ICUJP Statement to Elected Officials:  
END ENDLESS WAR  
Close Guantanamo and Pursue Diplomacy, Not War, in the Middle East  

After 9/11, the United States responded to a terrorist attack on our country by retaliating with endless wars in the Middle East and other parts of the world. These wars have caused millions of deaths, displaced tens of millions of refugees, cost trillions of dollars, and made our nation and the world considerably less safe.

As people of faith and conscience, we have not only opposed these endless and futile wars, we have also opposed the indefinite and unwarranted detention and torture of political prisoners at Guantanamo and CIA “black sites.”

Consistent with our belief that “religious communities must stop blessing war and violence,” we stand utterly opposed to political assassination as a tool of foreign policy. Killing foreign leaders doesn’t advance the cause of peace. It has the opposite effect: It provokes retaliation and further violence.

The current violence in Iraq is a result of our misguided decision to use force instead of diplomacy to try to resolve political conflicts in the Middle East.

For this reason, we call upon our elected officials to speak out publicly and pass a resolution opposing the assassination of General Qasem Soleimani, a high-ranking Iranian government official. This assassination will further exacerbate tensions in the Middle East and perpetuate the cycle of violence. A breaking news report indicates that 3,000 U.S. troops are being sent to the Middle East in response to this threat.

This dangerous escalation of violence can be seen as a direct consequence of abandoning the Iran Nuclear Agreement negotiated by the Obama administration and supported by the United Kingdom, Russia, France, China, and the European Union. Our withdrawal from this multinational agreement was unwise. We urge our elected officials to resume negotiations with Iran and be open to reducing sanctions and making other concessions as an expression of good faith.

We are concerned that this extrajudicial killing could lead to war between the United States and Iran, and possibly even worldwide. World War I was triggered by political assassination. Assassinating a high-ranking government official can be seen as an act of war – and would be considered as such if a foreign power were to kill a comparable American official. We urge Congress to reaffirm its opposition to war on Iran, and to support repealing the Authorization for the Use of Military Force, which presidents have used as a blank check to justify military intervention.

RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES MUST STOP BLESSING WAR AND VIOLENCE