

Action of Immediate Witness for GA 2022

Code Red for Humanity

Protect the Livable Planet We Love - Addressing the Climate Impacts of Military Emissions

WHEREAS:

- Calling on Unitarian Universalists and others to protect humanity. If ever in our history there was a time for us to affirm our sixth Unitarian Universalist Principle, “*The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all*” and our seventh, “*Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part,*” it is now.
- This AIW is a necessary next step calling UU’s to address the largely ignored greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions of the US military; it is built on past UU climate and peace efforts, the 2006 Global Warming and Climate Change Statement of Conscience, the 2010 Statement of Conscience on Creating Peace, the 2015 AIW Act for a Livable Climate, and the 2019 AIW on Building the Movement for a Green New Deal.
- In 2020, United Nations General Assembly President, María Garcés, warned “We are the LAST generation that can prevent irreparable damage to our planet.” UN Secretary General António Guterres has warned that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 6th Assessment Report of Aug. 9, 2021 is CODE RED FOR HUMANITY and “an atlas of human suffering.” He called out that the extent of this climate emergency is the result of “CRIMINAL abdication of (climate) leadership.” With the IPCC’s latest Report of Apr 8, 2022, Guterres further warned action is required NOW or NEVER.
- The IPCC’s Summary for Policymakers states: “The cumulative scientific evidence is unequivocal: Climate change is a threat to human well-being and planetary health. Any further delay in concerted anticipatory global action on adaptation and mitigation will miss a brief and rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a livable and sustainable future for all.”
- This challenges UUs to respond to their warnings with *our right of conscience, our use of the democratic process in our congregations and as advocates within society, to prioritize saving vulnerable and essential ecosystems and human communities “with justice, equity and compassion”* while there is still time.
- The chemical composition of our global atmosphere has been disrupted by human caused GHG emissions and deforestation. Carbon dioxide (CO₂) levels in our atmosphere have reached the highest concentration in 3.6 million years; and levels of methane (CH₄) and nitrous oxide (N₂O) are higher than at any point in the last 1 million years.

- The earth's surface temperature has risen 1.1°C (1.9°F) since 1880, with 2022 predictions that it may exceed 1.5°C (2.7°F) at least once before 2026 and one third of the earth's population is expected to be faced with trying to survive in near unlivable Sahara-desert-like conditions in another fifty years without effective urgent climate mitigation now.
- Many of the changes observed are unprecedented in thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of years. Impacts include longer and more frequent droughts, heat waves, fires, extreme weather events, the acidification of the global oceans, the loss of glacial, oceanic and polar ice causing sea level rise and reducing global fresh water supplies. These changes will be accompanied by further degradation of wildlife habitat, reductions in agricultural production, increasing rates of extinction, increased ranges of disease vectors, and the possible loss of the keystone oceanic coral reef species.
- The supply of fossil fuels is expected to be largely exhausted within a few decades, so to remain an effective defensive force going forward the DoD must not remain reliant on dwindling fossil fuel reserves. The US Department of Defense (DoD) can better ensure its mission to protect US national security by developing and implementing alternative energy sources.
- The US Department of Defense (DoD), the world's largest institutional contributor of GHG emissions, acknowledges the existential threat of climate change to their own organization and though they are moving towards decarbonizing and are committed to reducing GHG emissions from utilities, buildings, non-tactical vehicles and power generation; they continue to purchase existing war fighting vehicles, military fighter jets, air craft carriers, and space vehicles requiring significant emissions to manufacture and, often, reliant on high GHG emissions producing fuels that build-in decades of additional climate stress.

