

Lutheran World Information

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Rev. Martin Junge saying bye to Onepolo woman, during LWF Geneva delegation visit to Onepolo in Cunene province. Photo: Daniel Cica

New Year Message 2014 from the LWF General Secretary

“But as for me, it is good to be near God.” (Psalm 73:28)

Dear sisters, dear brothers in Christ,

It is with joy that I greet you in this new year that lies ahead of us with all the opportunities to continue witnessing to God’s love and care for every human being and the entire creation.

“It is good to be near God,” reads the watchword for the year 2014. Yes, indeed, this is good!

Yet, we know how easily we can lose track of God’s presence in our world and in our own lives, particularly when things seem to prevail in life that do not seem to be in line with what we know God is bringing to the world: justice, peace and reconciliation through Jesus Christ.

This Christ-centered focus, however, helps us to continue trusting that near-

ness to God is not our doing, but God’s doing. It is God who approaches us – constantly, relentlessly, insistently – and creates that closeness for which we can only rejoice. May this promise carry all of us as we journey into the year 2014!

In the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Communion Office we look back at 2013 with gratitude. We are grateful for the support member churches and partners have shown in so many ways to enable the LWF to continue working and witnessing together as a communion of churches. There is indeed good reason to celebrate, with thanksgiving to God,



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

A Communion
of Churches

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Lutheran Reformation is a Global Citizen

Starting from Wittenberg in Saxony-Anhalt, the Reformation has become a global citizen. This idea was the theme of a meeting between Rev. Martin Junge, the general secretary of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and Stephan Dorgerloh, education minister of the state of Saxony-Anhalt, on 13 January 2014 in the Ecumenical Center in Geneva. Dorgerloh took the opportunity to find out about the activities of the LWF to mark the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in Wittenberg.

“The Reformer Martin Luther did not just initiate reforms and profound changes in central Germany, he also left footprints worldwide, that are visible and effective to this day,” Stephan Dorgerloh stated. “However, it is true that these footprints are particularly visible in Saxony-Anhalt and, above all, in the Luther towns of Wittenberg and Eisleben. Visitors from all over the world will be able to see that for themselves in 2017, the anniversary of the Reformation.”

The talks included a presentation of the LWF program of the Global Young Reformers Network. In the coming four years, this

international network is designed to link up tens of thousands of young people worldwide in projects on the Reformation. A gathering of 175 delegates from all over the world is planned for 2015 in Wittenberg.

“Young people nowadays have a global view of things and are still active at the local level. This is a very valuable perspective when we are thinking about the role the Lutheran Church can play in the world today,” commented Rev. Martin Junge.

Furthermore, the LWF Council will convene in Wittenberg in 2016. Before the Council meeting, there is to be a two-day pilgrimage through the historical Luther sites. The idea is that, when following this itinerary together, participants will reflect on the journey of the Reformation throughout the whole world. “The second and third largest member churches of the LWF are to be found in Africa,” said Junge. “The Reformation has become a global citizen.”

Another anniversary project is the Luther Garden, which is jointly sponsored by the LWF and the City of Wittenberg.

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LWF Affirms Support for Ecumenical Efforts to End Conflict in Syria

Junge Participates in WCC Consultation on Syria

GENEVA (LWI) – The global church family has an urgent ecumenical and humanitarian responsibility towards civilians who continue to suffer the greatest impact of the ongoing conflict in Syria, says Rev. Martin Junge, General Secretary of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), reflecting on two major meetings in Geneva.

Junge shared his thoughts at the end of a World Council of Churches (WCC) organized ecumenical consultation for church leaders from Syria and around the world, held 15-17 January, at the Ecumenical Center in Geneva. The general secretary participated in the meeting upon WCC's invitation.

Ahead of the "Geneva 2" United Nations-backed international conference for Syria scheduled for 22 January, church representatives at the Ecumenical Consultation on Syria called for substantial action to be taken at the talks to end the armed conflict that started in March 2011.

In a message to be delivered to the Geneva 2 talks by the UN-Arab League joint representative for Syria Lakhdar Brahimi, the group emphasized the need for "immediate cessation of all armed confrontation and hostility," and assurance of appropriate humanitarian assistance to "all vulnerable communities in Syria and refugees in neighboring countries." The consultation called for the development of "a comprehensive and inclusive process toward establishing a just peace and rebuilding Syria," a WCC press release stated.

