Meeting of the LWF Council
Geneva, Switzerland
18 - 22 June 2015

LWF Public Statements, Letters and Documents Relating to International Affairs and Human Rights
June 2014 – May 2015
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LWI PRESS RELEASES

1. ANGOLA

1.1 LWF Delivers Oral Statement from Angolan Human Rights Defenders for UN Human Rights Council 19 March 2015

Thank you for the chance to speak today. I am a human rights defender from Angola, delivering this statement on behalf of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF).

Since the end of the war, (except in the oil-rich Province of Cabinda), the Government of Angola has been implementing a national reconstruction program, building new social, economic and cultural infrastructure across the country. However, the implementation of this program does not in most cases comply with the fundamental rights to housing of citizens.

Allow me to highlight some cases in which thousands of victims currently waiting for reparations or relocation to adequate housing. From 29 May to 4 June 2013, about 3,000 families living in Areia Branca, located in the area called Coreia, in the municipality of Luanda, were evicted by the Provincial Government of Luanda (GPL) without providing any alternative housing. These families are, until now, living in an open area between two municipal drainage ditches. On January 20, 2014, about 4000 families who lived in either Quilombo or Chicala, in the urban district of Ingombota, were evicted from their land and relocated to either Zango or Quiçama. Neither relocation area offers adequate living conditions and those from Quilombo were resettled in tents and containers now located 125 km from the city of Luanda. Those who speak out against this injustice and defend the rights of victims are facing repeated threats and denied access to justice.
We ask the Angolan government to immediately stop forced evictions and demolitions; stop harassment of victims and activists defending their rights; stop using military force and paramilitary groups against citizens; ensure that proper consultation mechanisms including compensation are put in place in cases where lands might be needed for the delivery of public services; and bring to justice perpetrators of various acts of forced evictions.

2. CLIMATE CHANGE

2.1 Public Statement by the LWF Council on Climate Justice 16 June 2014

The Lutheran World Federation, a communion consisting of 72 million Lutherans worldwide, regards the challenge of present and future Climate Change with utmost seriousness. Both from the perspective of our belief in God as the Creator and from the perspective of justice and human rights, Climate Change is a matter that must be urgently addressed by human beings in our age.

“As Christians, we do not live in the despair and melancholy of the tomb, but in the light of the Risen Christ. Our resurrection hope is grounded in the promise of renewal and restoration for all of God’s Creation, which gives us energy, strength and perseverance in the face of overwhelming challenge. For us, this promise is more than an abstraction. It is a challenge to commit ourselves to walk a different course and serve as the hands of God in working to heal the brokenness of our hurting world.” (Joint statement of the Episcopal Church, the Church of Sweden, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), May 2013)

The LWF expresses its gratitude for its longstanding partnership with the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the ACT Alliance in caring for creation and working together for climate justice.

This statement aims to:

• provide background information about the engagement of the LWF with climate justice,
• present the position of the LWF regarding Climate Change, and
• propose ideas for the work of LWF on this issue up to 2016.

Background

2014 is crucial year in shaping the human response to Climate Change, during which the United Nations will determine the scale and ambition of a global warming treaty. In this context, religious leaders play an important role in advocating for an ambitious and binding global agreement on climate change. The upcoming December 2014 UN Climate Change Conference in Lima (Conference of Parties [COP] 20) will lay the foundations for binding agreements which must be reached in Paris in December 2015 (COP21). Throughout the year, there are significant moments in the climate advocacy calendar, and LWF will be represented at all of them:

• The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) session in Bonn, Germany
• The UN Climate Summit in New York, USA
• COP20 in Lima, Peru

At this critical juncture we look back and recall:
• The Public Statement of the Tenth Assembly in 2003 on the United States and the Kyoto Protocol,
• The Resolution adopted by the LWF Council in 2008 on Climate Change,
• The Resolution adopted by the LWF Eleventh Assembly in 2010 on Climate Change,
• The recommendation from the LWF Delegation to the COP18,
• The capacity building work on advocating for climate justice by the Department for Mission and Development and the Department for Theology and Public Witness, and
• The work of the LWF Department for World Service in responding to this issue through its projects of adaptation to climate change in the field.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) fifth Assessment Report (AR5) is in the final stages of completion. It concludes that the reality of Climate Change is "unequivocal" and that there is increasing certainty that anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions play a measurable and significant role.

Science detects human influence in the warming of the atmosphere and the ocean, in changes in the global water cycle, in reductions in snow and ice, in global mean sea level rise, and in changes in some climate extremes. This evidence for human influence has increased since AR4 in 2007. It is therefore extremely likely that human influence has been the dominant cause of scientifically observed warming since the mid-20th century. (IPCC, 10.3-10.6, 10.9)

It seems that many aspects of climate change will persist for centuries even if we succeed in halting the increase in CO2 emissions. This presents the need to create a long-term, multi-century Climate Change commitment as a result of past, present and future emissions of CO2 gases. (IPCC, p. 27)

The Position of the LWF

As a result of these reports, the LWF understands that:
• Climate change is real and influenced by human actions;
• Increasingly severe impacts are already being experienced on every continent, with growing economic and social costs;
• If we act now it will still be possible to keep global warming below the internationally agreed danger-threshold of an increase of 2 degrees Celsius. To achieve this, carbon pollution must be reduced quickly; and
• Climate change is a matter of social and economic justice, as it most affects the quickly; and the most vulnerable.

As those who live in the resurrection hope of renewal and restoration for all of God’s Creation, we believe we cannot stand by and ignore the impacts of Climate Change. Creation groans under the weight of human action and inaction (Rom 8:22). Our hope for justice and peace for all, and our trust in God, forms the impetus for this statement. We believe that taking global action now can make a difference.

