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A Call for Peace and Compassion

March 1, 2022

As Canadian Unitarian Universalists (UUs), we are deeply concerned about the state of unrest, aggression, and violence in the world.

“It is understandable to feel saddened, outraged, or helpless as we read or watch the news,” says Anne Barker, President of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers of Canada. “We may even feel numb. The cumulative effects of the Covid-19 pandemic; violence against Indigenous, Black and marginalized people; and the wildfires and flooding brought about by climate change have exhausted and overwhelmed us.”

Our weariness has been made worse by recent actions that threaten democracy at home and abroad.

Earlier this month, we watched as a convoy of protestors and their supporters converged on Parliament Hill to protest vaccine mandates. Bitter blockades, intimidation, and violence brought the city of Ottawa to a standstill. For weeks, residents (including members of First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa and Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ottawa) lived with the incessant blasting of horns; blocked access to workplaces and stores; and displays of symbols of racism and hate.

Some Canadians are defending the protestors’ aggressive use of force to alter public policy; others see it as a threat to our democratic institutions. People in Canada are also divided on the unprecedented use of the Emergencies Act to end the protests. These are divides that will not be bridged easily.

And now we are witnessing a global threat to democracy and a very direct threat to the lives of Ukrainian people and institutions. These acts contravene international law and violate our sixth principle: *The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all.*

We support the people of Ukraine and the more than 1.3 million people of Ukrainian descent who call Canada home. Many are members of our congregations and the broader UU community.

“These are difficult times,” says Margaret Wanlin, President of the Canadian Unitarian Council’s Board of Trustees. “As we strive towards a more peaceful, just, and equitable world, may we come together to build the strength to respond in active and meaningful ways, while taking care of ourselves and being kind to one another.”



Related statements from our colleagues at the Unitarian Universalist Association

UU World: “UU Nations: Ukraine and our Commitment to Peace”

<https://www.uuworld.org/articles/uu-nations-ukraine-2022-02-23>

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee: “We Demand an End to the Bloodshed”: UUSC Responds to Vladimir Putin’s Invasion of Ukraine”

<https://www.uusc.org/press/we-demand-an-end-to-the-bloodshed-uusc-responds-to-vladimir-putins-invasion-of-ukraine/>

~ From the CUC’s National Voice Team: UU Ministers of Canada President, Rev. Anne Barker; CUC Board President, Margaret Wanlin, and Executive Director, Vyda Ng.

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