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Ecumenical Patriarch Appeals For Peace in the World

Expresses Concern Over Increase of Violence in the World

By Junno Arocho

ROME, AUG. 16, 2012 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, Archbishop of Constantinople expressed concern on the rise of violence in the world and issued an appeal for peace. Citing the "phenomenon of intolerance, the senior bishop of the Eastern Orthodox Church said that such occurrences not only undermines world stability and peace, but also constitutes a denial of human dignity."

"Racial murders, genocide, ethnic cleansing, anti-semitism, destruction of places of worship etc, constitute barbaric acts that must be denounced publicly, particularly when they are masked with the veil of religion in an effort to justify them," he said.

The Ecumenical Patriarch expressed concern in Nigeria and Sudan where there have been recent clashes between Christians and Muslim, saying that such religious tensions can only be overcome "by promoting love for one's neighbor as the peaceful expression of the bond uniting every human being."

Citing a deep concern with the conflict in Syria, Bartholomew I also called on all parties involved to lay down their arms and allow for humanitarian efforts to aid the population. Violence has raged in Syria since 2011 when President Bashar al-Assad's regime sought to quell the rebellion against the government. At least 20,000 people have died in the conflict, many of those killed being civilians.

"The solution to such conflicts requires dialogue above all else. Dialogue constitutes more than merely a better understanding or toleration of our differences, indeed, dialogue is the essence of reconciliation and transformation. Therefore, religious leaders should be working together, through dialogue, to affirm God's peace in the world," he said.

The Archbishop of Constantinople emphasized that religion must never be used as a cause for war, fanaticisms or political motivations. Bartholomew I, concluded his statement calling on

international organizations, leaders, all people of good will “to contribute to the triumph of peace over war and hatred.”

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