

## **Human Rights and International Law Must Be Respected Universally Rather Than Selectively**

We Unitarian Universalists believe in the worth and dignity of every human being, in justice and equity for all, and in a world community at peace;

We understand that these human rights to worth, dignity, justice, equity, and peace hold for all people without regard to race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity or other human differences;

We Unitarian Universalists therefore assert the universality of human rights and affirm that both human rights and international law must be respected universally rather than selectively;

We recognize, however, that human rights and international law are not at present respected universally, neither domestically within the United States nor internationally;

We recognize that the United States falls short with regard to respect for, and delivery of, the human rights for all its people. We recognize that rights to health care, education, housing, safety, voting, equal treatment before the law, and other fundamental human rights are not universally respected within the United States but that major inequities exist according to race, gender and other differences among human beings.

We note that International human rights law and the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights have inspired and continue to inspire work for the human rights of all people here in the United States;

We recognize that human rights and international law are also not at present respected universally internationally. Instead, the United States and other nations condemn violations when committed by strategic enemies and ignore them when committed by themselves or their allies;

We believe that this hypocrisy regarding the fundamental principles guiding our collective life must be opposed if we are to achieve a world that is truly at peace and ruled by respect for human rights and international law;

We note, in illustration of the international hypocrisy, that Russia has been rightly condemned for its violations of human rights and international law in its 2022 invasion of Ukraine and has been held to account with massive boycotts, divestments and sanctions by the United States and Western European countries, but equally egregious violations by other countries including the United States and its allies have escaped all accountability;

We note, for example, that the US invasion of Iraq was a violation of the supreme international law against war on another country that is not based on immediate self-defense nor approved by the UN Security Council, but no sanctions have been imposed on the US;

We note, for example, that Israel is guilty of the international crime of apartheid as shown by Palestinian, Israeli, United Nations and international human rights organizations, and is also guilty of other international crimes .These include the detention and abuse of children, and the acquisition of territory by military force with its annexation of the Golan Heights and East Jerusalem. But Israel is not being held to account;

We note, for example, that Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates with the help of the United States maintain a brutal war on the people of Yemen causing the world's greatest humanitarian crisis with tens of thousands of civilians killed and millions at risk of starvation, but neither the United States, Saudi Arabia nor the Emirates are being held to account;

We believe that universal respect for international law would reduce the likelihood of war with its associated human rights violations and environmental degradation. Moreover, the huge expenditures of resources on war prevents these resources from being used to meet our universal human rights to a sustainable planet, to health care, to education, and to opportunities for personal growth;

We note the racism involved in the immediate and profound response of the United States and its European allies to the suffering of white European Ukrainians in comparison to the lack of response to decades of suffering of Iraqis, Palestinians, Yemenis, and other people of color .

We note this same racism in the massive attention given by Western media to the crisis in Ukraine and the lack of attention to human rights violations and humanitarian crises in Yemen, Palestine, Myanmar, and East Africa. We note the racism involved in the lack of attention to the achievement of full human rights for all people in the United States. We note the racism involved in the lack of attention to food access and hunger in Africa. We note how this massive difference in attention prevents the responses that are desperately needed as well as the delivery of aid;

We recognize, as Unitarian Universalists, that we are part of an interdependent web of existence in which violations of human rights anywhere affect all of us everywhere.

We recognize that the United States remains a democracy and that a primary means of achieving universal respect for international law and human rights is through demands made upon our United States government including our elected representatives;

Be it therefore resolved by this 2022 Unitarian Universalist General Assembly and in solidarity with Yemenis, Palestinians and other marginalized people both internationally and domestically:

- 1) That all countries including the United States must respect human rights and international law universally, both domestically and internationally, rather than selectively;

- 2) That UUs at all levels will call on their members of Congress to respect universal human rights and international law by ratifying several conventions that have been ratified by enough countries to become settled international law but which the United States has not ratified. These include the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability*, *The Convention on the Rights of the Child*, *The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*, *The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People*, and *The Optional Protocol on the Convention Against Torture*.
- 3) That UUs at all levels will call on their members of Congress to end United States military support for the Saudi and Emirate war on Yemen by supporting [H.J.R. 87](#), *Directing the Removal of United States Armed Forces From Hostilities in the Republic of Yemen That Have Not Been Authorized By Congress*.
- 4) That UUs at all levels will call on their members of Congress to support [H.R 2590](#), *Defending the Human Rights of Palestinian Children and families living under Israeli Occupation Act* which stipulates that no US military funds may be provided to Israel for its use in the detention and abuse of Palestinian children, the demolition of Palestinian homes, or the annexation of Palestinian land.
- 5) That UUs at all levels will call on their members of Congress and the United States Government to support the [American Civil Liberties Union call](#) on the US to live up to its unmet domestic obligations under the treaties it has already ratified, i.e. the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, *the Convention Against Torture*, and *the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*.
- 6) That UUs at all levels will call on their US Senators to support the [John Lewis Voting Rights Act of 2021, H.R. 4](#), which would help ensure the voting rights of persons of color by restoring provisions of the 1965 Voting Rights Act calling for certain states to pre-clear changes to voting laws with the US Department of Justice.
- 7) That UUs at all levels will call on their US Senators to support [the Women's Health Protection Act of 2021, H.R. 3755](#) which protects womens' right to an abortion and the right of health care workers to provide this service.
- 8) That UUs at all levels will call on their members of Congress to support [the bill recently introduced](#) by Representatives Marc Pocan and Barbara Lee called the *People over Pentagon Act of 2022* that would reduce United States military spending by 100 billion dollars.

**Sponsored by: Unitarian Universalists for Justice in the Middle East, Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism, and Unitarian Universalist Peace Ministry Network.**

