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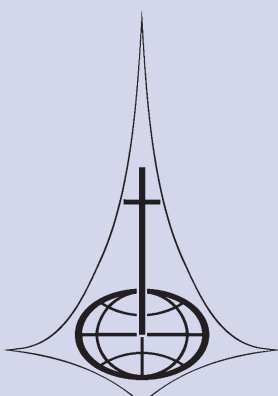
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Haram Jukin (middle) walks with two of her friends in the Yusuf Batil refugee camp in South Sudan's Upper Nile State. © LWF/Paul Jeffrey

LWF-Run Schools at Refugee Camps in South Sudan Offer Child-Friendly Spaces

MABAN COUNTY, South Sudan/GENEVA, (LWI)

– Haram Jukin has always wanted to go to school, but poverty and war have stood in her way. In mid-October the 10-year old started classes in a crowded refugee camp inside South Sudan.

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) opened Haram's school in the Yusuf Batil refugee camp, a sprawling collection of tents and makeshift shelters just across the border from Sudan's Blue Nile State, from which Haram and her family fled earlier this year. A simmering insurgency and government counter-offensive have pushed more than 110,000 refugees, the majority of them children, across the border into four camps in Maban County, part of the newly independent South Sudan's Upper Nile State.

The Jukin family says they decided to leave their home village of Kukur after months of aerial bombardment by the Sudanese military.

“The bombs would fall and we would run to the streams and sleep there. After months of this, we decided to leave,” said Kames Jukin, Haram's father.

The trek took the family two months. Haram's mother, Shaia Hamed, says she walked with food and a child dangling from each end of a pole she carried across her shoulders. Her husband usually carried another child, while Haram and her 14-year old brother Saddam walked alongside.

The family's precious supply of sorghum ran out after several weeks, and they eventually slaughtered the animals they had brought from home. Before the end of their journey, food grew scarce.

“Father would climb trees and pick leaves which we'd boil and then eat. They tasted awful,” Haram said.

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LWF Congratulates New Leader of the Coptic Orthodox Church

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) congratulated Bishop Tawadros II on his election, 4 November, as the new leader of the Coptic Orthodox Church.

In a letter to the newly elected Pope of the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria and Patriarch of All Africa, LWF General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge expressed “the joy and gratitude” with which the LWF had received the news about Tawadros’ election.

Junge noted the choice of the new head the Coptic Church comes in the midst of complex and profound changes in society. He prayed for guidance and inspiration, perseverance and strength upon the new leader, and assured the church of LWF’s prayers as it carries out its faithful witness.

Junge recalled that Tawadros’ predecessor Pope Shenouda III was a committed leader of the Coptic Church and of the

ecumenical movement, who “understood the importance of interfaith encounter” and the critical role of faith in building a just and peaceful society. He said the LWF “joins all those who are praying fervently that the people of Egypt may be strengthened as they seek to build a nation where everybody enjoys justice and peace.”

Prior to his election, Tawadros, 60, served as bishop of the Nile Delta province of Beheira. He was inaugurated into office on 18 November, succeeding Pope Shenouda III who led the church from 1971 until his death last March.

The Coptic Orthodox Church has an estimated 12 million followers worldwide, most of them in Egypt.

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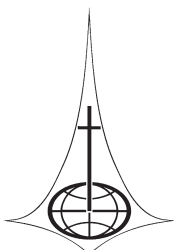
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Lutheran World Information (LWI) is the information service of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF).

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Theological Education Should Reflect Diversity of the Lutheran Communion

LWF Consultation Seeks Greater Focus on Ecumenism, Gender Studies and Inclusion of Lay People

WITTENBERG, Germany/GENEVA (LWI)

– Lutheran theological education should include more focus on ecumenism, give greater attention to gender studies and be inclusive of lay people, a global consultation of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) heard in Wittenberg, Germany.

The 50 church leaders, theologians and educators at the 18-22 October gathering also urged that a practical component and the diversity of the global Lutheran communion should be reflected in the curricula taught at Lutheran educational institutions.

The event hosted by the Evangelical Church in Central Germany and the LWF German National Committee was jointly coordinated by the LWF Departments for Mission and Development (DMD) and Theology and Public Witness (DTPW). Participants represented the seven LWF world regions—Africa, Asia, Central Eastern Europe, Central Western Europe, Nordic countries, Latin America & the Caribbean and North America—and LWF staff. “Secure foundations of the past and aspirations for the future: Lutheran Theological Education for Communion Building towards 2017,” was the theme of the meeting held in the town where 16th century reformer Martin Luther lived and worked.

In plenary and group sessions, participants assessed how the Lutheran heritage and the Reformation help to define what it means to be Lutheran in a fast-changing world. They discuss how globalization affects Lutheran education, and looked at how it could be used positively. The agenda included presentations on the challenges and opportunities of the growing charismatic movements from a Lutheran perspective; cross-cultural contacts in neighborhoods; and shared regional identities.



Participants at the LWF global consultation on theological education
© LWF/Anli Serfontein

“People are in very different places—in some countries they have more traditional approaches, some are experimenting with new approaches, some are experimenting outside of the theological schools,” Rev. Dr David Pfrimmer, Principal-Dean of Waterloo Lutheran Seminary in Canada told *Lutheran World Information (LWI)*, reflecting on the consultation.

“Part of what you have to do is to see how you can make the tent big enough to include that type of diversity while maintaining the Lutheran traditions,” Pfrimmer continued.

One of the meeting’s goals was to find ways of strengthening Lutheran identity and to consider focus themes for the 500th Reformation anniversary in 2017.

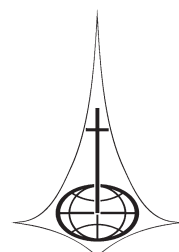
“We should have more ecumenism and ecumenism should be included into the curriculum. It is very important for me. We live in an inter-religious society,” said Dr Mariette Razivelo from the Malagasy Lutheran Church.

Gender Emphasis

The issue of gender justice in theological education emerged as a strong theme. Razivelo said the consultation had helped “me a lot in the process of transforming the theological education. We are not an island anymore.” She expressed great appreciation for the meeting’s emphasis on gender.

Rev. Lilana Kasper from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa, and a member of the Female Theologians Forum of the sub-regional body Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa (LUCSA) said: “We are being empowered to go back and revive our teachings back home and look at what it means to be a Lutheran in today’s world.”

From the small group discussions reflecting the diversity of the seven LWF regions, strengthening networks and connecting with each other globally emerged as a strong desire among participants. It was agreed that possibilities of connect-



ing electronically with each other should be further explored.

Delegates heard that in some regions like Latin America, the starting point for theological reflection is the everyday life of the Christian individuals and congregations. It was felt that this methodological approach should be taken seriously in the curricula.

Strategic Planning

Rev. Dr Dietrich Werner, World Council of Churches (WCC) program on Ecumenical Theological Education and co-editor of a WCC handbook on theological education, said that studies had shown that very few Christian theological institutions have a strategic plan for theological education.

Reporting back on a group discussion, Rev. Dr Hallgeir Elstad from the Church of Norway said,

“We looked at the importance of education in our strategic thinking—how to design curriculums for the future and not curriculums that will be old fashioned tomorrow.”

Learning from each other’s experiences one group concluded that, “Lay people are very important. We don’t just need educated clergy, but also pastors that are educating.” Kasper said LUCSA is developing a guide for lay leaders in the church and some of the topics discussed at the global consultation should be incorporated.

The challenge of combining theological education with practical skills was also highlighted. There is not a single “best way” forward, but a need to reflect on other cultures and adopt theological education to the local needs, one group noted.

