

**Leaders of more than 35 national groups, including MFSA,
call for end to Iran violence**

To the Iranian Leadership: End the Violence Immediately

To: Ayatollah Ali Khamenei
President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad
U.N. Ambassador & Permanent Representative Mohammad Khazaei

Date: June 24, 2009

We are leaders of organizations representing tens of thousands of U.S. citizens who love Iran: its people, culture, poetry, and land. Some of our members have traveled in recent years to the Islamic Republic of Iran to build relationships between our cultures, and have returned home with images and stories of wonderful new friends and your land's admirable humanitarian and religious cultures. We passionately urge peace between our countries, and deeply regret the unfortunate history of U.S. intervention in Iran and its sovereignty. We believe all nations and peoples have the right to live free of the threat of unjust foreign interference in their internal affairs.

Our organizations represent national and regional U.S. peace, anti-war, and religious communities, and some of our members have held meetings with President Ahmadinejad, former President Khatami, and Iranian religious leaders to discuss common concerns about peace and humanitarian issues. We have pressed the U.S. Congress and White House on numerous issues related to Iran, including: ending sanctions levied on Iran; engaging in constructive dialogue with Iranian leaders; and formally apologizing for past actions against Iran – such as the July 3, 1988 attack by the USS Vincennes on Iran Air #655, which killed 290 innocent civilians. And while the results of the recent Iranian election are contested, we commend the election as an exercise in the building of stronger democracy in Iran, and we hope that the open expression of different ideas and visions for the future of the nation will continue.

The Holy Qur'an teaches us, "If anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people." And today we are compelled to communicate our pain and outrage about the violence being inflicted on peaceful Iranians. The killings of innocent civilians, beatings of elderly women and young students alike, and imprisonment without charge of hundreds of civilians – done in the name of Islam – serve to slander this holy religion whose name itself means the "making of peace."

We are inspired by the ways that the nonviolent legacy of Mahatma Gandhi has been lifted up by many ordinary Iranians in this critical moment. For indeed, Gandhi reminded us, "Victory attained by violence is tantamount to a defeat, for it is momentary." Our faiths and commitments to peace compel us to demand an end to this senseless brutality against the people of Iran who are walking in silence, offering nonviolent witness, and engaging in other peaceful acts of conscience.

For more than a week, violence has wracked the nation of Iran. This past weekend, official reports have stated that between 10-19 Iranians died, while other reports give higher figures. These deaths are in addition to many others who have died in previous days. Moreover, we have received reports that in Tehran on Saturday, June 20, liquid chemicals were sprayed on civilians, causing burns. Many were unable to obtain adequate medical care, as they were followed by militia forces and trapped in hospitals; the consequences of their seeking aid and refuge were either additional beatings or arrest.

We have seen no sign that this oppression of ordinary Iranians will cease. In the name of the Islamic Republic and of the constitutional rights of its people, Iran's political and religious leaders must bring an end to the ruthlessness that is being perpetrated, immediately.

We bring no moral weight to this request as Americans. In fact we stand in the same relationship of resistance and opposition to the use of violence by the government of the United States, in its continued violent occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan, its use of violence to quell nonviolent dissent around political conventions and elections, its use of torture in violation of the Geneva Conventions, and its use of imprisonment of people without charges or fabricated and unsubstantiated charges against U.S. citizens and non-nationals alike.

The Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) said, "Break your bows, sever your strings, beat stones on your swords." Therefore we appeal to the Islamic Republic of Iran, under the guidance of the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, to work to immediately stop the violence.

With deepest concern,

Signed by over 35 leaders of national peace groups and communities of faith Salam Al-Marayati,
Executive Director, Muslim Public Affairs Council

