



THE  
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FEDERATION

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[lutheranworld.org](http://lutheranworld.org)

## Statement by the LWF President and General Secretary on the escalation of military conflict in Syria

The Lutheran World Federation expresses its grave concern over the dangerous escalation of the conflict in Syria and new levels of direct foreign military intervention. This development is pushing humankind closer to a global armed conflict, the like of which has not been seen since World War II.

The Lutheran World Federation unequivocally deplores any breach of international law pertinent to the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons in either international or non-international armed conflict.

Alleged breaches need to be independently investigated, and addressed thoroughly and swiftly. Perpetrators need to be held accountable, as per the Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Out of the traumatic experiences of World War I and II, the community of states developed treaties banning the use of chemical weapons, such as the Geneva Gas Protocol and the Chemical Weapons Convention. The UN Security Council was established to safeguard compliance with these treaties. In doing so, the community of states, was driven by the resolve not to allow conflict and violence again to escalate and get out of control.

It is with dismay that the LWF has observed that the existing instruments to address allegations of the use of chemical weapons in Syria have been either ignored or have failed to deliver on their purpose.

Instead, retaliatory military strikes have been carried out. These strikes constitute a breach of International Law, because they have not been authorized by the UN Security Council.

The Lutheran World Federation urges for an immediate halt of the spiral of military retaliatory action that is leading the world closer to global military conflict.

The Lutheran World Federation calls upon the leaders of governments and the United Nations to:

- Make use of the available instruments, conventions and procedures to address any dispute and conflict among and within States, as well as any breach of international obligations;
- Not to dismiss or ignore these instruments, conventions and procedures, where they may have failed to deliver on their purpose. Instead, urgently reform and improve them so that they work for the sake of humankind;
- Remain accountable to customary International Law while addressing conflict and alleged breaches of internationally binding conventions.

The Lutheran World Federation calls upon its member churches to:

- Pray for justice and peace in the world, and particularly at this time in Syria and the Middle East.
- Publicly support and advocate for the de-escalation of this spiral of conflict and
- Publicly hold their governments accountable to International Law as the only way to safeguard lasting peace and justice in the world

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid." John 14:27

*LWF President Archbishop Dr Panti Filibus Musa*

*LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Martin Junge*