

## **Behind the news: Visions for peace – Voices of faith**

**Issue no. 8**

**22 November 2001**

*Providing church, ecumenical and interfaith information, resources, and analysis on issues of current global concern*

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#### **1. Background**

In response to the threatening global situation in the wake of the September 11 attacks in the United States, Action by Churches Together (ACT), the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA) and the World Council of Churches (WCC), have set up a short-term response mechanism to offer a selection of statements, useful information, thought-provoking reflections, and worship resources which might aid churches in responding to the unfolding situation. This weekly bulletin contains summaries and references to selected resources that can be found through our web site at <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/behindthenews>. There is additional information on the web site than may not necessarily be referred to in the bulletin.

Please feel free to share this bulletin widely by e-mail and in hard copy. We apologize if you are receiving duplicate copies of this bulletin due to the multiple distribution lists we are using. We appreciate feedback on what you find helpful and what other information you may need. Please contact us at: [bulletins@wcc-coe.org](mailto:bulletins@wcc-coe.org)

#### **2. Statements and actions of the global church and ecumenical family**

An international ecumenical delegation from the World Council of Churches visited US churches from 7-14 November as a “living letter” to US churches. The group, headed by Bishop Mvumelwano Dandala, presiding bishop of the Methodist Church in Southern Africa, visited “Ground Zero” in New York as well as Chicago and Washington, DC before participating in the National Council of Churches Assembly held in Oakland, California. The delegation also met with representatives of the US Catholic Conference of Bishops as well as with representatives of the American Muslim Council. In a letter to US churches, the team summarized the mission of the delegation: “we have come out of our wounded contexts to share with you in your woundedness. We have not come with answers; we have come to love you.” The letter concludes with 4 questions which accompanied the delegations’ conversations: “Where do we find the basis to be together? How can churches be at the front line of the struggle against injustice? How can we communicate the imperatives of the Gospel where there is a struggle for the hearts and minds of people? Do we wait to speak until there is unanimity? How do we encourage the prophetic voices in our midst?” (<http://wcc-coe.org/wcc/news/press/01/39pu.html>)

The Australian Catholic Social Justice Council issued a statement on 14 November, calling for an end to the bombing of Afghanistan “because we believe that it does not conform to the conditions for a morally legitimate use of force.” The statement then spells out the specific reasons why the bombing does not conform to the conditions for a just war. The statement calls on the Australian government to review its support for the current military action; to encourage world leaders to cooperate to bring those suspected of terrorism before an international criminal tribunal; to cooperate with other nations to explore other means against the sponsors of terrorism and to undertake an honest exploration of the causes of terrorism; to welcome asylum-seekers; and to support and protect the rights of members of the Australian community being victimized because of their ethnicity or religion. The ACSJC also calls on the Catholic community to pray for the victims of terrorism around the world and for world leaders that they will respond to terrorism with “wise and principled action for the common good.” The statement is accompanied by a substantive position paper on “The Bombing of Afghanistan.”  
<http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au>

Addressing the Assembly of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, Keith Clements, General Secretary of the Conference of European Churches called for new and deeper cooperation between the churches of Europe and the United States in the wake of the terrorist attacks of 11 September and the war in Afghanistan. He also paid tribute to the attitudes he was encountering in the Assembly in face of the terrorist atrocities and the response of the US government “I have never before experienced such heart-searching and honest self-scrutinising by churches as they reflected upon their country, and their own record and role in society.”  
<http://www.cec-kek.org/News/index.html>

Bishop Noack of Germany issued a statement in which he called upon members of the Bundestag not to follow blindly the decision of the Government to send German troops, calling this a "confessional question". Parliamentarians should vote their conscience, not simply follow party lines or be motivated by domestic political considerations with respect to the delicate balance in the governing coalition. In his statement, Bishop Noack says that he knows that this position differs from that of the EKD Synod, but that there come times when one must speak the truth as he sees it.  
<http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/behindthenews/us143.html>

