

## WCC general secretary mourns lost lives, calls for end to violence



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**As tragic news filtered out of at least three different countries this weekend, World Council of Churches general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit called for an end to violence and corruption that stands in the way of a global just peace.**

On Sunday morning, a bomb exploded in St Peter's Coptic Orthodox Church in Cairo, Egypt, killing 25 people and injuring 31 others, according to reports from local media and the Coptic Orthodox Church.

The blast in Egypt occurred one day after 38 people were killed and 155 wounded in two bombings in Istanbul, Turkey, according to Turkish government reports. The explosions happened after a crowded football game at the Besiktas Vodafone Arena.

Also on Saturday, in Nigeria, the roof of a church collapsed on worshippers at the Reigners Bible Church International in the city of Uyo, killing at least 160 people, according to wire reports. The church was crowded with those attending a ceremony ordaining the church's founder as a bishop. Many in the country have called for an end to corruption that compromises construction standards, regularly putting people in danger.

It has been a weekend in which tragedy and darkness seem to be on a crescendo, said Tveit. "People gathered to worship should be able to connect with God in a place of dignity, protection and respect," he said. "People attending a sporting event should be able to have a sense of camaraderie that is unmarred by violence."

The weekend's sad events remind us that, more than ever, the pursuit of just peace is vital on every front: individuals, governments, structures, systems, he said.

"We will forge ahead on a pilgrimage of justice and peace made stronger by faith, hope and love. The pursuit of what is just, and what is right, is more necessary than ever."

Tveit concluded "The Coptic church in Egypt has experienced several times in the recent years that their members and worshippers have been killed and became martyrs of their faith. This event in Cairo today is a new grave examples of the vulnerability of the Christian communities in the Middle East. This is a great concern for the whole world wide fellowship of Churches, and should be so who care for them and the mosaic of believers in this region."

The WCC fellowship extends its prayers and condolences to all those who lost loved ones this weekend, he added. "We are mourning the loss of innocent people, of family members and friends."

**WCC member churches in:**

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