Reiterating LWF's support for ecumenical efforts to bring lasting peace in Syria, Junge said a political solution towards peace in the country must include adherence to international law and humanitarian principles. "The protection of civilians is not optional, but mandatory and I urge parties involved in the Geneva 2 discussions



With the huge influx of Syrian refugees, classrooms in Mafraq public schools are even more crowded than usual. Photo: LWF/Mats Wallerstedt

to take this obligation as their point of departure," he added.

Scaling-Up Humanitarian Response

The general secretary expressed deep concern over the increasing number of civilians displaced in the Syrian crisis, adding "the cessation of all hostilities is imperative" as the different parties sit down to negotiate for peace.

Junge stressed the need to scale up support for humanitarian response to the crisis. "The number of displaced people is staggering: from 500,000 Syrian refugees in January 2013 to the 2.3 million currently in the region, and another 9.3 million displaced inside the country. This suffering has to come to an end, it cannot continue," he added.

He expressed LWF's commitment to do more in collaboration with its partners to assist refugees and support efforts to bring peace in the country and the region as a whole.

Ongoing Intervention

In Mafraq region, northern Jordan, the LWF Department for World Service

emergency program is supporting 4,000 families in camps and host communities with winterization kits that include gas and cylinders for cooking and heating, winter clothing, blankets and carpets.

Other intervention includes a food voucher distribution program aimed at benefiting 1,700 Syrian refugee families and Jordanians with monthly food coupons of USD 85 dollars per family over a six-month period.

A school expansion program in Mafraq continues, with a goal to build 30 new classrooms by the end of 2014 in crowded local schools that host Syrian students, especially girls. LWF's support to refugee women and Jordanian hosts includes an income-generation program providing employment also for the Syrian women. In addition, more than 800 women from both communities have benefitted from an LWF vocational training program aimed at increasing self-sustainability.

At the Za'atri camp, home to more than 124,000 refugees from Syria, the LWF coordinated "Peace Oasis" program targets around 1,500 youth aged between 14 and 24 years in activities aimed at spreading a culture of peace and building resilience through

psychosocial support. Art and play therapy, sports, and group counseling are some of the tools used in this program.

By mid-January Jordan was hosting more than 582,000 Syrian refugees.

[Read WCC Statement for Geneva 2 talks on Syria: www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/public-witness-addressing-power-affirming-peace/middle-east-peace/statement-for-geneva-2-talks-on-syria](http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/public-witness-addressing-power-affirming-peace/middle-east-peace/statement-for-geneva-2-talks-on-syria)

[Find out more about LWF assistance to Syrian refugees in Jordan: www.lutheranworld.org/content/response-syrian-refugees-jordan](http://www.lutheranworld.org/content/response-syrian-refugees-jordan)

New Year Message 2014 from the LWF General Secretary

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what we have been able to achieve as we have journeyed together:

- We work together: LWF leaders from around the world convened for numerous local, regional and global consultations and meetings on capacity building in member churches, Lutheran identity, sustainability, theological education, diakonia and many other issues. The mere fact of coming together and working together is to me a powerful witness in times during which fragmentation and withdrawal seem to be the prevailing patterns.
- We are committed to nourishing theological identity: The Lutheran Theological Education Network (LUTEN) was launched in 2013 to support collaboration in theological education across the communion.
- We opt for dialogue: LWF member churches continue their discernment on local, national and regional levels on issues that are potentially dividing them. I am grateful that as a communion of churches, we can look back at a year in which - even as we continue grappling with differences and differing theological perspectives - we remain committed not to dismiss each other but to continue discerning *jointly* the Word of God as fully revealed to us in Jesus Christ.
- We believe that religion is about bridge-building: The LWF Council endorsed the document "Welcoming the Stranger: Affirmations for Faith Leaders," a code of conduct for religious leaders for work with

and on behalf of refugees. The document is co-authored by the LWF under the auspices of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Later in the year, the LWF's Department for World Service held a joint workshop with international Muslim humanitarian organizations in Amman, Jordan, exploring how people of faith can work together for people in need.

