

# Journal of Conventional Weapons Destruction

---

Volume 4  
Issue 3 *The Journal of Mine Action*

Article 26

---

October 2000

## World Council of Churches

CISR JMU  
*Center for International Stabilization and Recovery at JMU (CISR)*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/cisr-journal>



Part of the [Defense and Security Studies Commons](#), [Emergency and Disaster Management Commons](#), [Other Public Affairs, Public Policy and Public Administration Commons](#), and the [Peace and Conflict Studies Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

JMU, CISR (2000) "World Council of Churches," *Journal of Mine Action* : Vol. 4 : Iss. 3 , Article 26.  
Available at: <https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/cisr-journal/vol4/iss3/26>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Center for International Stabilization and Recovery at JMU Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of Conventional Weapons Destruction by an authorized editor of JMU Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact [dc\\_admin@jmu.edu](mailto:dc_admin@jmu.edu).

## Profiles

---

Information in this issue may be out of date. [Click here](#) to link to the most recent issue.

### **World Council of Churches**

In 1937, church leaders established a World Council of Churches (WCC), but its official organization was deferred by the outbreak of World War II until August 1948. At that time, representatives of 147 churches assembled in Amsterdam to coordinate the organization of the WCC. Since then, a growing number of churches on every continent have joined the WCC. The organization feels that they have built new bridges over ancient chasms that have separated believers from one another, while working together to stop inhumanity and injustice by active involvement in a variety of humanitarian issues. The WCC has been involved in mine action over the last four years. This involvement has included educational work to raise landmine awareness in the public consciousness and advocacy work to bring governments to the table to sign the treaty ban. In the field, it has been involved in programs for demining and support for victims.

### **Ecumenical: A Cornerstone Belief**

The word ecumenical is derived from the Greek term oikoumene, which may be translated as “the whole inhabited world.” “It is in seeing this world as God’s that we see ourselves as one. It is in seeing all the world’s people as made in God’s image that we are called to protect the welfare of every one.”-WCC

The churches that make up the WCC live in remarkably different social conditions. Their members speak an array of languages. Their distinctive histories produce different styles of worship and forms of organization and governance. It is this diversity that makes the WCC an exciting and challenging forum. Historic tensions and differences sometimes persist, and new difficulties occasionally surface, yet the fundamental commitment remains to build a community among the churches and to reach outward in humanitarian endeavors.

### **Current Initiatives**

The current focus for the WCC is a major long-term initiative: The Proclamation of a Decade to Overcome Violence (2001-2010). The organization’s Central Committee approved the basic approaches for this initiative and set out five goals:

- addressing the spectrum of violence, in all its varieties,
- challenging the churches to affirm reconciliation and to renounce the “spirit, logic and practice” of violence,
- understanding security in terms of cooperation and community rather than domination and competition,
- working with communities of other faiths against the misuse of religious and ethnic identities in pluralistic societies,
- challenging the growing militarization of the world, especially the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

The initiative, rather than being a monolithic program centered in Geneva, will offer a variety of entry points and use an assortment of approaches. These will include studies, campaigns, education, worship, spirituality, collecting and sharing stories and using a full range of media, especially the World Wide Web.

### **Involvement in the Crusade for Mine Action**

The WCC feels that the problem of AP landmines is fundamentally humanitarian because these weapons of war kill in peacetime. “Designed for soldiers, they kill and injure women and children.”- WCC. It is because of the indiscriminate humanitarian effects of these weapons that the WCC is a strong advocate and lobbyist in the ban movement. The WCC is also a strong supporter of increasing government support for mine-clearance and victim assistance programs.

The WCC feels that the language used to describe the global humanitarian crisis of AP landmines is not new. It is the same language used by the humanitarian community 70 years ago to condemn chemical weapons. The language is moral in nature, not military; ethical, not strategic.

While the WCC is actively involved in victim assistance and mine awareness programs, it ultimately feels that the only way for churches to assist in mine action is in taking an active role in landmine prevention.

### **Contact Information**

World Council of Churches  
P.O. Box 2100, 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland

