



Religions for Peace

Religions for Peace's Statement on the Prisoners in Russia and Belarus

25 October 2022

As leaders of world religions and faith communities, we express our sorrow, and concern, for the thousands of people in the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus, imprisoned for expressing their opposition to war and bloodshed, and expressing their support for freedom and for human rights.

All religious and ethical teachings, at their core, cherish human life, and basic freedom of expression, especially when waged for peace.

We consider the imprisonment of those who speak out against acts of war as a direct violation of all our sacred codes. We see it as our duty as faith leaders, worldwide, to speak out against the injustice of imprisoning those who refuse to wage, or to support war, and who express their opposition to any forms of it.

We believe strongly that any act of war must be avoided. Yet, we see war's ravages moving inexorably forward, and causing generations of harm to persons and to resources necessary for the survival of our planet, and for our integrity as an interdependent species.

We have repeatedly asked for a halt to war, and to all acts of aggression.

We call on relevant authorities in the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus, to, please, free these political prisoners.

Troubled by global developments, and in response to a call by faith leaders from around the world, including His Holiness Pope Francis, His Eminence Archbishop of Canterbury, and His Eminence the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, among many others, *Religions for Peace* convened a Peace Roundtable of faith leaders from countries suffering conflicts, in September 2022, in Tokyo, Japan. This Roundtable was a witness to the moral and practical courage to insist on dialogue with one another in spite of serious disagreements. The [Statement](#) of these Religious Leaders is a living testament to their willingness, and their determination, to stand together as agents of peace.

Mindful of their courage, and of the utter senselessness of war, we call on all parties directly and indirectly engaged in the war in Ukraine to commit to a continued dialogue, enabling both an immediate ceasefire, and an immediate start to negotiations for peace.

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Religions for Peace World Council Signatories

- H.E. Judge Mohamed Abdelsalam, *Egypt* (Al-Azhar Al-Sharif)
- H.M. Sultan Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar III, *Nigeria*
- H.E. Metropolitan Emmanuel Adamakis, *Turkey*
- Dr. Pritpal Kaur Ahluwalia, *United States*
- Hon. Dr. Layla Alkhafaji, *Iraq*
- Dr. Vinu Aram, *India*
- Dr. Renz C. Argao, *Phillippines*
- H.E. Raymundo Cardinal Damasceno Assis, *Brazil*
- Dr. Swami Atmapriyananda, *India*
- Shaykh Dr. Abdallah Bin Bayyah, *United Arab Emirates*
- H.E. Cardinal Charles Bo, *Myanmar*
- Most Ven. Dr. Phra Brahmapundit (Prayoon Dhammacitto), *Thailand*
- Most. Rev. Archbishop Miguel Cabrejos, *Peru*
- Rev. Sr. Agatha Ogochukwu Chikelue, *Nigeria*
- Ms. Ana-Maria Daou, *Lebanon*
- Sayadaw Dr. Khammai Dhammasami, *Myanmar/United Kingdom*
- Ms. Bani Dugal, *United States*
- Mr. Claudio Epelman, *Argentina*
- Hon. Ela Gandhi, *South Africa*
- Mr. Homi Gandhi, *United States*
- Elder Jack N. Gerard, *United States*
- H.E. Dr. Nedzad Grabus, *Slovenia*
- Sheikh Muhammed Yusuf Hallar, *Argentina*
- Sheikh Dr. Hamza Yusuf Hanson, *United States*
- Ms. Sheran Harper, *Guyana* (Anglican Communion)
- H.E. Archbishop Dr. Antje Jackelen, *Sweden*
- Bishop Dr. Margot Kässmann, *Germany*
- Ven. Hyo Chul Kim, *South Korea*
- H.E. Sheikh Shaban Mubaje, *Uganda*
- Dr. Haedar Nashir, *Indonesia*
- Rev. Kosho Niwano, *Japan*
- H.E. Cardinal Dieudonné Nzapalainga, *Central African Republic*
- Dr. Aruna Oswal, *India*
- H.E. Cardinal Philippe Ouédraogo, *Burkina Faso*
- Dr. Elizabeth H. Prodromou, *United States*
- Dr. Anantanand Rambachan, *India/United States*
- Grand-Father Dominique Rankin, *Canada*
- Chief Rabbi David Rosen, *Israel*
- H.E. Dr. Koutoub Moustapha Sano, *Saudi Arabia*
- Dr. Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati, *India*
- Rev. Dr Ioan Sauca, *Romania*
- H.E. Archbishop Dr. Thomas Schirrmacher, *Germany*
- H.E. Bhai Sahib Mohinder Singh, *United Kingdom*
- Dr. Said Aqil Siradj, *Indonesia*
- H.H. Shri Shri Sugunendra Teertha Swamiji, *India*
- H.E. Bishop Mary Ann Swenson, *United States*
- Serigne Mansour Sy, *Senegal*
- Dr. Din Syamsuddin, *Indonesia*
- Dr. Nayla Tabbara, *Lebanon*
- H.E. Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, *Philippines*
- H.H. Samdech Tep Vong, *Cambodia*
- Rev. Megumi Wada, *Japan*
- Rev. Dr. Thomas Wipf, *Switzerland*
- Dr. Maria Lia Zervino, *Argentina*