- We continue serving those who are suffering: In September, I, together with a group of LWF vice-presidents and Council members, visited people in northern Namibia and southern Angola, who are severely affected by drought. It had a great impact on us all to see the desperate situation in the region and the response of our member churches there. At the same time, we were grateful to see how LWF member churches responded to the appeal for Namibia and Angola where their considerable donations are now helping us meet people's basic needs.
- We uphold our ecumenical commitment: The Lutheran - Roman Catholic Commission on Unity published "From Conflict to Communion - Lutheran-Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017," which the LWF Council received unanimously. It is the first ever attempt by the two traditions to describe the history of Reformation at a global level, tracing developments since the Reformation and looking at how theological issues are framed today. The report is already offering a solid basis for joint preparations of the

500th anniversary of the Reformation at the local and global levels.

- We intentionally include youth: The Young Reformers Network was launched. The program will bring together young people from across the communion in the lead-up to the Reformation anniversary. Young people offer us unique perspectives as we begin to reflect on how our Lutheran church is always being reformed, always reforming. Can Lutheran churches engage in such a reflection without intentionally involving youth? In the LWF, we say, "No!" and thus have launched this network with the potential of bringing together up to 10,000 youth around the world!
- We care about justice in relationships: The LWF Gender Justice Policy was adopted, as a continuation of the LWF's ongoing commitment to issues of justice, including justice in relationships between men and women. The Gender Justice Policy is offered as a tool to support member churches to address issues of gender justice in their own contexts.
- We value the expressions that the Reformation has taken around the world: The LWF Council accepted the invitation of the LWF member churches in Namibia to hold its 2017 Assembly in Windhoek. With this decision, the LWF Council wanted to underline that the Reformation is indeed a global citizen today and that it has many centers and expressions around the world. The Assembly will be a historic, yet forward-looking, celebration that will coincide with the Reformation

anniversary. We have much to look forward to.

I could list many more examples, yet they all would just lead us back to the same fundamental insight: thanks be to God who was so near and so life-giving, that our journey as a communion

was sustained, inspired and guided. Thanks be to God, who through his nearness to us has made possible closeness among us as churches, as well as with our suffering neighbors and the groaning creation.

We look forward to the year 2014 with the hope of God's ongoing pres-

ence in our journeys. We are eager to discover what God will continue doing in our midst and in this world. Indeed, it is good to be so near to God!

Rev. Martin Junge
LWF General Secretary

Joint Theological Reflection Creates Shared Space

First Cooperation between the LWF and a University institute for Islamic Theology

MÜNSTER, Germany/GENEVA (LWI) – A Christian-Muslim consultation on the role of faith in the public sphere marks the start of collaboration between The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and an institute for Islamic theology. The conference which took place in Münster, Germany, from 9 to 12 January 2014, was jointly organized by the LWF Department for Theology and Public Witness and the Centre for Islamic Theology (Zentrum für Islamische Theologie, ZIT) in Münster (Germany).

“The collaboration between the Centre for Islamic Theology and The Lutheran World Federation in Geneva demonstrates that we do not engage in dialogue about each other but with each other. This constructive cooperation is evidence of our important contribution to religions' active participation in pluralistic societies,” emphasized

Professor Mouhanad Khorchide, director of the ZIT.

Intellectual and Emotional Acceptance

In the consultation, speakers from 15 different countries shared their analyses of the role of religions in society and jointly discussed understandings of the “public sphere” from faith-based perspectives. The consultation was interreligious and interdisciplinary, Christian and Muslim theologians, as well as scholars from social, political and legal sciences contributed to the conversations. During the consultation there were lively discussions on how to ensure equal citizenship in religiously plural societies and in the face of many asymmetries between religious communities.

In her keynote lecture, the Muslim Professor Mona Siddiqui from the University of Edinburgh looked at the religiously plural societies and argued: “It is about understanding that if diversity in all manners is truly God's will and blessing on earth, it must be accepted intellectually as well as emotionally in real terms.” She added: “This kind of commitment to diversity must make theological and political space for other ways of living and being whatever the differences.”

Seeking a Language of Hope

Bishop Dr Antje Jackelén, Archbishop-elect of Uppsala, Sweden, emphasized that theology has an important public role to play in society. “This is both possible and necessary.” She described that since its beginning, Christian theology has been in dialogue with secular knowledge in society. In unfolding the meaning of 1 Peter 3:15, she argued for a “theology that in light of the public seeks a language that can motivate and nourish hope. This does not happen by means of a theology that is absolute. It takes a theology that is resolute in its critical and self-critical reflection.”

