

WCC expresses concern over renewed violence in Jerusalem

19 October 2015

The World Council of Churches (WCC) general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit has expressed deep concern over the renewed wave of violence in Jerusalem.

In a letter to WCC member churches in Palestine and Israel issued on 19 October, he expressed solidarity with the churches and peoples of the land, and affirmed WCC's commitment to justice and peace in Palestine and Israel.

“We are following with increasing dismay events throughout the region and especially in the Holy City of Jerusalem, which we hold in our hearts and prayers as an open city of two peoples (Israelis and Palestinians) and three faiths (Judaism, Christianity and Islam),” wrote Tveit.

“We continue to work and pray for a just peace for both Palestinians and Israelis, promoting respect for the status quo of the holy sites of Jerusalem as an important contribution to reducing current tensions.”

Tveit went on to say that “as Christians, we must all seek an end to violence against any of God's children, just as we seek an end to occupation and the injustices that present such formidable obstacles to peace in Israel and Palestine.”

“Violent attacks are an unacceptable and counter-productive means of seeking justice. Proportional security measures and the rule of law are the appropriate instruments for responding to such attacks, not extra-judicial killings,” he added.

“The WCC stands firmly with Christians in the Holy Land in our conviction that the illegal occupation of the Palestinian Territories must be brought to an end – not as a pre-condition for an end to violence, but as an essential foundation for any long-term, sustainable and just peace in the region,” Tveit stressed.

With the vision of a “pilgrimage of justice and peace” as promoted by the WCC 10th Assembly in 2013 at Busan, Tveit promised the member churches, “we are committed to moving together with you on this difficult path.” The primary focus of the “pilgrimage of justice and peace” for 2016 will be the Middle East, with an emphasis on Israel and Palestine.

[Full text of the WCC general secretary's letter to churches in Israel and Palestine](#)

[WCC calls for prayers so that “wall will fall” between Israelis and Palestinians](#) (WCC news release of 18 September 2015)

[WCC programme "Churches in the Middle East"](#)

The World Council of Churches promotes Christian unity in faith, witness and service for a just and peaceful world. An ecumenical fellowship of churches founded in 1948, today the WCC brings together 345 Protestant, Orthodox, Anglican and other churches representing more than 550 million Christians in over 120 countries, and works cooperatively with the Roman Catholic Church. The WCC general secretary is the Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, from the [Lutheran] Church of Norway.

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