



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

A Communion
of Churches

lutheranworld.org

Extend the hand of welcome to refugees and displaced people

A statement of the Lutheran World Federation on World Refugee Day

From its foundation a core commitment of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has been to assist refugees and displaced people. This commitment is rooted in Christian faith which calls believers to welcome the stranger and to protect those seeking refuge.

Lutherans have experienced themselves what it is to become a refugee and a displaced person: at the close of World War II, one out of every six Lutherans in the world was a refugee. An overwhelming majority of them was supported at that time and received due protection.

In its 70 years of work with refugees, the LWF has found that this work and the refugees themselves have been a blessing. The LWF is profoundly grateful for all the individuals, congregations, churches, and communities who have welcomed refugees and displaced persons.

Currently, more than 65 million people worldwide have been forced to move away from their homes and regions because of wars and violent conflict, oppression, climate change and natural disasters.

It is morally imperative to meet the needs of those who are on the move, refugees and displaced people. This moral imperative, shared among all the major world religions, has been accepted by the nations of the world in their legal obligations under the international refugee conventions, international humanitarian law, and international human rights treaties.

- The LWF calls upon the governments of the world to uphold their international obligations to protect refugees and offer hospitality, and to refrain from building walls of isolation and fear.

At the same time, it is imperative to address the root causes that force people to move away from their homes – including conflicts, human rights violations and climate change.

- The LWF calls for effective multilateral approaches to resolve the protracted conflicts in Syria, South Sudan, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and other places where so many people suffer and millions have had to flee.
- The LWF calls upon the governments of the world to support the implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement in order to avoid displacement because of climate change.

- The LWF calls upon the wealthier countries of the world to meet the standard of devoting 0.7% of their Gross National Income (GNI) for official development assistance (ODA).

Mindful that many of us Lutherans have been refugees, and that all of us could become refugees, and in obedience to what the Scriptures teach us, the LWF calls upon its member churches, people of God and all people of good will to extend the hand of welcome to refugees and displaced people.

The LWF calls upon its member churches to support governments in meeting their obligations and to themselves respond to Jesus' invitation to welcome, feed, clothe and take care of the stranger

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' Matthew 25.35-36

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