The Center for Islamic Theology in Münster was established two years ago in response to the need for training Muslim religious education teachers. Germany is a secular state that in its constitution, guarantees religious education in state schools and allows for faith-based



Dr. Dina El-Omari vom Zentrum für Islamische Theologie (ZIT) in Münster begrüsst die Tagungsteilnehmer der Christlich-Muslimischen Konsultation über die Rolle des Glaubens im öffentlichen Raum. Foto: LWB/ E. Gano

theological faculties in state universities. In order to implement the positive neutrality that the state claims towards religious communities, Muslim religious

education has been introduced in some federal states in Germany. "Competent academic research on Islam promoting young Muslim researchers makes a

vital contribution to the integration and equality of Muslim life in Germany," said Dr Dina El Omari, researcher at the ZIT and co-organizer of the consultation.

Religions in the Public Space: A Contested Terrain

Churches and mosques are just one way for religion to occupy space, says Rev. Dr Mitri Raheb from Bethlehem, Palestine, as he describes an everyday experience: "If I go into public transportation, most of the time, the driver has the Qur'an recitation on." In the same way that big Christian processions block the streets on Fridays, the Qur'an recitations on the bus are part of life in Bethlehem. Raheb continues, "A Muslim secular person has to endure that unless he has enough guts to tell the bus driver: Can you please turn it off. As a Christian, I have to endure it, unless I say something about it."

Marking the Territory

The Middle East is not the only place where public space is a contested area, marked by religious hegemonies and polarized perceptions. At the international Christian-Muslim consultation "Creating Public Space: The Role of Faith in the Public Sphere," held from 9 to 12 January in Münster, Germany, 35 scholars from 15 countries and Muslim and Christian backgrounds critically analyzed the situation in their respective countries. They expressed common concern on how the majority religious group in a region usually dominates public space. The consultation was organized by the LWF Department for Theology and Public Witness together with the Center for Islamic Theology (ZIT) in Münster, Germany.

Vibrant expressions of religiosity in public transportation, shopping malls, streets and schools can be used by religious groups to mark the territory. Regions with undefined religious majorities may witness a struggle for attention in public space as Prof. Mohammed Ali Bakari, a political scientist from the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, mentioned.

In many countries, debates about the constitutional framework for state and religious life in society have become an issue. "The 2012 constitutional amendments in Norway imply that the Evangelical Lutheran religion is no more referred to as the public religion of the state," said Prof. Oddbjørn Leirvik from Norway.

"Instead, unspecified Christianity, on par with humanism, is referred to as a national heritage and as society's value basis. I think the tendency is clear, namely, to translate God and religious traditions into general notions of heritage, values and nationhood." In Norway, as well as Hungary, Christianity has found a way of retaining its symbolic hegemony, Leirvik explained.

Understanding Secularity

During the consultation in Münster it became evident that it is such hegemonic ambitions, not religion itself, which are making life difficult in religiously plural societies. Stimulating debates emerged on the notion "secular" and the meaning of "secularity."

In Islamic perspective, a secular state is essential to the teachings, as Prof. Adnane Mokrani, a Muslim from Tunisia currently teaching at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome argued: "The secular state is not a non-religious or anti-religious state, but rather a neutral one which treats all citizens equally. Forced faith is nothing but hypocrisy, a phenomenon condemned repeatedly and severely in the Qur'an."

In some contexts, however, it is hard to make sense of secularity as a neutral space open and mindful of different religious backgrounds. Rev. Lesmore Gibson Ezekiel and Dr Imran Abdulrahman from Jos, Nigeria, described tensions and conflicts in the country and

said that most people in Nigeria would resent the notion of "secular space" as it would be perceived as having anti-religious implications.

Protecting the Vulnerable

Leirvik suggested moving the discourse from group solidarity to protection of the vulnerable, thus creating space for equal citizenship. Strengthening inter-religious dialogue by providing opportunities to enhance mutual trust is much needed in plural societies, he said.

Rev. Dr Leonard Mtaita, General Secretary of the Christian Council of Churches in Tanzania, reported efforts in building constructive interreligious relations in the face of extremist religious violence, while Jonas Widmer from the Institute for Peace Church Theology at the University of Hamburg, Germany, described how Mennonite communities have committed themselves to be peacemakers in society.

