



## **World Student Christian Federation (WSCF)**

### **Mourning the Loss & Decrying the Massacre Praying for Healing & Seeking Justice**

14 June 2016

The World Student Christian Federation mourns the massive loss of life and the wounding and traumatizing of so many people due to the atrocious mass shooting in a gay club in Orlando, Florida in the United States in the early hours of Sunday morning, June 12, 2016.

We collectively express our solidarity with families and friends who have lost their beloved ones in what is described as the biggest mass shooting in the recent history of the United States of America. As a student movement and federation, we grieve the death of so many young men and women, and the loss of so much youthful energy and future potential.

In this tragic time, the WSCF extends deep solidarity with LGBTQ communities around the world who are often victims of bigotry, harassment, discrimination, violence and murder for their sexual orientation and gender diversity. We take note that the majority of the victims are Latinos and Latinas, a group that has often come under attack in a vile electoral rhetoric by a political class that often manipulates issues for political gains. The rampage that occurred in Orlando is another example of how many people are imbibed with a culture of violence that reigns undisturbed in the world, often motivated by hatred towards minority communities.

We acknowledge that we are part of a global ecumenical community that is still divided on the issues of human sexuality and therefore lament the complicity of the global church in contributing to the suffering of sexual and gender minorities across the globe. This complicity does not help in eliminating the use of religion and religious rhetoric in justifying acts of terror and violence.

We pray today for God's consolation of the bereaved families and of traumatized communities in Orlando and across the world. We urge our student movements, communities and churches to stand in solidarity with LGBTQ people across the globe who today feel confused, terrorized and

enraged by another act of hatred toward people who want to be who they are and love who they do in the open and without fear.

The WSCF is a Federation of Student Movements whose members' age is in the same bracket as those who were murdered in the attack. Many of our students, staff and Senior Friends across the regions identify as LGBTQ and we accompany them as they feel the grief they feel today. This violent act, as all the conflicts being waged in the world, reminds us that the production, sale and ease in purchasing small but deadly arms and assault-style weapons point to the root causes of this heinous attack together with the perceived reasons that motivated the person who committed this mass homicide.

Although we do not shy away from naming the personal responsibility of those who carry out these despicable acts, we charge a societal system that condones violence against peoples who are made vulnerable by their marginalization and minoritization. We must thereby dismantle the veil of discrimination and fear that still envelops LGBTQ people in our societies and encourage our communities and governments to act today to protect those who are targeted by ignorance, violence and hatred.

As Christians, we must appeal to the Gospel of love and justice to resist the deadly onslaught on LGBTQ people, often done in the name of God. As a community of students and young people committed to interfaith engagement and justice, we stand in solidarity with our Muslim brothers and sisters who will likely be attacked and deviled because of the religious background of the perpetrator. For the massacre in Orlando, we must make sure that the bigotry of the perpetrator is equally emphasized as the terrorism ascribed to his act.

We affirm the sanctity of safe spaces for LGBTQ people for whom often dancing, as is the case of WSCF events, is a liberating act from hurt and injustice. We call on the God of love to bring healing to those who cry today and to make us agents of transformation for a world in need of justice and peace.

On behalf of the WSCF Advocacy and Solidarity Committee (ASC) members

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