



# THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION

LUTHERISCHER WELTBUND - FEDERACIÓN LUTERANA MUNDIAL - FÉDÉRATION LUTHÉRIENNE MONDIALE

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## ISRAEL/PALESTINE

Resolution adopted by the Council of the Lutheran World Federation

The Lutheran World Federation deeply regrets that, due to the violence and insecurity in Israel-Palestine since 28 September 2000, it was unable to hold its annual Council meeting in 2001 in Jerusalem and Bethlehem as planned. The LWF laments the deaths, injuries and human suffering which have been inflicted since the events of 28 September 2000, with the far greater burden of these tragedies having been borne by the Palestinian communities.

The LWF abhors and denounces all attacks upon civilians, regardless of their ethnicity. Such attacks upon civilians and upon their property and livelihoods, the closures and related measures which have nearly paralyzed social and economic activities and threaten to strangle the Palestinian economy, and the continuation of Israeli settlement activity in the occupied Palestinian territories, are clear violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. The LWF endorses the conclusions of many international authorities in this regard, including the Commission of Inquiry established pursuant to resolution S-5/1 of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

The LWF also welcomes the report of the fact-finding commission led by former US senator Mitchell as an important measure to re-invigorate efforts to bring the Israelis and Palestinians back to negotiations towards a comprehensive peace agreement.

The LWF expresses its solidarity with the Palestinian Christian community in the exceedingly difficult context in which it seeks to carry out its ministry, and notes with grave concern the accelerating exodus of Palestinian Christians out of the Holy Land. The LWF notes the critical importance of the educational programmes conducted by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan in moulding and maintaining the Palestinian Christian identity and presence in Israel and Palestine and disseminating a message of the possibility and necessity of reconciliation.

The LWF reaffirms the significance of the Augusta Victoria Hospital and the services it provides as an expression of the LWF's accompaniment of the entire Palestinian community.

The LWF considers that respect for the inalienable human rights of Palestinians – economic, social and cultural as well as civil and political, and including the right to self-determination – will provide the only sure foundation for a just and sustainable peace, in which Israelis' and Palestinians' mutual longing for security can be realized.

The LWF expresses its concern that the current context of injustice and occupation provides a fertile ground for the growth of religious and political extremism, anti-Semitism and racism, and that mass media reporting of the events in Israel-Palestine often convey negative images of the peoples concerned, and that such negative images are an impediment to building the foundations for peace.

The LWF emphasizes dialogue among religious leaders in Israel-Palestine – Christian, Jewish and Muslim – as a basis and an impetus for political dialogue and reconciliation. Political agreement which is not founded upon community reconciliation through inter-religious dialogue is unlikely to endure long.

The Council VOTED:

- to declare that a peaceful future for Israeli and Palestinian children alike can best be assured by ensuring equity, justice and respect for international humanitarian law and the human rights of Palestinians today;
  - to reiterate its call for negotiations leading to a comprehensive and just settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, based upon UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 and General Assembly resolution 194;
  - to call especially for an end to the illegal occupation of, and the illegal settlements in, the occupied Palestinian territories, as a fundamental and necessary step towards securing a just and sustainable peace for all peoples of the region;
  - to express support for all efforts to promote non-violence, to welcome the current cease-fire, and to appeal to both the Israeli government and the Palestinian leadership to do all in their power to ensure that this cease-fire holds;
  - to encourage LWF member churches in member countries of the European Union to request that their governments pursue dialogue with the Government of Israel on these matters within the framework of the EU-Israel Association Agreement;
  - to urge LWF member churches to make every possible effort with their respective governments for the establishment of a ban on the sale of arms to the Middle East region and to encourage them to work with other governments to do likewise;
  - to encourage LWF member churches and related agencies to strengthen their support for the Christian educational, housing, health and other social programmes and projects of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan, as a primary means of protecting the future presence and witness of a living church in the land of Christ's birth;
  - to express thanks to those churches which have established prayer vigils for peace in Israel-Palestine, and to encourage all member churches to establish such vigils and to offer other expressions of Christian solidarity and witness for peace and justice among Palestinians and Israelis, including visits to the churches and communities of the region;
  - to support the launching of further ecumenical initiatives for creating awareness of the relevant principles of international humanitarian and human rights law, for monitoring violations of those principles, and for disseminating information with regard to such violations;
- to strongly endorse all possible efforts for continuing, establishing or re-establishing dialogue among religious leaders and communities of the three major faiths in Israel-Palestine, in the interests of strengthening a faith-based constituency for a resumption of political dialogue and for promoting reconciliation among the communities in the region; and
- to promote and facilitate dialogue and encounter at all levels of all parts of the population of the Holy Land.

Geneva, Switzerland  
18 June 2001