The Churches Commission for Racial Justice in the United Kingdom has issued a statement expressing concern about the effects of the Emergency (Anti-Terrorism) bill which is likely to pass before Christmas. The Commission fears that the government is likely to imprison indefinitely without evidence of crime or trial people who may genuinely be seeking asylum in the UK. The Secretary of CCRJ, Rev. Arlington Trotman said that it was “unacceptable” for the UK to opt out of the European Convention on Human Rights. <http://www.cbti.org.wk/news>. For more on this issue, see also <http://www.hrw.org/backgrounder/eca/UKleg1106.htm>

The National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA adopted a statement “Out of the Ashes and Tragedy of September 11 2001” at its annual assembly in Oakland, California on 15 November. The statement says “we believe that no nation can feel secure by itself if others are insecure. Similarly, military security does not ensure economic security.” The statement “calls for an early end to the bombing campaign and for all parties to collaborate with the international community to discern non-violent means that may be available by which to bring to justice those who terrorize

the nations of the world” The Assembly “urges the United States to play a constructive role within the framework of the UN in establishing institutions of a post-war Afghan government that are broadly based, respectful of their traditions and acceptable to the people of Afghanistan.” <http://www.nccusa.org>.

US Catholic bishops call for resolve, restraint and a long-term focus on broader issues of justice and peace that must mark the international campaign against terrorism, in a broad pastoral message approved 15 November.

While the United States has a "moral right and a grave obligation" to defend the common good against mass terrorism, it must also actively seek to resolve political, economic, and cultural injustices exploited by terrorists, the bishops said in a "special message" titled A Pastoral Message: Living with Faith and Hope After September 11. <http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/sept11.htm>

The National Executive Committee of the South African Council of Churches issued a statement on October 25 and a letter to US churches on November 7 on the events of September 11 and their aftermath, with “sympathy and solidarity” to the churches in the United States and desire for justice in the wake of the attacks. However, because of the desire for justice, “we are compelled to continually to examine the unfolding responses to the events of 11 September and to measure them against our understanding of God’s justice, as revealed in human history and the life and death of Jesus Christ.” Among the questions they raise are the dangers of acting in a context of collective injustice, the limits to just war, and the moral quality of actions. As the scale of the crisis has grown, the letter notes, “it has assumed an increasingly important position on the domestic and foreign policy agendas of many nations, including South Africa.” <http://www.sacc.org.za/news.html>

### **3. Responses from other faith communities**

The Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) have expressed deep concern and fear of the Northern Alliance advance into Kabul. “The Taliban and Al-Qaeda will be eliminated, but the existence of the NA as a military force would shatter the joyful dream of the majority for an Afghanistan free from the odious chains of barbaric Taliban.” RAWA states that “though the NA has learned how to pose sometimes before the West as ‘democratic’ and even supporter of women's rights, in fact they have not at all changed”. The statement appeals to the UN to send a peace-keeping force into the country and withdraw its recognition of the Islamic government headed by Rabbani and help the establishment of a broad-based government based on the democratic values.

<http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/behindthenews/us140.html>

PeaceTalks, from the Asian Muslim Action Network-Integrated Peace Education Program (AMAN-IPEP) desk based in Moroland, Mindanao (Philippines), distributed a special issue of “Three Poems For My Suffering Afghan Sisters And All other Women Who Suffer The Same Plight” by Zieba Shorish-Shamley, Ph.D.

<http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/behindthenews/us144.html>

The Asian Muslim Action Network-Integrated Peace Education Program has also been sending out reflections on Ramadan for use by Muslims, including “Some Hadith on Fasting from Malik's Muwatta Book 18 "On Fasting".

<http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/behindthenews/us141.html>

A Spanish web portal on Islam has been set up at <http://www.webislam.com/>

#### **4. Summaries of inter-governmental response**

The UN General Assembly concluded its high-level debate on 16 November which was dominated by a discussion of ways to combat terrorism and eradicate extreme poverty and exclusion that often provide breeding grounds for extremism. In his closing statement, the Assembly President noted that almost all speakers had highlighted the need for concerted action to combat terrorism and that many had stressed that terrorism could only be eliminated if poverty and marginalization, its breeding ground, were also addressed.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=2189>.

