

I. Human Slavery and Trafficking

The Baptist World Alliance General Council, meeting in Bangkok, Thailand, July 5-7, 2017:

ACKNOWLEDGES that General Council has regularly reminded the global family of Baptists about the evil practice of modern slavery;

REGRETS the sad reality that slavery and human trafficking exist today within nearly every society;

LAMENTS the deep trauma experienced by fellow human beings who are held against their will and forced to participate in economic, violent, and/or other exploitative activities for the personal gain or profit of others;

CONDEMNS those who create demand for such services, which perpetuates these modern forms of slavery;

AFFIRMS all legal and societal initiatives to prevent and eliminate modern-day forms of slavery and human trafficking;

URGES global Baptists to make use of a growing number of biblical, theological, and practical resources designed for educating persons about injustice and advocating for victims of slavery and human trafficking;

CALLS upon all Baptist bodies, churches, and individuals to actively embrace opportunities for Christian ministry and witness by standing up for the rights of “the least of these,” and working towards the prevention of slavery and human trafficking, and caring for those impacted; and

ENCOURAGES Baptists to collaborate with other Christians and all people of good will who are also concerned about bringing an end to this personal, social, and economic injustice.

II. Religious Freedom in Russia

The Baptist World Alliance General Council, meeting in Bangkok Thailand, July 5-7, 2017:

REAFFIRMS our historic Baptist commitment to religious freedom as a gift of God to all people, regardless of denomination or religion; and that this same commitment is enshrined in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights Article 18, to which the Russian Federation is a signatory;

NOTES with great concern the passage of recent legislation that restricts evangelism and missionary work by minority faiths, which has led to a deterioration of religious freedom in Russia;

REGRETS the application of this law to make illegal Jehovah's Witnesses as a religious denomination, labelling it as an 'extremist group' and seeking to criminalize its worship;

NOTES with concern that fellow Baptists and other Christian believers in Russia have been arrested and fined during the past year due to the new laws curtailing religious liberty;

COMMENDS the response of the Russian Baptist Union for standing for the principle of religious freedom for everyone, even for those with whom they have deep differences, such as Jehovah's Witnesses; and for having expressed to President Putin its 'profound concern' at this violation 'of freedom of conscience of tens of thousands of citizens of the Russian federation who confess the teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses';

URGES the President, government and judiciary of the Russian Federation to restore the religious rights of all people, especially the Jehovah's Witnesses, at the forthcoming Appeal of their being declared an illegal organization;

UPHOLDS the rights of all religious groups in Russia, especially religious minorities, to legally exist and to worship in freedom, as provided for in the Constitution of the Russian Federation and the United Nations Declarations on Human Rights, Article 18.

III. Religious Liberty in the USA

The Baptist World Alliance General Council, meeting in Bangkok Thailand from 5-7 July 2017:

RECALLS that Freedom of Religion or Belief for all is a fundamental value of the Baptist World Alliance; that the BWA opposes all kind of discrimination based upon faith or religion; and that this is also a fundamental pillar in the Constitution of the United States of America;

NOTES that the current travel ban on residents of several Muslim-majority nations raised serious concerns about religious freedom, while the BWA believes that no law should be used to discriminate on the basis of religion;

URGES President Trump and the United States Government to affirm its historic commitment to religious freedom for all people as the legal process around this issue continues; and

CALLS upon Baptists in the United States to understand the implications of religious discrimination and to stand firm for cherished Baptist principles of religious liberty.

IV. Refugees in East Africa

The Baptist World Alliance General Council, meeting in Bangkok, Thailand, July 5-7, 2017:

NOTES with appreciation the resolution titled “Ministry to Refugees” adopted by the General Council of the Baptist World Alliance meeting in Vancouver, Canada, July 6-8, 2016;

ACKNOWLEDGES the deteriorating circumstances in some nations of East Africa resulting in a significant expansion of refugees seeking food, shelter, and safety;

RECOGNIZES the heroic responses of Baptist bodies in East Africa to these changing circumstances; and

REQUESTS Baptists around the world to remember the people of East Africa in prayer and to provide support as possible.

V. The Humanitarian Crisis in Venezuela

The Baptist World Alliance General Council, meeting in Bangkok, Thailand, July 5-7, 2017:

STATES its concerns at the climate of political and social instability and violence in Venezuela, which has led to a deteriorating socio-economic situation, including a shortage of food and medicines;

EXPRESSES compassion to all the Venezuelan people, and especially to fellow Baptists in the country;

CALLS on the Venezuelan authorities to allow humanitarian aid into the country, and to grant access to those who wish to assist the worst affected sectors of society;

CONDEMNNS all forms of violence and calls for respect for democracy to guarantee a just way out of the grave situation affecting the nation;

PRAYS for all the people of Venezuela that peace will be recovered and internal divisions will cease.