamic culture. The Christians in this region see their Muslim neighbors to be, like them, children of God and, therefore, reject forms of understanding the Muslim world that attempt to separate Muslims and Christians from one another as if they are not neighbors.

In this time of turmoil and change, we commit to accompanying Arab and Middle Eastern Christian sisters and brothers. We will listen carefully to their needs, even as we celebrate with them the heritage of their indigenous presence in their lands and their mission to bring life abundant for themselves and for all their neighbors.

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We are impressed with the stated commitment of Arab and Middle Eastern churches to develop work among youth and women in order to engage all of the assets in their communities.

We express our solidarity with the work and witness of the Middle East Council of Churches as a vital ecumenical body in this troubled time.

The LWF Council,

- 1) Together with the World Council of Churches and the Middle East Council of Churches, affirms the long-standing commitment of Christians in the Middle East to be recognized as an integral part of their societies and joins them in upholding this tradition.
- 2) Supports the desire of those Christians in the region who want to remain in their countries with their people.
- 3) Encourages our Christian sisters and brothers as they work for peace based on justice in their respective countries.
- 4) Gives thanks for the Lutheran ministry and work being carried out in the Middle East through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land and through the Lutheran World Federation; these help support the continuity of Christians in the Middle East, both in holistic mission and in diakonia.

## 9. ROMA PEOPLE

### ***9.1 Recommendations by the Lutheran World Federation and the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe on Roma People, 10 February 2014***

A Call for Justice and Dignity for Roma People

Recommendations to Churches, Church-Related Organizations and Christians in Europe

"And then you will be citizens of the household of God" (Ephesians 2: 19). This was the theme of a meeting in Frankfurt, Germany in November 2013, jointly organized by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Europe Desk and the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME), focusing on migration and equal citizenship of Roma in Europe. The consultation concluded with the following recommendations:

- 1) Enhance knowledge about Roma culture and history in the churches and in society, for example through exhibitions, leaflets and educational materials. Let International Holocaust Remembrance Day (January 27) and International Roma Day (April 8) be used as opportunities for making Roma history and culture visible and known.
- 2) Create meeting places between Roma and non-Roma people with face-to-face interaction, sharing of life stories, sharing music and art, and worshiping together. Support congregations to become open and welcoming communities, and provide for closer cooperation with and more representation of Roma in European church consultations.

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- 3) Ground the work in inclusive and justice-oriented theology, making use of Biblical stories and parables that open up space for reflection and challenge us to move out of our comfort zones towards a stronger belief in a shared humanity. Create spaces where fears of each other and difficulties in cultural encounters can also be expressed and struggled with.
- 4) Strengthen capacity within the churches. Offer trainings on Roma culture for church workers, so as to make knowledgeable and effective outreach to Roma communities possible. Offer training on spiritual and diaconal service to church workers from the Roma community to strengthen their role in the churches. Collect and share best practices.
- 5) Reduce tensions between Roma people and the majority society, for example through training intercultural community mediators. Work together with the Roma leadership to build mutual trust and understanding. Support bridge-building initiatives, especially involving children and youth.
- 6) Reclaim Roma culture. Value and cherish the cultural contributions from the Roma community and learn about its diversity and commonality. At the same time, avoid freezing the concept of what Roma culture is or should be, affirming that every living culture is involved in processes of change.
- 7) Don't victimize Roma people. Affirm Roma people as agents of change and strengthen their voice in society. Always work together with Roma people on Roma people's concerns. Facilitate the creation of platforms where different minority groups and their different organizations can strengthen and stand up for each other and walk together.
- 8) Encourage and empower Roma people to pursue basic and higher education. Work against any hindrance of Roma children's—both girls and boys—school attendance. Provide support for Roma adults—both women and men—for further education and training, also for church ministries.
- 9) Support the development of sustainable livelihoods and poverty reduction among Roma people, for example through education, business training, income generating projects and assistance in developing small and medium scale enterprises, as well as access to employment, also in the churches. Work with long-term, inclusive and strategic measures.
- 10) Acknowledge that "one intolerance seldom comes alone". Build strategies that take into account the interconnectedness between, for example, anti-ziganism, anti-Semitism and racism. At the same time, acknowledge the need to specifically focus on anti-ziganism as one of the most neglected among these.
- 11) Speak out against "anti-ziganism" in the society and media. Following the 8th Commandment, react whenever false and generalized accusations are made against Roma people. Challenge any hateful rhetoric, making people aware that history teaches that intolerant rhetoric can lead to genocide.
- 12) Strengthen cooperation on Roma migration, on European ecumenical levels as well as between churches, diaconal agencies and the wider civil society. Enhance both spiritual and diaconal approaches to Roma migration and its challenges, both from sending and receiving countries' contexts, and work also with Roma belonging to other faith communities.

And in all this: Work together with and involve Roma people in both analysis and action!

