

WCC decries Munich shootings, calls for nonviolence



Photo: WCC/Albin Hillert

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The general secretary of the World Council of Churches, Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, decried the shootings in Munich, Germany, on 22 July.

Tveit said: “The fatal attack that took place yesterday in Munich against innocent people, adding to the litany of recent religiously-motivated violence, is an attack on human life, human dignity and the human rights of all.”

According to German media, an 18-year-old man opened fire in a crowded Munich shopping mall and a nearby McDonald's Friday night, killing nine people — eight of them between the ages 14 and 20 — and wounding 27 others before killing himself. The fatalities might increase as three people are still in critical condition.

“We are again shocked and saddened by this latest act of brutal violence. My thoughts and prayers are with the victims, their relatives and friends,” Tveit said.

It was the third major act of violence against civilians in Western Europe in eight days. The previous attacks, in the French resort city of Nice and on a train in Bavaria near the city of Wuerzburg, were claimed by the Islamic State group.

“This attack is particularly shocking, because there seems to have been a clear intention deliberately to target young people who were simply enjoying themselves in town Friday evening,” said Tveit.

The WCC general secretary encouraged prayer for and solidarity with the victims and those close to them.

“I remain convinced that European civilization and culture will endure and flourish despite such extremist attacks. As churches, we have a shared responsibility to work for a culture of non-violence in all societies.”

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