



## Interfaith Communities United For Justice And Peace

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***Religious Communities must stop blessing war and violence!***

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# NO U.S. MILITARY INTERVENTION IN SYRIA!

***As an interfaith community of religious and secular members who believe in the power of love to overcome hatred and the power of mercy to conquer vengeance, while affirming the world's common humanity and the sacredness of human life, we urge President Obama and Congress to reject any military intervention in Syria, including any military attack, arming the rebels, or creating a no-fly zone, and instead to focus on increasing humanitarian assistance through the United Nations and building active multilateral diplomacy without preconditions with all involved parties for an immediate ceasefire, a full arms embargo, and negotiations to end Syria's civil war.***

Hundreds of Syrians recently died in what appeared to be a chemical weapons attack. Any such attack would violate a host of international laws, and would indeed be what Secretary of State Kerry called a "moral obscenity." But the UN weapons inspectors have not yet determined what killed the Syrian victims, nor has anyone proven who might actually be responsible. Yet the threat of direct U.S. military intervention in Syria is rising, as the Obama administration claims, without revealing any evidence, that the Syrian government is responsible and therefore military strikes are somehow called for.

We stand against all chemical weapons, as well as all other weapons of mass destruction, and oppose their possession or use by anyone, including our own government. The horrific deaths in Syria must be thoroughly investigated and whoever is responsible brought to justice – in the International Criminal Court or elsewhere.

Any military attack without the prior consent of Congress would violate our own Constitution, as well as international law. Committing a crime as a reaction to a crime brings us and the Syrians no closer to peace or justice. A military strike by the U.S. would not make any Syrians safer. It would not bring the civil war closer to an end. Such a strike, without Security Council approval, would be completely illegal, regardless of any "coalition" Washington may cobble together. We must demand diplomacy and new talks to end the war, not more military attacks. There is no military solution to the crisis in Syria, and more arms to any side would mean more civilians would be killed.

Any U.S. military intervention holds the threat of unplanned escalation, and ultimately a quagmire. It is much easier to send planes, bombs and missiles in than it is to get out – especially if a plane is shot down or a pilot captured. There is no exit strategy for Syria, and even a "no-fly zone" could easily become a costly quagmire.

The situation in Syria today is full-scale civil war, which denies the people of Syria their right to choose their own government and leaders. Other governments arming and financing the two sides will not restore that right; it will only makes things worse.

The U.S.-Russian initiative known as the Geneva II talks should be pushed forward, involving all the relevant outside actors, especially those providing weapons and military or economic support to any side. The U.S. should stop trying to prevent Iran's participation in the talks – any serious diplomacy requires everyone to be at the table. On the Syrian side, negotiations must include not only the Syrian government and the armed rebels, but organizations representing Syrian civil society including unarmed opposition forces, Syria's minority communities, women, and youth.

*Adapted from a statement originated by U.S. Labor Against the War and co-sponsored by ICUJP, Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), Institute for Policy Studies (IPS), Just Foreign Policy (JFP), Peace Action, Peace and Justice Resource Center (PJRC), United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ), U.S. Labor Against the War (USLAW), and Women's Actions for New Directions (WAND).*