

However the report calls the churches not only to act against the TNC's abuse of power, but also to repent of their own involvements in such abuses: "We in the churches stand in judgement for our past and present captivity to unjust economic structures and systems..."

In taking action, churches are warned against the dangers of paternalism and urged to include the experience of the "excluded, exploited and oppressed".

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WCC SUPPORTS WALDHEIM'S EFFORTS FOR MISSING PERSONS IN CHILE

Geneva (EPS) - A cable of "deep appreciation" for the UN's efforts on behalf of missing persons in Chile has been sent to UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim by the director of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, World Council of Churches.

Under date of 27 June, Leopoldo Nilus assured Kurt Waldheim of continued WCC support in further efforts to obtain full information about the many persons who have disappeared in Chile. He lifted up particularly Mr Waldheim's role "regarding the hunger strike on the premises of the Economic Commission of Latin America (ECLA) in Santiago", held by the relatives of some of the missing from 14-23 June.

More than a thousand persons are reliably reported to have disappeared in Chile since the present regime came into power by a coup d'état in 1973. Hundreds of their cases have been documented and brought to the attention of the Chilean authorities over the last year through legal proceedings initiated by the Vicaria de la Solidaridad of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Santiago.

Twenty-six relatives (24 women and two men) of some of the missing began a hunger strike in the Santiago offices of ECLA on 14 June on behalf of all who had disappeared. According to a spokesman of the UN Office of Public Information in New York, Secretary General Waldheim has since been informed by the Chilean Government that it was "prepared to give information on the whereabouts of relatives of the group of 26 and also declared that it will not apply sanctions against members of the group". The group of 26 then decided to terminate the hunger strike on 23 June, and expressed its thanks to the UN, its secretary general and to the executive secretary of ECLA for their "serene and humanitarian attitude". The Santiago group had received support from groups in North America and Europe during the strike.

A representative of the WCC's Commission of the Churches on International Affairs has made statements to the UN Commission on Human Rights on the issue of missing persons in Chile as early as 1975 and has supported legal efforts by church bodies in Chile to determine their whereabouts. The Fifth Assembly of the WCC, in a major public statement on human rights in Latin America, protested the systematic increase of human rights violations on that continent, and singled out in particular the disappearance of persons and unexplained deaths following arbitrary and/or unjustified detention without proper warrants from competent courts. "Having considered this anguishing reality", the WCC stated, "we respectfully but energetically exhort the governments of Latin America to comply with the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights" and "call upon the churches in Latin America to educate...its members in order that they may be led to comprehend their responsibility as a community of faith in Christ with respect to the Declaration (leading to) the implementation of concrete programme in defence of those rights by the churches and their members".

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