Muslim and Christian scholars affirmed that both religious traditions need to revisit their holy scriptures and explore the guiding principles that affirm human dignity and life. Dr Clare Amos, interreligious program executive at the World Council of Churches, underlined: "One of the key principles is the affirming of life, it is an underwriting hermeneutical principle through the spectacles of which we need to read the Bible."

"Secularity does not mean to abandon God or to abandon religion," Prof. Abdulaziz Sachedina from George Mason University in the United States concluded: "It simply means to create all the possibilities within our power not to impose our doctrines on others, and yet be able to live in respect with empathy so that we can work together for the betterment of the entire citizenry".

New Lutheran Church in Jordan “Emblematic of Freedom of Religion”

LWF President Munib Younan Dedicates Church at Baptismal Site in Interreligious Celebration

AMMAN, Jordan/GENEVA (LWI) – More than 200 clergy, royalty and guests joined The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) President Bishop Dr Munib A. Younan on 6 January in dedicating the Evangelical Lutheran Church at Bethany-Beyond-the-Jordan. The church, which is part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) is located at the spot where John the Baptist baptized Jesus in the Jordan River.

“Dedicating a new church is something that should not be taken for granted, especially in the Middle East,” Younan, who is ELCJHL bishop said in his dedication sermon. “All too often, we see on television that churches are destroyed and atrocities are committed against houses of worship.” Receiving support and patronage from the Royal Family of Jordan was a “gracious act of hospitality, emblematic of the freedom of religion that we enjoy in Jordan.”

The ELCJHL was given land at the Baptismal Site by His Majesty King Abdullah of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in 2008, making it one of seven churches to receive land with the hopes that Bethany-Beyond-the-Jordan would become a site for pilgrimage and baptism to Christians worldwide.

“We are going to develop worship surrounding both baptism and baptismal renewal,” said Rev. Rolf Pearson who together with his wife Deacon Kerstin Pearson has been seconded



(l. to r.) LWF President Bishop Dr. Munib Younan and LWF Vice President for Africa Bishop Dr Alex G. Malasusa at the dedication of the Bethany-beyond-the-Jordan Church. Photo: ELCJHL

by Church of Sweden to be caregiver of the site. “We are hoping that pilgrims will find a place where they can be renewed spiritually, a place to understand the religious, social and political context of the place where they are, and to see the church presence in the Middle East.”

LWF Vice-President for Africa Bishop Dr Alex G. Malasusa, representing the LWF, blessed the font reading a verse from Romans 6: 3-5: “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been

united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.”

ELCJHL also received generous support from various LWF member churches and international partners. “There is no church that can live on its own,” Younan said. “We are all interdependent and that was seen through this project.”

Younan said he wishes to encourage churches around the world to include the Baptismal Site in Jordan as part of their pilgrimage: “For me, pilgrimage is reviving your faith when you visit and reviving the faith of others. We want every pilgrim to use this place for choirs, concerts, worship, baptisms, weddings. This church is a church for all people, for the glory of God.”

Churches Are Advocating for an Economy of Life

Bishop emeritus Dr Zephania Kameeta Speaks Out on Being the “Yeast to Make the Bread Rise”

GENEVA (LWI) – The Ecumenical Panel on a New International Financial and Economic Architecture has concluded

its second meeting in Geneva on 15-17 January, developing advocacy strategies for churches to ensure economic

justice and the ecological wellbeing of the communities they serve. The Ecumenical Panel on a New International

Financial and Economic Architecture was established last year by the World Council of Churches (WCC), the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Council for World Mission (CWM) as a follow-up to the São Paulo conference on a New Financial and Economic Architecture in 2012. On that conference, the participants issued a statement proposing an just economical architecture which among others sets limits to greed and accounts for social and environmental tasks.

In an interview with *Lutheran World Information (LWI)*, LWF Council member Bishop emeritus Dr Zephania Kameeta from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN), who is representing LWF in the panel, shared his views on a just economy in the context of the situation in his home country.

LWI: Why is it important for you as a representative from the ELCRN to be part of this panel?