“There are similarities but also many differences. There is a greater

need for sustainability also in theological education. Our goals will not only be church in school, but also school in church,” Alexandra Battenberg from the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Austria said.

“There is a sense of excitement about the future of theological education, but we are not quite sure what it would look like. But it is hopeful,” Pfrimmer added.

(Written for LWI by Berlin-based journalist Anli Serfontein)

The LWI No. 10 special edition “What Does It Mean? Reappropriating Lutheran Theological Heritage Today” documents some of the presentations and discussions to the LWF global consultation on Theological Education: www.lutheranworld.org/lwf/index.php/lutheran-world-information-lwi-102012.html

LWF Welcomes Nomination of New Leader for Anglican Communion

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) received with “great joy” the news about the nomination of Bishop Justin Welby as the new leader of the Anglican Communion.

On 9 November, the Office of the Archbishop of Canterbury announced today the Queen’s approval of the nomination of Welby for election as the 105th Archbishop of Canterbury. He will succeed Dr Rowan Williams who is retiring at the end of December after ten years in office.

In a letter congratulating Archbishop-designate Welby on his nomination, LWF President Bishop Dr Munib A. Younan and General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge affirmed the “profound theological work and close practical cooperation” that characterize the long standing relations between the Lutheran and Anglican world communions.

They referred to the outcomes of ecumenical dialogues between the two communions, and mentioned the recent final report of the Anglican-Lutheran International Commission that shows how church ministries are transforming relations between churches in both communions. In anticipation of the first meeting of the next phase of the dialogue group in 2013, the LWF leaders said they are convinced that this “is a strong sign of our on-going commitment for joint witness.”

Younan and Junge underlined the contribution of the outgoing Archbishop of Canterbury Dr Rowan Williams, saying the “Lutheran communion has been enriched” through his leadership. They expressed hope that “the fruitful exchange of theological and spiritual gifts between our two Christian traditions will continue in the future as well,” and wished



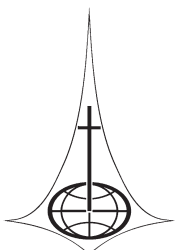
Bishop Justin Welby will become the 105th Archbishop of Canterbury. © Lambeth Palace/Picture Partnership © LWF/Anli Serfontein

Bishop Justin Welby God’s inspiration, wisdom, perseverance and joy as he prepares to assume his new office.

Welby, 56, is currently bishop of Durham. He studied history and law and worked in the oil industry, before taking up pastoral studies in the early 1990s. He was ordained as a priest in 1993, and worked for several years in the Coventry diocese. He served as Dean of Liverpool from 2007 until 2011 when he was elected bishop of Durham. He will be enthroned as Archbishop of Canterbury on 21 March 2013.

Bishop Welby and his wife Caroline have five children.

The Archbishop of Canterbury is primate of the Church of England and spiritual head of the worldwide Anglican Communion comprising some 80 million members.



LWF Co-Hosts Conference on Relationship between Religion and Development

Critical Analysis of the Role of Faith in the Well Being of Societies

NEUENDETTELSAU, Germany/GENEVA, (LWI) – The relationship between faith-based organizations and secular agencies that are shaping human, social and economic progress in society was the focus of an international conference jointly organized by The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in cooperation with the mission agency Mission Eine Welt in Neuendettelsau, southern Germany.

world through their religious lenses. How then can we ensure that religion is not a hindrance but a contribution to development?” remarked Rev. Dr Kenneth Mtata, study secretary for Lutheran Theology and Practice at the LWF Department for Theology and Public Witness (DTPW).

“My hope is that the conference can help bring the diverse groups and actors together. There are dif-

Mission Eine Welt is a development agency of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria. Its work includes partnerships with Lutheran churches in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Pacific.

Mtata said that until the 1960s, there had been “a widely-held view” that as societies became modernized they would abandon religion in preference for secular worldviews. Among the many reasons given was that the hierarchical nature of the church and some of its teachings reinforced gender inequality and non-inclusive participation. Religion was also used to support racial and other forms of discrimination. But statistics show that faith affiliation is increasing even in countries with fast growing economies such as Brazil, he noted.

Mtata emphasized that religious institutions continue to make huge contributions in the areas of education and health. Therefore, their efforts to strengthen societies in developing countries need to be affirmed and supported, he added.

Participants examined perspectives on the value of faith-based organizations as important partners in development theory and policy making, and listen to regional case studies on consolidating religion and democracy. Presentations also focused on distribution of wealth and the underlying impacts on poverty and public policies both from conventional Christian and other faith perspectives.

The hope for the LWF was that the conference could help define some frameworks to strengthen the links between networks of faith-based organizations, churches and academic institutions in development.

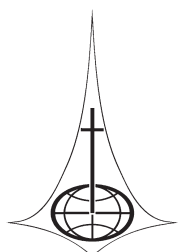


Participants at the opening worship of the conference on religion and development in Neuendettelsau, Germany.
© LWF/Anli Serfontein

An estimated 70 delegates from churches, academics, secular development practitioners and policy makers attended the 21-25 October conference, and discussed how religion can contribute to achieving lasting peace and justice, at a time when the “western model” of development has proved inadequate.

“Seventy to eighty percent of the people in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean—where most development work is carried out—are affiliated to religions and see the

ferent development discourses: with academics, development agencies, and with church, mission work and congregations. I feel they do not work together for a variety of reasons. But I also think the work would be more successful if they worked together. If for instance development agencies respect and become aware of the vast potential of local church congregations,” said Rev. Dr Claudia Jahnel, head of the Department for Mission and Intercultural Studies at Mission Eine Welt (Mission OneWorld).



Interpretation of Holy Scripture Impacts Definition of Development

The impact of the interpretation of holy scripture and religious traditions on human, social and economic progress in society was one of the major subjects discussed at the international conference on religion and development in Neuendettelsau, southern Germany.

The opening address by South African scholar Prof. Madipoane J. Masenya on “The Future Role of the Church in Development Cooperation” highlighted in a powerful way the close connection between development issues and the Bible and other sacred writings, delegates emphasized.

Masenya, an Old Testament scholar at the University of South Africa (UNISA) pointed out that for development to reach its full potential among religious communities it was not only the Bible but also other holy scriptures like the Koran that should be re-interpreted in a current context.

Her presentation, which was extensively discussed, also addressed gender issues in development. “If we understand development in a holistic way, that is, developing people spiritually, emotionally, economically and socially then we cannot leave out the issue of the reinterpretation of scripture in a more gender sensitive way,” Masenya said.



Prof. Madipoane J. Masenya from South Africa delivers the opening address.
© LWF/Anli Serfontein

“A faith that is alive will enable its bearer to seek righteousness and justice. Persuaded by such a faith, we are continuously reminded that for as long as there is a section of God’s humanity which is oppressed (in one way or another), we are all oppressed,” she stressed.

In group discussions, some of the delegates looked at how women can be empowered and their roles strengthened both in religious and development contexts. Some par-

ticipants raised concern that when gender roles changed there was also a shift in the family structures, which sometimes leads to the breakdown of family life. There was a strong call for the churches to support families encountering new challenges to their held values and traditions.

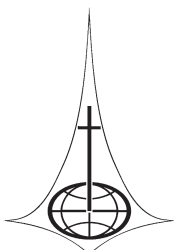
Other speakers focused on how Lutheran theology contributes to a holistic development model; gave perspectives from Pentecostal and charismatic churches, and Islamic and multi-faith contexts; while one of the case studies focused on women’s contribution to peace.