Call for Commitment by the World’s Leaders

1. The LWF calls on world political and business leaders to:
a. Design and agree on elements of a strong global response to climate change that reflects the strong and growing scientific and environmental evidence and draft an ambitious new climate agreement to tackle climate change in the coming decades; 
b. Urge Heads of State and key decision makers to make it a personal priority to address the human contribution to Climate Change, and make firm commitments for deeper cuts in carbon pollution; 
c. Make national contributions meaningful by ensuring that they feature convincing targets to reduce carbon pollution while providing money to help poorer countries take climate action as well; and 
d. Respect the principles of equity, ensuring that the response includes provisions to assist the most vulnerable communities to adapt to the impacts of Climate Change already being experienced, and to account for the loss and damage being caused. Call for Commitment by Member Churches

2. The LWF calls on its member churches to: 
   e. Take action now to initiate or strengthen policies and practices aimed at becoming sustainable and eco-friendly, with the goal of becoming carbon neutral at organizational, congregational and personal levels by 2050; 
   f. Help and galvanize each other in the communion by sharing their good practices through the LWF Facebook page “LWF for Climate Justice”; 
   g. Engage in sustained climate justice advocacy with local and national governments as soon as possible, in the perspective of COP20 in Lima, Peru, and all along the process leading to COP21 in Paris, France. This advocacy would be based upon the advocacy call of the LWF and the policy papers on climate justice of the ACT Alliance; 
   h. Promote and work with ecumenical and interfaith climate justice initiatives in the local, national and regional contexts; and 
   i. Sign up to the #fastfortheclimate campaign on the 1st day of each month until December 1, 2015, at the beginning of COP21 in Paris:

“We fast in solidarity with the poor and vulnerable who are unduly affected by extreme weather events. We fast to underline the urgency of the negotiations on climate change. We fast in many different places and faith communities worldwide, united in a common practice. We fast for climate justice.”
http://www.lutheranworld.org/fastfortheclimate.

A Joint Commitment to Global Action

As leaders of the Lutheran World Federation – A Communion of Churches, we commit to join the global Christian community, and people of all faiths and persuasions, on the journey for climate justice. This task is one that we can only achieve when we unite in a common cause, living out our joint destiny on this fragile, beautiful world which we all share.
2.2 Joint LWF and ACT Alliance Oral Statement delivered by LWF at the UN Human Rights Council 6 March, 2015

This is a joint statement between ACT alliance and the Lutheran World Federation. ACT alliance is a global membership alliance of over 140 churches and church based organizations and the Lutheran World Federation is a global communion of 144 churches, representing over 72 million Christians in 79 countries.

Climate change continues to threaten lives and livelihoods of poor and vulnerable communities around the world. The communities we work with, especially in Africa and the Pacific, are already facing irreversible impacts of climate change. Increased drought and extreme weather events affect rights to health and education, and disproportionately affect already vulnerable populations, and the sinking of small islands states causes disruption of livelihoods and loss of cultures and traditions. While we welcome the discussion today, we are concerned that inadequate attention has been given to date to the impacts of climate change on the full enjoyment of human rights. For instance, this Council’s previous relevant resolutions on human rights and climate change have not adequately influenced the discourse in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. We therefore call upon the HRC:

To monitor the implementation of resolutions on climate change by the relevant UN bodies including inter alia the UNFCCC.

To address the rights of individuals and communities experiencing climate induced migration and relocation.

To amplify its demand on the Parties to the UNFCCC to ensure that the climate agreement to be adopted in December contains specific language to respect, protect and promote human rights for all.

3. DENMARK

3.1 Letter by LWF General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge to Danish Church Leaders, 15 February 2015

It is with pain and shock that we have received the news about the attacks in Copenhagen on Saturday 14 February in which two men lost their lives, several policemen were injured and the attacker was shot dead.

I want to express deep solidarity with those affected by this terrible act and commit our prayers to the families of the deceased and to the people in Denmark.

As the nation is now grappling with this terrible act happening in the heart of the capital and directed against civilians we encourage you to let the prophetic voice of the church bear witness to your ongoing deep commitment to work at all levels of society towards supporting and upholding communities to live together in justice and peace.
We know of your unbroken commitment to this cause and we pray that the attack will not de-rail this vocation. We know of the many ways in which pastors and church congregations have already been actively contributing to offering a space for discussion in the aftermath of the attack. And we know of the acts of solidarity shown with the Jewish people in Copenhagen as well as the joint statement of Christians and Muslims speaking out against violence and underlining the continued need for dialogue.

Let this all bear witness to a common vision to uphold a public space where violence does not have a place and the respect and the dignity of each human being is upheld. We pray for the authorities so that their response to the current challenge is guided by wisdom and diligence.

The apostle Paul reminded the community in Rome that even in the face of violence and pain, for those who have been washed by the waters of Baptism there is no other option than continue doing good:

_Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good._ (Romans 12:21)

Let this word guide the prayers and reflections of your church as it continues engaging in God’s works of reconciliation. May God bless you and strengthen you as you continue being transformed by God’s amazing power for continued witness to God’s loving care for humanity and the entire creation.

### 4. ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND PEACE

#### 4.1 LWF General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge’s Presentation for Panel Discussion “Economy in the Service of Peace” Antwerp, September 2014

“Do you know what you are actually talking about?” I was asked once in a panel similar to the one I have been invited today. It was meant to be a challenging question, wondering about the presence of a theologian, a pastor, to engage in a debate about issues of economy.

“Indeed I know”, I responded then. “The pastoral ministry of churches all over the world exposes us to realities of poverty and marginalization. We know and we serve the people and the populations who for reasons often totally beyond their control are sentenced to a life in abject poverty, or see themselves sliding inexorably down into vulnerability and exclusion. We know of entire generations migrating to other countries, or entire villages migrating to the cities”.

It is because of this exposure to individual and collective crises triggered by economy, and what it means for people, that churches all over the world have a keen interest on these issues.

In addition, and more fundamentally, there is also our vision and conviction, based on our faith, that each single life is valuable and meant to be enjoyed in dignity, peace and justice – a life in fullness – as we say in biblical terms. This vision and conviction drives us to deal with the question: what is wrong and what needs to happen if we were to think about real transformation towards dignity, peace and justice for all?
Indeed, this is not for a church or for a specific religion to address and respond on its own. It requires an interreligious, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach, to which the Lutheran World Federation is strongly committed to. The interdisciplinary composition of this panel is encouraging in this respect, and is also the reason why I gladly accepted the invitation to speak here.

So, what’s wrong? I could of course go for hours speaking about this, but want to restrict myself to pointing at some fundamental features, which we believe need to be addressed if economy is to serve life:

- People, communities and entire regions in this world are structurally disadvantaged, if not excluded, from a real, fair and just access and enjoyment of the resources in this one world, which we all share;
- Equally, people, communities and entire regions are structurally disadvantaged, if not excluded, from enjoying from the wealth that is being developed. Disparities are growing, gaps are widening, even among societies with a traditionally strong socio-economic cohesion. Injustice in the way wealth is distributed is mounting.
- The patterns of consumption, without which the current economic model would collapse, are leading to substantial devastation in at least two realms I want to mention here:
  - The environment: to put it short: the economy and its growth is currently based on resources, which aren’t available and do not exist if they were to be enjoyed by all. The extractive and depleting approach to natural resources can’t be sustained in the short term.
  - The generations: the current setup isn’t only eating up the natural resources and seriously affecting the ecological balances of which humankind is part of. It has now begun to systematically exclude youth from participation in the economic life in order to preserve itself. Unprecedented unemployment rates among youth speak a clear language in this regard. What future can humankind have, if in order to sustain a model it is ready to sacrifice younger generations?

An important ecumenical process called “A new international financial and ecumenical architecture (NIFEA) proposes a series of actions in order to address as a matter of urgency these dramatic developments. It addresses political and structural issues to be tackled around the following three major clusters:

- Financial sector
- Public finance and debt
- Global economic governance

I would exceed my time limit if I would go into the detailed proposals that are included in the document “An economy of life for all now: an ecumenical action plan for a new international financial and economic architecture”. But the title of the document is already self-evident: some profound changes need to take place in the market place, its policies and structures, particularly in view of governance and oversight, of policy development and – something which is felt particularly harshly in Europe nowadays – of policy enforcement. The dream of the self-regulation of economy has proven to be a nightmare, at least for the many groups and communities excluded from its benefits. And the vision of
an economy finding its moral compass within its own undertakings – still and illusion for some – has become a deadly threat for many.

This leads me then to a more fundamental challenge, beyond the important structural and political proposals that need to be pursued urgently at an international level, ideally in an interdisciplinary approach. It is the question of the underlying worldviews and the sets of values that sustain these worldviews and how they shape the way economy, market and economic relations are understood. Or to put it differently: it is the question regarding the ultimate definition of what life is all about, and what makes life to be a rich, full, well succeed life.

Let me bring this challenge with the words of an American poet C.W. Williamson, who in the 50ies wrote the following indeed prophetic words:

“Man has survived hitherto
because he was too ignorant to know
how to realize his wishes.
Now that he can realize them
he must either change them
or perish.”

These words describe the fundamental debate that needs to be taken up regarding the choices we are confronted with. Some things are wrong with the aspirations and wishes, with the dreams and life projects of some influential sections of our world population. And these wishes and life projects, in many cases so inherently excluding, predatory and unsustainable, have become cast into today’s prevailing economic ideology, its structures and policies. There aren’t patches big enough to bring remedy to an economy that wants to serve almost suicidal, because so unsustainable wishes.

What is life? Does freedom have limits? Can growth be endless, when resources aren’t? What are the moral principles, and what are the values that relate to economy? How to manage the ambivalence of the good and the evil, which is inherent to humanity and therefore inherent to the way humanity relates in economic terms?

The endless and unsuccessful Doha negotiations are a proof to the fact that without a more fundamental discussion about how humankind realistically envisions life today, there won’t be much transformation at the structural level. If there isn’t room in minds and hearts for a different, thereby inclusive, respectful, sustainable and solidarian individual and collective life project, obviously there won’t be any room for engaging in required change. With no change, though, economy will increasingly become a source of conflict, rather than a contribution to peace.

Hence, and taking up my initial remarks, let me conclude by stating: yes, I believe a theologian has the right and even the duty to speak about economy. And yes, indeed, I believe economists have a right and even the duty to speak about these ultimate questions too. Because: one can’t dissociate what
happens in the market place, from what happens in the daydreams of humanity, which is still struggling to get its wishes right.

5. FOOD SECURITY; RIGHT TO ADEQUATE FOOD

5.1 LWF Oral Statement at the UN Human Rights Council 9 March 2015

People’s fundamental right to adequate food and freedom from hunger is at the core of our work as the ACT alliance and the Lutheran World Federation.

To reiterate this Council’s resolution 25/14, it is intolerable that 1 billion people today are suffering from serious malnutrition, while the planet produces enough food to feed everyone. Hunger today is not caused by the limits of our planet but by societal limits in the ways we have chosen to produce, share, buy and sell our food. Hence, hunger is not a question of scarcity but a matter of injustice.

One of the injustices that drive food insecurity and hunger in many parts of the world is the lack of recognition of a right to land for many rural communities. Access to land and security of tenure are essential for the enjoyment of right to food. Scientific evidence shows that when communities have access to land and tenure security, household food productivity level increases, poverty is reduced and the land is used more responsibly. Regrettably, what we see today in many parts of the world is the promotion of large-scale industrial farming in which communities are displaced from their lands, most often by force; land is commodified; and agricultural lands are converted for growing exportable non-food crops. It is no wonder, therefore, that 80% of the hungry people in the world today live in rural areas where rights to land are not recognized or respected.

Therefore, in order to realize the right to food for everyone, we strongly recommend that this council continue:

- To push for communities’ access to land and tenure security.
- Call upon member states to review and correct development policies that lead to evictions and mass rural landlessness by promoting policies that assure rights to land access and tenure security.
- Pay special attention to the unique situation of marginalized groups such as women, minorities, and indigenous communities.

6. FRANCE

6.1 Letter by LWF General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge to French Church Leaders after Charlie Hebdo Attacks, 8 January 2015

It is with horror and revulsion that we received the news of the brutal murder in Paris of a team of journalists of the magazine Charlie Hebdo and of two police officers guarding its building. The sickening
brutality of the killings with their odious disregard for human life is intolerable, not justifiable under any circumstances, and is to be rejected in the firmest possible terms.

The Lutheran World Federation expresses its condolences to the families and communities affected as well as to the whole people of France in all their diversity.

The LWF joins the voices of religious leaders in France and around the world in rejecting in clear terms any claim that these attacks could have a valid religious justification. There is no justification on religious or other grounds for such crimes.

We express our heartfelt solidarity with you and call upon your churches to continue to be steadfast in your vocation to be firm and tangible witnesses for a world in which human beings live together in justice and peace. Do not be overcome by these attacks. As you well know, such attacks must be defeated by not allowing them to derail the church, its leaders or its members from your convictions and values, deeply rooted in faith. Rather, this is a time for the church to be strengthened in its commitment to be a vital and active actor within the social fabric of France. This is a time to be advocating for and contributing towards the values that continue holding together the diverse people that make up the population of your country. This is a time to resist the very intention behind these attacks, hence to resist fragmentation, division, blanket stigmatization and the condoning of violence. It is by intensifying cohesion, togetherness and solidarity that these attacks will be overcome.

We join and surround you with our prayers. We ask for strength and hope, comfort and creative thinking. Especially in this season of the Epiphany we are reminded that there is no darkness that prevails. The True Light shines and will overcome all darkness. Amidst the most horrific circumstances, God continues to speak to our individual lives and to our collective experience. Let God’s message that reaches us extra nos – beyond of what we could think and say – become the source of inspiration during these days of trouble.

7. IRAQ

7.1 LWF Joins Faith Based Organizations Calling for End to Violence in Iraq

An Urgent Call to Stop the Horrific Suffering in Iraq

The humanitarian situation in northern and western parts of Iraq is dire. The untold suffering of minority groups as a result of escalating violence and attacks is unacceptable and the violation of international human rights and humanitarian laws is despicable. This must be stopped immediately. There are reports of gross human rights violations, especially committed against women and children, which could amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

As international faith based humanitarian and development organizations and networks, we are utterly shocked at the horrific wave of attacks that has so far led to the killing of many and left hundreds of thousands more homeless, desperate and in flight. We are further concerned and saddened by the many cases of kidnapping and hostage-taking of people, including women and children.
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We call for international pressure at all levels of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, and from people, governments and institutions of goodwill, to urgently and adequately address the situation in Iraq.

Since the beginning of the year, around 1.2 million people are reported to be displaced following violence and insecurity. Armed groups have taken control of large swathes of territory accompanied by local fighting and displacement. We are appealing for immediate action for the protection of all people, including Yazidis, Christians, Turkmen and other persecuted groups, hundreds of thousands of whom have fled in fear for their lives. The minorities are not strangers or alien to the land, they are important groups firmly rooted in the origin of Iraq and have defined the identity of the country, and have the right to be full citizens in their land. Their homes, their land, historic and cultural sites are connected to their heritage and lives. We are gravely concerned about their exposure to more loss, attacks, rape and other violations.

While taking cognizance of the United Nations Security Council’s resolutions 2169 and 2170, we call on the council and all UN members States to take all possible peaceful measures to prevent killings and other forms of violence based on religious grounds, or framed as such, and to protect the fundamental right to life and freedom of religion and worship of the Yazidis, Christians and other minority groups as well as all Iraqis, regardless of their background.

All of the people affected by this crisis and in need of humanitarian assistance must be reached without delay with life-saving assistance such as water, food and non-food items. Besides the violence, people are in danger of more suffering and even death resulting from hunger and lack of water.

We call for a proactive search for lasting solution for peace, reconciliation and justice for all in the region. Iraq is divided and suffers many difficult challenges politically, economically and socially. Peace and reconciliation is critical and dialogue within the country is of utmost importance in order to bring about a lasting resolution to this humanitarian crisis. We believe that the crisis in Iraq exemplifies the challenges that affect men, women, youth and children in the Middle East region, and therefore call for a human rights based comprehensive long-term approach to addressing them.

The protection of civilians must be prioritized by the international community. We call for strict application of international law in all interventions that deal with the crisis in Iraq and call on all States to ensure that any measures taken are in conformity with international human rights and humanitarian law.

We pledge our solidarity and commitment to support and to continue providing humanitarian assistance to all the people affected by this crisis. Our interventions strictly adhere to humanitarian principles targeting refugees and all internally displaced persons in need, without discrimination or partiality.

This statement is endorsed by the following:
John Nduna, General Secretary, ACT Alliance
Dr. Hany El-Banna OBE, Chairman, Muslim Charities Forum
Chris Bain, Director, CAFOD
Saif Ahmad, CEO, Islamic Help
8. INDONESIA

8.1 Statement of the LWF Council on 16 June 2014

The LWF Council, meeting in Medan, Indonesia 12-17 June 2014, is thankful to the thirteen Indonesian Lutheran member churches for their warm welcome and hospitality. Indonesia has the fourth largest number of Lutherans in the world—5.8 million—and two-thirds of all Lutherans in Asia are Indonesians. We give thanks to God for the Indonesian sisters’ and brothers’ vibrant and faithful witness to the Gospel and for the way in which they live out their faith in love and service for the neighbor. They live in communion amidst diversity. It has been a great blessing to have our meeting here.

We have marveled at the immense size and diversity of Indonesia, the fourth-largest nation of the world, with more than 17,000 islands and more than 500 languages and dialects, tied together by the unifying language of Bahasa Indonesia. Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world—86% of its 240 million people. The Indonesian state is based on the philosophy of Pancasila—Five Principles: belief in God, just and civilized humanity, the unity of Indonesia, representative democracy, and social justice.

There are so many impressive achievements of the Indonesian people to celebrate and for which to give thanks. Among them are:

- A constitutional framework that provides for freedom of religion and the equal rights and dignity of each citizen;
- The lively revival of democracy since 1998;
- The huge treasure of how Indonesians deal with diversity, allowing so many people to live together peacefully, in most places at most times;
- The valuable “local wisdom” which helps to promote the cultural and religious respect for each other;
- The vibrant civil society; and
- The way the country has been helped by women and men working together toward addressing the important concern of gender justice.

We have also learned that there are pressing challenges with which the people of Indonesia are grappling. Among them are:
• Inconsistent enforcement of the rule of law as the country has been decentralized, with certain laws and practices enforced in different ways in different regions and local areas;
• The need for the national government and local authorities to protect the rights of all religious communities, especially the Shia, Ahmadiyya, Christians, Buddhists, Confucians, and those who practice local religious traditions;
• An increasing separation of people in their daily lives along religious lines;
• Economic justice issues such as increasing gaps between the rich and the poor, and the use of land; and
• Environmental degradation, deforestation, and increasing CO2 emissions.

The LWF Council joins and supports the Indonesian churches in their efforts to uphold freedom of religion, their interreligious solidarity in working against injustice and in responding to human need, and in their continuing engagement in dialogue with different religious groups to promote understanding, just and peaceful communities and environmental protection.

We give thanks to God for the people and churches of Indonesia.

9. KENYA

9.1 LWF Update on Dadaab Refugee Camp in Kenya 16 April 2015

In a letter on 8 April to the Bishops of the two LWF member churches in Kenya—Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya and Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church—The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge condemned the Garissa attacks in the firmest terms. These attacks have no political, religious or moral justification. The LWF joins in prayers for the families, communities and the people of Kenya at large, who in pain over the loss of precious lives, and dismayed by the circumstances under which this happened, are seeking to find peace and comfort in their hearts and minds.

We also wish to underline how generous and admirable the Kenyan people have been in granting refuge to so many vulnerable people over so many years. This has not been easy, yet the Kenyans have persevered in doing the right thing. The LWF continues to express its deep appreciation for the hospitality and compassion of Kenya.

The Deputy President’s statement is to be taken seriously and respectfully, in the wake of the horrific attacks at Garissa. However, we wish to underline that there has been no decision of the Kenyan government. Neither the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) nor the LWF have received any demand that the Dadaab camp be closed.

