

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE | 2015 RESOURCE PACKET



United Nations Sunday Service

International Criminal Justice: From
Punitive to Restorative

Part I

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Background Information

Find yourself in the Global U/U Story! With a UN Sunday Service, your congregation will learn about an important global issue and be inspired to take action in the name of justice. That's what the global U/U story is all about – Unitarians, Universalists, and Unitarian Universalists around the world engaging in liberal spiritual worship, compassionate acts, and doing their part to bend the arc of history toward justice. This packet includes various and plentiful resources for you and your UN Sunday planning team. It will take you through the steps of learning about, planning, and executing a successful and inspirational UN Sunday. Please read through as much as possible and see each page as a resource for information and knowledge on the topic.

Please be aware of the requirements and deadlines for the Dana Greeley Award, Blue Ribbon Congregation Award, and procedures for collecting and sending donations. The UU-UNO is able to keep our doors open thanks to you! Our funding comes from the generous contributions of congregations and individual donors and we truly appreciate all your support!

Lastly, once you have successfully held your UN Sunday, please remember to complete and mail/email us the Envoy Report, which is included in the packet on page 20. This report is the pre-qualifier for becoming a Blue Ribbon Congregation and helps us learn more about how we can improve our resources and support of initiatives and events.

Please contact the Envoy Coordinator at unenvoycoordinator@uua.org or 617-948-4610, ext. 3, with any questions or concerns. This complete packet is available for all at uua.org/unsunday

Good luck and remember to remain confident in your ability to host this UN Sunday celebration!

About the United Nations

Here is a brief overview of the history of this international organization. You may choose to read the Purposes as opening words or as a reflection.

With the scourge of war heavy on hearts and minds following World War II, 51 countries met in San Francisco to create the United Nations, where they drafted and signed its Charter. When these 51 countries signed the Charter on 24 October 1945, they became *member states* of the United Nations and committed their governments and peoples to “maintain international peace and security” as well as the Charter’s other purposes and principles. When *states* become *members* of the United Nations, they agreed to accept the many obligations of the [UN Charter](http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/index.shtml)¹.

¹ United Nations Charter: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/index.shtml>

Much of the UN's work sets normative frameworks which governments must take upon themselves to implement. One of the most important purposes in the Charter to remember when thinking about the purpose of the United Nations is the fourth: "to be a center for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends."

A common misunderstanding is that the UN is a director of action or change or that it has power over states. Much like elected or appointed officials in a city or province draft legislation in the interest of their local constituents, UN delegates from different countries deliberate law and legislation at the international level. Governments draft, debate, and vote for or against treaties, conventions, or action plans discussed at the UN.

The entirety of the budget for the United Nations is financed by dues and voluntary contributions from member states. There are 193 member states in the United Nations (the newest member state is the Republic of South Sudan, 14 July 2011). In addition, the Holy See and the Palestinian Authority have observer status, meaning that they have speaking rights, but no voting rights. Working with such a diversity of peoples requires a large full-time translation team; the UN works in six official languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, & Spanish.

PURPOSES

Here are four of the main tenants of the UN, which are similar to our Seven Principles.

- To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace;
- To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace;
- To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion; and
- To be a center for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends.

United Nations Sunday

BACKGROUND

The United Nations was founded in 1945 as a global association of governments that facilitates cooperation in international law, security, economic development, and social equality. With aims to protect human rights and achieve world peace, it is a center for governments to communicate and develop strategies to reach these ends. Since 1947, 24 October has been called United Nations Day to commemorate the anniversary of the UN's creation. In 1971, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution recommending that the day be observed as a public holiday by member states.

AT YOUR OWN CONGREGATION

In celebration of this annual event, the Unitarian Universalist UN Office invites congregations and individual UUs to engage with the Global U/U Story by deepening their understanding of the United Nations and devoting one service in October to reaffirming the connections between our UU principles and the vital issues dealt with at the UN. Usually, congregations organize a UN Sunday for the Sunday closest to UN Day, but any Sunday is better than no Sunday at all. The theme for the UN Sunday service follows the theme for that year's UU-UNO Intergenerational Spring Seminar. This year's theme is *International Criminal Justice: From Punitive to Restorative*.

We encourage ministers, lay leaders, and youth and adult envoys to take advantage of our prepared materials and/or develop their own ideas for a UN Sunday service. Consider enlisting a UU-UNO Envoy or a special UN speaker to present the sermon. We especially encourage a multigenerational service, including children, youth, young adults, adults, and seniors working together in the preparation and execution of UN Sunday. Further, we urge congregations to organize related religious education sessions. Our UN Religious Education curriculum (UN Me) is available on our UN Sunday webpage: www.uua.org/unsunday. Also on our website is a short insightful history of UN Day and UU history at the UN which can be a great additional resource to use. This downloadable document, entitled, "They called it UN Day," is written by UU lawyer Frank B. Frederick, who was involved in the creation of UN Day and the UU-UNO.

Finally, we ask congregations to consider dedicating their UN Sunday offering or collection to the important work of the UU-UNO and to inform fellow UUs of the benefits of contributing to the UU-UNO. The UU-UNO exists to provide a unique Unitarian Universalist perspective at the United Nations. We depend on individual and congregational support, and we need your involvement, engagement, and enthusiastic contributions to help us bring our UU voice to the UN. We can help to change the world so that every person enjoys a safe and dignified life. Thank you for participating in UN Sunday!