During the annual treaty-signing event, 10-16 November, nearly 80 countries took action on more than 40 international treaties. The highest number of treaty actions related to the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism which received 47 signatures and 8 ratifications or accessions. The accord currently has 119 signatures and 13 parties and will enter into force when 22 instruments of ratification have been received.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=2184&CrI=event>.

Commemorating the International Day for Tolerance on 16 November, UN officials stressed that respect for diversity was crucial to securing peace and winning the battle against terrorism. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan explained that exclusion and marginalization could lead to hostility and fanaticism – a process which would generate further intolerance. Joining the call, the UN High Commissioner for Human rights, Mary Robinson said that “even before the horrendous events of 11 September, the world was facing the stark choice of uniting in all its rich diversity or sinking deeper into conflict born of hate of the other.”

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=2182>.

UN member states have called for strengthening the anti-terrorism role played by the Vienna-based UN Centre for International Crime Prevention. States made their call during an inter-sessional meeting of the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. They agreed that the Centre’s Terrorism Prevention Branch could play an important role in assisting member states with the ratification and early implementation of existing UN anti-terrorism conventions.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=2187>.

The UN Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, Param Cumaraswamy sent an urgent appeal to the US government regarding the military order signed in mid-November by President Bush on the detention, treatment and trial of certain non-citizens in the war against terrorism. In his appeal, the Special Rapporteur expressed concern about the setting up of military tribunals to try those subject to the order and the absence of a guarantee of the right to legal representation and advice for persons in detention. He also raised questions regarding the establishment of an executive review process to replace the right to appeal the conviction and sentence to a higher tribunal, as well as the exclusion of jurisdiction of any other courts and international tribunals.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story/.asp?NewsID=2173>.

The International Labour Organization convened a think tank grouping of civil aviation industry experts, as well as representatives of airlines and unions to assess the impact of the events of 11 September on the industry. The ILO called for a series of operational measures to rebuild the devastated aviation sector, saying it would take “years” for the industry to return to its pre-September 11<sup>th</sup> levels. The air transport industry employs some 4 million persons worldwide, of which more than 200,000 have lost their jobs or will in the immediate future. The ILO also said the post-September 11 crisis is expected to have a disruptive impact on all segments of the industry, from employment to incomes, technology to investment as well as restructuring including partnerships and global alliances. For a summary of the meeting or the complete report, see <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/inf/pr/2001/42.htm>.

The Universal Postal Union's Council of Administration adopted a resolution on 25 October condemning the events of 11 September. The UPU resolution calls specifically on the postal services of its 189 member countries to take all appropriate measures to ensure that the global postal network is not used by criminal elements for the transport of biological substances, bombs and other dangerous goods, or for the purposes of money laundering. The Council of Administration also deplored the deaths of postal workers in the United States as a result of anthrax contamination. See [http://www.upu.int/about/en/postal\\_security25.html](http://www.upu.int/about/en/postal_security25.html).

## **5. Humanitarian concerns**

UNHCR reports that the number of Afghans spontaneously returning to Afghanistan from Iran via the northern border crossing of Dogharoun has increased dramatically. Throughout the crisis hundreds of Afghans have returned with well over 800 returning daily over the past two weeks. Earlier returns were motivated by people wishing to return to their families to support them in a difficult situation. Now, some Afghans say they want to see for themselves the developments in Herat following the takeover by the Northern Alliance while others say they prefer to wait and see how the situation inside Afghanistan evolves. <http://www.unhcr.ch> (See Afghanistan Updates no. 33, 34, 35)

UNHCR reports that extensive looting of its offices has taken place in Mazar-i-Sharif with people carting off anything they could remove – down to door and window frames. In Kabul, a mob ransacked a UNHCR warehouse, taking away quilts and 1400 tents intended for internally displaced people and returnees. UNHCR's Kabul office has been re-opened and has put together an immediate program to assist some 100,000 internally displaced people and returnees in Afghanistan. <http://www.unhcr.ch> (See Afghanistan Update, no. 34, 35.)

