



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

A Communion
of Churches

lutheranworld.org

50th Session of the UN Human Rights Council ORAL STATEMENT: ITEM-6 UPR OUTCOME ICELAND

30 June 2022

**Speaker: Bishop Solveig Lára Guðmundsdóttir
Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Iceland**

Madam President,

The Lutheran World Federation and its member church the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Iceland, and our local partners and rights-holders would like to commend the Government of Iceland for its constructive engagement with the third cycle Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Iceland.¹

It is encouraging that the government has accepted the bulk of the recommendations in the working group report that will be adopted by the council at the end of this session, including recommendations pertaining to the rights of refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers; and the rights of persons with disabilities.

However, we regret that with the exception of refugees fleeing from Ukraine, the government of Iceland has been overly restrictive with the rights of refugees, migrants and asylum seekers. For instance, the government has introduced a bill amending Icelandic immigration law, which prohibits the issuing of residence permits to asylum seekers on the basis that they have received protection in other European countries (e.g. Italy, Greece or Hungary). This is followed by suspension of subsistence allowance after 30 days from the refusal of permission, effectively making it legal to "throw them out on the street." We call upon the government to re-evaluate and improve its policies and legislative framework when implementing the accepted UPR recommendations regarding the protection of the rights of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants.

¹ The Lutheran World Federation is a global communion of 148 churches in the Lutheran tradition, representing over 75 million Christians in 99 countries. The LWF acts on behalf of its member churches in areas of ecumenical and interfaith relations, theology, human rights, ecological justice, humanitarian assistance, communication and the various aspects of mission and development.

We welcome the government's declared commitment to improve the human rights situation of persons with disabilities in Iceland and combat all forms of discrimination against persons with disabilities.

Nonetheless we urge the government to redouble its efforts and expedite the domestication of the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities into the Icelandic legislation, including in housing law, labour and employment law, and user-driven personal assistance and increase efforts to improve financial security in Iceland more broadly.

Finally, we appeal to the government to accelerate the ratification of the Optional Protocol of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrants Workers and Members of Their Families.

We look forward to continued collaboration with the Government and all relevant stakeholders to ensure the swift implementation of the accepted recommendations.

I thank you Madam President.