

US Presbyterians stand in prayer and solidarity with Ethiopian Christians



The brutal execution of 30 Ethiopian Christians on the shores of Libya shown in a video released April 19 have caused great commotion among our partners in the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY). In spite of the fact that the particular denominational affiliation of those murdered have not yet been determined, the leadership of the Mekane Yesus Church was involved in drafting a press release from the Ethiopian Interfaith Council.

In correspondence with Rev. Debbie Braaskma, Presbyterian World Mission's Area Coordinator for Africa, Rev. Endrias Essay, president of South West Bethel Synod, noted that the government had announced three days of national mourning and there were demonstrations in several cities in Ethiopia with numerous people attending. He also said, "This time we are mourning and praying to God for peace for our nation and peace for the world."

Rev. Dr. Wakeseyoum Idossa, who serves as the president of the Mekane Yesus Church, expressed his appreciation to Presbyterian World Mission's Evangelism Catalyst Juan Sarmiento for the sympathy and continued prayers of the people of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for peace in the aftermath of the event.

An official statement posted on April 29 on the EECMY website (<http://www.eecmy.org/?page=Inews&article=220>) states "the detestable act committed by the terrorist group had a religious cover; nevertheless, it does not represent any religious belief. As the original purpose of human creation is to do only the good and constructive deeds, almost every religion teaches that human beings should live in peace and harmony by striving together for mutual benefits and contribute to betterment of others".

Several leaders of Presbyterian World Mission, including Director Hunter Farrell, sent a letter to the executive board of EECMY expressing their condolences and stating that they a "have issued a call to prayer to the 10,000 congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to join us in prayer asking the Spirit to bring comfort to the relatives and friends of those who have lost their lives, for repentance to those who terrorize the vulnerable and for the 'peace that surpasses all understanding' for those that may seek to perpetuate hostilities and vengeance." The letter of sympathy concludes by saying "May the God of life strengthen us as the Body of Christ to boldly witness to his reconciling and death-conquering love of God in an age of violence and despair.