The Humanitarian Information Centre For Afghanistan (HICFA) provides a common physical meeting place and discussion forum on the web for the humanitarian community to exchange, share and agree on common data and information products. <http://www.hic.org.pk/>

Emergency operational assistance plan for Afghanistan from the Office of the United Nations Co-ordinator for Afghanistan (OCHA): In order to be better able to plan activities and identify gaps, UN agencies and NGOs have developed this 30-Day Operational Emergency Assistance Plan for the period 15 November to 15 December

2001. The Plan covers assistance inside Afghanistan, including assistance to Afghans seeking asylum in neighbouring countries.

<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/vID/FE669FF0DB549A02C1256B090058C46A?OpenDocument>

“Humanitarian assistance faces new challenges in Afghanistan” reports ACT Press Officer Paul Jeffrey from Peshawar, Pakistan. “While the Taliban may be on the run, the people of Afghanistan are not celebrating yet. After surviving years of drought, land mines, and chronic internecine fighting, war-weary Afghans now face a chaotic future as feuding warlords carve their country into separate fiefdoms.”

[http://act-intl.org/news/dt\\_nr\\_2001/dtafghan1601.html](http://act-intl.org/news/dt_nr_2001/dtafghan1601.html)

For an overview of the most recent information on ACT members' and partners' humanitarian work in Afghanistan and Pakistan:

[http://act-intl.org/news/dt\\_nr\\_2001/dtafghan1501.html](http://act-intl.org/news/dt_nr_2001/dtafghan1501.html)

The Jesuit Refugee Service has issued a statement (Rights of Refugees) calling on the neighbouring states of Afghanistan to open their borders to the refugees from that country. <http://www.jesref.org/inf/statemen/us11022e.htm>

When crisis or disaster hits a country, communications are often one of the first casualties. Reliable sources dry up, government agencies collapse, media images do not give the full picture. In sub-Saharan Africa and Central Asia the need for an accurate picture of events on the ground is being met by the Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN), part of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). For reports on the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, see: [http://www.reliefweb.int/ocha\\_ol/](http://www.reliefweb.int/ocha_ol/)

Reuters AlertNet site offers an extensive overview of the situation in Afghanistan with the latest reports from the region:

<http://www.alertnet.org/thefacts/reliefresources/152563/>

Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) called on the United States to impose an immediate moratorium on the deployment of cluster bombs and antipersonnel landmines in Afghanistan. The group also called on the United States to comply with the request by the UN Mine Action Program for Afghanistan (UNMAPA) to be informed of the targets, types, and quantities of munitions used so far during coalition air strikes. Lastly, PHR called on the US to commit to and implement full clearance of all unexploded munitions deployed during the military campaign in Afghanistan.

[http://www.phrusa.org/research/afghanistan/field\\_110201.html](http://www.phrusa.org/research/afghanistan/field_110201.html)

The UK based Christian Aid web site offers this reflective piece, “Their pain is our pain: hearing the cry of Afghanistan,” based on the passage from Luke: ‘As Jesus entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, they called out, saying, ‘Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!’ (Luke 17.12-13). <http://www.christian-aid.org.uk/worship/preach/111afgha.htm>

Other reflections posted on the website of Christian Aid can be found at:

<http://www.christian-aid.org.uk/worship/reflect/reflect.htm>

## **6. Contributions to the current debate**

The US based Program on International Policy Attitudes has released new poll results on US public attitudes on terrorism. The report finds that support for US engagement in world affairs is at its highest level since the end of World War II: 81%. There is overwhelming support for multilateralism and strong support for UN involvement in the war on terrorism. Almost half of those polled support having bin Laden (if captured) tried in an International Criminal Tribunal (49%) See:

<http://www.pipa.org/OnlineReports/Terrorism/findings.html>.

