World Council of Churches

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To the World Council of Churches
member churches

Geneva, February 16, 2018

A day of prayer and fasting for peace in South Sudan the Democratic Republic of Congo- 23 February

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

'And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful.' Colossians 3:15

Lent is a time of repentance, fasting, and preparation for the coming of Easter. It is a time of reflection regarding the suffering, death, and resurrection of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is also time for self-examination and reflection, for us to redirect and rededicate our attention and action, prayerfully, to the most crying needs in our society.

Let us heed Pope Francis's call to a day of prayer and fasting for peace in South Sudan the Democratic Republic of Congo, to be held on 23 February, in the first week of Lent according to the Gregorian calendar. Let us join in prayer and fasting, as part of the global ecumenical movement in light of the ongoing social- political tension, violence, and the suffering of the affected peoples in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and South Sudan.

In the DRC, 4.3 million people are displaced throughout the country and 13.1 million people will be in need of humanitarian assistance throughout the country this year.

In South Sudan, 2 million people have fled the young nation as refugees and about 1.9 million people are internally displaced, over the past four years of conflict- with 7 million people inside the country - that is almost two-thirds of the remaining population - still need humanitarian assistance.

Children, young men, and women have been among the most affected. Millions of women and girls are exposed to gender-based violence in these crisis-affected areas.

The churches and communities are dedicated and present in these communities, accompanying the affected people through these challenging times. We acknowledge the courageous and hopeful work that carries on each day to serve the people in need. May the prayers of all Christians on 23 February for the gift of peace be a sign of solidarity and closeness to those suffering in South Sudan and DRC.

May God bless you and your ministry during this season of Lent,

Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit
General Secretary