

STATEMENT ON CONSEQUENCES OF THE CONFLICT IN NAGORNO-KARABAKH

*He will wipe every tear from their eyes.
Death will be no more;
mourning and crying and pain will be no more,
for the first things have passed away.
Revelation 21:4*

In light of the report of the WCC delegation visit to Armenia on 18-22 September 2023, the executive committee of the World Council of Churches, meeting in Abuja, Nigeria, on 8 to 14 November 2023:

Expresses deep solidarity with the Armenian people and churches, and especially with all those who were forced to flee from their ancient homeland in Nagorno-Karabakh, following the traumatic events of 19-20 September 2023.

Profoundly regrets that in the years since the 1992-1994 Nagorno-Karabakh war, ways could not be found to secure a sustainable peace among the people of the region.

Calls for a generous international response to the humanitarian needs of the refugees who fled from Nagorno-Karabakh, especially vulnerable women, children, the elderly and people with disabilities, and those without any other means of support.

Urges the Government of Azerbaijan to guarantee security and equal rights for those ethnic Armenian people who remain or who may decide to return to their homes in Nagorno-Karabakh, to protect ethnic Armenian cultural and religious heritage in Nagorno-Karabakh, to respect freedom of religion or belief (including access to religious sites and places of worship), and to enable and facilitate an independent UNESCO assessment mission to visit the region and document the status of relevant sites.

Appeals to the European Union to strengthen the EU Mission in Armenia, in order to ensure sufficient personnel and resources to monitor and report on any incursions by Azerbaijan's armed forces on the sovereign territory of Armenia.

Urges the UN Security Council to remain seized of the matter, and to take swift and decisive action in the event of any attack on Armenia's sovereign territory by Azerbaijan's armed forces.

Asks the WCC general secretary to continue to follow up on the observations and conclusions of the WCC delegation that visited Armenia on 18-22 September 2023.

Invites all WCC member churches to pray for the affected people, and to support and accompany the Armenian Apostolic Church as they minister to the Armenian nation in this time of mourning and uncertainty for the future.

ADOPTED BY CONSENSUS