



THE  
LUTHERAN  
WORLD  
FEDERATION

A Communion  
of Churches

[lutheranworld.org](http://lutheranworld.org)

## Resolution – Standing with Refugees

Refugees may lose many things when they flee, but never their human rights. In the words of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, “recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.” In our Christian understanding, each refugee or migrant—just like every other human being—is a child of God, created in God’s image, with equal dignity and worth.

In our all-too-violent world, an unprecedented number of people have been forced to flee—some 60 million women, children, and men. 20 million of them are refugees, outside their own country. 40 million of them are internally displaced, refugees within their own countries, unable to return home in safety. The refugee situation attracted dramatic media attention in 2015 when more than a million people fled to Europe. But that meant that there were still 59 million refugees and internally displaced persons outside Europe, most of them in protracted situations. On average, a refugee is now in exile for more than 17 years.

There are some signs of hope. Most of the internally displaced persons in northeastern Nigeria, including those welcomed so generously into the homes of members of the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria, have been able to return home. In Colombia, where one out of every ten persons has been forced from their homes, an accord is in sight to end the decades-long civil war and allow the internally displaced to return. In Germany, Sweden, Hungary, Canada, and other countries, there have been heart-warming examples of churches and everyday citizens welcoming the refugees and helping them to begin integrating into their new communities. So often, they discover that refugees are not burdens but gifts, soon bringing important contributions to their new societies.

Yet the situation remains dire. The High Commissioner for Refugees warns that the refugee issue has never been as politicized as it is in today’s world. In many countries, xenophobia and negative public opinion are rising to alarming levels. Some countries are closing their borders. Too many refugees are living in fear in abysmal conditions. Assistance for refugees is falling far short—halfway through 2016, the UNHCR’s budget is only 32% funded. Desperate people continue to risk their lives at sea, with often heart-rending consequences. And to make matters worse, some politicians are even beginning to challenge the Refugee Convention itself, the hard-won global commitment that the victims of persecution and war should be protected.

Meeting again on World Refugee Day, June 20, the Council of the Lutheran World Federation:

- Reaffirms the Lutheran World Federation's profound concern for the refugees and other forced migrants in our world and, in response, our deeply-rooted commitment to live out Jesus' call to "welcome the stranger."
- Gives thanks to God for the Lutheran churches and members, as well as those of other churches and faiths, who are reaching out a loving hand of welcome and help to refugees and migrants in need.
- Gives thanks to God for the staff and supporters of LWF World Service, who make it possible for the LWF today to provide assistance for some 2.3 million refugees and other forcibly displaced persons across the world.
- Urges the nations of the world to use the 19 September 2016 United Nations Summit on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants to reaffirm that refugees are a matter of international concern, to recommit to protecting the rights of all refugees and migrants, to uphold the United Nations Refugee Convention and all instruments of international humanitarian law, and to more generously support the welcome and care for people in need.
- Urges that Lutherans around the world join the UN High Commissioner for Refugees' #WithRefugees Campaign by signing the petition at [www.unhcr.org/refugeeday/petition](http://www.unhcr.org/refugeeday/petition) and calling upon world leaders to show solidarity and find solutions for people displaced by war or persecution.