Talking about development and institutional change, Prof. Claudia Warning, a member of the board of the German Protestant agency Evangelisches Werk für Diakonie und Entwicklung (Protestant Agency for Diaconia and Development), explained that some reorganization of development agencies has become inevitable with the demand to deliver high professional standards in development.

Evangelisches Werk für Diakonie und Entwicklung was formed from a recent merger of three church development organizations in Germany: Church Development Service



Prof. Claudia Warning, German Protestant Agency for Diaconia and Development, making her presentation.
© LWF/Anli Serfontein



(Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst – EED), Bread for the World (Brot für die Welt) and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe (Diakonia Disaster Relief).

Warning told *Lutheran World Information (LWI)* that faith and development have been ignored by governments in the past, but this focus was now on the agenda again. “So governments realized in the last years that they have neglected both culture and religion [in development work] and that part of the failures are because of this neglect. And they also

realized that if you do not deal with people as holistic human beings you are likely to fail.”

Worship

Worship life also played a part in the conference. In his sermon at the conference opening service, Rev. Michael Martin, head of Ecumenical Affairs and Church Life for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria, referred to Germany’s situation after the Second World War in 1945 when it lay

in ruins but was rebuilt through the generosity of the whole world.

Reflecting on the theme, “Rebuilding the walls and repairing the broken gate,” Martin reminded the conference participants that religion and development was not an inner-Christian topic. “It goes far beyond our congregations and churches. And it asks how we can renew cities and people together after terrible devastation; how we can help together to create living possibilities for all people, and how we can rebuild what is lying in waste.”

Religion and Development Belong Together

The recent global conference on religion and development jointly organized by The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the German mission agency Mission Eine Welt called for the establishment of an interactive platform to enhance cooperation between churches, faith-based aid organizations and academic institutions.

and its partners had brought together so many key players from development and religion for such intense discussion on development.

Rev. Michael Martin, head of Ecumenical Affairs at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria, told *Lutheran World Information (LWI)* that the outcome of this conference was “very positive and I see it as a

LWF Department for World Service, had encouraged participants to seek a shared understanding about the important relation between development and religion in responding to human need.

During the conference the need for closer cooperation emerged as participants heard a mix of speakers from academia, churches and global and local development practitioners. The case studies on the role of faith communities in peace building and development in China, Costa Rica, Liberia, Myanmar and Zimbabwe particularly stood out.

Some challenges were also mentioned. Rev. Dr Johnson Mbillah from the Program for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROC-MURA) noted that religious extremism was a reality, and therefore urged caution so that emphasis is on dialogue and promoting “education and not indoctrination.”

Local Cultures and Religions

Prof. Karel August from the Department of Theology at Stellenbosch University in South Africa stressed the need for genuine ownership of a development model that is informed by local worldviews, cultures and religions. He noted there had been changes in recent years, but still local people were “rarely consulted on what kind of development they want.

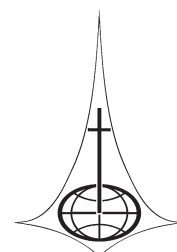


Prof. Ataul Huq from Malaysia presented a paper on Islam and development.
© LWF/Anli Serfontein

The meeting of more than 20 faith-based development agencies from Europe, Asia, Latin America, North America and Africa, heads of Lutheran churches, theologians from universities and church-based development practitioners, was the first time the LWF

starting point for wider cooperation. We already have cooperation, but not in this wide range.” He said it is now “the task of the LWF to create a network of which we will be part.”

In his opening remarks, Rev. Eberhard Hitzler, director of the





[Left to right] Ms Rosalyn Nokise (Fidji) and Dr Atola Longkumer (India), exchanging ideas during a group session at the conference. © LWF/Anli Serfontein

They have always been the objects of various models, although these have rarely increased their supplies of food or improved the state of their health.”

August’s views were echoed by Latin American participants, who affirmed a new development paradigm based on the indigenous ‘Buen Vivir’ concept which refers to the collective well-being of human beings living in solidarity with one another and with the environment. It was clear from the case studies on Costa Rica and views echoed by participants from other Latin American countries, that the ‘Buen Vivir’ notion was the leading guiding principle for holistic development now preferred in the region.

Dr Vitor Westhelle, Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil, emphasized the need to have a development ethos grounded on clear theological traditions. Using Martin Luther’s criticism of the usury as an oppressive economic system, he called on development practitioners to go back to their

Lutheran roots to retrieve important insights for development.

A New Paradigm

Reporting back from lively small group discussions, participants expressed the shared need to establish a process of ongoing engagement and deliberate collaboration to strengthen their development efforts. “A Kairos moment,” is how Dr Petri Merenlahti from Finn Church Aid, the development aid agency of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, described the LWF-Mission Eine Welt conference. “Times are changing and we need a new paradigm. There is so much duplication, lack of coordination; we are losing ground because we fail to work well together,” he added.

Citing religious institutions’ contributions to the peace building process in Sierra Leone after the 1990s civil war, Lutheran Bishop Thomas J. Barnett said the establishment of the global cooperation platform “is long overdue.”

Dr Theresa Carino Chong from the Amity Foundation, which caters for the needs of disadvantaged members of Chinese society, echoed similar sentiments. “Very often when we do development work, there is not much theological reflection and there is not much reflection on the work that goes back to the churches. And I think that kind of flow, the interaction with the churches is very important so that development work is not done so far away from the churches.”

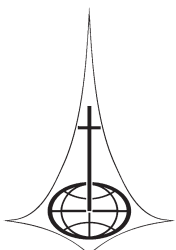
The conference participants tasked the LWF to coordinate a five-year process of a global interactive platform on development cooperation. In order to strengthen the regional character of this initiative, the LWF was also asked to facilitate regional consultations in Africa, Asia and Latin America, so that local reflections can inform this process.

For Rev. Dr Kenneth Mtata at the LWF Department for Theology and Public Witness, which jointly organized the event with Mission Eine Welt’s Department for Mission and Intercultural Studies, “the conference has been both a challenge and an opportunity for faith-based organizations to see the potential for mobilizing their wide variety of resources on the global development agenda.”

He reiterated a view shared by many participants about the added value of faith-based organizations as development practitioners. “They have constituents in their regular places of worship, have longstanding traditions of their faith, and have history on their side since their religious traditions have always sought to take care of those in need as far back as we know.”

(Written for LWI by Berlin-based journalist Anli Serfontein)

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Importance of Gender Justice Discussed at LWF Conferences

Making Visible Women's Theological Reflections and Contributions

GENEVA (LWI) – The critical need for gender justice in theological education and in defining development programs was one of the key themes discussed at two recent international meetings of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in Germany.

In addition to the plenary and small group discussions, the women delegates at the global consultation on theological education discussed further their experiences of being theologians in different parts of the world, and explored how they could strengthen networks of women theologians.

They said while it was encouraging to note that in some regions of the LWF, women comprise nearly 50 percent or more than half of those studying theology, in other regions it was still difficult for women to enrol for theological studies. Where women could pursue such studies, several challenges were identified including access to scholarships at masters' or doctorate levels. The women delegates noted that overall theology is still a very male dominated field, with even fewer women teaching theology.

Dr Mariette Razivelo, a professor at the Lutheran Seminary of

the Malagasy Lutheran Church in Madagascar, noted that about 40 percent of her students were women. She said the global LWF consultation would help such church institutions in developing their curricula.

Also discussed were the expectations of many theologically trained women, of which ordination was a key concern. The women noted that in some countries, theological training did not necessarily lead to possibilities for ordination.

