

## **VELKD Bishops' Conference concerned about annexation plans of the Israeli government**

### **Church leaders reaffirm solidarity with people in the Holy Land and call for a peaceful conflict resolution**

The Bishops' Conference of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (VELKD) has reacted with concern to Israeli government's announced intention to annex parts of the West Bank. They fear that this step will further exacerbate the political conflict situation in the Holy Land.

“Implementing the plans would have fatal consequences for the future of the peace process in the Holy Land,” says Ralf Meister (Hanover), VELKD's presiding bishop. “We therefore call on the Israeli government to drop its annexation plans. The aim of the peace process must be a jointly negotiated two-state solution that contributes to peace and stability.”

The Bishops' Conference reaffirms the statement of 28 May 2020 by the Evangelical Middle East Commission (EMOK) of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD). On the basis of the church's bonds with Judaism and, at the same time, in solidarity with the Christian churches in Israel and Palestine, EMOK - of which VELKD is also a member - expressed criticism of the “current plans of the Israeli government, also included in the coalition treaty, to annex the Jordan Valley and other parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Such an annexation would violate international law.”

In agreement with the EMOK statement, the Bishops' Conference endorses the internationally recognized perspective of a two-state solution. It supports the calls EMOK makes in its statement: notably to the Israeli government to suspend, i.e. drop, the annexation plans it has agreed; to the Palestinian leadership to end internal disagreements and to speak with one voice against the annexation plans of the Israeli government; and to the German federal government to promote a central mediator role of the EU in the context of its presidency of the Council of the European Union and to continue to work for a negotiated solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict on the basis of international humanitarian law.

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The statement concludes: “The VELKD member churches remain closely committed to the Holy Land and all those who live there. They will not cease to pray and work for peace and reconciliation.”

*NB: You can download the full statement at: [www.velkd.de/downloads/200701-Statement-on-the-Annexation-Plans-of-the-Israeli-Government.pdf](http://www.velkd.de/downloads/200701-Statement-on-the-Annexation-Plans-of-the-Israeli-Government.pdf). Download the EMOK statement at: [www.ekd.de/EMOK-Texte-22521.htm](http://www.ekd.de/EMOK-Texte-22521.htm).*

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VELKD Press Office  
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The United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (VELKD) is a union of seven regional churches with a total of approx. 8.4 million members. They are: Ev. Luth. Church in Bavaria, Ev. Luth. Church in Brunswick, Ev. Luth. Church of Hanover, Evangelical Church in Central Germany, Ev. Luth. Church in Northern Germany, Ev. Lutheran Church of Saxony and Ev. Luth. Church of Schaumburg-Lippe. Its presiding bishop is Ralf Meister (Hannover), with Bishop Kristina Kühnbaum-Schmidt (Schwerin) as his deputy. The president of the General Synod is Prof. Dr. Dr. h. c. Wilfried Hartmann. The VELKD office area in the EKD Church Office in Hanover is headed by vice-president Dr. Horst Gorski.