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Uppsala, August 30, 2018

Dear Brother in Christ,

The Bishops' Conference of the Church of Sweden has been gathered these past days. We are aware of your message regarding the law adopted by the Knesset last month entitled "Basic Law: Israel as the Nation State of the Jewish People". We share your deep concern regarding this law. As partners with the ELCJHL we want to assure you of our prayers for your church and the wellbeing of the democratic state of Israel, with peace and justice for all inhabitants in the Holy Land.

We have followed the discussions around the so called Nation-State Law, as well as the reactions that have emerged since it passed. Concerns and objections have been voiced by ecumenical bodies and within the Jewish community. A number of prominent Jews in Sweden also demanded that the law be rescinded.

We share the assessment that the law is weakening fundamental values of equality and democracy, as well as internationally recognized agreements.

Several aspects of the Nation-State law are disturbing. For example the principle that "the right to exercise national self-determination in the State of Israel is unique to the Jewish people", consequently depriving the many non-Jewish citizens of Israel of their right to participate in national self-determination. Moreover, the status of the Arabic language has been degraded from an official language alongside Hebrew, to a language with "a special status". We are also saddened by the fact that the vision of Jerusalem as a shared city between three religions and two peoples, is dishonored by the new law.

As Christians we pray and long for just peace in the Holy Land. This includes a democratic Israel where all citizens can prosper and enjoy equal rights and responsibilities. We are afraid that this law will not bring the Holy Land closer to peace. Rather, it risks deepening divisions, escalating tensions, and promoting increased violence. Jews, Muslims and Christians all have their roots in the Holy Land. Around 1.5 million citizens of Israel identify themselves as Arab Israeli; the Nation-State Law is degrading their citizenship and ignoring their significant contributions to society.

Therefore, we support you in your call upon the Knesset to rescind this law and instead work for legislation which can secure equal rights for all citizens, and protect the mosaic that is part of Israeli society. The Church of Sweden remains committed to its long-lasting engagement for human rights and a just peace and in the Holy Land.

We will continue to pray for you, your church and all people in Israel and Palestine. We persist in our hope for a just peace and co-existence for the two peoples and three religions living together in the Holy Land.

Church of Sweden

May our Lord Jesus Christ sustain you and bless you abundantly with the gifts of the Holy Spirit!

Yours in Christ,



Antje Jackelén
Archbishop
Church of Sweden



Eva Brunne
Bishop of Stockholm
Member of WCC Central Committee



Johan Dalman
Bishop of Strängnäs
Partner Diocese of the ELCJHL