Military GHG emissions result from and include:

- the excavation and extraction of raw materials and fossil fuels needed to build and run today's military
 - the processing and smelting of ores and concrete for materials
 - the construction, maintenance, and supply of hundreds of bases and consequent the energy used to develop, manufacture, store (house), maintain, and transport personelle, equipment, weapons, and supplies across a massive global network of bases
 - the use and disposal of toxic chemicals and fuels (including burn pits) used in research and development, testing, training, public relations, fly-overs, military preparedness, exercises, engagements and wars
 - the destruction of natural environments and habitat further degrading the global ecology and depriving the planet of a key carbon sinks
- Global military GHG emissions, *including war impacts*, are estimated to be 6% of total annual GHG emissions according to Scientists for Global

Responsibility (SGR), making militarism a critically important, but little recognized, driver of climate change.

- According to research from the World Research Institute the United States was responsible for 29% of the world's largest cumulative GHG emissions between 1850 – 2009.
- NATO's Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg is calling for mapping military GHG emissions across the Alliance as a means of greater accuracy in quantifying and reducing them.
- Scientists deem the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) of the United States to be critically insufficient and is falling far short of a fair meeting the 1.5°C (2.7°F) goal. Yet these GHG emissions are NOT fully delineated as part of our NDC or in our annual GHG emissions reporting to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
- In the face of our responsibilities as citizens of the offending nation whose actions have greatly contributed to immediate and future threats of climate impacts, we affirm our ever- greater acceptance of one another and encourage spiritual growth in our congregations as we call for accountability and appropriate action by our government and its leaders.
- Peoples around the globe are already being displaced from their homes by the effects of the climate crisis, and instead of providing complementary protection, governments are responding with militarized approaches that further the exclusion of displaced people and increase the climate effects of military emissions.
- The U.S. government has been a leading contributor to both the historic GHG emissions and the specifically military factors that are fueling the climate crisis. This includes the history of U.S. militarism in the Pacific (such as nuclear testing) that harmed communities who are now on the front lines of climate impacts, as well as the pattern of U.S. foreign policy backing militarized regimes in the Global South that are committing human rights violations that exacerbate climate displacement.
- A survivable climate and a functioning global ecosystem is a necessary foundation for a viable and just economy to support all UU social justice goals.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the 2022 UUA General Assembly, its member congregations, and individual Unitarian Universalists take immediate action to:

- Recognize that militarism and war are major obstacles to meeting the 1.5°C (2.7°F) goal of the Paris Agreement requiring urgent united action to meet livable climate goals.

- Invite our member congregations and ministries to organize moments in worship and religious education to support Climate Justice including cultivating actions and advocacy to reduce the overall environmental impact of all military activities.
- Urge Members of Congress (MOC) to support all legislation that reduces GHG emission impacts and particularly those of the Department of Defense (DoD) such that they are consistent with the 1.5°C target specified by the 2015 Paris Agreement and commit to GHG emission reporting mechanisms that are robust, comparable and transparent, are based on the GHG protocol, and which are independently verified, reduce reliance on fossil fuels, and contain clear reduction targets for the military technology industry; this includes Rep. Barbara Lee’s (D CA -13) H Res 767 legislation “Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that it is the duty of the Department of Defense to reduce the overall environmental impact of all military activities and missions.”
 - Ask the US Administration and Congress, following above measures, to truly lead by example by calling for the United States to delineate *all* DoD GHG emissions including GHG emissions from equipment and supply chains, and those related to the impact of conflict operations in our annual GHG reporting to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and to include and delineate them, along with reduction targets as part of our Nationally Determined Contributions.
- Appreciate the UU at UN for its years of effort pursuing climate goals and call on them for further support of the above actions as well as to work to strengthen and broaden the UN’s GHG military emissions protocols to include mandatory reporting of all military GHG emissions from equipment and supply chains, bunker fuels, and those related to the impact of conflict operations.
- We ask the Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community, the Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice, the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, the Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth, the Unitarian Universalist Young Adults for Climate Justice, Unitarian Universalist BIPOC Caucus on Climate Justice, the Unitarian Universalist Peace Ministry, and other Unitarian Universalist networks to coordinate and provide ethical and moral leadership for supporting this Action of Immediate Witness, and further urge UUs to join campaigns on military emissions being led by Veterans For Peace and its Climate Crisis and Militarism Project, (CCMP) World Beyond War, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, US Section, Climate Justice + Women + Peace Campaign, and Disarm/End War Committee, and People vs. Fossil Fuels and other climate justice organizations on behalf of peace and diplomacy and towards maintaining a livable planet for the benefit of all.