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**10. SOUTH SUDAN****10.1 *Statement by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) On South Sudan, 12 May 2014***

On 20 May 2014, the international community will convene in Oslo, Norway, to discuss how to address the humanitarian crisis in South Sudan. In just under five months since fighting erupted, the situation in South Sudan has deteriorated severely, causing 1.3 million people to flee from their homes, including an estimated 300,000 to neighbouring countries. Over 4 million people, including over 2.5 million children, are extremely vulnerable to food insecurity, as people have been displaced from their sources of survival. This crisis is worsening on a daily basis. Humanitarian actors have warned that by the end of this year half of all South Sudanese citizens could experience forced displacement (within the country or as a refugee), severe food insecurity, and/or threats to their protection. The undersigned non-governmental organisations (NGOs) call on the UN member states and others to urgently focus on clear and immediate actions to provide assistance to the people of South Sudan and to rally national, regional and international support to this end. Furthermore, an inclusive and viable political framework for ending conflict is critical. As such, we call for the following seven steps in order to provide coherent assistance to the people of South Sudan.

1) Timely funding of the humanitarian response is critical to saving countless lives, preventing further suffering in the coming months, and supporting resilience to further shocks. Despite some generous contributions, the overall donor response to the humanitarian crisis has been disappointing. The UN humanitarian appeal for South Sudan for January-June 2014 remains sixty-one per cent unfunded. Based on Gross National Income, traditional donors have yet to contribute close to a quarter of their fair share to the emergency response in South Sudan. Aid transparency is an important part of a well-coordinated and cost effective response. All donors, traditional and non-traditional, are encouraged to give aid that is proportional to the size of their economy and to fully disclose such donations.

Enabling the delivery of large-scale humanitarian assistance will have a clear and tangible benefit in the immediate term, allowing supplies to be pre-positioned and delivered to affected populations. It will ensure that an already beleaguered population has access to life-saving water, sanitation, healthcare, shelter services and essential items, and to reinforce protection of the most vulnerable, particularly women and children. The Oslo conference presents an opportunity for donors to demonstrate their resolute commitment to addressing the humanitarian needs of the South Sudanese people, by generously contributing and rapidly disbursing funds to the humanitarian appeal and ensuring that all sectors are adequately funded.

2) Protection of and respect for humanitarian staff, installations and operations is vital to allow the delivery of this assistance. Aid workers have been killed and thousands of national staff are unable to work in many areas due to fear of being targeted, and this is significantly undermining the humanitarian response. Aid workers must be free to deliver assistance wherever it is needed, without fear of attack or restrictions placed upon them by parties to the conflict.



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In addition to these difficulties, access to people in need and the ability to scale up the humanitarian response are further constrained by the imposition of targeted bureaucratic impediments, including difficulties in obtaining flight clearances and tax exemptions, and the stop-and-search of humanitarian convoys. For example, customs clearances are taking an average of five weeks to obtain.

Donor governments must continue to urge all parties to the conflict to ensure the protection of humanitarian personnel and installations, enable the safe and unfettered movement of such personnel, equipment and supplies, and ease bureaucratic procedures to allow rapid delivery of assistance.

3) In South Sudan political and financial support to the Government of South Sudan has, until now, been generally quite high, but support to the humanitarian needs of the people has sometimes wavered. Whilst recognizing the importance of building national institutions, the recent crisis has highlighted that a focus on 'state building' can come at the expense of supporting sustainable peace and development that all South Sudanese can benefit from. At this time, given the humanitarian impacts of the recent crisis, there is an imperative to protect the lives and security of all communities in South Sudan without delay.

In the midst of the conflict, humanitarian partners on the ground have seen many positive examples of community commitments to non-violence and mutual support. In states currently less affected by the conflict, local authorities and leaders are working to protect their communities from slipping into crisis. In those states most affected by violence, NGOs and civil society organisations work tirelessly to provide health, education and other community services to the most vulnerable. While there are, and should be, serious questions about providing support to the parties to the conflict, help for the people of South Sudan should never be something that is up for debate. Because of the recent crisis, some donors have already reoriented their approach to direct funding for state building for certain purposes in South Sudan, and suspended some institutional support packages. We therefore recommend that suspended assistance to the Government of South Sudan for building state institutions should be re-programmed to national community services providers who offer the clearest way to support the people of South Sudan.

4) Providing financial assistance cannot be an excuse for inaction or inertia at the political level. The people of South Sudan require a viable, inclusive and transparent mediation and political process. The 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), despite its successes, failed to address some of the fundamental drivers of conflict and societal divisions that are being manipulated by political and military leaders. The CPA also sacrificed inclusivity in order to ensure agreement on key political and security goals. A much-needed reconciliation process was also insufficiently supported. We welcome the signing of an initial peace agreement on 9th May, that includes commitments to an immediate truce, cooperation with the IGAD Monitoring and Verification teams, and commitment to an inclusive dialogue. However, we are deeply concerned about the reports of violations of the ceasefire within hours of the signing of the

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agreement. The peace effort must offer tangible and immediate outcomes to enable affected populations to seek safety, access assistance and recover livelihoods. Even if peace is achieved, the crisis has created severe humanitarian needs that will require addressing well into next year.