Rev. Lilana Kasper explained the role of the Female Theologians Forum of the Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa (LUCSA): "We empower the female pastors who serve the local congregations so that they are able to do their work better, and handle issues better. We prepare them for leadership positions, so that when leadership positions in the churches come up, they are able to take up such positions."

The women agreed that regional networks should be nurtured in order to support women for high-level leadership positions in the church and its institutions. Some regions are already working on this: Latin

America and Caribbean is developing a women theologians' group within the recently created women and gender justice network. In LUCSA, the Female Theologians Forum and women theologians from other LWF sub-regions will hold a consultation in December that will include focus on the contribution of female African Lutheran theologians towards the 500th Reformation anniversary in 2017.

At the joint LWF – Mission Eine Welt conference, in Neuendettelsau, southern Germany, the issue of changing gender roles in Asia and Africa and the impact on development and on church life were discussed at length.

Rev. Dr Elaine Neuenfeldt, LWF secretary for Women in Church and Society, emphasized the importance of strengthening regional networks and initiatives that make visible women's theological reflections and contributions in the Lutheran communion. She spoke of the possibility to have a global conference for women theologians in 2014.

(Written for LWI by Berlin-based journalist Anli Serfontein)

Guatemalan Mother Urges "No Amnesty" for Perpetrators of Genocide

LWF Event at UN in Geneva Supports Transitional Justice for Victims of Armed Conflict

GENEVA (LWI) – Blanca Rosa Quiroa de Hernández, whose 22-year-old son was abducted by secret service agents in 1984, is pleading that no amnesty should be granted to those accused of genocide over three decades of civil war in Guatemala.

"Our organization was formed 28 years ago. We struggled to find members of families who were detained and disappeared at the hands of the military," she said at a side event co-organized by The Lutheran World Federation (LWF)

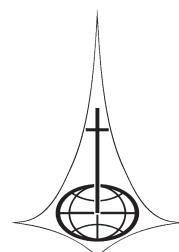
on 22 October in Geneva, prior to the United Nations Universal Periodic Review (UPR) for Guatemala.

"It [organization] gave us the strength to survive the most horrific atrocities," said Quiroa, a founding member of FAMDEGUA, the Association of Family Members of the Disappeared of in Guatemala and co-host of the event.

Guatemala's civil war from 1960 to 1996 involved a variety of military, government and civilian conflicts

that left nearly 200,000 people dead, an estimated 45,000 reported as missing or disappeared, and over 1 million displaced.

Since its founding in 1992, four years before the Peace Accords ending the fighting, FAMDEGUA in collaboration with other civil society groups provides legal support to families seeking to know the fate of their loved ones, conducts exhumations at burial sites and assists in the burial of victims.





[Left to right] Transitional Justice in Guatemala panel members Sofia Duyos Alvarez-Arenas, Marcie Mersky, Eva Ekelund (moderator) and Blanca Rosa Quiroa de Hernández. © LWF/T. Rakoto

“Transitional Justice in Guatemala” was the title of the panel discussion and photo exhibition in Geneva. Eva Ekelund, LWF regional representative for the Department for World Service (DWS) work in Central America, moderated the event. Other speakers included Sofia Duyos Alvarez-Arenas, a human rights activist and lawyer from Spain who is seeking a genocide prosecution in her country; and Marcie Mersky, program director of the International Center for Transitional Justice in the United States.

Thousands Disappeared

Quiroa cited Efraín Ríos Montt, Guatemalan president from 1982 to 1983, who has been charged with ordering the massacre of hundreds of innocent civilians. Earlier in October, a Guatemalan judge rejected an amnesty request filed by Rios, who led the country when the worst atrocities against civilians occurred.

“More than 45,000 people disappeared, 5,000 of them children during the dictatorship. We don’t know where they are. We set up our association because the government was making people disappear. It gave us the strength to live. Now we want to see justice,” Quiroa said at the panel which was attended by, among others, representatives from the Gua-

temalan government, international civil society organizations and UN Permanent Missions in Geneva representing Iceland, Finland, Norway, the Netherlands and Sweden.

“We had to face a giant and ferocious enemy. Personally, six members of my family disappeared, including my son Oscar David, a fireman who was just 22 when the army took him away.

“For all these years we have strived to fight for peace and justice in Guatemala. Justice up to now is beginning in very small steps. Just before I came to Geneva we have been trying to exhume bodies from cemeteries of people killed by the army from 1979 to 1986.”

Mersky said the creation of an official truth commission was agreed in one of the early thematic peace accords in 1994, but it did not begin to work until almost three years later as the final peace agreement was a prerequisite for its implementation.

“Today, however, there has been backsliding in Guatemala. Even as national prosecutors attempt to move forward to try those accused with genocide in the Guatemalan courts, Cabinet-level officials in the current government have stated publicly that the claims of genocide are unfounded. And there have been pressures on the Prosecutors Office and the judges hearing the cases to close them,” said Mersky.

Mersky, who lived in Guatemala for 20 years, explained that while the 1996 National Reconciliation Law provides amnesty for many crimes committed during the armed conflict, it specifically excludes “genocide, torture and forced disappearance.”

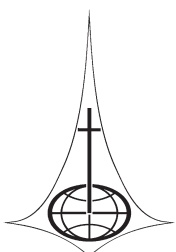
Return of Remains

She affirmed the ongoing “very important work in support of the right to truth” in Guatemala.

“These are efforts led by civil society, albeit with some limited degree of official state support or acquiescence until now,” she said referring to the exhumations mentioned by Quiroa. “From a human perspective,



FAMDEGUA provides emotional and psychological support to families seeking to identify the remains of their loved ones. © Magnus Aronson



the recovery and return of remains to families is deeply important and allows some degree of closure.

“At the same time, the forensic evidence produced is key to establishing the truth about what happened in specific cases, that is, for fighting the on-going denial by the military that it committed the violations.”

Since April 2008 the human rights records of the 193 UN member States have been examined by the 47-nation Geneva-based human rights council in a peer review process known as the UPR every four years.

Alvarez-Arenas explained that in order to bring about a prosecution in Spain an event in another country has to relate to Spain. She mentioned that in 1980, a group of indigenous

K’iche’ took over the Spanish embassy to protest army massacres in the countryside. The Guatemalan government, however, attacked the embassy and 33 people were killed in its precincts.

“Prosecution in Spain and Guatemala both have the same aim—to condemn those guilty of genocide,” she said explaining that bringing the matter to the UN was necessary to bring justice to all those affected during the brutal regime.

LWF Support

The LWF participates in this process by submitting information on the human rights situation in some of the countries under review. “We are supporting this because at DWS we

do advocacy in a setting that can bring about truth and justice,” said Ekelund.

The work of DWS—LWF’s humanitarian relief and development arm—in Central America includes support to various community-based initiatives in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the LWF played a central role in the peace process that led to the end of Guatemala’s civil war. At its 2012 meeting, the LWF Council issued a public statement on Central America, condemning the rising tide of violence in Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador.

(Written for LWI by Geneva-based journalist Peter Kenny)

Tanzania’s Lutheran Bishops Urge Peaceful Response to Church Burnings

LWF General Secretary Encourages Faithful Witness amid Tensions

DAR ES SALAAM, Tanzania/GENEVA, (LWI) – The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) pledged to continue working with local communities to create a peaceful Tanzania following the burning of churches and Christian buildings by Islamist extremists in the country’s coastal region this month.

The 20 bishops of the ELCT labeled the attacks “torture” and “persecution” of the church but urged Christians to resist the temptation to seek revenge.

