

RESOLUTION: 1510gb-2

REFUGEES

The Governing Board of the World Jewish Congress, meeting in Rome on 27 October 2015,

NOTES with great sadness that resulting from the brutal civil war in Syria, which is now in its fifth year, and following the advance of the so-called 'Islamic State' terror movement in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), hundreds of thousands of people from these countries alone have been killed and more than 11 million, including half the population of Syria, have been forced to flee their homes;

NOTES with great concern that an estimated 3,000 refugees have died over the past year trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea from North Africa or the Levant into Europe;

RECALLS that many Jews in the past had to flee their homelands due to persecution or expulsion and had to settle elsewhere and that during the 20th century Jews often faced closed borders;

FURTHER RECALLS the Talmudic maxim that "He who saves a single life saves the whole world";

WELCOMES the view expressed by Pope Francis that it is a humanitarian obligation to provide refugees with a sanctuary irrespective of origin or religion;

WELCOMES the fact that many European countries, in particular Germany, have gone to great lengths to provide a humanitarian solution to the refugee crisis by allowing hundreds of thousands of refugees into Europe;

PRAISES the many initiatives undertaken by citizens and initiatives, including by Jewish communities in numerous European countries, to provide the refugees with assistance;

ACKNOWLEDGES that the unprecedented number of refugees heading to Europe poses real challenges for many host countries and has raised concerns among their population, including on security matters, all of which need to be taken seriously by the authorities;

URGES that particular attention is paid to the longer-term integration of *bona fide* refugee migrants in their host countries, in particular with respect to education, and to the need to respect democratic principles, the rule of law and their host countries' values, including a firm rejection of anti-Semitism.