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## **Germany: Mgr. Hesse (Bishops' Conference), "refugees are not mere numbers, but people with faces and stories"**

Ahead of tomorrow's Summit in Berlin (10 May) on the reception and integration of refugees, where the Federal Chancellor, Olaf Scholz, and the Federal Government will exchange views with the Länder and local authorities, the bishop in charge of the pastoral care of refugees and migrants of the German Bishops' Conference, Archbishop Stefan Hesse of Hamburg, reiterated that human rights should be respected in all decisions. "The ethical obligation to provide protection for refugees enshrined in international law should not be questioned in Germany and Europe", Mgr. Hesse said in a statement released by the German Bishops' Conference (DBK). The protection of refugees, he added, is a duty for society as a whole and involves major challenges. Länder and municipalities should be supported by the Federal Government, and "signs of failing to meet this obligation must be taken seriously", said Mgr. Hesse. So far, he stressed, a great social solidarity has helped in ensuring that this duty was met. But "pragmatic and humane responses are needed, instead of alarmist slogans", Mgr. Hesse continued. Migrants "are not mere numbers, but people with faces and stories". Caritas also expressed its views on the Berlin Summit: "All too often in this country, we are told stories that blame those who seek protection", said Caritas President Eva Maria Welskop-Deffaa. "What we need is a clear commitment to working together to provide reliable support to people fleeing to Germany".

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