

Christians, Muslims call for joint crisis group

by [Peter Kenny](#) in the [November 30, 2010](#) issue

Global Christian and Muslim leaders meeting in Switzerland have jointly called for the formation of a group which can be mobilized whenever a crisis threatens to arise in which Christians and Muslims find themselves in conflict.

In closing their November 1-4 meeting at Geneva's Ecumenical Center, leaders of the two faiths said, "Religion is often invoked in conflict creation, even when other factors, such as unfair resource allocation, oppression, occupation and injustice, are the real roots of conflict."

They added: "The basis of our faiths, as expressed in the call to get to know each other and the two commandments—to love God and to love the neighbor—provide a solid ground for our common responsibility to act and address common concerns."

The conference at the Geneva center, which houses the World Council of Churches and other Christian organizations, was convened by the WCC, the Libyan-based World Islamic Call Society, the Jordanian-based Royal Aal al Bayt Institute and the consortium, A Common Word, a group that includes Muslim scholars from around the world.

The general secretary of the WCC, Olav Fykse Tveit, and Muslim leaders who took part were asked November 4 what sort of crisis they would deem necessary to assemble such a group. Tveit said ideally such a group would be able to prevent a serious crisis. At the least, he said, Christian-Muslim collaborators must speak out as they did earlier at their meeting. Participants condemned an attack by an armed group on

Baghdad's Our Lady of Salvation Church in which 58 people were killed on October 31.

The leaders urged "the United Nations and its Security Council and all groups that call for just peace, and especially Iraqi officials, to intervene to put an end to all terrorist attacks aimed at degrading Iraqi people, irrespective of their religious affiliation, and defiling Christian and Islamic sacred places."

In a separate, pointed statement, the World Student Christian Federation general secretary, Christine Housel, said from Lebanon: "The Christian community in the Middle East is threatened every day by such incidents."

Not only that, said Muhammad Al-Sammak of Lebanon's National Council for Christian-Muslim Dialogue: "We have noticed a big change in the demographics of the world." Christians, he noted, are growing rapidly in numbers in Asia, Africa and South America where Muslims also live. "Out of 1.5 billion Muslims in the world, one third now live in non-Muslim countries." —ENI