“We urge all Christians to pray and fast for the peace of this nation. As Christians we are not ready to kill, [seek] revenge in the name of Christ. Our God is not defended by killing others or destroying others’ properties,” the bishops said in an 18 October statement issued in Mbagala, Dar es Salaam, where one Lutheran church was burned down.

They stated they had traveled to the area to share the community’s grief, and offer solidarity and hope.

“Through the ashes of the burnt altars in Mbagala, a new Tanzania



ELCT Presiding Bishop Alex G. Malasusa
© ELCT

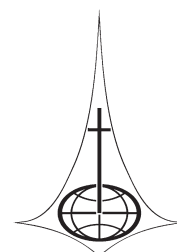
will emerge. The ashes and your tears are fertility for a new Tanzania, which will care for love, tolerance, unity, solidarity, freedom of religion and leadership that has no sides with any religion,” the bishops said.

Church and media reports indicate that over the past two weeks Islamist extremists have burned down several church building in various parts of Tanzania after an apparent argument between two minors in Mbagala, following which a Koran was allegedly defiled.

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge expressed concern over the violence in a 22 October letter to ELCT Presiding Bishop Dr Alex G. Malasusa, who is also LWF vice-president for the Africa region.

“We have read with great attention and appreciation the strong and faithful word offered by the bishops of the ELCT to the members of the church and society at large,” Junge said.

Referring to Paul’s Letter to the Galatians (“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control,” 5:22-23), Junge added: “We pray for those fruits of the Spirit to manifest themselves abundantly in the ways



in which the church as a whole continues to address the tensions and violence that have erupted.”

The LWF general secretary also called on the Tanzanian government to take on its duty of protection and

enforcement of the laws of the country; and to ensure the administration of justice.

The Lutheran bishops emphasized they would continue to preach patience and love in the midst of the

current religious tension sweeping Tanzania. “We are urging all Christians to forgive and continue to be good citizens. Be actively involved in bringing about real change through proper channels,” they added.

German Churches Encouraged to Learn from the Global Reformation

Approaching 2017 with Ecumenical Accountability

TIMMENDORFER STRAND, Germany/GENEVA, (LWI)—The celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017 should take up the global dimensions and worldwide experiences of the Reformation, and be ecumenically accountable.

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge made this appeal to German churches when he addressed the General Synod of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (VELKD) in Timmendorfer Strand on 2 November.

Junge underlined that the Reformation had emigrated from Germany and influenced churches and cultures all over the world. Thus 500 years later, there should be a stronger perception in the original centers of the Reformation of what can be learned from this “extensive, ongoing global travel” of the Reformation.

Reformation and Inculturation

In his address on “Reformation and Inculturation” to the synod members

of VELKD—a union of seven German Lutheran churches, all LWF members—Junge illustrated the different effects of the Reformation with examples from the LWF Communion.

The processes of inculturation and contextualization had led to specific Reformation accents in various countries, he noted. For example, in India, God’s incarnation in Jesus Christ was of particular importance due to the Lutheran church’s roots among the “untouchables” (Dalits).

“On the basis of their experience of being untouchable, they interpret God’s incarnation in Jesus Christ as God’s very own way of escaping untouchability,” Junge stated.

A further issue Junge raised was the experiences of churches in minority situations.

They do not just learn to assert themselves under difficult conditions, but also frequently make relevant contributions. “They no longer presuppose the ABC of Christian faith but have to offer it,” he added.

Kurt Cardinal Koch, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting

Christian Unity, also addressed the focal theme of the Synod.

Both he and Junge referred to the joint declaration on the Reformation anniversary “From Conflict to Communion: Lutheran – Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017,” which is currently being completed by the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity.

The document, which looks at the common past and the ecumenical future of the Roman Catholic and Lutheran churches, aims to enable a common commemoration of the Reformation anniversary in 2017.

The LWF general secretary pointed out that 2017 will also mark 50 years of dialogue between the Vatican and the LWF. Such an anniversary year, he added, therefore could only be celebrated with ecumenical accountability.

(Written for LWI by Florian Hübner, public relations officer, LWF German National Committee)

LWF General Secretary Junge and Cardinal Koch Conduct Service Affirming Baptism

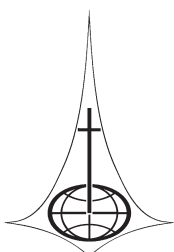
Body Language in the Bond of Ecumenical Fellowship

TIMMENDORFER STRAND (Germany)/GENEVA (LWI) – During an ecumenical worship service at the General Synod of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (VELKD) Lutheran and Roman Catholic church leaders jointly made a symbolic af-

firmation of the common baptism of Christians.

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge together with Kurt Cardinal Koch, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian

Unity (PCPCU), and Bishop Kirsten Fehrs, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Northern Germany, made a sign of the cross with water on the foreheads of over 100 worshippers attending the 2 November service in Lübeck, northern Germany.





Evangelical Lutheran Church in Northern Germany Bishop Kirsten Fehrs (middle) makes a sign of the cross on LWF General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge's forehead in a symbolic affirmation of baptism during worship at the 2012 VELKD general synod. Left is Kurt Cardinal Koch, PCPCU president. © LWF/GNC

“Baptism binds us Christians beyond all differences,” said Junge. “It is good for us to recall this ecumenically at regular intervals,” he added.

The affirmation of baptism ceremony was based on an order of service from VELKD’s newly revised liturgical guide for remembering baptism, which was approved at the synod, and is expected to be ready for use in the congregations next

year. The VELKD is a union of seven Lutheran churches in Germany.

In his address to the VELKD synod earlier, Junge, focusing on the topic “Reformation and Inculturation,” had underlined the importance of the church’s body language.

The radical, unconditional love of God becomes a liberating message, “not only through proclamation in the Reformation understanding

but, in particular, through the body language with which the church encounters people,” he said.

Baptism is one of the most concrete acts of this body language. “The church’s body language—it actually speaks, sometimes more than words!” Junge emphasized.

Collection to Support Syrian Refugees

The collection taken at the service signaled the close ties between VELKD and the LWF, as half of it was dedicated to the work of the Department for World Service in Jordan. On the invitation of the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization, the LWF supports Syrian refugees in that country with winter clothing, winterized tents and psychosocial assistance.

The VELKD has the status of a recognized council of churches within the LWF, and all its member churches are LWF members.

(Written for LWI by Florian Hübner, public relations officer, LWF German National Committee)

LWF Considers Initiatives to Fight Human Trafficking in Southern Africa

Call for Awareness Raising in Congregations and Cooperation with Governments

HARARE, Zimbabwe/GENEVA (LWI) – Tariro Dube, 19, (not her real name) vividly remembers how she and her two friends were offloaded from an Air Zimbabwe plane at the Harare International Airport in 2008.

Their planned destination was China, where they would work in garment industries. Their journey started with a simple newspaper advert with promises of lucrative jobs, but alert anti-trafficking police officers saved them from human traffickers.

Human trafficking was one of the topics debated extensively at a regional consultation of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), held 5 - 9 November in the Zimbabwean capi-

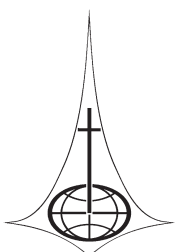
tal Harare. The 34 participants represented the LWF Department for World Service (DWS) country and associate programs in the Southern Africa region, LWF member churches within the Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa (LUCSA), related agencies and invited speakers on specific topics.

From the case study presentations and other reports, participants discussed how churches and faith-based organizations can strategically contribute to initiatives that prevent and stop human trafficking, and other forms of forced migration.

