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UKRAINIAN BISHOP CALLS FOR END TO VIOLENCE

ODESSA, Ukraine/GENEVA, 20 February 2014 (LWI) – Serge Maschewski, newly installed bishop of the German Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Ukraine (GELCU), has issued an urgent appeal for an end to the violence at Independence Square (Maidan) in the capital of Kiev.

In an interview with *Lutheran World Information (LWI)*, he described how the Lutheran congregation in Kiev had been caring for victims of the violent clashes on Tuesday night.

“[On Wednesday morning] the Kiev congregation attended to over 20 people with serious injuries – cuts, burns from Molotov cocktails, bruises and injuries from batons,” he said. “We are extremely concerned about a situation where the government uses force against its own people.”

Maschewski also called for assistance to the Lutheran congregation in Kiev, whose church building has been kept open and which has been providing assistance to people since the Maidan protests began in December 2013.

“It is our biblical responsibility to call for peace,” Maschewski said in a statement issued by his church, “but we cannot remain silent about injustice.” He emphasized that GELCU as a German church was associated with Western Europe but was not taking any sides in the conflict.

Maschewski called for a return to peaceful negotiations.

“In a country that has signed the International Convention on Human Rights, it should be possible to express opinions freely,” the bishop said, asking the Ukrainian government to “start a mutually respectful dialogue about the future of the Ukraine.”

The interview text is available on the website of The Lutheran World Federation:

<http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/ukrainian-bishop-calls-end-violence>

Contact:

Ms. Heidi Martinussen, LWF Head of Communication

hpm@lutheranworld.org

Tel: +41 22 791 6367, Mobile: +41 79 124 0288