

A Moral Response to the March for Our Lives

Student-led public witness after the shooting at Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, FL, calls to all Unitarian Universalists for a response based on individual conscience and collective ethical discernment. Together we should build upon the long time efforts of activists, especially those from communities of color who have suffered disproportionately.

Religious liberals of every theological and political persuasion should offer both personal and organizational support to the young people who seized our attention, and demand our best effort to reduce gun violence. Together we should help realize new cultural paradigms of political honesty and ethical clarity. We should respond without fear, hesitation or hypocrisy.

We ask UU congregations, organizations, clusters, Districts, Regions and our national bodies, along with their members, religious professionals, officers, and employees, to consider:

- Following the lead of these young people including our own UU youth, by focusing on advocacy for reasonable gun control measures, and by helping to birth a long-term change in American pro-gun culture. We ought not to be distracted by side issues.
- Offering resources for this effort, including: meeting space, planning assistance, opportunities to speak and demonstrate, organizational endorsement, administrative and other professional help, as well as the development of local gun-control projects. We should study and discuss, but then we should act and fund such efforts.
- Siding with them in this endeavor, learning from their courage, sharing in their grief, and advancing their hopes with our own work, in particular in those communities where youth activists may work in isolation. We should resolve to no longer uncritically accept suffering and death as the price of a constitutional right to bear arms.

END ISRAELI MILITARY DETENTION OF PALESTINIAN CHILDREN Proposed AIW for UUA GA 2018

WHEREAS, our Unitarian Universalist principles ask us to respect the worth and dignity of every person, to promote justice and compassion, and to recognize that we are embedded in an interdependent web of existence;

WHEREAS, approximately 700 Palestinian children between ages 12 and 17 are prosecuted in Israeli military courts in the occupied Palestinian territory annually with three-fourths experiencing physical violence from military personnel;

WHEREAS, systematic mistreatment of Palestinian children during arrest, court appearances and incarceration includes late-night home invasion and arrest by heavily armed soldiers; blindfolding; restraining with plastic ties; physical and verbal abuse during transfer; lack of access to water, food and toilet facilities; solitary confinement; lack of access to lawyers or family; interrogation using physical violence and threats; coerced confessions; transfer across borders; and incarceration without charges;

WHEREAS, abuses have long-lasting traumatic consequences for children, families and communities;

WHEREAS, the abuses are extensively documented by international and Israeli human rights organizations including [Amnesty International](#), [Human Rights Watch](#), [Military Court Watch](#), [B'tselem](#), [Defense for Children International](#) and [UNICEF](#);

WHEREAS, concern about the abuse of children has led to the introduction in 2017 of a bill in Congress, "Promoting Human Rights by Ending Israeli Military Detention of Palestinian Children Act" ([H.R. 4391](#));

WHEREAS, the [Presbyterians](#), the [Disciples of Christ](#) and the [United Church of Christ](#) have passed resolutions condemning mistreatment of children under Israeli military detention;

WHEREAS, the deaths and suffering of Palestinian children in Gaza due to [Israel's blockade](#) and [violent repression of recent protests](#) highlight the need for international support for Palestinian children;

WHEREAS, UUA General Assemblies have passed statements on militarism, the rights of children, and human rights of Palestinians, including a [1979 General Resolution](#) opposing militarism; a 1996 [General Resolution](#) addressing the rights of children; a [2013 Action of Immediate Witness \(AIW\)](#) condemning the racist mistreatment of young people in the U.S. by the police; [a 2015 AIW supporting the Black Lives Matter movement and the replacement of racist police and prison systems](#); and the [1982 General Resolution](#) and [2002 AIW](#) calling for ending the occupation of Palestine;

WHEREAS, Israel signed the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), which prohibits physical violence against children and [is the only nation that automatically prosecutes children in military courts](#) (8,000 since the year 2000); and only Palestinian children are tried in military courts, settler children are tried in civil courts;

WHEREAS, a [1982 UUA Board of Trustees Business Resolution](#) rightly opposed anti-Semitism and stated that criticism of the policies of Israel should not be equated with anti-Semitism; and

WHEREAS, our Unitarian Universalist principles and our opposition to oppression, militarism and racism call on us to oppose the abuse of Palestinian children;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the 2018 Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly calls on our UUA leadership, affiliated organizations, ministers, and member congregations to advocate for and act to end the detention and mistreatment of Palestinian children under Israeli military occupation.

“Join the Poor People’s Campaign”

BECAUSE Unitarian Universalists are committed to “The inherent worth and dignity of every person” (first UU principle) and to “Justice, equity and compassion in human relations” (second UU principle); and

BECAUSE the Poor People’s Campaign: A National Call to Moral Revival is “rooted in a moral analysis based on our deepest religious and constitutional values that demand justice for all” (first PPC principle) and envisions “unity across lines of division” (second PPC principle) in the spirit of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., as revived by Rev. William Barber and others; and

BECAUSE the Poor People’s Campaign believes “that people should not live in or die from poverty in the richest nation ever to exist” (fifth PPC principle), and seeks to “build up the power of people and state-based movements to serve as a vehicle for a powerful moral movement in the country and to transform the political, economic and moral structures of our society” (eighth PPC principle), creating a movement from below (ninth PPC principle); and

BECAUSE the Poor People’s Campaign Audit “emphasizes the complex relationships between and across systemic racism, persistent poverty, the war economy and its inevitable militarism, and the ecological devastation” and that over “40 million Americans subsist below the poverty line” in a “structural crisis” manifested in deficient “healthcare and housing”, reflecting “a tragic loss of purpose” for the common good; and

WHEREAS over recent years there have been a multiplicity of developments and disruptive actions, symptoms of deeper dysfunction in our society, such as the financial crash of 2008 and subsequent Occupy movement, the two-tier legal and policing system leading to mass incarceration and the Black Lives Matter movement, soaring profits while pay stagnates activating the minimum and living wage movements, the continued loss of good jobs for the bottom 2/3, the explosion in student debt, opioid and obesity crises, expanding homelessness and worsening health, gentrification in some areas while other areas struggle; and

WHEREAS Escalating Economic Inequality and the Corruption of Our Democracy have now erupted as a national political crisis, threatening not only domestic but also global stability, with greed on one hand and resentment on the other driving spreading authoritarianism and militarism; and

WHEREAS To reverse our descent into plutocracy, extreme disparities, and conflict, we need to assemble a vast caravan on the road to equity and justice, rooted in the struggles of the “least among us”, aiming to unite the stressed-out and neglected across lines of race, ethnicity, culture, and hardship, instead of being divided by false narratives, with the more affluent among us acting as allies and using their privilege and assets in solidarity with the beleaguered.

THEREFORE: BE IT RESOLVED

That the 2018 General Assembly of the UUA calls upon UUs everywhere, and their congregations and interfaith contacts, to join the Poor People's Campaign to broaden and deepen the moral strength and commitment that comes from solidarity with the "least among us" as we build a more just and equal society.