INTERFAITH YOUTH CALL FOR GLOBAL CEASEFIRE
DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS

Young people across the world have much to lose from the COVID-19 pandemic. With our societies and economies unstable, our futures are at stake; our dreams are on hold. Our actions, and the actions we hold our leadership accountable to today, will define the world we will live in tomorrow.

Even as the world works together to overcome COVID-19, in many parts of the globe hostilities and armed conflict continues to rage. We know that these crises disproportionately affect those who are already vulnerable – those who already face challenges accessing healthcare, shelter, food, and water. We know that on their own, governments, NGOs and other institutions are ill-equipped to protect and heal everyone from this virus. This is why the world’s religious communities need to come together to serve, not only our own communities, but all people across the globe.

Religions for Peace’s Global Interfaith Youth Network is mobilizing our members in 90 countries and 6 regions to respond to this crisis. We strongly echo the appeal of H.E. Mr. António Guterres, the Secretary General of the United Nations, for a global ceasefire.

While COVID-19 has forced the XXXII Olympiad in Tokyo to be postponed, we also make this call for the cessation of hostilities and conflicts in the Spirit of the Olympic Truce which promotes peace, friendship and understanding—qualities that will surely guide humanity in this time.

To Government leaders: we urge you to reallocate a portion of your military budget to your healthcare budget. Instead of purchasing more weapons, purchase medical supplies, personal protective equipment, testing kits and medications. Instead of spending on warfare, dedicate the funds to support the vulnerable, including refugees, migrants, and internally displaced persons to ensure their access to testing, treatment, clear water, and hygiene supplies. Instead of finding means to end lives, let us work together to save lives.

To our religious leaders, including those of us privileged with these responsibilities: Let us use our voices to urge governments and individuals to act morally and responsibly for the common good. Let us continue to guide believers in faith so that we may increase our compassion for all.

To all generations: We join with you in our efforts to sow the seeds of peace this world desperately needs. We will continue to lead projects that strive to keep our community members safe. Beyond this crisis, we will be faced with many more challenges that will require deep collaboration across all divisions. Let’s continue to bring the moral urgency and innovation that such challenges demand of humanity – Let’s continue to lead, not just of the future, but now. We call upon youth across the world to join us.
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