The United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime

and its protocols describe human trafficking as the acquisition of people by improper means such as force, fraud or deception, with the aim of exploiting them. It is different from smuggling migrants which involves procuring for material benefit the illegal entry of a person into a state of which that person is not a national or resident.

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), human trafficking generates an estimated USD 10 billion annually. Statistics indicate that out of the 12 million people trafficked annually about 80 percent are women and children. They end up in illegal adop-





Rev. Dr Mogomme Masoga (South Africa) addressing the LWF regional consultation.
© LWF/Stamley Kwenda

tions, forced marriages, child labor, domestic servitude in agriculture and construction, sexual exploitation and prostitution, or as sources of human organ trafficking.

“Human trafficking is a modern kind of slavery reappearing again. There are a lot of people out there who seek fortune out of other people’s lives and indeed we have to ask ourselves as World Service and the church: How can we help to prevent the scale of suffering of the people in these situations? After all it’s the church, the pastor’s door where people knock for help,” remarked Rev. Eberhard Hitzler, DWS director.

Porous Borders, Weak Legislation

In Southern Africa where DWS has country programs in Angola, Mozambique and Zambia, and associate programs in Malawi, South Africa, Swaziland and Zimbabwe, human trafficking and smuggling are prevalent largely because of porous borders and poorly enforced laws.

Allet Sibanda, Child Protection Officer at the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) in Harare, explained the human trafficking phenomenon. “People who specialize in the business of smuggling people across borders sometimes become human traffickers, and children always suffer the most

because of their vulnerability. [This] is made even worse by the ‘culture of child exploitation’ in our societies. Sending a 13 year-old child to go and [look for] work is exploitation because the child does not choose to go and work,” she said.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (ELCSA) pastor Rev. Dr Mogomme Masoga pleaded for the church’s active involvement in the global fight against human trafficking, including holding governments accountable. “We are being reactionary [rather] than being proactive. In Johannesburg and Pretoria people are being trafficked for prosti-

tution and pornography, forced labor in farms, and forced [to] beg around South Africa’s rich suburbs,” he said.

Masoga’s sentiments were echoed by Tapfumane Kusemwa, IOM counter trafficking officer, who challenged the church’s accountability in ensuring that the money received from congregation members is not tainted.

“The church can do so much in raising awareness, especially in supporting survivors of human trafficking. Churches are a base for awareness and sensitization,” said George Mkanza, LWF/DWS country representative for Mozambique.

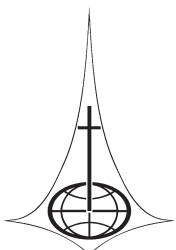
The different steps taken to combat human trafficking at both international and regional levels do not seem to be deterrent enough, participants heard. “It’s an organized business, clandestine and low cost, investigations are ad-hoc, and penalties against offenders are lenient. There is victim intimidation, corrupt officials work with syndicates, there are language barriers, victims are afraid and police officers are untrained,” said Kusemwa.

Some Positive Steps

Participants at the meeting largely agreed that countries in the Southern African region need to tighten legislation to fight this phenomenon. And there are some positive steps. “South



[Left to right] Ms Deizi Sitori, program coordinator, DWS Mozambique; David Korpela, Finn Church Aid regional representative; and Mr Rudelmar Bueno de Faria, LWF/DWS global program coordinator in Geneva, during the consultation in Harare, Zimbabwe. © LWF/Stamley Kwenda



Africa now requires anyone travelling with a child to have an affidavit showing that both parents have consented to the child's travel," said Sibanda.

Angola also prescribes to this requirement. Abrao Mushavi, DWS Angola, encouraged churches to

"create alliances with like-minded organizations working to fight human trafficking and seek to address the root causes such as widespread poverty in our societies."

The DWS associate program in Zimbabwe, Lutheran Development

Service, hosted the meeting, which was also addressed by Presiding Bishop Stephen M. Dube of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe.

(Written for LWI by Harare-based journalist Stanley Kwenda)

Hungarian Lutherans Provide Education to Counter Discrimination of Minorities

Bishop Tamás Fabiny Speaks about Church's Social-Political Responsibility

BUDAPEST, Hungary/GENEVA (LWI)

– Young people work alongside bishops to sort clothes for the homeless, distribute soup to the hungry and build dams to guard against potential floods.

Teenagers run with heavy cans of water in their hands to give them a feel of the real life situation in many parts of the world, where people must walk long distances to obtain water.

Welcome to the Lutheran youth festival Szélrózsa in Hungary, commonly referred to as an Olympic Games for volunteers. Szélrózsa, which means Wind Rose, is organized every second summer, drawing 2,000 to 3,000 young Lutherans from Hungary together with guests from Germany, Finland, Romania and the Slovak Republic.

Three girls from Transylvania, who belong to the Hungarian minority living in Romania, are overjoyed to win the game. This is their first Szélrózsa festival and they are keen to get to know Hungarian youth.

On the big stage, various bands play their music. In the tents, round-table discussions are about to begin. The speakers analyze the social responsibility of the church.

The ninth Szélrózsa festival was held last July at a camp site by Lake Balaton in the Transdanubian region of Hungary.

Bishop Tamás Fabiny, head of the Northern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary (ELCH) and The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Vice President for Central Eastern Europe, reflects



Students and teachers of ELCH's biggest educational institution, the Petöfi Sándor institute in Kiskőrös, central Hungary, attend a church service to mark the beginning of the new school year in September 2012. © Szilvia Mihály

on the significance of these bi-annual gatherings.

"In my opinion our work is most effective if we are not only against something but engage ourselves for a cause," he says. This also applies to the social-political responsibility of Lutherans in Hungary.

Important Role in Education against Racism

"It is not enough to step up against all kinds of discrimination but we have to offer alternatives." This means the church makes an effort to distance itself from extreme political groups that appeal to young and disoriented people, Fabiny notes.

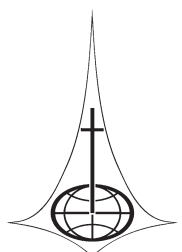
In the midst of the current economic recession in Hungary, the

country's minority Roma population has been targeted as scapegoats by right-wing extremists, who claim they cause social problems, including crime and public insecurity.

The Roma are the largest ethnic minority group comprising around two percent of Hungary's population of nearly 10 million people.

In October the right-wing party Jobbik held rallies in various parts of the country, bearing banners and carrying torches as they protested at the housing projects where the Roma live.

For Fabiny, these protests are a discomfiting issue. "The party and its paramilitary groups—the so called Hungarian guard—have an increasingly intensive presence and it worries me. I have asked teachers at our Lutheran schools to immediately intervene to stop even the slight-



est provocations of racism (usually against the Roma). In our schools, such attitudes should not be tolerated,” he explains.

A Minority Church with a Wide Network of Institutions

The Lutheran church is a minority church in Hungary, with only three percent of the population, less than 300,000 members. However, it plays an important political and intellectual factor in Hungarian society, Fabiny stresses.

“In our country, many people are fed up with politics and it should not be so. The Lutheran church has an excellent chance to form the political culture and to promote democracy in Hungary. We have a wide network of congregations and educational institutions and their existence should be mirrored in the society,” he notes.

Rev. Márta Bolba, ELCH pastor in the Józsefváros congregation in Budapest, says that congregations as some of the smallest structural units of society can provide spaces



Eva lives with her five children in an ELCH-run home for women fleeing domestic violence or needing shelter for other reasons. About half of the residents are Roma. © Tamás Kiss

to reflect on alternatives to extremist and dictatorial structures.

Radicalism is often a substitute for religion among unhappy citizens, says Bolba. The church must therefore help people in hard economic times to share their problems within the congregation so that its members have a clear understanding of the situation and don't succumb to racist ideologies.