I am in the first place representing the LWF as a Council member. But at the same time, I am coming from the South. I regard it as very important because you cannot divide the economic crisis from the ecological crisis. These are intertwined. In Namibia, we are experiencing a drought. It has not rained for several years. Vegetation has disappeared, the area is becoming a desert. Many people depend on cattle for survival, but the cattle are dying. They wear traditional clothes, but they cannot wear those clothes anymore because it is becoming cold. When I've seen some of them recently, they are now wearing blankets over their beautiful traditional costumes. Their children are treated in the hospital for colds and bronchitis. These are effects of climate change, it is destroying the people as well as their culture. But the people who are living here do not have any cars, the pollution that causes climate change comes from somewhere else. That in turn is a consequence of bad economic management.



"If it is God's world, we cannot close our eyes to the injustice that is taking place in it." Bishop emeritus Dr Zephania Kameeta of ELCRN speaks out on economic justice. Photo: LWF/C. Kästner

LWI: In the Sao Paolo statement you talk about an "economy of life". How would you envision that in your country?

Namibia is very rich - we have mineral resources, diamonds and uranium. But to talk about a rich Namibia in the midst of abject poverty is a scandal. What I want to see is the responsible management of our wealth. We want the sharing of the resources. The value adding to what is taken out of the ground of Namibia should be done in Namibia. We might not have enough skilled human resources to deal with these things, but let those who have it do it in Namibia, train our people and create jobs here and not in their countries! We encourage debate and action on these crucial issues wherever we are and in a very small way may become the yeast which makes the bread rise.

LWI: The Sao Paolo statement calls for "active radicalizing of our theological discourse". What does that mean to you?

My faith in Jesus Christ has radicalized my view of the world. I only got involved because of the things I believe in. In the book of Revelations Christ tells us: I make all things new. That concerns tradition, culture, politics, economy, money etc. So our faith

has radicalized us to see the world differently.

LWI: Why should the church be concerned with political and economic issues?

Before and after the independence of Namibia (1990) we were told: The church should keep out of politics. But if it is God's world, we cannot close our eyes to the injustice that is taking place in it. The Bible does not divide these things. Moses was sent to the Pharaoh to say: Let my people go. That is a political move!

Read the São Paulo Statement: International Financial Transformation for the Economy of Life": www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/public-witness-addressing-power-affirming-peace/poverty-wealth-and-ecology/finance-speculation-debt/sao-paulo-statement-international-financial-transformation-for-the-economy-of-life?set_language=en

Find out more on the second meeting of the Ecumenical Panel on a New International Financial and Economic Architecture: www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/ecumenical-panel-promotes-economic-justice

South Sudanese Religious Leaders Calling for Ceasefire

LWF on the Ground to Assist Refugees from the Conflict

JUBA, South Sudan/GENEVA (LWI) – Some 200,000 people are reported to be internally displaced and 1,000 have been killed since fighting broke out in the South Sudanese capital of Juba on 15 December and later spread to the eastern part of the country. Reportedly, more than 23,500 people have sought refuge in neighboring countries.

South Sudan is the world's newest state. It was formed in 2011 after gaining independence from Sudan following decades of conflict.

The Lutheran World Federation's (LWF) Department for World Service (DWS) has been able to uphold essential services in LWF-run programs through national and local staff, despite having to evacuate international staff due to the security situation in December.

Currently, the LWF is preparing a response to the crisis together with ACT members and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Two international staff members are now back in Juba and are coordinating the LWF's involvement. People fleeing the conflict have camped under trees with little to support themselves.

Arie den Toom, DWS Country Representative in South Sudan, reports that LWF staff is helping distribute non-food items provided by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to about 600 families in Jonglei in the eastern part of South Sudan, who have fled the heavy fighting in Bor.

"We are also currently exploring with UNHCR how we can resume our work in child protection and education for refugees from Southern Khordofan and Blue Nile States," adds den Toom.

Scaling Up Assistance in Neighboring Countries

The LWF also is preparing for an influx of refugees to camps in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda by bringing in additional emergency staff and assessing how to provide meals and other essential support for the many new arrivals.

"The number of new arrivals per day has quickly increased from being in the tens, to now being 300 nearing 400 per day," said Lennart Hernander, DWS country representative in Kenya.

A majority of the 388 people arriving on 5 January alone were children.

"There is a need to quickly scale up the response in child protection, emergency education, water and peace and security," added Hernander.

An ACT appeal has been launched to support the activities in countries neighboring South Sudan to assist those forced to leave their homes.

Call for an Immediate Ceasefire

The LWF has been involved in South Sudan for more than two decades and is providing humanitarian assistance in the capital of Juba and in Jonglei, Unity, and Upper Nile states.

