

17 August 2020

A pastoral letter to the churches and the people of Zimbabwe

Let justice roll down like water, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream (Amos 5:24)

To the churches and people of Zimbabwe,

Grace and peace from the God of life and the Lord Jesus Christ

Christian greetings from the World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, the World Communion of Reformed Churches, and the World Methodist Council.

We have heard the laments of our sisters and brothers in your country and we are deeply concerned about the circumstances by which you are afflicted. We express our solidarity with all the people of Zimbabwe yearning for the realization of their human rights, for justice, and for physical and economic security in their communities.

We have heard of the deteriorating conditions for women, children, young people and men whose lives and livelihoods are facing increasingly serious threats each day, with approximately half of the entire population facing hunger, staggering unemployment rates, corruption and insecurity, the country is crying out for effective accompaniment.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the economic challenges and seriously affected the already fragile public health and education systems. The ongoing medical doctor's strike has caused millions of Zimbabweans – including children and pregnant women – to have no access to essential medical care.

While we understand the gravity of the challenges posed by the pandemic, we also recognize that the root causes of corruption and the longstanding failure to protect human rights lie in failed governance structures.

We condemn the increasing use of force, violence and intimidation against people protesting these failures, targeting particularly those deemed to oppose the current government. We are particularly concerned about the mistreatment of political activists and other advocates for human rights. We strongly condemn the sexual abuse and violence against women activists. We find the incarceration of journalists and political leaders unacceptable.

We are encouraged by the ongoing ministry of churches in Zimbabwe to serve the most vulnerable and call on you to keep remembering the 'least of these' even as you remain steadfast in your hope in Christ Jesus. May your voice continue to be raised on behalf of the most vulnerable.

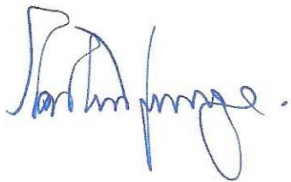
We believe that the God of life calls us into action for justice for the oppressed. We pledge our solidarity with you as we lift up your cries for justice, dignity, and protection of their human rights. We shall continue to advocate together with our member churches for this cause.

Sisters and brothers, we assure you of the continued prayers of the global Christian family. Hold steadfast to the faith that we share, which binds us together in Christian unity, and compels us to seek justice and work for peace.

In solidarity,



Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Saucă, WCC Interim General Secretary



Rev. Dr. Martin Junge, LWF General Secretary



Rev. Dr. Chris Ferguson, WCRC General Secretary



Bishop Ivan M. Abrahams, WMC, General Secretary