5) In addition to an inclusive mediation and political process to address this crisis, other measures need to be taken to immediately protect the people of South Sudan. The upcoming renewal of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) mandate - which current circumstances dictate be brought forward without delay - provides an opportunity to increase emphasis on the protection of civilians, and to provide greater clarity and resourcing for the UNMISS. A significant re-orientation of the UNMISS mandate and implementation framework is needed to enhance the credibility and acceptance of the mission amongst the population and to ensure UNMISS has the requisite tools to take preemptive action against threats to civilians, including those residing outside UNMISS bases. It further provides a platform from which to promote renewed respect of the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) by all parties.

6) UNMISS alone cannot protect the people of South Sudan in the face of the extraordinary violence being levied against them by the multiple armed groups in South Sudan. Engaging with clear and direct drivers of the conflict is imperative. There are reportedly one million small arms in South Sudan and they are widely available to all. Tougher domestic and international measures must be explored to curb the sale, transit and flow of arms to South Sudan.

7) Finally, but importantly, accountability for the violence should be a critical component in any eventual political settlement and peace effort. Building towards justice and reconciliation in South Sudan should be the genuine aim of the international community, requiring sustained diplomatic efforts and political will.

Signed by the following Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO):

1. ACTED
2. ACORD
3. Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)
4. African Educational Trust (AET)
5. Association for Aid and Relief (AAR-Japan)
6. BRAC
7. CAFOD
8. Catholic Relief Services (CRS)
9. Care
10. Caritas Switzerland/Luxembourg
11. Christian Aid

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12. Concern Worldwide
13. Cordaid
14. Coordinamento delle Organizzazioni per il Servizio Volontario (COSV)
15. Danish Church Aid (DCA)
16. Danish Refugee Council (DRC)
17. Farm Africa
18. Finn Church Aid
19. Food for the Hungry
20. Handicap International
21. Health NET TPO
22. HELP (Hilfe zue Selbsthilfe e.v)
23. IBIS, Education for Development
24. ICCO
25. International Aid Services (IAS)
26. International Medical Corps (IMC)
27. International Rescue Committee (IRC)
28. Islamic Relief
29. INTERSOS
30. Islamic Relief 31. Joint Aid Management (JAM)
32. Light for the World
33. Lutheran World Federation (LWF)
34. Mercy Corps
35. Mentor Initiative
36. Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF)
37. Non Violent Peace Force
38. Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)
39. Norwegian Church Aid (NCA)
40. Oxfam
41. Pact
42. PAX Netherlands

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43. Peace Winds Japan
44. People in Need (PIN)
45. Plan International
46. Population Services International (PSI)
47. RedR
48. Relief International
49. Save the Children
50. Sign of Hope (Hoffnungszeichen)
51. SNV Netherlands Development Organisation
52. Tearfund
53. Terre des Hommes
54. War Child Holland
55. War Child Canada
56. Welthungerhilfe (German Agro Action)
57. Windle Trust
58. Women for Women International
59. World Relief
60. World Vision

**11. SWISS IMMIGRATION VOTE**

***11.1 Letter to M. François Longchamp, president of the state council of Geneva, signed by the WCC General Secretary, Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, the LWF General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge, and the ACT Alliance General Secretary John Nduna, addressing the Swiss Immigration Vote. 25 March 2014***

Dear M. Longchamp,

We write in our capacities as leaders of the three major international Christian ecumenical organizations still based in Geneva. We are deeply concerned about the February 9 vote on the Swiss federal "Immigration massive" referendum.

We fully share the apprehension expressed by the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches that the initiative was discriminatory and incompatible both with Switzerland's long humanitarian tradition and the Christian idea of humanity. Fundamental humanitarian principles, European norms and Christian values are being seriously challenged by the results of the vote.

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We are also directly concerned about what the implications of this referendum might be for our organizations. We write to ask what you and the other Geneva authorities can do to help make it possible for us to continue to carry out our work and our mission here in Geneva and in Switzerland.

The World Council of Churches is the broadest and most inclusive expression of the ecumenical movement, a fellowship of 345 member churches in more than 110 countries around the world. The members of the WCC represent more than 500 million Christians. Since its founding in 1948, the WCC has had its headquarters in Geneva. In fact, the office of the WCC-in-formation was located here already in 1939. Currently, the WCC employs 116 persons in Geneva and at nearby Bossey.

The Lutheran World Federation is the global communion of Christian churches in the Lutheran tradition. Its 142 member churches in 79 countries represent more than 70 million Christians. The LWF is the largest faith-based implementing partner of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and currently provides support for some 1.4 million refugees around the world. Since its founding in 1947, the LWF has had its headquarters in Geneva, co-located with the WCC. Currently, the LWF employs 65 persons in Geneva.

The ACT Alliance (Action by Churches Together) is a coalition of more than 140 churches and affiliated organizations working together to create positive and sustainable change in the lives of poor and marginalized people regardless of their religion, politics, gender, sexual orientation, race or nationality. The work of the ACT Alliance is supported by 25,000 staff from member organizations and mobilizes US\$1.5 billion for its work each year, carried out through humanitarian aid, development, and advocacy. Currently, ACT employs 22 persons in Geneva.

