

FOR PRESENTING AT THE 2026 GA ANNUAL MEETINGS

TEXT OF THE GA EMERGENCY MOTION ON THE WAR IN THE MIDDLE EAST FROM 12 FULL MEMBERS

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches stands in solidarity with all people suffering the devastating effects of the current war in the Middle East being waged by the United States, Israel and Iran.

We join the United Nations, the International Red Cross and other global agencies in calling for all warring parties to respect international law and the UN Charter and immediately end this war, which has no UN Security Council sanction and is considered by the vast majority of international jurists illegal in international law and a flagrant violation of the UN Charter.

We stand in solidarity with the peace witness of Pope Leo, Pax Christi International, the American Unitarian Universalist Association, the American Friends Service Committee, Quakers in Britain and other religious and humanitarian organisations and UN agencies in strongly urging an immediate end to the war and lasting peace and reconciliation in the spirit of the Global Ethic of the Parliament of the World's Religions and other advocates of peace worldwide.

We call for massive immediate medical and other humanitarian aid to all victims of this war through the British Red Cross, Save the Children, UNICEF and other overseas aid charities and urge fellow Unitarians to respond with generosity to their life saving appeals.

Signatories to our 2026 GA emergency motion on war in the Middle East

Rev. Michael Allured, Rev. Brian Cockroft, Rev. Lena Cockroft, Rev. Jim Corrigall, Rev. Joy Croft, Rev. Danny Crosby, Rev. Chris Goacher, Rev. Dr Peter Godfrey, Rev. Elizabeth Harley, Rev. John Harley, Rev. Peter Hewis, Rev. Margaret Kirk, Rev. C.J. McGregor, Rev. Celia Midgley, Rev. John Midgley, Rev. Feargus O'Connor, Rev. Dr Andi Phillips, Rev. Lynne Readett, Rev. Lewis Rees, Rev. Sue Sinnamon, Rev. Geoffrey R. Usher, Rev. Charles VanDenBroeder, Rev. Martin Whitell, Rev. Sue Woolley

Background

1. This emergency motion is being presented to the 2026 Annual Meetings because it is important that we, as the Unitarian sovereign body, take a public position on the imperative need for peace in the Middle East and declare our support for international law and our respect for the United Nations Charter.
2. This devastating war, involving Iran, Israel and the United States, and with such global ramifications affecting everyone, was launched after the deadline date for the receipt of GA motions. The human, economic and environmental costs of this war are incalculable and, like the 2003 war in Iraq, will have consequences lasting generations.
3. We are therefore asking our General Assembly to pass this motion endorsing the March 2026 interfaith peace statements (summarised below) in response to this current war raging in the Middle East, of Religions for Peace and the Parliament of the World's Religions.
4. In the spirit of this motion we are also asking our General Assembly to stand in solidarity with the peace witness of Pope Leo, Pax Christi International, the American Friends Service Committee, Quakers in Britain, the American Unitarian Universalist Association and others. In solidarity with them we strongly urge an immediate end to the war now being waged by the United States, Israel and Iran and call for massive humanitarian life saving aid to all victims of this war.
5. This motion urges our General Assembly to stand in solidarity with all the people in the region suffering in the current hostilities and to join Religions for Peace in calling for a respect for international law and the UN Charter, an immediate cessation of hostilities and a return to diplomatic negotiations to secure a lasting peace settlement.

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6. Religions for Peace:

- i. declares: “Continued retaliation will only deepen civilian suffering and further destabilize the region. Durable security cannot be achieved through military escalation; it requires sustained diplomatic engagement grounded in international law”.
- ii. urges all parties to guarantee unhindered, safe and sustained access for humanitarian aid and reaffirms that the safeguarding of civilian lives and human dignity must remain a central priority of all.

7. This Religions for Peace declaration concludes: “As religious leaders and people of faith, we reaffirm the sacred value of every human life and our unwavering commitment to peace, justice, and reconciliation. Let us unite in prayer and action for the region—that peace, justice, and human dignity may prevail.”
8. By supporting this motion at this time of escalating conflict and uncertainty in the Middle East, we are asking you to endorse this 2026 declaration of the Parliament of the World’s Religions reaffirming a commitment to the Global Ethic, “a shared moral foundation embraced across traditions, calling humanity to nonviolence, justice, truthfulness, care for the Earth, and partnership grounded in mutual respect”.
9. The Parliament of the World’s Religions affirms that the “patterns that have long governed global conflict – rooted in division, fear, and rigid identification with nation, ideology, or difference – continue to generate cycles of suffering. Across cultures, faiths, and nations, we witness a deep and abiding yearning for peace, for compassion, and for a way of being that reflects our fundamental interconnectedness. Even as we honour the richness of our differences, we must also remember a simple and unifying truth: we all share this one Earth, fragile, interconnected, and entrusted to our collective care.”
10. This Global Ethic, launched at the Parliament of the World’s Religions in 1993, calls us to:
 - a culture of nonviolence and respect for life, where restraint and reverence guide action;
 - a culture of solidarity and a just economic order, where dignity is upheld for all people;
 - a culture of tolerance and a life of truthfulness, where understanding replaces distortion and fear;
 - a culture of equal rights and partnership, where no identity becomes a barrier to our shared humanity;
 - a culture of sustainability and care for the Earth, so often damaged and depleted by human violence.
11. The Parliament of the World’s Religions declares: “To embody these commitments requires more than agreement; it requires transformation in how we see and respond to one another. We therefore call upon... all leaders, communities, and individuals to act from the recognition that what affects one part of humanity affects us all. In this recognition lies the possibility not only of ending conflict, but also of transforming the very way we relate to one another as a human family.”
12. Though this motion we therefore ask our General Assembly to express our solidarity with the Parliament of the World’s Religions and agree that “the path forward is not found in choosing sides, but in choosing a deeper truth – the truth of our shared dignity, our shared responsibility, and our shared future. We call on all people, across geographic regions, traditions, cultures, and communities, not only to affirm these principles, but to live them.”
13. In the spirit of these inspirational interfaith peace statements, which this motion affirms, we urge our General Assembly to pass this emergency humanitarian and peace motion calling for “an immediate end to the war and lasting peace and reconciliation in the spirit of the Global Ethic of the Parliament of the World’s Religions and other advocates of peace worldwide”.