AIW submitted for GA 2020
CODE RED for HUMANITY

Reference Materials

UNITED NATIONS

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Sixth Assessment Reports:

<https://unfccc.int/topics/science/workstreams/cooperation-with-the-ipcc/the-sixth-assessment-report-of-the-ipcc/>

[Climate change widespread, rapid, and intensifying – IPCC — IPCC](#)

*See the Summary for Policy Makers:

https://report.ipcc.ch/ar6wg2/pdf/IPCC_AR6_WGII_SummaryForPolicymakers.pdf

** Last paragraph “The cumulative scientific evidence is unequivocal: Climate change is a threat to human well-being and planetary health. Any further delay in concerted anticipatory global action on adaptation and mitigation will miss a brief and rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a livable and sustainable future for all.”

NASA.GOV

[World of Change: Global Temperatures](#)

CBS NEWS

[Climate change: Global warming may exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius in at least one of the next five years](#)

THE IRISH TIMES

[Three billion people will be living in ‘near unlivable’ temperatures by 2070](#)

NOAA RESEARCH

[Despite pandemic shutdowns, carbon dioxide and methane surged in 2020](#)

BROWN UNIVERSITY COSTS OF WAR PROJECT

[Pentagon Fuel Use, Climate Change and the Costs of War](#)

Revised November 2019

INSTITUTE FOR POLICY STUDIES

“No Warming, No War: How Militarism Fuels the Climate Crisis - and Vice Versa”

<https://ips-dc.org/climate-militarism->

GRIST

[U.S. responsible for 29 percent of CO2 emissions over past 150 years, triple China’s share](#)

CONFLICT AND ENVIRONMENT OBSERVATORY

The military’s contribution to climate change

<https://ceobs.org/the-militarys-contribution-to-climate-change/>

“Did NATO members just pledge to reduce their military GHG emissions?”

<https://ceobs.org/did-nato-members-just-pledge-to-reduce-their-military-ghg-emissions/>

Environmental CSR reporting by the arms industry

[Report: Environmental CSR reporting by the arms industry - CEOBS](#)

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks | US EPA](#)

POPULAR SCIENCE

“The world’s largest military isn’t reporting its giant ‘carbon footprint’”

<https://www.popsci.com/environment/military-greenhouse-gas-emissions-data/?msclkid=e07522d8b51511ec8484a8a75f82315a>

MILITARY EMISSIONS.ORG

[The Military Emissions Gap – Tracking the long war that militaries are waging on the climate](#)

NATIONAL PRIORITIES PROJECT

[Climate, Militarism, and Migration](#)

SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN

[Climate Change News and Research](#)

SCIENTISTS FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

“The carbon boot-print of the military”

<https://www.sgr.org.uk/resources/carbon-boot-print-military-0>

THE TRANSNATIONAL INSTITUTE (TNI)

Climate Security Primer <https://www.tni.org/en/publication/primer-on-climate-security>

THE GLOBAL CARBON PROJECT

[Carbon Budget \(globalcarbonproject.org\)](#)

WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE (WRI.ORG)

[Advancing the Systems Change Needed to Fight Climate Change](#)

SCIENCE (SCIENCE.ORG)

Intergenerational inequities in exposure to climate extremes

https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.abi7339?_ga=2.140428851.1086394533.1632749462-1575527405.1631121912&

WAMU - AMERICAN UNIVERSITY RADIO

[How the Russian invasion is impacting the Ukrainian landscape](#)

by Neta Crawford 1A WAMU: NPR, April 25, 2022.

STOCKHOLM INTERNATIONAL PEACE RESEARCH INSTITUTE (SIPRI)

<https://www.sipri.org/>