Also, a site full of polling data on a wide range of international affairs issues:

<http://www.americans-world.org/>

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) has developed a paper on “International Legal Remedies in Response to the Attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001”. This paper explores for the AFSC one facet of its response to the attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 - the call for justice under international law. Its advocacy for the use of international law led to this review of the status of international legal remedies. For the full text of the paper, see:

<http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/behindthenews/analysis20.html>

Human Rights Watch has written to US President Bush, expressing deep concerns about the Executive Order on the Detention, Treatment, and Trial of Certain Non-Citizens in the War Against Terrorism, issued on November 13, 2001. The letter spells out past occasions when the US government has criticized the use of military courts and says that “if the Executive Order is implemented, it will do permanent damage to the United States’ ability to champion human rights and the rule of law around the world.” The letter further spells out the implications of this order for US obligations to various international human rights standards. <http://www.hrw.org>.

Amnesty International raises similar concerns on the Executive Order and calls for its revocation, saying that the “sweeping presidential order bypasses fundamental principles of justice found in both US and international law, specifically the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ratified by the US in 1992”.

<http://www.aiusa.org/news/2001/usa11152001.html>

In “Terrorism and Religions”, H.S. Wilson, on the faculty of Wartburg Seminary, reflects on the role of religious values and views in the lives of people as they deal with issues affecting their communities, particularly in light of the attacks of Sept. 11. He looks generally at what Islam, Christianity, and Judaism teach regarding the perceived and/or real adversaries to its faith and community and suggests some ways forward in cooperation among the world’s religions.

<http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/behindthenews/analysis23.html>

Robert Fisk's article in The Independent on 19 November details the inherent contradictions of the military operations in Afghanistan which supported the recent offensive of the northern alliance. Now that the Taliban regime has collapsed, the Northern Alliance, the Afghan warlords and tribal leaders could be tempted to replay the sinister episode of the civil war that was at the origin of the Taliban movement.

<http://argument.independent.co.uk/commentators/story.jsp?dir=140&story=105560&ost=6&printable=1>

Where is Bin Laden hiding? What is like to share 24 hours of his life in caves at an altitude of 3000m? In 1996, Abdul Bari Atwan, editor of the UK Arabic weekly news magazine Al-Quds al-Arabi, met the al Qaida leader in one of his eagles' nest. In this

article published in The Guardian, he describes in a vivid manner his visit to the world public enemy No 1.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/waronterror/story/0,1361,591809,00.html>

In “Justice Is Still the Goal”, Jim Wallis shares that many in the religious community “have deep concerns about the moral, practical and political consequences of the military campaign in Afghanistan.” He also recognizes that those committed to non-violence “must answer the questions that violence purports to answer: how to stop further terrorist violence and punish those responsible for the mass murder of innocent people”. He outlines that “The most effective and morally defensible strategy now would be one focused clearly on feeding starving people, bringing the terrorists to justice and utilizing the rule of law and international forces.”

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A24936-2001Nov13.html>

Tony Benn's article “Tackle terror at its roots” in The Guardian is very critical of the way the war against terrorism is thought by political leaders. The author analyzes the global and local implications of the current phase of "Infinite Justice" and sees in the militarization of the crisis a potential danger for democracies.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/waronterror/story/0,1361,591856,00.html>

In an interview, René Girard, a Christian philosopher and anthropologist, analyzes the current crisis under the light of his theory of "mimetic rivalry". He focuses more on the notions of resemblance and competition than on cultural differences. At the same time, his views on contemporary Islam sketch out its specificity as well as its continuation of the monotheistic tradition.

[http://theol.uibk.ac.at/cover/girard\\_le\\_monde\\_interview.html](http://theol.uibk.ac.at/cover/girard_le_monde_interview.html)

In an article published in The Nation, author John Le Carré expresses his pessimistic analysis on how the "war against terrorism" is conducted and perceived. Le Carré is extremely critical to the leaders of the "coalition" and vigorously denounces “the new world (dis)order which produces more inequality, more injustice, more enemies... In this global chaotic context, can the current war eradicate terrorism?”