- Rev. Paul Alexander, Ph.D., Co-Founder, Pentecostals & Charismatics for Peace & Justice
- Ryan Amundson, Chair of the Steering Committee, September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows
- The Rev. Michael J. Baxter, National Secretary, Catholic Peace Fellowship
- Medea Benjamin, Founding Director, Global Exchange
- Rev. Dr. Leonard B. Bjorkman, Moderator Emeritus, Presbyterian Peace Fellowship
- Ken Butigan, Executive Director, Pace e Bene Nonviolence Service
- Matthew W. Daloisio, Coordinator, Witness Against Torture
- Rev. Richard Deats, Past Executive Director, Fellowship of Reconciliation
- Rev. Patricia de Jong & Sam Keen, Ph.D., Co-Founders, Axis of Friendship
- Paul Dekar, Chair of the National Council, Fellowship of Reconciliation
- Marie Dennis, Director, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
- Goudarz Eghtedari, Ph.D., American Iranian Friendship Council
- Jodie Evans, Co-Founder, CODEPINK: Women for Peace
- Priscilla Fairbank, Co-Founder, Women Against War
- Karen Jacob, National Chair, Women's Action for New Directions
- Rev. Kathryn J. Johnson, Executive Director, Methodist Federation for Social Action
- Mark C. Johnson, Ph.D., Executive Director, Fellowship of Reconciliation
- Stephen D. Jones, President, Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America
- Kathy Kelly, Co-Coordinator, Voices for Creative Nonviolence
- Scott Kennedy, Coordinator of Middle East Program, Resource Center for Nonviolence
- Peter Klotz-Chamberlin, Steering Committee Chair, Resource Center for Nonviolence
- Judith Le Blanc, National Organizing Coordinator, United for Peace and Justice
- Rabbi Michael Lerner, Executive Editor, Tikkun Magazine; National Chair, The Network of Spiritual Progressives
- Marie Lucey, OSF, Associate Director, Leadership Conference of Women Religious
- Kevin Martin, Executive Director, Peace Action
- Paul Kawika Martin, Organizing, Political & PAC Director, Peace Action
- Stefen Merken, Chair, Jewish Peace Fellowship
- Gael Murphy, Co-Founder, CODEPINK: Women for Peace
- Michael N. Nagler, Founder, Metta Center for Nonviolence Education
- Arash & Ebrahim Norouzi, The Mossadegh Project
- Gerald Paoli, Co-Coordinator, Voices for Creative Nonviolence
- Jill Parillo, Deputy Director for Security Programs, Physicians for Social Responsibility

- Dan Pearson, Co-Coordinator, Voices for Creative Nonviolence
- Rev. Allie Perry, Vice-President of the Board, National Religious Campaign Against Torture
- Franz Rad, Ph.D., Chair, American Iranian Friendship Council
- Ibrahim Abdil-Mu'id Ramey, Director of Civil & Human Rights, Muslim American Society Freedom Foundation
- David Robinson, Executive Director, Pax Christi USA
- Terry Kay Rockefeller, Project Director, September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows
- Bill Scheurer, Editor, PeaceMajority Report; Coordinator, Peace Garden Project
- Susan Shaer, Executive Director, Women's Action for New Directions
- Amy Stapleton, National Organizer, Methodist Federation for Social Action
- Samina Faheem Sundas, Founding Executive, American Muslim Voice
- Rabbi Karen Sussan, Steering Committee Member, Jewish Peace Fellowship
- Rev. Rick Ufford-Chase, Executive Director, Presbyterian Peace Fellowship
- Rabbi Arthur Waskow, Executive Director, The Shalom Center
- Peter Wilk, Executive Director, Physicians for Social Responsibility
- James E. Winkler, General Secretary, United Methodist Church General Board of Church & Society
- Ann Wright, retired U.S. Army Colonel and former U.S. Ambassador

Regional and Local Leaders

- Andrea Briggs, National Council member, Fellowship of Reconciliation, Altadena CA
- Hank Brusselback & Gaia Mika, Dixon NM
- The Rev. Stephen J. & Caroline C. Chinlund, Ph.D., New York NY
- Tom Cornell, The Catholic Worker, Marlboro NY
- Rev. Cheryl K. Cornish, Pastor, First Congregational United Church of Christ, Memphis TN
- The Rev. Dr. Barbara Dua, Executive Director, New Mexico Council of Churches
- Rev. Ellen M. Frith
- Jane C. Gilman, member, Buddhist Peace Fellowship, Brookline MA
- Talat Hamdani, mother of Mohammad Salman Hamdani and member, September 11 Families for Peaceful Tomorrows
- Jane Harte, member, Buddhist Peace Fellowship
- Lynda Howland, Pittsford NY
- Bill Jenkins, Washington Buddhist Peace Fellowship, Washington DC
- Dr. Terry Johns, Patten University, Oakland CA
- Valerie Lucznikowska, aunt of Adam Arias and member, September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows
- The Rev. Paul Mayer, NYC Forum of Concerned Religious Leaders; Co-Founder, Climate Crisis Coalition
- Sean McConnell, Communications Officer, Episcopal Diocese of California
- Shirley McRae, member, Religious Society of Friends, Port Townsend WA
- Danny Postel, Member, Chicago Committee in Solidarity with the People of Iran
- The Rev. Cecil Charles Prescod, Ainsworth United Church of Christ, Portland OR
- Bill Quigley, Loyola University, New Orleans LA
- Rev. Dianne Rodriguez, Pastor, First Parish Church, United Church of Christ, Northville NY
- Rev. Osagyefo Uhuru Sekou, Senior Minister, Lemuel Haynes Congregational Church, Jamaica NY
- Daniel R. Smith, Seattle WA
- Trish Thompson, United Buddhist Church of America
- Nichola Torbett, Director, Seminary in the Street
- Bruce Wallace, Director, 121Contact; uncle of Mitchell Wallace and member, September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows; and Noor, staff member, 121Contact
- Adele Welty, mother of firefighter Timothy Welty and member, September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows

(Organizational affiliations listed for identification purposes)