It is unrealistic at this point to expect that Dadaab should be closed, for several reasons. Firstly, conditions in Somalia are still not such that refugees can return in safety and dignity. It would violate Kenya’s international legal obligations and its domestic law to send people back under such circumstances. Secondly, it is not clear that closing the camp would improve the security situation in Kenya. The vast majority of the refugees are themselves victims of persecution and violence, and the
The great majority of them are women and children. Forcibly returning them to Somalia would be a form of collective punishment not against terrorists or criminals, but against innocent vulnerable people. And lastly, closing the camp would provide a victory for those who carry out attacks such as in Garissa. It would reinforce the mind-set that spoke through the attacks, separating people and communities, instilling mistrust and hatred as the driving force in people’s relationships. None of these features relate in any way to what we have learned through Scriptures about God’s vision for humanity.

It continues to be a privilege for the LWF to work with the government and people of Kenya and with UNHCR in providing services for the refugees in Kenya.

_LWF direct assistance to refugees at the camps in Dadaab:_

As of 31 March 2015, the camps in Dadaab had 351,446 refugees, nearly all of who are Somalis. LWF works mainly and foremost in the Hagadera (106,000 refugees) and Kambioos (21,000 refugees).

LWF’s assistance to refugees mainly focuses on primary education, early childhood development, community services—persons with specific needs (including a main focus on person with disabilities).

LWF directly supports 30,000 refugees, out of which 24,000 are children in primary schools. In addition, LWF’s community mobilization reaches all the 127,000 refugees in Hagadera and Kambioos camps.

10. MIGRANTS IN EUROPE

10.1 _LWF General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge on the situation of Migrants in Europe, 20 April 2015_

We in the Lutheran World Federation Communion Office find ourselves shocked and sickened, as you must also be, at the massive loss of life among desperate people seeking to cross the Mediterranean to find refuge in Europe.

I write to you with an urgent appeal for you to approach your governments. Urge them to adopt European Union-wide actions so that (a) European search and rescue efforts are increased in an effective and meaningful way; and (b) legal and safe pathways into Europe are developed in order to help to prevent these tragedies from happening. These would include increased refugee resettlement and lifting of visa requirements for people arriving from countries in conflict, such as Syria and Eritrea.

The need is clear and compelling. This past weekend, the death toll from two boats alone may be as high as 1,000. According to UNHCR—the UN Refugee Agency—so far this year more than 36,000 refugees and migrants have arrived by boat in southern Europe and, if the weekend toll is confirmed, more than 1,600 have died. In 2014, approximately 219,000 people crossed the Mediterranean, and 3,500 lives were lost.

Why would people be so desperate, to risk their lives in this way? Many are fleeing from war and persecution in the Middle East, primarily from Syria, where during the four years of violence millions
have been forced from their homes. Others are fleeing from situations of severe human rights violations, such as in Eritrea or Sudan. Still others are fleeing not from persecution but seeking to escape from grinding poverty.

Concern for refugees is deeply rooted within the Lutheran World Federation. This is because so many of us have refugee histories. At the close of World War II, one out of every six Lutherans in the world was a refugee or displaced person. Freed by grace to love and serve the neighbor, Lutherans elsewhere in the world banded together to provide relief and new lives for the displaced, who at the time were called “the homeless.” It was out of this common ministry of service that the Lutheran World Federation was itself formed in 1947. LWF World Service continues to operate major programs of assistance for refugees around the world, responding to human need, regardless of religion. Service with refugees and displaced persons continues to be part of the core witness and work of the Lutheran communion of churches, of which you are an important and integral part.

At its meeting in 2011, the LWF Council reaffirmed the LWF’s profound commitment for refugees. An excerpt:

[The LWF Council] expresses concern that many countries, especially some that are wealthy, are not offering as generous a welcome as they could to vulnerable people who have been forced to flee from their homes. This can be a matter of life and death, as is now seen with migrants drowning in the Mediterranean. In the current circumstances in North Africa and the Middle East, the Council calls especially on countries in Europe to offer protection to those seeking asylum.

It is sad that those words are as timely today as they were four years ago.

I hope that you will have an opportunity to approach your governments with this urgent concern. My appeal is being coordinated and is consistent with that of the Churches’ Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) and the Conference of European Churches (CEC). Thank you for your prayers and efforts on behalf of refugees and migrants, as you help to carry out Jesus’ call (Matthew 25:43-45) to “welcome the stranger”.

11. NICARAGUA

11.1 LWF Oral Statement at UN Human Rights Council on Nicaragua, 18 September 2014

This is a joint statement on behalf of the Center for Justice and Human Rights of the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua, the Humboldt Center and the Lutheran World Federation. The statement focuses on the situation of the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua who continue to suffer multiple forms of human rights violations. As a matter of urgency, we would like to focus on the following three major issues.
First, lack of effective political representation and participation: The State of Nicaragua continues to violate the decision delivered in the Sentence of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. In the YATAMA case, to reform the Electoral Act and to create the necessary steps enabling indigenous people and communities of color to participate in the electoral process and effectively take into account their traditions and customs in the context of a democratic society. However, the current government maintains absolute hegemony in all spheres of power, creating paperwork procedures that hinder indigenous people the political participation in the electoral process.

Second, lack of access to justice for the indigenous peoples particularly in relation to communal property: At present, the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua continue to suffer harassment and intimidation by non-indigenous people who are encroaching upon their lands and exploiting their natural resources. Similarly, the government of Nicaragua in the past few years has announced the implementation of mega projects such as, the Grand inter-Oceanic canal project that greatly affect indigenous territories. These projects were carried out without prior, free and informed consent from the affected indigenous peoples.

Third, curtailment of economic, social and cultural rights: As a consequence of the above violations, indigenous peoples of the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua today are living under harsh economic conditions characterized by impoverishment, segregation, marginalization, assimilation, oppression and exploitation.

We therefore call up on the government of Nicaragua to:
- Stop the process of demarcation and titling of indigenous territories as well as prevent and stop the illegal activities of others within that territory.
- Implement the content of the ILO 169 Convention and respect the collective rights of indigenous peoples, in compliance with national laws and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.

12. PALESTINE-ISRAEL

12.1 LWF Statement on the Violence in Gaza: Abide by International Law and Duty to Protect Civilians 23 July 2014

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) expresses its profound shock and sadness at the rising casualties of innocent civilians, including children, in the Gaza conflict. People are indiscriminately attacked, only given short warning with no safe place to find refuge, or possibly used as human shields. It is distressing when access to the wounded and dead becomes impossible and emergency services are hampered and overwhelmed making people’s suffering even worse. Our thoughts and prayers go out to those in agony as a result of the continued shelling and bombing of densely populated areas in Gaza.

