



The Anglican Archbishop of Central Africa, the Most Revd Albert Chama, has written to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon ahead of the Global Summit Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants, being held this week at the UN General Assembly in New York.

Writing on the request of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Archbishop Albert – who is Chair of the Anglican Alliance – said the "global tragedy" of the forced displacement of millions of people "is now a crisis that calls us to work together in new and creative ways in response to such suffering and disruption."

The trauma experienced by the world's 60 million refugees - fleeing conflict and violence, as well as the effects of poverty and climate change - demands a much more intentional and robust collective response, he said, adding that churches and other faith communities "are more than ready to take their place."

"In today's world hospitality, reconciliation and love are our most formidable weapons against hatred and extremism," he added.

Archbishop Albert said the Anglican Communion is consistently at the forefront of humanitarian response, conflict prevention – above all currently in the Great Lakes of Africa and in South Sudan – and in rebuilding communities and lives.

In his letter he expressed the Anglican Alliance's warm appreciation for colleagues at the UNHCR and other UN partners. He also commended to Ban Ki-moon the Anglican Communion representatives attending the summit, the Right Revd David Hamid and Canon Andrew Khoo, who he said "will bring to the Summit the experience and the witness of the churches responding to the crisis in Europe and in South East Asia."

Read the text of Archbishop Albert Chama's letter to Ban Ki-moon:

Your Excellency,

I am writing at the request of His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, as you prepare for the important Global Summit Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants, which will be held next week at the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

The global tragedy of the forced displacement of millions of people is now a crisis that calls us to work together in new and creative ways in response to such suffering and disruption. The trauma experienced by the world's 60 million refugees speaks to our common humanity, and pleads with us to take action as we reach out to respond to their suffering. However, people are not only fleeing conflict and violence, but also moving around the world to escape from poverty or the effects of climate change. People search to find places where they can work and feed their families, to find better opportunities or freedom to live in peace and safety, whoever they are. All this demands a much more intentional and robust collective response in which the churches and other faith communities are more than ready to take their place.

In the United Kingdom, in my own country Zambia, and in many of the 164 countries around the world in which the Anglican Communion is present, the churches, together with other local religious communities, are working with their United Nations and civil society partners and with governments to provide sanctuary and protection to those fleeing conflict and poverty.

In addition, as our church communities reach out in loving service to those who have lost everything and who often arrive profoundly traumatized, bearing both physical and psychological scars from their experiences, we know that these people, whom the world labels as refugees, asylum seekers or migrants are, like all the people of the earth, treasured human beings made in the image of God. They deserve safety, freedom and the opportunity to flourish. It is easy to be overwhelmed by the sheer numbers of people on the move, but we know that each of them is not only another number in a huge statistic but also an individual who brings a unique story of displacement, a unique potential to flourish and a unique ability to contribute to the common good.

Whilst responding to this massive movement of people is a humanitarian challenge for us all, we know that there are still governments around the world that are reluctant to accord such people any national legal protection or to recognise their status. This only serves to exacerbate their situation, placing them at the mercy of human traffickers, smugglers and others who would exploit their predicament for profit. The churches of the Anglican Communion are working to assist the dialogue with such governments and to advocate for stronger legal protection for these most vulnerable people. We aim to contribute where possible to a durable solution that is based on appreciation of the dignity of the individual and respect for human rights.

As I reflect on the reality around the world that the Anglican Communion is consistently at the forefront of humanitarian response, conflict prevention, above all currently in the Great Lakes of Africa and in South Sudan, and in rebuilding communities and lives, I recall the words of the Archbishop of Canterbury at the beginning of 2016:

"Standing by a mass grave that I had just consecrated for the bodies of clergy and lay leaders of Bor Cathedral, last January, and then hearing the Archbishop of the Sudan, whose home town it was, call for reconciliation, and to know that he is working with us on that now, was one of the most powerful moments of my life."

In today's world hospitality, reconciliation and love are our most formidable weapons against hatred and extremism.

So, as you and your staff prepare for these very important meetings, we express our warmest appreciation of our colleagues at the UNHCR and other UN partners. We commend to you our Anglican Communion representatives, The Right Reverend David Hamid and Canon Andrew Khoo – who will bring to the Summit the experience and the witness of the churches responding to the crisis in Europe and in South East Asia.

We also assure you that you are daily in our prayers in this work that we share,

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