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With the kind request to forward this letter to all delegations to the 11th Ecumenical Assembly

Open letter to the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches and the delegates of the 11th assembly in 2022 in Karlsruhe

Dear members of the Central Committee,
Dear general secretary Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca,
Dear delegates of the world-wide ecumenical community!

We are delighted that you are visiting Germany this year! The 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches in August and September 2022 in Karlsruhe is part of a great tradition. We are hoping, that the assembly will become a platform for dialogue and understanding.

Over the past decades, the world-wide ecumenical community has condemned military armament, war and the threat of using nuclear weapons with ground-breaking words and resolutions. By doing so, the ecumenical community has become an exceptional role model for many Christians, who pass on God's love for the world by striving towards peace and the protection of life. In particular, we want to highlight:

- **Amsterdam 1948:** »War is contrary to the will of God«
- **Nairobi 1975:** »The churches should emphasize their readiness to live without the protection of armaments, and take a significant initiative in pressing for effective disarmament«
- **Vancouver 1983:** »We believe that the time has come when the churches must unequivocally declare that the production and deployment as well as the use of nuclear weapons are a crime against humanity«
- **Busan 2013:** »We must join other communities of faith and people of good will to reduce national military capacities and delegitimize the institution of war«

We would like to thank the WCC Central Committee for the important words in its »Statement on Ukraine«. In view of the current state of the world, a clear commitment of the world-wide ecumenical community to the renunciation of violence and to military disarmament is indispensable!

Russia's war against Ukraine is a dominant and depressing topic. We are noticing with great concern that many people – under the impression of the war – have started to doubt the Christian ethics of peace. They are questioning the goal of overcoming violence through love of enemies and reconciliation, and thus also the politics of civil peace promotion.

By giving so much attention to the war in Ukraine, other catastrophes are pushed into the background. Meanwhile, nearly a quarter of humanity suffers directly from violent conflict. Climate change is

progressing rapidly, resulting in poor harvests, and the number of people suffering from hunger is again on the rise worldwide.

We are convinced that the task of overcoming all wars as well as working together towards peace, justice and the integrity of creation must be at the centre of our actions.

We are aware that the export of weapons and armament from Europe is fuelling wars and conflicts all over the world, enabling serious human rights violations. The governments and arms industries of our countries carry the burden of guilt.

We also see that the nuclear weapons states show no efforts to reduce their nuclear arsenals. Like many European NATO states, they continue to hold on to the threat of nuclear weapons, thus accepting the destruction of all life on our earth for illusory security. We concur with the WCC's position that the existence of even a single nuclear weapon violates the fundamental tenets of our faith traditions and threatens everything we hold dear with unimaginable destruction.

If the 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Karlsruhe once again sends out clear signals for the path of Just Peace, it would strengthen our churches and civil society significantly. May you succeed in encouraging also those that have doubts to deprive the institution of war of any legitimacy!

The pilgrimage of justice and peace has taken us to many places of injustice and violence in recent years. And it has offered us countless opportunities to celebrate life, regain hope, find reconciliation and build peace. We therefore look forward to sharing a journey towards a world that promotes peace as well as social and climate justice – starting from Karlsruhe.

In particular, we hope that the worldwide ecumenical movement will encourage and engage the German and European churches to take a clear and public stand:

- To **immediately join the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons**, in order to ban the most dangerous of all weapons from this world and overcome this permanent threat to humanity,
- To **stop exporting armaments from their countries** (especially small and light weapons), because they exacerbate the suffering in the wars of this world and make peaceful negotiations more difficult,
- To **redirect the billions spent on military armament each year** towards rebuilding societies in ways that mitigate climate change and promote social justice and peace.

We have formulated these expectations for the inviting churches in our Appeal for Peace 2022 »War is contrary to the will of God«. More than 5,150 people have joined the demands and signed the appeal in the run-up to the assembly of the World Council of Churches!

God of life, guide our steps onto the path of just peace!

August 22, 2022

Simon Bödecker, Ecumenical campaign Ohne Rüstung Leben

Pastor Martina Basso, Mennonitisches Friedenszentrum Berlin (Mennonite Peace Center Berlin)

Ulrich Duchrow

Ulrich Frey

Br. Markus Fuhrmann, Deutsche Franziskanerprovinz (German Franciscan Province)

Jan Gildemeister, Aktionsgemeinschaft Dienst für den Frieden (Association of Peace Service Initiatives)

Antje Heider-Rottwilm, Church and Peace – European Ecumenical Peace Church network

Karen Hinrichs

Dr. James Jakob Fehr, Deutsches Mennonitisches Friedenskomitee (German Mennonite Peace Committee)

Krieg soll nach Gottes Willen nicht sein

War is Contrary to the Will of God

(First Assembly of the World Council of Churches, 1948 in Amsterdam)

An Appeal for Peace for the 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches

In 2022, the World Council of Churches Assembly (WCC) is to be held **for the first time in Germany**. Representatives of approximately 350 churches will meet in Karlsruhe from August 31st to September 8th 2022. They represent more than 500 million Christians from over 120 countries.

As the signatories of this appeal, we call on the inviting churches:

Make use of the public awareness that the WCC Assembly will create in the context of your church. **Affirm your commitment to Just Peace in Germany, Europe and worldwide, within the Church, the state and society!**

In particular, we expect the inviting churches to promote in public and with political decision-makers the calls to:

- **Immediately join the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)**, in order to ban the most dangerous of all weapons from this world and overcome this permanent threat to humanity,
- **Stop exporting arms (especially small and light weapons)**, because they exacerbate the suffering in the wars of this world and make peaceful negotiations more difficult,
- **Redirect the billions spent on military armament each year** towards rebuilding societies in ways that mitigate climate change and promote social justice and peace.

First signatories: *Prof. Dr. Ulrich Duchrow · Prof. Dr. Fernando Enns · Ulrich Frey · Karen Hinrichs · Prof. Dr. Margot Käßmann · Prof. Dr. Konrad Raiser · Konstantin Wecker · Aktionsgemeinschaft Dienst für den Frieden (AGDF) · Deutsche Franziskanerprovinz · Deutsches Mennonitisches Friedenskomitee (DMFK) · Church and Peace – European Ecumenical Peace Church network · Ev. Treuhandstiftung Friedensarbeit in Württemberg · Martin-Niemöller-Stiftung · Mennonitisches Friedenszentrum Berlin (MFB) · Ohne Rüstung Leben · pax christi-Diözesanverband Freiburg · pax christi-Regionalverband Limburg-Mainz · Pro Ökumene – Initiative in Württemberg.*

More than 5.150 additional people have signed this appeal for peace to the churches!
www.ohne-ruestung-leben.de/friedensappell2022



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