The LWF is deeply saddened by the developments and the impact on the thousands of people concerned, and urges an end to the violence and more talks, says DWS Director Rev. Eberhard Hitzler.

"We have a deep concern for people who are tired after years of civil war and now again have to face a situation of conflict and violence," Hitzler said.

"We have learned through history that there is no military solution that can offer peace in South Sudan. We need an immediate ceasefire and a political solution for the sake of the thousands of people suffering severely under the armed conflict."

There have also been credible reports of mass killings and other human right violations by state and non-state armed actors alike, the DWS director added. He called for urgent, decisive and effective enhancement of the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan's (UNMISS) protection of civilians.

On 5 January, religious leaders in South Sudan issued a joint statement



Refugees fleeing the crisis in South Sudan arrive at Kakuma camp in Kenya.
Photo: LWF/J. Macharia

calling for an immediate ceasefire, titled “God Save Our Nation of South Sudan.”

It stated: “We are seeking peace and ceasefire urgently and welcome the world to intervene and put an end to the rampant killing of innocent

women, children, disabled and the elderly people that are dying without cause and the abuse that is now going on across the Country.”

At the same time religious leaders urged neighboring countries and the

international community to approach South Sudanese political leaders to bring an end to the conflict. “We are tired of war, we need peace and South Sudanese peace is African Peace,” the statement said.

Massive Influx of South Sudanese Refugees into Uganda Calls for Scaled-Up Humanitarian Response

LWF to Increase Support for Thousands Arriving Daily

ADJUMANI, Uganda/GENEVA (LWI) – Within three days, the number of refugees from South Sudan entering Adjumani in northern Uganda had doubled to reach 24,105 people by 9 January. The high influx puts high pressure on Ugandan camps and calls for a scaling-up of humanitarian response. The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), a member of ACT Alliance is providing refugees with soap and utensils, and plans additional support with water, sanitation, hygiene and shelter and other non-food items.

“Water is a big problem here. I have not showered for over seven days—just look at my feet,” says 61-year-old Tabisa Nyabol pointing at her feet. Nyabol, seated with her grandchildren under a shade from a couple of blankets, arrived on 1 January. “We have not yet been registered anywhere, we are so many people,” she says, lifting up her hands as though in despair.

Nyabol is among the thousands of refugees who escaped the recent fighting in South Sudan and arrived at the Dzaipi reception center in Adjumani district, northern Uganda. “When I heard the gunshots from my home in Bor (Jonglei state), I was sleeping with my grandchildren, we started running. My son was killed. He did not know I had gone and tried to run back to save me,” Nyabol says.

“I have not only lost my son, but I also lost everything at home, the rebels took my 30 cows and 10 goats,” says Nyabol, who did not manage to carry along any of her belongings. Together with her grandchildren, she walked for more than



*Tabisa Nyabol and her grandchildren in Adjumani, Uganda.
Photo: ACT-DCA-LWF/Mai Gad*

two days and traveled several days by boat and truck escaping the conflict.

The unfolding political crisis in South Sudan started on 15 December 2013. The fighting that followed has resulted in massive population movements inside the young country with an estimated 300,000 people displaced internally, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and around 60,000 fleeing into neighboring Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda. The UN refugee agency anticipates the number of refugees could rise to 125,000 and those internally displaced could reach 400,000.

Additional Support Needed

As of 9 January, Uganda had received more than 32,000 South Sudanese,

and the numbers continue to swell with between 4,000 and 5,000 refugees arriving daily.

“There are so many areas of intervention that we need support in. The Dzaipi reception center is overcrowded and we have given ourselves a week to make sure it is cleared and people are resettled in permanent settlements. The biggest problems are water, hygiene, sanitation and food,” says Titus Jogo, emergency coordinator, Uganda Office of the Prime Minister (OPM).

The LWF was among the first to arrive at the reception center and has supported the refugees with basic needs. “We have so far brought 7 tons of laundry soap, 2,000 cups and 2,000 plates as a start, but we are waiting for UNHCR and OPM to ensure coordination in the distribution,”

says Eugen Emuron, LWF emergency coordinator.

“Right now the number of refugees is high, and there are many new arrivals every day. The biggest challenge is shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene,” says Cathy Mavenjina, UNHCR senior community service assistant.