“We can only fight the discrimination of Roma people if we offer opportunities for advancement in the society, and this happens through education,” she adds.

(Summarized from Bishop Fabiny's interview with Hungarian journalist Anna Frenyó, English translation by Ms Kinga Marjatta Pap, ELCH ecumenical and international relations officer.)

Lutheran Communion Prayers and Solidarity for US Church after Hurricane

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) offered its prayers, solidarity and support for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the people of the United States of America following devastation caused by the hurricane that struck the country's East Coast.

In a letter, 1 November, to ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson, LWF General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge assured the US Lutheran church of solidarity from the entire LWF Communion.



A man holds his head walking by homes in the Queens borough of New York, USA, devastated by Hurricane Sandy. © REUTERS/Shannon Stapleton, courtesy Trust.org – AlertNet

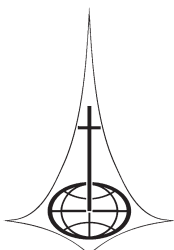
“On this All Saints Day, we share our prayers and solidarity with all those whose lives have been affected directly or indirectly, and those who suffer distress because of the horrific circumstances from Hurricane Sandy,” Junge wrote.

Junge expressed condolences to families mourning loved ones who died as a result of the storm and prayed for strength and healing as many people struggle to deal with the difficult situation.

Hurricane Sandy made landfall over the Caribbean on 25 October and on the United States on 29 October, leaving a trail of destruction, floods and power outages for millions of people. Media reports put the overall death toll at more than 120, including over 50 people in the US, one in Canada and more than 60 in the Caribbean.

According to the ELCA News Service, some of the church's congregations along the Atlantic coast reported damage. The ELCA Disaster Response network is working with congregations, affiliates and other partners in efforts to restore communities.

In his letter, Junge affirmed the pastoral and diaconal support that the ELCA Disaster Response is extending to people affected. He reiterated “the solidarity and support of the entire LWF communion and its members,” as the ELCA joins in efforts to “bring comfort and restore hope” during the critical moments following the devastating storm.



It's Crowded but Learning Has Started under Tents in Upper Nile

Continued from p. 1

Hiding frequently in the bush to avoid detection by soldiers, the family finally crossed into South Sudan, where Kames said they found representatives from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) who directed them to the camp, where they received emergency food rations and a plastic tarpaulin.

Since then they've resettled alongside many of their old neighbors from Kukur. They are safe from the bombing, Kames says, but life is far from good.

"Look at our clothes. We're wearing dirty rags. We never dressed like this back in our village. We had clean, good clothes to wear and good food to eat," he said.

remained behind when the women in their families fled, taking small children with them. Some men remained to farm, but aid officials also admit many remained to fight alongside anti-government rebels, though refugees arriving here are reluctant to confirm that.

Retief arrived in Maban in June to begin assessing needs in the rapidly expanding camps, and in coordination with UN officials and other non-governmental organizations soon decided that the LWF would focus on education and child protection. Over 60 percent of residents at the UNHCR camp are children, and the LWF has considerable experience working with education in other refugee camps in the region.

child-friendly spaces and chalks for teaching—that had been flown in from neighboring Kenya arrived as staff from the UN, LWF, community leaders and locally hired teachers and volunteers were preparing to open the new tented school.

The challenges didn't discourage Haram, who says she is determined to learn despite the late start. Some day, she says, she'd like to be a teacher herself.

The LWF's educational work will initially include primary classes, early childhood development groups, and "child friendly spaces," which will give children a secure place to be themselves in the midst of chaotic camp life.

Host Community

Retief said the LWF is also working to assist existing schools in the local host community. Relations have been strained at times between refugees and host community members, whose numbers were already swollen with returnees from the north who fled harassment under the Khartoum regime following the south's independence in July 2011.

"Although they've welcomed the refugees here, there have been tensions. They've been displaced in the past, so they understand what it's like to have to live away from home. But there are concerns about water usage and about rapid deforestation to produce charcoal for cooking and lumber for construction. And the refugees all came with their livestock, so there are a lot of cattle and goats and sheep that need a place to graze," said Retief.

Young People

The youth population at the camps in Maban represents a challenge, says Collins Onyango, education coordinator for the LWF regional team at the camps.

"Many young people feel left out. They may have dropped out of primary school or finished primary and haven't had a chance to begin



October 2012: Boys line up to enter a classroom in a school at the Gendrasa refugee camp in South Sudan's Upper Nile state. © LWF/Paul Jeffrey

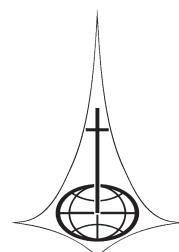
More Refugees

According to Mairo Retief, head of the Nairobi-based LWF Department for World Service (DWS) Emergency Hub for East Africa, there's no end in sight for the violence in the neighboring Blue Nile State, and in a few weeks when the rains end, flooded rivers subside and the dry season starts, another 30,000 refugees are expected to arrive from the border state between Sudan and the new Republic of South Sudan.

Many of the expected new arrivals are men and boys who initially

The LWF set about establishing an operations base here, but logistical challenges have slowed that process. Moving supplies into the region overland during the rainy season is virtually impossible.

When LWF-run classes for more than 1,000 students started at Gendrasa camp on 15 October, teachers initially had to make do without printed materials. The first three trucks of tons of cargo—tents, furniture, computers, student exercise books and pencils, volleyballs for





Girls skip rope during a school recess in the Gendrassa refugee camp in South Sudan's Upper Nile State.
© LWF/Paul Jeffrey

secondary education. It's often worse for young women, some of whom married early, but because of the war were left to take care of small children on their own," he noted.

"There is no secondary education or vocational training in the camps,

and so these young people are left to while away their time. It's a potential time bomb," he said.

The LWF's emergency work in the camps includes plans for community-based sports and other activities that can be managed by the youth them-

selves. Also foreseen are English language literacy training, and vocational skills training in areas such as carpentry, catering and tailoring.

"With no end to the war in sight, the camps will grow, and there will be great need for things like furniture and school uniforms. If we can help train people to produce those items locally, we're helping them prepare for a more sustainable future while here as well as when they eventually go back home," Onyango concluded.

The LWF World Service country program for South Sudan is located in Juba. Preparations for the emergency response in Upper Nile began in June this year.

(Written for LWI by Paul Jeffrey on a recent visit to South Sudan)

Read more about the LWF's work in the Upper Nile region:

www.lutheranworld.org/lwf/index.php/tag/upper-nile

Warm Clothing and Shelters for Syrian Refugees in Jordan

LWF to Provide More Support During Winter

AMMAN, Jordan/GENEVA, (LWI) – In October, the Za'atri refugee camp is still a hot and dusty place but the coming onset of winter, when temperatures can drop to below zero at night, means Syrians who have sought refuge there urgently need protection from the cold.

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF)'s support to the camp residents includes provision of winterization kits and heaters for about 2,200 tents, blankets and quilts, and warm clothes for more than 10,000 children.

"The situation is difficult and complicated, and the oncoming winter season demands immediate action," says Jaap Aantjes as he covers his face from the dust whipped up by the endless rows of heavy trucks entering and leaving camp Za'atri, which is located near the northern city of Mafraq.

Aantjes is the emergency program manager for an LWF joint program with the Jordan Hashemite Charity

Organization (JHCO) to support Syrians fleeing the violence at home.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) stated that as of 7 October, almost 250,000 people had fled Syria into the neighboring countries of Lebanon, Iraq, Turkey and Jordan.

