

## WCC: In North Korea, use negotiation not confrontation



Visitors at the monuments to Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il in Pyongyang, North Korea.

Photo: Sean Hawkey

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**Following North Korea's 6<sup>th</sup> nuclear weapon test on Sunday 3 September, the World Council of Churches (WCC) redoubled its calls to reduce tensions on the Korean peninsula through negotiation rather than spiraling confrontation.**

On Monday, South Korean officials reported that there are indications that the North is preparing more missile launches, possibly an intercontinental ballistic missile. South Korea has carried out live-fire exercises in response to Sunday's test.

"North Korea has done enough to demonstrate its capability as a nuclear-armed state," said Director of the WCC's Commission of the Churches on International Affairs Mr Peter Prove. "The WCC strongly advocates for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons everywhere, including on the Korean peninsula where the risk of nuclear conflict is currently by far the greatest."

Nevertheless, the reality of North Korea's nuclear capability must be recognized and addressed through negotiation, not through escalating confrontation, he added. Prove also expressed misgivings about the effects of further sanctions against North Korea, saying that they "would only be likely to harm the most vulnerable people in North Korea while adding to the political tensions."

“The WCC calls on all parties to refrain from further escalation, to step back from this dangerous precipice, to take the path of dialogue and engagement, and to develop new initiatives for crisis management and tension reduction,” Prove said. “The risk of conflict – whether by design or by mishap – and the magnitude of the consequences are too great to allow the present course to continue, and cannot serve the interests of any party in this situation.”

Now is the time for diplomacy, not for brinksmanship, he concluded. “We call on all WCC member churches to hold the people and churches of the Korean peninsula and of the northeast Asian region in their prayers, and to accompany and support them in their witness for peace and reconciliation.”

[Read the full message of the WCC Commission of the Churches on International Affairs on the nuclear weapon test by North Korea](#)

[Churches call for dialogue and nonviolent resolution of conflict with North Korea](#)

[WCC urges dialogue and engagement - not threats and sanctions - for North Korea](#)