LWF plans additional support including water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and distribution of non-food items such as cooking and serving utensils, water containers, soap and blankets, as well as shelters and offering psycho-social support.

(A contribution by Mai Gad and Agnete Rishoej)

Find out more about the LWF response to the South Sudan crisis: www.lutheranworld.org/content/emergency-south-sudan-conflict

LWF Non-Food Items for Sudanese Refugees in Eastern Chad

Chad Hosts over 420,000 Refugees from Neighboring Countries

N'DJAMENA, Chad/GENEVA (LWI) – The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has contributed non-food items to support 18,000 Sudanese refugees under the care of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in eastern Chad.

LWF Chad representative Jan Schutte presented the items to UNHCR deputy representative Mr Mamadou Baldé on 17 January in N'Djamena. Thousands of buckets, sleeping mats, jerry cans, blankets and kitchen sets will cover the needs of refugees who have fled the recent tribal clashes in neighboring Sudan.

The consignment worth EUR 400,000 was donated by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs through LWF partner Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe (DKH).

The German Embassy Charge d'Affaires in Chad Mr Robert Strnadl and DKH representatives attended the handing over ceremony in the capital N'Djamena.

The items will be distributed to Sudanese refugees in the new Abgadam camp, some 40 km from the border with Chad.

Chad currently hosts nearly 420,000 refugees who have fled conflicts in neighboring countries,



*German Chargé d'Affaires, UNHCR and LWF representatives at the NFI handover.
Photo: LWF Chad/S. Dalou*

with Sudanese accounting for around 350,000 people.

The recent fighting in the Central African Republic (CAR) has forced some 13,000 people to flee into Chad, where they are being accommodated in UNHCR camps and host communities in the southern part of the country.

In addition, most of the 25,000 Chadians evacuated on 20 January from CAR are receiving food assistance from the LWF in partnership with the World Food Program in southern Chad.

LWF's operations in Chad include livelihood and basic services support to refugees in 11 camps and in host communities.

More on the LWF response in Chad: <http://www.lutheranworld.org/content/emergency-sustainable-recovery-eastern-and-southern-chad>

**More LWI News at
www.lutheranworld.org**

LWF Providing Assistance in Central African Republic Crisis

Hot Meals and Non-Food Items Provided

N'DJAMENA, Chad/GENEVA (LWI) – The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Department for World Service (DWS) is providing emergency assistance to thousands of people fleeing the violence in the Central African Republic (CAR) that heightened at the end of 2013.

Jan Schutte, DWS country representative in Chad, said the LWF is continuing to monitor the situation while working with the government to assess the needs.

In partnership with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), DWS is providing hot meals for CAR refugees fleeing to Chad. According to DWS, during December the

crisis in CAR escalated and over the past weeks more than 1,000 people were killed in sectarian violence in Bangui alone.

The African Union has sent 4,000 troops to CAR, while France, the former colonial power, has deployed 1,600 soldiers.

Because of the increasing violence, on 21 December the Chadian government began evacuating by air and road its nationals who want to leave CAR. Several hundred thousand Chad nationals have lived in CAR, many for generations, while Chad hosts 70,000 refugees from CAR.

LWF Chad said that 15,000 persons have been evacuated thus far,

mostly women, children, the wounded and the elderly. Eight transit centers have been set up. Between 3,000 and 7,000 persons await evacuation from Bangui in CAR to Chad.

Over the past couple of weeks, thousands of Chadians have fled the violence in CAR to return to Chad.

CAR has been wracked by violence since the overthrow of then-President Francois Bozize in March 2013, and the conflict is becoming increasingly sectarian in tone with the mostly Muslim Seleka militia clashing with Christian groups, media reports say.

The Government of Chad is requesting international organizations as well as its own population to assist those fleeing CAR with shelter, transportation and psycho-social support. Mohammed Abdiker of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) said it is ready to assist but needs funding.

“We must stress to our donors and partners that migrants’ lives are at great risk,” he said.

For its part, the LWF is expecting a new shipment of non-food items from Lutheran World Relief consisting of 13,500 quilts, 1,500 layettes and 2,500 school kits, and will make some of these items available to those affected by the crisis. The LWF Chad program continues to monitor the situation.



Newly arrived refugees from Central African Republic receive a hot meal in Dosseye camp in southern Chad. Photo: LWF Chad/S. Dalou

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