

37th German Evangelical Church Assembly

Resolution: “Saving lives and building a sustainable future through interreligious dialogue – in Germany and the Middle East”

Recipients: Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development; Federal Foreign Office; Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany

Applicants: Society for Threatened Peoples; Anba Damian, Diocesan Bishop of the Coptic-Orthodox Church in northern Germany; Ali Ertan Toprak, President of the Federal Association of Immigrant Associations

Contact Persons: Dr. Kamal Sido and Lina Stotz, Society for Threatened Peoples

Event: “How political should religion be? Visions for Society”, Saturday, 22 June 2019, 11:00-13:00, Center of Worldviews

Resolution:

Thanks to the commitment of numerous voluntary helpers, associations and churches, bridges have been built across Germany for the purpose of migration and integration: bridges between people of various cultures, languages and religions from Germany and the entire world. The dialogue between cultures and religions is important because it unites and enriches us.

However, overcoming differences and promoting interreligious dialogue is not only relevant in Germany. For persecuted religious believers in the Middle East, interreligious dialogue can save lives and build visions for a sustainable future. After many years of war in Syria and Iraq, which also involved German weapons, it can now be hoped – due to the fall of the last “Islamic State” strongholds – that the violence will eventually cease. Nevertheless, several obstacles on the path to peace still remain: discrimination and harassment between different religious communities still occur on a daily basis. Fighting continues. Villages are left in ruins. Peace, rebuilding and dialogue between different religious communities are urgently needed for Christians, Yazidis and other minorities in the Middle East – the cradle of their religions – to allow them to stay or return to their homes. Such commitments would enormously benefit the entire population in the Middle East.

Politics of peaceful religious coexistence in Germany as well as in the Middle East need to be strengthened. To this end, we demand:

1. Victims of persecution have to be given safe shelter in Germany, where religious diversity is strongly valued. To this end, it is crucial that all political actors and the German churches incorporate various cultural and religious groups, such as the Assyrian Federation in Germany, the Central Council of Yazidis in Germany, Pater Emanuel and the Christian aid organization CAPNI, the Coptic Church of Germany and the Federal Association of Immigrant Associations.
2. Peaceful interreligious coexistence in the Middle East needs to be supported. Germany is therefore urged to make the improvement of relations between religious groups and the protection of minorities a greater thematic and financial priority in the areas of development aid and foreign policy in Iraq and Syria.
3. German arms exports to Turkey have led to the forced displacement and persecution of Christians, Yazidis, Arameans, Alewites, Kurds and other minorities and pose a particular threat to women and children within the country and in the Syrian-Kurdish province of Afrin. This needs to be recognized by the German federal government, also in communication with the European community of states. Further arms deals and deliveries should not be made as long as the illegal occupation of Afrin continues.

For human rights. Worldwide.



Society for
Threatened Peoples