Over the past years, our organizations have experienced an increasingly difficult environment to hire international staff, with increasingly cumbersome and slow authorization processes to obtain work permits. Most all permits are eventually granted, but the delays can go on for a long time. Some of the required showings do not reflect the reality of our international organizations. For example, when we are recruiting a member of one of our African churches to relate to our work in that region, we have to demonstrate that there is no qualified Swiss for that job.

In addition, our organizations bring thousands of persons to Geneva each year for conferences and consultations. For those coming from Europe and the Global North, entry to Switzerland is easy. But for many from the Global South, it is increasingly difficult and expensive. It is not unusual for some of our church representatives to be denied a Schengen visa, especially if they are young, single, and of modest economic means. And even when the visa is eventually granted, it can be expensive and time-consuming. For example, an LWF governing board member from Liberia must travel to the nearest Swiss consulate in Abidjan and stay there several days while the visa is being processed.

These difficulties are on top of other burdens that make it more expensive and challenging for us to operate in Geneva, such as the shortage of affordable housing (especially for families with children), the high cost of living, and the adverse currency exchange rates due to the strong Swiss franc. Indeed, two of our sister ecumenical organizations, the World Communion of Reformed Churches and the Conference of European Churches, have recently taken the difficult decision to move their headquarters away from the City of Calvin.

We are committed to staying in Geneva. Indeed, the WCC is investing in a major redevelopment of the Ecumenical Center where we each have our offices. But we are concerned that the Swiss immigration vote will add additional burdensome constraints for us as we seek to hire international staff and continue our operations in Geneva. We respectfully request a meeting with you to discuss these questions:

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- How do you interpret the outcome of this vote and the implications for international organizations like ours?
- What measures can you take within the Canton of Geneva to see that the implementation of this law does not prevent organizations like ours from recruiting the international staff that we need, to be representative of our international membership?
- In more general terms, how do you envisage safeguarding the framework conditions for the Canton of Geneva to retain its ability to offer a viable home to international non-governmental organizations like ours?

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns. We look forward to meeting with you.

## 12. SYRIA

### *12.1 Public Statement by the LWF Council on Syria, 18 June 2013*

The Apostle Paul taught that if one member of the body suffers, all suffer together and that if one member is honored, all rejoice together. As the Council of the Lutheran World Federation meets in Geneva, Switzerland, 13–18 June 2013, the people of Syria are again in our thoughts and prayers.

We grieve for the suffering the people of Syria are enduring. Recent estimates have placed the number of people killed during the past two years of fighting at 93,000. Of this dreadful number, more than 1300 have been children under the age of 10. The tragedy of this violence is matched only by the humanitarian disaster that has touched the lives of all Syrians. 1.5 million refugees have fled the country, while another 4.5 million people are displaced internally.

As a global communion of churches, we grieve that religion also is being used as a weapon to perpetuate the conflict in Syria. We reject violence perpetrated in the name of God and call on all parties to the fighting to do the same.

We have a special concern for our Christian sisters and brothers of all traditions in this land where the followers of Jesus were first called Christians. At the same time, we pay heed to their reminder that they are part of the fabric of Syrian history and society, with a desire to live in peace with all their neighbors. The rich religious and ethnic tapestry that has characterized Syria for centuries is at risk of fraying beyond repair. We have already seen the conflict spill over into neighboring countries, exporting misery to other civilian populations.

The LWF Council recalls its 2012 resolution on Syria and

- 5) Continues to join with the United Nations in appealing for an end to the violence and all forms of human rights abuses,
- 6) Reiterates its call upon all parties to urgently protect all Syrian populations and to take steps to alleviate rather than inflame violence;
- 7) Calls upon all outside parties to refrain from supplying combatants and weapons;
- 8) Appeals to the Syrian government and opposition forces to allow immediate international humanitarian access to all persons in need in the wake of the increasing violence;

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- 9) With our LWF Member Churches and with the World Council of Churches, we raise our voice to appeal for the release and safe return of the two Orthodox bishops kidnapped near Aleppo in April of this year, as well as the priests who have also been abducted.
- 10) Urges the international community to offer generous assistance to internally displaced persons and refugees from the Syrian conflict;
- 11) Renews its support for those who seek dialogue instead of further fighting, for the good of all people in Syria as well as its neighbors; and
- 12) Continues to stand in solidarity with the Christian churches in the Middle East and many of their neighbors as they yearn for the nurturing of modern civil societies which respect human rights, including women's rights, the freedom of speech and expression, freedom of religion, and the rights of all religious and ethnic minorities.

***12.2 Statement of the LWF President, Rev. Dr. Munib A. Younan, and the LWF General Secretary, Rev. Martin Junge, on the Situation in Syria, 2 September 2013***

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has witnessed with great pain and deep concern the continued deterioration of the situation in Syria. Our direct involvement in the Za'atri refugee camp in Jordan—the second largest refugee camp in the world today —has brought our attention to the plight and the suffering of Syria's civilian population, which has been and still is exposed to brutal violence. Over the last months, the violence seems to have spiraled into new dimensions of brutality and horror.

The alleged use of chemical weapons in the conflict represents such a new dimension. It is for good reasons that the international community has agreed that there should be no place for chemical weapons in our world, and we want to repudiate the use of such weapons in the strongest possible terms.