While reiterating the LWF’s conviction that violence and wars are not means to resolve differences, wars and violent conflicts remain a part of human history. However, throughout the years humankind
has learned from its mistakes and worst experiences. For that reason, it developed a set of internationally negotiated, binding and customary international laws to protect the life and dignity of every human being, particularly of civilian populations in times of conflict. It agreed on principles of what should never happen, even in the midst of fiercest conflict. Among these are the recently adopted principles of the responsibility to protect.

Today, we observe with deepest concern and dismay that these standards are being deliberately ignored in Gaza. In view of this, the LWF states with all firmness: conflicts and wars do not, and cannot provide any excuse to cease observing international obligations. As we have seen in the past, tampering with these obligations only opens the floodgates for atrocities, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The LWF reiterates its urgent call upon the parties to the conflict (Israel and the Palestine Resistance Committee, including Hamas) to agree on an immediate and unconditional ceasefire.

Until the urgent ceasefire is finally reached, and in order to halt the unacceptably rising death toll of civil population and to ease human suffering, the LWF furthermore calls upon:

- Parties in conflict to:
  - Allow for unimpeded humanitarian access as prescribed by international humanitarian law.
  - Strictly respect and adhere to international humanitarian law and other relevant binding and customary international legal instruments.

- International community to:
  - Step in and broker an immediate ceasefire, and resume the direct peace negotiation that addresses the root causes of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians and solve it according to international law.
  - Move beyond rhetoric and the stalemate of geopolitical interests, of which the UN Security Council has become increasingly hostage, and enforce applicable international laws for the protection of civilians and easing of human suffering.
  - Embrace a broad definition of civilian protection that includes humanitarian assistance and guarantees human rights standards, as well as the prevention of physical harm.

13. SOUTH AFRICA

13.1 Letter by LWF General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge to Church Leadership regarding Xenophobia

It is with dismay and pain that we saw the news regarding xenophobic attacks, affecting foreigners mostly from African countries living in South Africa.

While explanations are given to help understand the background of this violence, we know that these explanations can never become a reason, let alone a justification for what happened. The dignity of
every human being regardless of their origin is the basis to affirm that such manifestations of violence are inacceptable and must be rejected. Problems of poverty and marginalization, unemployment and lack of perspectives have much deeper roots than the presence of foreigners and require a political approach.

My thoughts go to the people, families and communities affected by the outbreak of violence. My thoughts are with your churches and the very important role they have in these days to offer strong and clear messages to reject violence, advocate for respect for every human being, as well as for justice so that live in dignity is possible for everyone.

*Violence shall no more be heard in your land, devastation or destruction within your borders; you shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates Praise. (Isaiah 60:18)*

I offer prayers of solidarity from the LWF communion to the people affected by violence, and a message of encouragement to your churches to promote a culture of conviviality inspired by the words of the prophet.

### 14. SUB-SAHARIAN AFRICA

#### 14.1 LWF Council Statement on Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa 16 June 2014

We, the members of the Council of the Lutheran World Federation, meeting in Medan, Indonesia June 11-17, 2014, representing 72 million Lutherans in 144 member churches in 79 countries; Bearing in mind the recent statements made by the Lutheran Council in Africa and the General Church Council of the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria; Having shared the pain caused by, inter alia, the abduction of more than 270 school girls and, in separate incidents, the abduction of women by Boko Haram in Nigeria; bombings in Kenya and Tanzania; and violence in the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and South Sudan which spills over to Chad, Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, Cameroon and other countries in the region; We strongly and unreservedly condemn violence irrespective of who the perpetrators are.

We therefore resolve to call upon:

- Boko Haram to release the school girls and others abducted in Nigeria unconditionally and immediately;
- The Nigerian and all African governments and all other U.N. member states to act jointly in order to prevent such barbaric actions to be taken in future and to take action together now to secure release of all those abducted;
- Al-Shabaab and its allies to desist from using violence as a vehicle to air and articulate its grievances;
• Seleka and Anti-Balaka in the Central African Republic to desist from killing their fellow citizens. Especially egregious are acts of violence perpetrated in the name of religion;

• The combatants in South Sudan, who have already caused much bloodshed, interrupted the planting season and are directly responsible for an impending famine which will likely affect 7 million people, to cease hostilities;

• The faith communities in the region to engage in inter-faith dialogue so as to foster the spirit and culture of peaceful co-existence in this part of God’s world, which God has given to all its people;

• The churches of the Lutheran World Federation and their ecumenical partners to engage in critical reflection on the pain and suffering people are experiencing from the violence in sub-Saharan Africa and to continue to pray for peace and work for justice in Africa and the whole world.

15. SYRIA

15.1 Letter by LWF General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge on the situation of Syrian Refugees, 11 December 2014

Greetings to you in this Advent season, which reminds us of the horizons of hope and wholeness that God holds prepared for the entire creation. Not the dimmest present reality can prevent this bright future to take roots in this world.

We write to you after received reports of the recent meetings in Geneva regarding the situation of Syrian refugees. Their situation is desperate. The World Food Program could only sustain its food delivery on the basis of private donations and in view of lacking financial support from the international community. Without additional support, the food delivery programs can only be sustained until end of January 2015. It means in concrete terms that Syrian refugees are at risk of hunger and starvation.

Neighboring countries have shown astonishing generosity to protect refugees, which however has taken them to the breaking point of their capacities: Turkey and Lebanon have received over one million refugees each and Jordan has accepted 620,441. 85% of the refugees in Jordan live in host communities, and LWF is currently expanding its operations in the communities with high levels of refugees. In the Zaatari camp, where the LWF is active, there are today 82,818 refugees. In comparison, the neighboring city which gave the name to the refugee camp has a total population of 11,000, including 5,000 Syrian refugees hosted in the community. Hence, a relation of 15 to 1.

Have you thought how big a refugee camp would be if, by retaining that proportion, it would be located at the outskirts of Oslo, Chicago, Canberra, Tokyo, Dar es Salaam, Copenhagen, Porto Alegre or Prague?

Certainly, the contexts are different, and indeed, these exceptional realities in countries neighboring Syria can’t be applied to far-away countries. Yet the numbers convey the magnitude of both the humanitarian emergency, and of the required solidarity to cope with it.
It is with dismay that we have been following news about social debate and policy developments in several countries, which instead of keeping a focus on how to protect refugees and to welcome the stranger, seem to be more concerned about protecting borders.