Out of the 105,215 receiving assistance in Jordan then, 55,462 people had been registered, another 22,729 had registration appointments and 27,024 people were waiting for registration in the Za'atri refugee camp.

Mahmoud Al Alomoch, camp manager at the JHCO, is also worried about how the camp will cope during winter. "In winter it will be very bad so we need more help," he says.

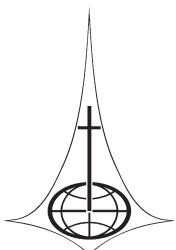
In recent weeks, the situation at camp Za'atri has been tense. Protesting against what they say are poor living conditions, the refugees torched tents and hospitals and police had to use tear gas and batons to suppress the riots.

"The ongoing unrest shows the urgent need of psychosocial support," Aantjes says, adding that while much has already been done, the needs remain great. "People living in camp Za'atri are used to a life of their own, a job and freedom to move. [...] Now they are confined to the camp," Aantjes explains.

Collaboration with Other Organizations

Under a Memorandum of Understanding with the JHCO, the LWF provides shelter, camp management, psychosocial support and education services for refugees in the camp.

The LWF office is based at the premises of the Amman congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land. The emergency program is still in its initial stages and currently has three staff persons. The focus now is on how to deliver assistance to the increasing number of refugees.



The LWF collaborates with non-governmental organizations and other partners in providing assistance to the Syrian refugees, Aantjes says. Together with the International Orthodox Christian Charities, the Middle East Council of Churches Department of Service for Palestinian Refugees, Finn Church Aid and Lutheran and other churches, the LWF participates in the local ACT Alliance forum in Jordan to coordinate humanitarian aid.

The LWF is a founding member of ACT Alliance, the global network of churches and their related organizations providing emergency humanitarian support.

Church of Sweden, an LWF member church, will provide the emergency program with two psychosocial consultants, which Aantjes describes as a much welcome contribution.

“The LWF as a member of ACT Alliance has a great potential to make a difference. There is a lot to do for the population in Za’atri camp but the most crucial thing for all of us here is that we work together,” Aantjes says.

The Jordan economy is affected by the global economic crises and the influx of Syrians is stretching its already limited resources, such as water and fuel. “People are fleeing for their lives. That is why we are here,” says Aantjes. The LWF really can make a difference, he adds.

“The LWF has a long history and longstanding expertise in refugee camp

management and service delivery in places such as Kenya, Chad, South Sudan and Nepal, as part of our on-going Christian commitment to those in need, no matter their background,” LWF General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge remarked during a recent visit to Jordan.

(Written for LWI by Thomas Ekelund in Jordan)



During the cold weather, refugees living in Za’atri camp need winterized tents, warm clothing and shoes.
© LWF/Thomas Ekelund

FEATURE: Welcomed into Homes, Garages and Local Town Hall

LWF to Expand Assistance for Syrian Refugees and Host Communities in Jordan

AL TOURA, Ramtha, Jordan/GENEVA (LWI) – It’s a short film clip received on a mobile phone—oriental music with fast drums accompanied by a sequence showing a man being decapitated. “The Syrian army spreads films like this to scare us. And to sell to international TV stations,” says Omar. “This is our life,” he adds.

In November, Omar was residing in Al Toura in Jordan’s far northwest region of Ramtha. The village is close to the common border with Syria and at night residents can hear the shelling and see the explosions on the Syrian side.

The proximity to the conflict zone has made Al Toura a host village for refugees. Since the fighting began over one and a half year ago, hundreds of Syrians have crossed the border and ended their fearful journey here.

“The huge influx of refugees has had a great impact on the village,” says Eman Ahmad Irsheid, president of the Al-khansaa women’s association. “People in the village have had to share its already strained resources,” she says.

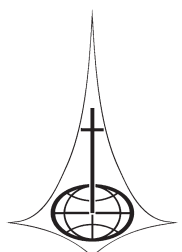
Not Enough for Everyone

The town hall is a big beautiful building; and while it was not designed for inhabitants, today the façade is covered with drying laundry as it is home for four refugee families. It is partitioned into four small living areas separated by blankets and clothes. At mid-day it is crowded; only five of the 18 children go to school, none of the adults have a job. So they all gather to tell their stories.

Almost 450 Syrian families have ended up here since the conflict began in March 2011. While they have been welcomed and housed in homes, garages and factories, rents have skyrocketed, schools are stretched to the limits and garbage collection has become a big issue for the local authorities. Among ordinary Jordanians, support for the open border policy has plummeted.

“The boredom is killing us,” says Omar. He wears a clean white shirt and beige trousers and smokes constantly. “We want to work, to help ourselves but all we do is sit and wait,” he adds. “We have no money, nothing. We need money desperately.

“I used to be a firefighter, so I miss my job and my colleagues,” he adds.



All They Owned

There is only one local organization that assists these families, providing food just once a month. The ration is far from enough and Omar says they eat rice and bread at every meal.

“And that is all we do, prepare food and clean,” says Zaidi, Omar’s sister, as her son clings to her neck.

It has been at least three months since most of the families here decided to leave Daraa in southern Syria. They talk about the bombings that wiped out their houses and all they owned; fleeing Syria under the protection of the Free Syrian Army; walking for hours at night; and finally being received by the Jordanian Army.

“The guns, tanks and missiles of the regime are being aimed at every man, woman and child that comes near the border,” Omar says, recalling what he was told by a member of the Free Syrian Army.

The number of arrivals in Jordan is rising despite Damascus’ reported military crackdown in the border region, with Syrian activists accusing regime forces of targeting refugees with gunfire and mortar rockets.

The crackdown is part of Damascus’ recent military offensive designed to reassert control over border regions and key rebel strongholds in the southern region.

Oncoming Winter

Noor is 14 years old and has friends in school. “I don’t like life here,” she says. “The subjects in school are strange and difficult. I only want to go back to my house, my friends and my school in Syria. And to become a journalist,” she smiles.

Apart from those who go to school, the children and women live



Abir, 5, and his family found shelter in a cement factory in Al Toura in northern Jordanian after fleeing the conflict in Syria. © ACT/Magnus Aronson

in isolation, with no contact with local Jordanians. This is eating away at the refugee community, while their needs grow by the hour.

“We need clothes, blankets and heaters,” Felka says, hugging her son. “It’s already very cold at night and the winter is not yet here. This building is not made for living in; we need to move at some stage.”

Felka says she doesn’t want to sound ungrateful. She knows she has been invited into Jordan and knows how much the country is doing for her. “But we don’t want to be here. We want to go home. I want to see my parents, my husband again,” she adds.

LWF Expanding Assistance

Jordan continues to follow an open border policy, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported on 2 November that by the end of the year

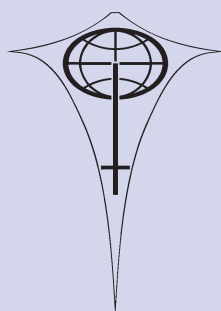
250,000 Syrian refugees will require assistance.

So far The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in Jordan has focused its efforts on the Za’atri camp in northern Jordan. But the needs in the host communities are vast and need urgent attention.

“We are currently assessing the situation in the northern areas to see in what way we can best support refugees and local Jordanians,” says Jaap Aantjes, emergency program manager for the LWF joint program with the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization (JHCO) supporting Syrians fleeing the violence at home.

“We have met with local organizations and authorities to get a better picture of the situation, [about] what has already been done and what we can do,” says Aantjes. “The needs are there and I really think we can make a difference,” he concludes.

(Written for LWI by Thomas Ekelund in Al Toura, Jordan)



Published and distributed by:
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