We deplore the fact that the inability of the international community today to work together in ways that are conducive for global peace has partly resulted in the failure to find a political and diplomatic solution to the conflict in Syria. Foreign national interests have prevailed over the interests of the Syrian population. The prevalence of conflicting national security interests of some nations has resulted in a painful paralysis within the United Nations (UN) Security Council. This critical and dangerous situation has made Syria, the Middle East and even the entire world more insecure. The prospects for durable security have become more volatile, putting the overall respect for human rights in a precarious situation.

At this crucial juncture in history we want to issue our firm call to those governments considering military options:

- To refrain from any military action as a means to address the complex matters at stake in Syria. Never has a fire been put out by adding more fuel to it. A punitive military strike, such as the one currently being considered by some governments, does not lead to any durable solution. Instead, it will only exacerbate extremism and violence, thus adding to the further escalation of instability in Syria and the entire Middle East, if not the whole world.

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Similarly, we want to issue our firm call to the international community:

- To work together through the United Nations systems and instruments in order to support efforts for a durable process of resolving conflict without the use of violence, and a political process to respond to the crisis in Syria. In the short term, this means waiting for the United Nations inspectors' report regarding the alleged use of chemical weapons before considering any further option or action.

The difficulty of the international community to cope with the challenges posed by the developments in Syria points to the urgent need of reform of the systems and instruments of the United Nations so that they indeed serve humanity as it strives to live together in justice, peace and dignity.

In this regard we call upon the international community:

- To work further on the necessary reforms of the UN Security Council, so that it is better equipped to respond to the challenges that humanity faces today. Security in today's world cannot be designed and pursued anymore as a negotiation for national interests between a few UN members. Neither can security in today's world be dissociated from the social, economic and ecological challenges that the human family faces altogether. Instead of bypassing the UN Security Council, we call upon the international community to ensure its effectiveness so that it responds to the complexity of both the specific situation of Syria, and the wider security challenges in the world. Looking at the Syrian refugees and at the suffering civilian population in Syria, the LWF is convinced that a reformed UN Security Council must work in particular for the security of those who are deprived of their rights and who bear the burden of conflict and violence.

***12.3 Statement from the WCC Ecumenical Consultation on Syria, presented at the Geneva 2 talks on Syria, 17 January 2014***

An urgent call to action for a just peace in Syria

Church leaders and representatives from Syria, the Middle East Council of Churches, the World Council of Churches and the Holy See<sup>[1]</sup> gathered in Geneva from 15–17 January 2014 for a consultation to address the forthcoming Geneva II peace conference on Syria.

Christians have maintained a continuous presence in the land of Syria since the dawn of Christianity. Today, as churches and church-related humanitarian agencies, we are present with the people of Syria on a daily basis both inside the country and amongst refugees. In this communication, we seek to raise their voice.

Our concern is for all people affected by the indiscriminate violence and humanitarian calamity in Syria. Innocent children, women and men are being killed, wounded, traumatized and driven from their homes in uncounted numbers. We hear their cries, knowing that when "one member suffers, all suffer together with it" (1 Corinthians 12:26).



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There will be no military solution to the crisis in the country. Endeavouring to be faithful to God's love of all human beings, and within the context of international humanitarian law, we submit these calls for action and guidelines for building peace.

We call upon you, as participants in the Geneva II conference, to:

1. pursue an immediate cessation of all armed confrontation and hostility within Syria. We call for all parties to the conflict to release detained and kidnapped persons. We urge the UN Security Council to implement measures ending the flow of weapons and foreign fighters into Syria.
2. ensure that all vulnerable communities in Syria and refugees in neighbouring countries receive appropriate humanitarian assistance. Where such large populations are at serious risk, full humanitarian access is essential in compliance with international law and the Responsibility to Protect.
3. develop a comprehensive and inclusive process toward establishing a just peace and rebuilding Syria. All sectors of society (including government, opposition and civil society) need to be included in a Syrian solution for the Syrian people. We recognize the urgent need to integrate women and young people fully in these processes.

Geneva II must be transformed into a peace-building process, responding to the legitimate aspirations of all Syrian people. We offer these guidelines:

- Any peace-building process must be Syrian-led. It should be transparent and credible so Syrians may determine their country's future. Such a process requires the support of the Arab League, the United Nations and the constructive engagement of all parties involved in the current crisis.
- All efforts must be made to secure the peace, territorial integrity and independence of Syria.
- The multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-confessional nature and tradition of Syrian society must be preserved. The vibrant mosaic of Syrian society entails equal rights for all of its citizens. The human rights, dignity and religious freedom for all must be promoted and protected in accordance with international norms.

As Christians we speak with one voice in calling for a just peace in Syria. To achieve this peace, we are committed to working hand-in-hand with Muslim sisters and brothers, with whom we share a common history along with spiritual and social values. We seek to work for national reconciliation and healing through building trust.

"Blessed are the peacemakers" (Matthew 5:9).

[1] Participants came from the following countries: France, Germany, Italy, Iran, Lebanon, the Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States. Ecumenical partners included the ACT Alliance, the Community of Sant'Egidio, the Lutheran World Federation, Pax Christi International, Religions for Peace and the World Student Christian Federation.

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**13. UNHCR*****13. 1 Welcoming the Stranger: Affirmations for Faith Leaders, June 2013***

A core value of my faith is to welcome the stranger, the refugee, the internally displaced, the other. I shall treat him or her as I would like to be treated. I will challenge others, even leaders in my faith community, to do the same.

Together with faith leaders, faith-based organizations and communities of conscience around the world, I affirm:

I will welcome the stranger.

My faith teaches that compassion, mercy, love and hospitality are for everyone: the native born and the foreign born, the member of my community and the newcomer.

I will remember and remind members of my community that we are all considered "strangers" somewhere, that we should treat the stranger to our community as we would like to be treated, and challenge intolerance.

I will remember and remind others in my community that no one leaves his or her homeland without a reason: some flee because of persecution, violence or exploitation; others due to natural disaster; yet others out of love to provide better lives for their families.

I recognize that all persons are entitled to dignity and respect as human beings. All those in my country, including the stranger, are subject to its laws, and none should be subject to hostility or discrimination.

I acknowledge that welcoming the stranger sometimes takes courage, but the joys and the hopes of doing so outweigh the risks and the challenges. I will support others who exercise courage in welcoming the stranger.

I will offer the stranger hospitality, for this brings blessings upon the community, upon my family, upon the stranger and upon me.

I will respect and honor the reality that the stranger may be of a different faith or hold beliefs different from mine or other members of my community.

I will respect the right of the stranger to practice his or her own faith freely. I will seek to create space where he or she can freely worship.

I will speak of my own faith without demeaning or ridiculing the faith of others.

I will build bridges between the stranger and myself. Through my example, I will encourage others to do the same.

I will make an effort not only to welcome the stranger, but also to listen to him or her deeply, and to promote understanding and welcome in my community.

I will speak out for social justice for the stranger, just as I do for other members of my community.

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Where I see hostility towards the stranger in my community, whether through words or deeds, I will not ignore it, but will instead endeavor to establish a dialogue and facilitate peace.

I will not keep silent when I see others, even leaders in my faith community, speaking ill of strangers, judging them without coming to know them, or when I see them being excluded, wronged or oppressed.

I will encourage my faith community to work with other faith communities and faith-based organizations to find better ways to assist the stranger.

I will welcome the stranger.

***13.2 Resolution by the LWF Council on the document 'Welcoming the Stranger: Affirmations for Faith Leaders'***

It is voted:

- to endorse the document "Welcoming the Stranger: Affirmations for Faith Leaders", commend it to the LWF member churches for their endorsement and widespread dissemination, and urge the member churches to bring the affirmations to the councils of churches and the interfaith bodies in their respective countries.

Note: Member Churches and National Committees will receive the document " Welcoming the Stranger: Affirmations for Faith Leaders" in a separate letter.

## **14. WCC 10<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY**

***14.1 Lutheran World Federation greetings delivered during the Mission Plenary of the WCC 10<sup>th</sup> Assembly by Bishop Dr Munib A. Younan, president of the LWF, 04 November 2013***

Mr Moderator, Rev. Prof. Dr Altmann, General Secretary of the WCC Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, honorable Assembly delegates and participants, dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

God of Life - Lead us to Justice and Peace!

It is a joy and a privilege to greet today the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches gathering here in Busan. I bring these greetings on behalf of the Lutheran World Federation, a communion of 142 churches in 79 countries bringing together more than 70 million Christians of the Lutheran tradition.

Commitment to the quest for Christian unity has been an integral part of the self-understanding of the Lutheran World Federation since its formation in 1947. Theological dialogue is the backbone of our ecumenical commitment as it is expressed in our bilateral dialogues, which we understand to be our major contribution to the wider ecumenical conversation.

Through these processes we have learned that as much as ecumenical dialogue is about theological discernment it is also about accompanying each other. It is about sharing the journey of faith, listening

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carefully to each other's experiences, and seeking justice in all contexts. The apostolicity of the church calls us to continue the tradition of visitation and hospitality, sharing spiritual, theological and diaconal gifts as we respond to the call to participate in God's mission.

Looking against the background of two thousand years of the Christian church, the achievements of the last fifty years of ecumenical dialogue are remarkable. Our joint theological engagement has been transformed into processes of healing of memories, leading our churches from fragmentation and conflict toward growing communion and joint witness in the world. We thank the Lord that the Holy Spirit continues to guide us again to hear the prayer of Christ: "That they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me" (John 17:23).

The 9th WCC Assembly approved a resolution on the role of Christian World Communions as partners of the WCC, calling the WCC to explore structures providing expanded space for Christian World Communions and confessional families to meet within the framework of WCC assemblies. Based on this resolution, the Busan Assembly has now provided wider space for an active participation of Christian World Communions during the preparation process as well as in the life of the Assembly. This is particularly valuable for our commitment to critically assess and to look for reconfiguration of the ecumenical space.