<http://www.workingforchange.com/article.cfm?itemid=12290>

An editorial from the Times of India reflects in the Asian political context the growing concern about the use of military courts for persons suspected of terrorism. If this is the kind of responses to terrorism that Great Powers want to promote in the 21st century, then, according to the Times of India, we should be worried about the regression of democracy.

[http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow.asp?catkey=2128669051&art\\_id=1661272832&sType=1](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow.asp?catkey=2128669051&art_id=1661272832&sType=1)

Strategic Forecasting LLC has put together a short analysis, “Ground War Strategies: What's Next for the Taliban?”

<http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/behindthenews/analysis21.html>

“Settling conflicts without going to war is possible, even cost effective” is an 19 November Ecumenical News International article on a new book, War Prevention Works by Dylan Mathews. Fifty cases of non-violent conflict resolution are described in the book. One successful intervention - in Lucknow, India - cost less than

US\$5000. But the conflict resolution field is overall extremely under-funded, according to Scilla Elworthy, director of the Oxford Research Group.

<http://eni.ch/highlights/news.shtml?2001/11>

## 7. Calls for action

US Catholic bishops have called for a national day of prayer for peace according to the Catholic News Service. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops designated Jan. 1, 2002, as a national day of prayer for peace as a response to the September 11 terror attacks.

Members of Christian Peacemakers Team (CPT) in Hebron plan to fast from sunrise to sunset November 17-December 16, along with their Muslim neighbors who will be observing the holy month of Ramadan. They will be fasting in solidarity with and lifting in prayer those who are hungry because of violence and warfare. They note that the period of Ramadan happens to encompass the first two weeks of Advent in the Christian calendar. They urge CPT's supporters and friends in the U.S., Canada, and around the world to consider fasting with them at a level that seems appropriate and to let them know if you are joining them.

<http://www.prairienet.org/cpt/archives/2001/nov01/0010.html>

Fast for Ramadan -- A Call to All Faiths: Richard Mouw, a leading evangelical Christian, says he's going to fast for Ramadan: "Islam, Judaism, and Christianity are all descended--each in its own unique way, to be sure--from the faith of Abraham." "Most other faiths have a tradition of fasting as well. By fasting a day during Ramadan, which begins November 17, we can symbolically support the Muslims who have decried the attack -- and encourage our own spiritual introspection."

See other resources on Ramadan and traditions of fasting at:

[http://www.belief.net/frameset.asp?pageLoc=/story/93/story\\_9306\\_1.html&boardID=28346](http://www.belief.net/frameset.asp?pageLoc=/story/93/story_9306_1.html&boardID=28346)

Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Washington, D.C., has urged all Catholics in the archdiocese to fast one day a week until the conflict in Afghanistan ends. He issued this call at Mass at the Cathedral of Saint Matthew in downtown Washington, saying it would be an appropriate way to remember those who died in the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. He left the choice of the day up to the individual, but recommended Friday, the day on which Christ died and the holy day for Muslims.

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*Behind the news: Visions for Peace – Voices of Faith* is a joint initiative of:

**World Council of Churches (WCC)** - a fellowship of 342 churches, in more than 100 countries in all continents from virtually all Christian traditions. The Roman Catholic Church is not a member church but works cooperatively with the WCC. The highest governing body is the Assembly, which meets approximately every seven years. The WCC was formally inaugurated in 1948 in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

**Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance** - a global action network of churches and church-related organizations who have pledged themselves to change unjust policies and practices related to global trade and HIV/AIDS. Participants speak out with one voice against injustice and structures which deprive human beings of dignity and for alternative visions based on the Gospel.

**Action by Churches Together (ACT)** - an international alliance of churches and relief agencies assisting thousands of people recovering from emergencies in more than 50 countries worldwide.

*This bulletin/website is intended to provide an ecumenical space for visions for peace and voices of faith; these materials do not necessarily reflect official policy of WCC, ACT, or EAA.*

Please circulate the Bulletin to friends, colleagues and people who are looking for alternative perspectives on the current situation.

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