

The CPCE General Assembly adopts this resolution on the situation in Syria and Iraq

Resolution on the situation in Syria and Iraq

Rationale

1. In 2012 the General Assembly of the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE) in Florence welcomed the general secretary of the Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches (FMEEC) and heard from her about FMEEC's great concern with regard to the future of Christians and other religious communities in the region.
2. The 2012 General Assembly issued a declaration on the situation of Christians in the Middle East. In it, the General Assembly shared the concerns of the Christians in the Middle East about the "constitutional, legal and political developments" in Syria and Iraq, in particular regarding the question of legal certainty for minorities. It called upon the governments in Europe to advocate more actively for a situation conducive to cultural and religious plurality, as well as for the rule of law in the countries of the region. It underscored the close partnership between European and Middle East Protestant Churches and called for acts of solidarity.
3. Since then, several CPCE member churches have carried out solidarity actions with the churches in the region and supported a number of programmes and projects, even if their impact was only a drop in the ocean in view of the overall needs.
4. Now, in 2018, the General Assembly wishes to express its deep respect and esteem for the Middle East churches in view of what they have achieved over the last few years. They have given an impressive example of courage, resilience, solidarity and care for the victims, particularly refugees and children, and, despite the adverse conditions, have kept up their long-standing health and educational programmes available to all.
5. Unfortunately the suffering of the peoples of the region shows no signs of abating and there is a risk that the consequences of the destruction may increasingly go unnoticed: bombings and bitter fighting continue, or threaten to break out in several areas; humanitarian international law is constantly breached; refugees are not permitted to return; political and geostrategic conflicts are preventing a rapid end to the war and the adopting of sustainable political solutions; reconciliation and reconstruction in the region are becoming more precarious and difficult. The war in Syria and Iraq is also a war on Syria and Iraq.

Resolution

In view of the current threat of another humanitarian disaster, which would lead to new refugee movements, the General Assembly feels impelled to reaffirm its bonds with its Christian sisters and brothers in the Middle East and adopts the following resolution on the situation in Syria and Iraq.

a) The CPCE General Assembly calls upon its member churches and church aid agencies to intensify their partnership and relief programmes in the Middle East, in order to provide assistance for the victims and to enable the population and those with leadership responsibility in the region to take serious note of this Christian witness.

b) The CPCE General Assembly mandates the Council to seek agreement among its member churches and church aid agencies on planning and implementing support programmes in cooperation with the FMEEC, its member churches and other local churches and networks (e.g. through Europe-wide church collections, trips by delegations, visits, invitations to Europe, networking with church support groups for Syria, communication initiatives, etc).

c) CPCE member churches pray for the victims of the war. They likewise understand it as an important part of their mission to use the opportunities available to them to urge their governments to work actively for an end to the war and to stand up for the protection of human rights, particularly religious freedom, as well as the protection of minorities in the region.

The CPCE General Assembly wishes to amplify the voice of the local churches in Syria and in Iraq. It underlines that they have played a constructive role in their societies for almost two thousand years. CPCE thanks these local churches for their willingness, today and tomorrow, to assume their responsibility for a peaceful, sustainable rebuilding of their countries. In this spirit, the CPCE General Assembly reaffirms its partnership with the FMEEC and its member churches.

Basel, on the Swiss Day of Thanks, Repentance and Prayer, 16 September 2018