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## Multiple Challenges

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Churches in many countries are in the position to extend an unmistakable call for justice and human rights as well as for an appropriate climate change policy in their respective nation. Their voice is unique and powerful. And they are connected all over the world.

In this context there are four major challenges for the churches on the horizon:



### Challenge 1:

#### a radical shift in thought and action

(e.g. a fundamental transformation in economy and consumption)

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### Challenge 2:

#### a new dynamic

(e.g. interfaith cooperation at local, national and regional levels)

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### Challenge 3:

#### a new methodology

(e.g. narratives based on peoples views)

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### Challenge 4:

#### a victims-based standard

(e.g. fostering people's resilience)

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## The Multiple Threat

Why Churches should get involved!

### Climate Justice needs Human Rights!

There are many reasons which lead to the conclusion that **climate change violates human rights**. At the same time it becomes clear how relevant human rights are in terms of fighting for climate justice and against climate change as a multiple threat. So the commitment of churches to protect human rights is of great value.

All this is described in a study on **"Climate Justice, Human Rights and the Role of Churches"** which was published in 2011 by the United Evangelical Mission (UEM) in Wuppertal/Germany and the World Council of Churches. It relates to key elements of the gospel such as justice, peace, and integrity of creation. And it refers to human rights as an effective tool in claiming basic rights and in clarifying responsibilities for human rights violations caused by climate change.

Order the study: [jpjc@vemission.org](mailto:jpjc@vemission.org)  
or download the study



Internet: [www.vemission.org/climatejustice](http://www.vemission.org/climatejustice)

or

[www.climate-alliance-germany.de/climate-justice-human-rights-and-role-of-churches/](http://www.climate-alliance-germany.de/climate-justice-human-rights-and-role-of-churches/)

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## Climate Change Violates Human Rights

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## From fertile soils to heavy droughts

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For the community of Kuresoi in Eastern Kenya “Climate Change” is not just a word but a bitter experience of loss and injustice although traditionally they were blessed with fertile lands. Kuresoi is bordering the Mau Complex, the largest water reservoir in Kenya and the largest indigenous forest in East Africa, covering an area of 675,000 acres. The fertile soils are derived from volcanic parent material that used to provide the region with food throughout the year.

However the change in weather patterns has made the area food insecure. The degradation and deforestation of the Mau Forest has resulted in the drying of rivers, persistent droughts and serious lack of water affecting also Kuresoi. On top of that the Kenyan parliament decided to evict the whole community of approximately 750 small farming households in order to preserve the water. In November 2009, the eviction started. But soon it was finished because of the resistance of the local population. The new constitution since 2010 allows better protection for traditional land tenure.

As there are unclear land tenure systems in Kuresoi, most peasants do not have land titles, and the government can displace them easily. Thus, climate change and its impacts come along with fundamental risks for the life of the peasant families: access to land and resources, to appropriate technologies, education, health and information – **a multiple threat to their existence.**

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## A Key Role for Churches!

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Kuresoi in Kenya is just one example out of thousands all over the world where human rights are violated – an obvious challenge to the churches. Considering the wide gap between powerful state actors and vulnerable victims churches should play a key role in a conflict like this: following their mission on the side of the poor and oppressed and in compliance with international human rights norms.

This seems even more important since the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio + 20) in June 2012 failed and missed another opportunity to agree upon time-bound, accountable, and solid commitments that demonstrate a credible path forward, enable sustainable conditions, and thereby guarantee a life in dignity for everyone, based on human rights, equity and respect for the environment.

Therefore churches should play a more prominent and dynamic role in order to speak out and to address the issue of climate change, particularly from a rights-based perspective.

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