From its beginning, the LWF has committed to the call to serve our vulnerable and marginalized neighbors. We are grateful for the opportunity to bring our diaconal vocation to the joint effort to serve the world and to work for sustainable development and humanitarian response. The ACT Alliance is a vital expression of this shared effort. Our joint service has transformed not just the communities we serve, but has become an important conduit of greater understanding among Christian communions.

As the LWF is now looking together with our ecumenical partners toward the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation in 2017, there is an increasing need to strengthen the link between theological discernment and service in the world. As people who have been encountered by Christ we are called to meet and accompany the poor and vulnerable. In this accompaniment, the message of reconciliation entrusted for us allows us to proclaim wholeness in the midst of a fragmented world.

Knowing that we receive these gifts from God alone, we continue to believe that the Church has to raise its prophetic voice in our fragmented world, and to address issues of justice and peace and human rights, including gender justice, economic justice, environmental justice and religious freedom. We continue to work for justice in and for the unity of this peninsula on which our Assembly is being held. God of life, bring justice and peace to this country and to all who call it home.

As I bring this greeting to you in my capacity as President of the LWF, I bring it also with my own identity and history as an Arab Christian and with my specific rootedness in the Middle East. Hence, I bring you also the greetings from the Holy City of Jerusalem, a city yearning for wholeness and peace. With the entire LWF communion, I continue to believe that peace based on justice, and reconciliation based on forgiveness is still possible in the Middle East. We continue calling for a shared Jerusalem for the three religions and two nations. I want to express our gratitude to the WCC for on-going support through both the Ecumenical Forum (PIEF) and the Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel. Together with the work of the LWF on the Mount of Olives and many other ministries of Christian

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churches in Jerusalem, these are all powerful signs of hope that need to be sustained. I want to particularly give thanks for the strong resolve with which the WCC is taking up the challenging realities regarding the Christian presence and witness in the Middle East. God of Life - Lead us to Justice and Peace.

The theme of the Assembly is a prayer. A prayer in which the children of God are turning to the Creator, the source of all life, asking for liberation and guidance - show us the way to justice and peace! We know that working and praying for justice and peace is our mission in this world as Christians, but that we as human beings, fallen and hence depending on the grace of God, are not able to fulfil that mission alone. This is why God sends Jesus Christ who opens the way for us and, through his death and resurrection, establishes justice and peace for the whole creation.

May the Holy Spirit lead the work of this Assembly. "What does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8). "God of Life - Lead us to Justice and Peace!" May God bless you.

## 15. LWI PRESS RELEASES

### Advocacy

- General Secretary Junge: The Cross of Christ Calls for Advocacy  
<http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/general-secretary-junge-cross-christ-calls-advocacy#sthash.GF7I0D3Z.dpuf> 4 May 2014
- Appointments of Dr Ojot Miru Ojulu and Rev. Rebecca Ruggaber  
<http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/enhancing-advocacy-and-worship#sthash.XG6VjGH9.dpuf>  
14 March 2014

### Central African Republic

- LWF Reaches Out to Displaced Populations in Central African Republic -  
<http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/lwf-reaches-out-displaced-populations-central-african-republic#sthash.8DNmQd7s.dpuf> 15 May 2014

### Climate Change

- Church Leaders Join in Fast for the Climate - <http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/church-leaders-join-fast-climate> 1 May 2014

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- LWF COP 19 Delegation Fasts for the Poor and Vulnerable - <http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/lwf-cop-19-delegation-fasts-poor-and-vulnerable#sthash.OZ6tkAdp.dpuf> 13 November 2013
- LWF Climate Delegation Initiates Interreligious Solidarity Fasting - <http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/lwf-climate-delegation-initiates-interreligious-solidarity-fasting#sthash.Tb3EPwMJ.dpuf> 15 November 2013
- Spiritual Solidarity with Victims of Extreme Weather Events - <http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/spiritual-solidarity-victims-extreme-weather-events#sthash.DHRSGwEy.dpuf> 20 November 2013
- “People of Faith Stand Together” - <http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/people-faith-stand-together> 22 November 2013
- LWF Launches Day of Fasting for the Climate – <http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/lwf-launches-day-fasting-climate> 18 December 2014
- Fasting for Solidarity - <http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/fasting-solidarity> 20 December 2013

**Colombia**

- Overcoming Impunity for Gender-Based Violence in Colombia - <http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/overcoming-impunity-gender-based-violence-colombia#sthash.S4kTBQKd.dpuf> 13 November 2013

**Democratic Republic of the Congo**

- Daring to Talk about a Taboo Subject for Women in DRC - <http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/daring-talk-about-taboo-subject-women-drc#sthash.ooG3gdZn.dpuf> 5 August 2013

**Ecumenical panel on the new international financial and economic architecture**

- Bishop emeritus Dr Zephania Kameeta Speaks Out on Being the “Yeast to Make the Bread Rise” - See more at: <http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/churches-are-advocating-economy-life#sthash.Utvonk6R.dpuf> 22 January 2014

**Freedom of Religion or Belief**

- Freedom of Religion: Liberated From the “Embrace of Power” - LWF Reflects on the Report by the Special Rapporteur to the UN Human Rights Council - <http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/freedom-religion-liberated-embrace-power> 24 March 2014

