



THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION

A COMMUNION OF CHURCHES – EINE KIRCHENGEMEINSCHAFT – UNA COMUNIÓN DE IGLESIAS – UNE COMMUNION D'ÉGLISES
LUTHERISCHER WELTBUND – FEDERACIÓN LUTERANA MUNDIAL – FÉDÉRATION LUTHÉRIENNE MONDIALE

Office of the General Secretary

Assistant General Secretary for International Affairs and Human Rights

Statement on the Situation in the Middle East

On 14 June 2011 the LWF Council approved the following public statement:

(1) In previous statements and resolutions The Lutheran World Federation has articulated the following key principles with respect to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict:

- 1) solidarity with the LWF member church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL),
- 2) support for the ELCJHL's ministries of diakonia and its witness for justice, peace and reconciliation.
- 3) recognition of the Christian community in the Holy Land as a bridge builder for peace, in relation to the other two Abrahamic faiths;
- 4) support for the services provided by the LWF Jerusalem Program, especially through the Augusta Victoria Hospital, and the LWF efforts to restore hope and foster a genuine civil society;
- 5) non-violence as a means of securing peace, together with a commitment to justice for all the people of the Holy Land;
- 6) the rule of law, international standards, and the promotion and protection of human rights, including:
 - a) support for freedom of movement for the Palestinians – specifically, access to Jerusalem and an end to the practice of separating married persons from their families because they lack the same required residence permit as their partner or children;
 - b) prevention of the confiscation of Palestinian homes and land; and
 - c) support for the creation of additional housing in Jerusalem and other areas to help maintain the human right of Palestinians to adequate shelter, as well as maintenance of the demographic status quo;
- 7) the removal of any vestiges of anti-Semitic attitudes toward our Jewish sisters and brothers, through processes in which we encounter each other as human beings with a shared faith heritage:

8) continued inter-faith dialogue and rejection of anti-Arab and anti-Muslim stereotypes;

9) a two-state solution, following the negotiated resolution of all final status issues and the end of the occupation, the establishment of an independent and viable Palestinian state alongside the State of Israel, and peace and security for both Israelis and Palestinians;

10) Jerusalem as a city shared between the two peoples and three religions;

11) the immediate lifting of the economic blockade of the Gaza Strip, for urgent international action to alleviate the suffering of its people, and for all parties to refrain from violent or provocative actions;

12) opposition to measures that work against the above, for example:

- changing the status quo in the Holy Basin surrounding Jerusalem's Old City;
- expansion and creation of Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza;
- pressures on Christians which lead to their emigration;
- the separation wall; and
- house demolitions and evictions, particularly in East Jerusalem.

13) encouragement of visits from church leaders and members from outside, as well as other acts of solidarity and witness for peace; and

14) encouragement of all LWF member churches to pray for peace, advocate for justice, and convey these concerns to political leaders.

(2) **The Council:**

1) expresses its appreciation to the President of The Lutheran World Federation for the attention he gave in his address to the current situation in the Middle East, to

-- the "Arab Awakening", where hope and expectations are being expressed for political and economic reforms that will allow for self-determination and a vibrant civil society and

-- the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, where hope is expressed that current initiatives by the United States and the European Union will bring about negotiations that lead to a two-state solution which realizes the principles of a) a shared Jerusalem for Jews, Christians and Muslims, Israelis and Palestinians and b) secure, permanent borders for Israel and Palestine based on the 1967 lines so that the two peoples, in a spirit of reconciliation, will be able to live side-by-side in peace and justice.

In this time in the Middle East, this Council wishes to express:

- a) our care for the rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people as well as for the security of the State of Israel;
- b) our condemnation of violence wherever and by whoever it is perpetrated;
- c) support and solidarity for the Christians in the Middle East and for maintaining a vibrant Christian community there so that they do not have to leave the region; and
- d) its encouragement to the Council of Religious Institutions in the Holy Land which is working for dialogue between Jews, Christians and Muslims.

2) calls upon the LWF member churches and all people of good will to recognize the image of God in each and every human being and the quest of every person for justice and for life abundant.

3) whether in the Middle East or elsewhere in the world, rejects the use or threat of violence as a means for the settlement of political disputes and calls on all parties to take concrete actions to protect and preserve internationally-recognized human rights.

4) expresses our ongoing prayers and solidarity with the churches and people of North Africa and the Middle East, and with all who are working for peace and justice in that region.

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