We write this letter to you in order to ask you to intercede for Syrian refugees by advocating with your respective governments for greater solidarity so that the international community meets its obligation to protect refugees. Concretely, we want to ask you to urge your respective governments to:

- Scale up the financial support to refugees in existing refugee camps to meet their basic rights,
- Increase the number of refugees to be accepted in your countries through resettlement and other humanitarian admission schemes such as humanitarian visas, private sponsorships, family reunification, scholarships, medical evacuation and labor mobility programs.

We want furthermore to ask you that your churches and specialized ministries:

- Advocate for the duty to protect refugees. We invite you to consider taking the many references to migration and exclusion that we will read in this Advent and Christmas season as an opportunity to speak relevantly to situations of forced migration and exclusion of refugees around the world today.
- Promote study and action of the document “Welcoming the stranger”, which the LWF Council received in 2013 and was sent to you for study [http://www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/Welcoming_the_Stranger.pdf](http://www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/Welcoming_the_Stranger.pdf)
- Continue supporting the work of the LWF protecting refugees in the Zaatari camp, but also in the newly operations in Northern Iraq, an emerging consequence of the same conflict.

The attached table provided by the UNHCR shows the current situation of hosting refugees beyond the neighboring countries of Syria. It may give you a starting point for your advocacy work with your respective governments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Refugees accepted</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Refugees accepted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>5,600</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>Uruguay</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>500</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: UNHCR)
We hope that the current season of Advent will give you additional motivation to undertake steps as requested in our letter. Let our action become the way in which we want to prepare for the Lord to meet us as a new born child, son of Mary and Joseph, two migrants looking for shelter in Bethlehem so that God could come to be among human beings.

16. UKRAINE

16.1 Statement of the LWF Council on Ukraine, 16 June 2014

The Council of the Lutheran World Federation, meeting in Medan, Indonesia June 11-17, 2014, is deeply concerned about the conflict in Ukraine which has intensified since December 2013 and has already resulted in nearly 400 deaths. This conflict, while centered in Ukraine, has the potential of destabilizing all of Europe.

We have learned from the German Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ukraine, our member church there, that many of the Ukrainian people feel helpless and cut off from the international community and that many are receiving misinformation about the reality in Ukraine. Our brothers and sisters have expressed fear that no one is willing to respond adequately to their situation, placing economic interests over the protection and preservation of human rights.

Our member church asks for our prayers and expressions of love and solidarity.

Therefore, the LWF Council, together with the German Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ukraine and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of European Russia, affirms the unity and indivisibility of the Church of Jesus Christ everywhere regardless of political divisions and calls on all member churches to:

1. Pray that God may grant wisdom to all decision-makers to establish peace, stability and common understanding between the Ukrainian and Russian nations for the sake of the people of Ukraine and in order that the current conflict does not escalate or spread to other places in the region;
2. Pray for all churches in Ukraine and pledge our spiritual support for the well-being of all people; and 3. Pray for the German Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ukraine and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of European Russia that they may continue to witness to unity in Christ despite political boundaries and divisions.

17. UNIVERSAL CODE OF CONDUCT ON HOLY SITES


Preamble

The Universal Code of Conduct on Holy Sites was developed in consultation with religious leaders and experts from many of the world’s major faiths by a writing group of representatives from the following organizations: One World in Dialogue (EVID), Oslo Centre for Peace and Human Rights, Religions for
Peace (RfP) and Search for Common Ground (SFCG). After consultation with experts from different faith traditions worldwide beginning in 2009 and throughout 2010, a universal code of conduct on holy sites was finalized in early 2011. During 2011, 2012 and 2013 a number of endorsements to the universal code of conduct have been obtained from interfaith networks and religious communities, among them: the World Council of Religions for Peace, the World Sikh Leadership, Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land, President of the All India Imam Organization, World Council of Churches, and the Russian Orthodox Church – Moscow Patriarchate.

The LWF Council:
• Endorses the Universal Code of Conduct on Holy Sites;
• Encourages member churches to support initiatives in their contexts; and
• Calls upon the United Nations to adopt a UN resolution in the spirit of the Code.

18. WELCOMING THE STRANGER

18.1 Public Statement of the LWF Council on Welcoming the Stranger, 17 June 2014

The LWF Council, meeting in Medan, Indonesia 12-17 June 2014, appreciates the affirmations thus far expressed by faith leaders in the Welcoming the Stranger statement, launched in June 2013 and endorsed by the LWF Council at that time. Many faith leaders and secular organizations have signed this document which was produced under the strong leadership of the LWF together with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other partners.

We see today that Welcoming the Stranger is as necessary as ever before in our world. It is part of our duty to act with love toward those in need, regardless of their religion, gender or nationality. Bearing in mind that migration can sometimes lead to great challenges, we want to focus on the positive outcomes, on the benefits of welcoming strangers:

- In many countries refugees and migrants have enriched the fabric of society;
- In many countries it has been refugees and migrants who have formed the churches there;
- Many churches have received many benefits from the migrants which, in turn, have enriched the whole communion; and
- New ways of living the faith have been brought by migrants and refugees to existing congregations, thereby enriching them.

We note that there are an increasing number of refugees in the world. Whether migrants, refugees, or those marginalized, all need our solidarity and support. Many of them need housing, jobs, and education. We have to continue to address these needs. We recognize that there is a connection between the economic situation in a country and the preparedness to welcome strangers. We recognize that we have to work to avoid the development of tensions between the citizens of a country and the incoming migrants. All persons in a country of refuge, “including the stranger, are subject to its laws and none should be subject to hostility or discrimination.” (Welcoming the Stranger, 2013).
How can we as Lutherans, as Christians, react to this challenge?
- We can tell the story of the Holy Family who were a refugee family shortly after the birth of Jesus;
- We can tell of the strong call in the Bible for all people of faith to welcome the stranger;
- We can tell the stories of our fathers and grandfathers, our mothers and grandmothers who have often been migrants themselves or received migrants into their communities;
- We can tell the story of the LWF which has supported refugees from its beginning and ever since with tangible assistance, such as food, shelter, education, etc., and other forms of care;
- We can tell the various stories of former “strangers” who became a blessing for their societies;
- We can confess that we have not done enough. We should have greater confidence in the support God will provide: God will give us all that we and they need;
- We can recognize that it is often the poorest countries in the world that have been the first to take up and welcome refugees from other poor nations; and
- We can stand in solidarity with the communities where the newcomers are and help them address the burdens and fears of welcoming the stranger.

Therefore it is urgent that we encourage our congregations and all people of faith to build their relationships with the “strangers” among them, and to be more open, to have more faith, and to trust God’s own support.