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- LWF Concerned about Attempt to Violate Freedom of Religion in Malaysia - <http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/lwf-concerned-about-attempt-violate-freedom-religion-malaysia#sthash.LFEtEW8r.dpuf> 8 November 2013

**Gender justice**

- LWF General Secretary Junge Affirms Commitment to Gender Justice <http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/lwf-general-secretary-junge-affirms-commitment-gender-justice#sthash.rhNgyoGe.dpuf> 17 April 2014
- LWF Addresses Gender Justice at the Commission on the Status of Women <http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/lwf-addresses-gender-justice-commission-status-women#sthash.uh4OJhMY.dpuf> 10 May 2014

**Guatemala**

- A Call for Solidarity with Human Rights Defenders in Guatemala <http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/call-solidarity-human-rights-defenders-guatemala#sthash.Om1cZRNv.dpuf> 11 April 2014

**Indonesia**

- A Commercial Forest versus Traditional Livelihoods in Indonesia <http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/commercial-forest-versus-traditional-livelihoods-indonesia#sthash.xYGDMML.dpuf> 31 January 2014

**Interfaith Relations**

- Joint Interreligious Declaration on Peace Building, Democracy and Development - See more at: <http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/joint-interreligious-declaration-peace-building-democracy-and-development#sthash.PKQy3Wdf.dpuf> 9 May 2014
- Christian and Muslim Scholars Strive for a Definition of Secularity <http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/religions-public-space-contested-terrain#sthash.NiUNuAJx.dpuf> 24 January 2014
- Christian – Muslim Humanitarian Partnership Workshop Endorses Closer Cooperation - <http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/people-faith-people-need#sthash.IH2DgjhR.dpuf> 10 October 2013

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**Israel - Palestine**

- Man of Peace - LWF President Younan Honored for Middle East Dialogue Efforts  
<http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/man-peace> 12 September 2013

**Kenya**

- LWF Urges Unity Following Nairobi Attack - <http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/do-not-be-overcome-evil> 23 September 2013

**Malaysia**

- LWF Concerned about Attempt to Violate Freedom of Religion in Malaysia - Court Rules That Christian Publication May Not Use "Allah" Name <http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/lwf-concerned-about-attempt-violate-freedom-religion-malaysia> 8 November 2013

**Migrant Drownings**

- Migrant Drownings: LWF Expresses Its Shock and Distress -  
<http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/migrant-drownings-lwf-expresses-its-shock-and-distress#sthash.wuvsw8XT.dpuf> 7 October 2013

**Myanmar**

- Myanmar: LWF Resumes Implementation of Programs -  
<http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/myanmar-lwf-resumes-implementation-programs> 16 May 2014
- LWF Deeply Concerned about Suspended Activities' Impact on Communities in Myanmar  
<http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/lwf-deeply-concerned-about-suspended-activities-impact-communities-myanmar#sthash.Hfq0XyO1.dpuf> 3 May 2014

**Namibia**

- General Secretary Junge Affirms Lutheran Communion Solidarity with Drought Affected Namibians - Visiting LWF Delegation Assesses Impact of Prolonged Dry Spell on Rural Communities - <http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/general-secretary-junge-affirms-lutheran-communion-solidarity-drought-affected-namibians> 27 September 2013



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**Nelson Mandela**

- Mandela Stood for Principle, Justice, Peace – <http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/mandela-stood-principle-justice-peace> 5 December 2013
- Remembering Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela (1918-2013) - <http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/remembering-nelson-rolihlahla-mandela-1918-2013> 16 December 2013

**Nigeria**

- Nigeria: People of Faith Affirming the Sanctity of Life amid Challenges <http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/nigeria-people-faith-affirming-sanctity-life-amid-challenges#sthash.DMJ3bZZH.dpuf> 27 February 2014

**Philippines**

- Typhoon Haiyan - A Survivor's Account - <http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/philippines-tree-life> 21 November 2013

**Roma people**

- 12 recommendations to advocate justice and dignity for Roma people <http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/12-recommendations-advocate-justice-and-dignity-roma-people#sthash.l8wba65s.dpuf> 14 February 2014
- Call for Justice-Oriented Engagement with Roma People - <http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/call-justice-oriented-engagement-roma-people#sthash.3PX5bao2.dpuf> 4 December 2013

**South Sudan**

- Calling the International Community to Action in South Sudan - <http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/calling-international-community-action-south-sudan#sthash.rqGrGtD2.dpuf> 12 May 2014
- LWF Pleads for Cessation of Hostilities and Humanitarian Access to Civilians in South Sudan <http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/lwf-pleads-cessation-hostilities-and-humanitarian-access-civilians-south-sudan#sthash.gx6uhd04.dpuf> 25 April 2014
- South Sudanese Religious Leaders Calling for Ceasefire - <http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/south-sudanese-religious-leaders-calling-ceasefire#sthash.TA6vkFqK.dpuf> 8 January 2014

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<sup>1</sup> Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review – Democratic Republic of Congo (A/HRC/13/8)