

**LWF Joint Submission to the Third Cycle UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Iceland
40th Session of the UPR Working Group
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Joint Submission By:

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF),¹ the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Iceland (ELCI),² and Iceland Church Aid (ICA)³

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Position: Bishop of Hólar in ELCI

¹ **The Lutheran World Federation (LWF):** Founded in Lund, Sweden, in 1947, LWF is a global communion of 148 churches in the Lutheran tradition, representing over 75 million Christians in 99 countries. The LWF acts on behalf of its member churches in areas of ecumenical and interfaith relations, theology, human rights, ecological justice, humanitarian assistance, communication and the various aspects of mission and development. LWF has a consultative status with ECOSOC since 1952.

² **The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Iceland (ELCI):** Also known as the Icelandic National Church – is by far the largest religious community in Iceland and has close roots with Icelandic history and culture. As of now about 70% of Icelanders belong to this church and in spite of rapid change in religious landscape it is generally acknowledged that ELCI provides a faith-based, pastoral and social support network all around the country, mainly through its staff and volunteer networks. The Icelandic National Church has a great deal of knowledge and human resources to meet people who live on the fringes of society. The goal of the church is to promote human dignity, respect and justice and pave the way for the people who live on the fringes to the center of society. It does not happen automatically and the church needs to add many more staff to these projects. It happens first and foremost with increased resources because human resources are certainly there. Due to its wide network and close connection with the people of Iceland, in happy times as well as difficult times, ELCI staff is in unique position for oversight of the conditions people in Iceland live in, and to provide wisdom on how human rights can be strengthened for everyone.

³ **Icelandic Church Aid (ICA):** Founded by the ELCI in 1970, ICA provides emergency aid, and runs empowerment and advocacy projects with people experiencing poverty in Iceland. We initiate and coordinate humanitarian assistance and development cooperation projects abroad on behalf of the National Church of Iceland. Their projects abroad are carried out in bilateral cooperation with local NGOs and through the Lutheran World Federation Department for World Service, LWF/DWS, and Action by Churches Together, ACT Alliance.

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