LWI PRESS RELEASES

Advocacy
- LWF Study Group Outlines Framework for 2 Year Process on Engagement in Public Space

Armenian Genocide
- 100 Year Anniversary Reminds Christians to Defend Vulnerable People
Brazil

- LWF President Bishop Younan Urges Brazilian Church to Proclaim Equality and Dignity for All

Cameroon

- LWF Expresses Shock at Kidnapping of Cameroon Pastor
  18 August 2014

Central African Republic

- LWF Joins Organizations Urging Humanitarian Access
  21 May 2014

Climate Change

- “Fast For the Climate” Launched as an International Campaign
  30 May 2014

- LWF Climate Delegation Hosts Fast at NYC Interfaith Climate Summit
  19 September 2014

- LWF Participates in NYC Climate March
  [https://www.lutheranworld.org/news/here-we-march-we-can-do-no-other-0](https://www.lutheranworld.org/news/here-we-march-we-can-do-no-other-0)
  22 September 2014

- LWF Interfaith Approach to Climate Justice Advocacy
  22 September 2014

- LWF Welcomes US China Agreement, Hopes for Global Accord in 2015
  14 November 2014

- LWF Youth Delegation Advocates for Climate Justice at UN COP in Lima
  27 November 2014

- LWF Launches 365 Days of Fasting
  2 December 2014

- LWF Delegation Joins Human Chain in Solidarity with Climate Vulnerable
  8 December 2014
Increased Call for Climate Justice Advocacy Following Unambitious Lima COP Call to Climate Action

LWF Delivers Joint Statement with ACT Alliance at UN Human Rights Council

LWF Launches Climate Hero Board Game

LWF, WCC, and ACT Alliance Joint Commitment to Vulnerable People Affected by Climate Change

Columbia

LWF Supports Landmine Victims’ Demand for Legal Rights

Denmark

LWF in Solidarity with Danish People and Churches after attacks in Copenhagen

Ebola

LWF Expresses Deep Appreciation for Church Efforts and Medical Staff Fighting Ebola

Expressions of Solidarity and Support for Churches Affected by Ebola Crisis

LWF Co-hosts Panel on the Role of Faith Groups in Fighting the Ebola Crisis, with ACT Alliance and World Council of Churches

Estonia

LWF President Bishop Younan Encourages Baltic Churches to Nurture Interdependence of LWF Communion
Education

- LWF Praises Nobel Prize Winners and their Emphasis on Education

Freedom of Religion or Belief

- General Secretary Martin Junge: Denounces Claims of Religious Justification for Violence

- LWF moderates Side Event At UN Human Rights Council with the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Religion or Belief: Enhancing Faith Based Cooperation for Religious Freedom and Expression

- Violence in the Name of Religion, Mr. Ralston Deffenbaugh Reflects on Report by Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief
  [https://www.lutheranworld.org/blog/violence-name-religion](https://www.lutheranworld.org/blog/violence-name-religion) 6 April 2015

Gender justice

- LWF Joins International “No Excuse for Violence Against Women Campaign”

- Polish Churches Hold Gender Justice Conference and Say No to Violence Against Women

- ELCJHL adopts Gender Justice into Ecclesiastical Court Constitution

- LWF WICAS Affirms Women’s Contribution to Inclusive Church in Asia with Gender Justice Policy Translation

Humanitarian Principles

- LWF Calls for Safety of Staff and Aid Workers on the Occasion of World Humanitarian Day
- LWF Takes Part in UN Panel for World Humanitarian Day
  20 August 2014

  17 March 2015

### Iraq

- LWF Joins Faith Based Organizations Calling for End to Violence in Iraq
  22 August 2014

- LWF Calls for Humanitarian Assistance and Protection of Minority Groups
  2 September 2014

- LWF Expresses Concern for Iraqi Refugees as Winter Approaches
  https://www.lutheranworld.org/news/concern-iraqi-refugees-cold-season-approaches
  24 October 2014

- UN Human Rights Day Focus on Freedom of Religion or Belief
  10 December 2014

### Islamic Relief Worldwide Partnership with LWF

- LWF and Islamic Relief Worldwide Sign Memorandum of Understanding
  25 August 2014

- LWF and IRW Joint Project Begins in Jordan
  17 October 2014

### Israel - Palestine

- LWF President Bishop Younan Joins Pope Francis in Prayer for Peace in the Middle East
  6 June 2014; https://www.lutheranworld.org/news/we-need-miracle-we-need-peace
  17 July 2014

- LWF General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge Urges for Political Solution and Support for ELCJHL
  17 July 2014

- LWF Calls for Parties to Abide by International Law
  23 July 2014
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Meeting of the LWF COUNCIL
Geneva, Switzerland 18 - 22 June 2015
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- LWF Calls for Ceasefire in Gaza Using Social Media
  

- LWF President Bishop Younan Receives Canadian Award for Peace Work
  

- LWF Condemns Violence Around Holy Site
  

- LWF President Bishop Younan Awarded Honorary Doctorate for Peace Work
  

- LWF Augusta Victoria Paid By Palestinian Authority
  

- LWF Success of Vocational Training in Jerusalem
  

- LWF advocates for Gaza Reconstruction
  

Middle East

- LWF President Bishop Younan, Public Lecture “Christian Love and Dialogue Can Influence Middle East Crisis”
  

Migrants in Europe

- European Lutherans Express Solidarity with Italian Churches
  

- Clear Need to Save Mediterranean Refugees
  

Migrants in United States

- LWF Member Churches Criticize Deportation of Migrant Children by US Administration
  

Mexico
AGENDA

Meeting of the LWF COUNCIL
Geneva, Switzerland 18 - 22 June 2015

- LWF General Secretary Martin Junge Urges Mexican Churches to Defend Dignity of Each Human Being, Encourages Solidarity and Prayers from Communion

Myanmar
- LWF submits report to UN Human Rights Council

Nepal
- LWF submits report to UN Human Rights Council:

Nicaragua
- LWF Brings Attention to Human Rights Abuses Against Indigenous People in Nicaragua to UN Human Rights Council

Nigeria
- Global Solidarity Critically Needed in Fight Against Boko Haram
- LWF Solidarity Visit to Nigeria
- LWF Communion Joins Nigerian Churches in Special Prayer and Fasting for Abducted School Girls

South Africa
- Junge: Affirm Dignity of Human Beings, LWF Encourages South African Churches

Sub-Saharan Africa
- LWF Member Churches Condemn Violence in Region; Urge Engagement in Dialogue for Peace

Syria

Ukraine


Uruguay