

KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives
Statement Regarding the War against Iraq
March 21, 2003

KAIROS, a partnership of Canadian churches and religious organizations, expresses its deep sadness and anguish that a military invasion of Iraq is underway. Our faith in the God of peace compels us to oppose this unjust, unnecessary and destructive war.

As we have stated consistently over the past six months, our primary concern is for the people of Iraq who have already suffered enormously as a result of the 1991 Gulf War, the ensuing sanctions, and the actions of their own government. We lament the loss of life, human suffering, and ecological destruction that this war will cause and do not believe it will bring peace and justice to the Iraqi people.

We pray for all who will suffer the horrors of war: Iraqi civilians; soldiers who are pitted against one another; and for all people of the Middle East, be they Muslim, Christian or Jewish, who have already witnessed far too much violence and bloodshed. We fervently hope that the war will end soon and that peace will come to Iraq and the region.

We are grateful for the courageous decision of the Canadian government in refusing to participate in this war that has no justification in international law. We call on the Canadian government to oppose the war actively and to continue to press for a multilateral approach to resolving outstanding issues in Iraq.

As Christians, we are called upon to love our neighbours and respond to their cries for help. Many churches will help the Iraqi people, both in their immediate needs as a result of war, and in the long-term task of rebuilding their society after the war. At the same time, we know that a much larger effort will be required to meet all of the needs. We call on those countries that have inflicted destruction through this war to provide the majority of financing for a United Nations administered reconstruction fund.

The vision of the world that underlies the wider military strategy of the United States is one of fear, insecurity and despair. We believe another vision is possible. It is inspired by compassion, understanding and justice--values that are shared by many faiths. It is also inspired by a common commitment to resolving differences through international laws and procedures, a commitment that has been breached by the United States and for which it must be held accountable.

We call on our church constituencies to persist in opposing this war through public demonstrations, prayer vigils and other expressions of non-violent resistance. These can be signs of faith that, although there is much suffering in the world, God continues to call people to build a world where there is peace and justice for all.

Approved at the KAIROS Board of Directors meeting

March 21, 2003

KAIROS unites Canadian churches and religious organizations in a faithful ecumenical response to God's call to seek justice. KAIROS members include the Anglican Church of Canada, the United Church of Canada, the Presbyterian Church in Canada, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund, the Canadian Religious Conference, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, the Christian Reformed Church in North America, the Mennonite Central Committee Canada and the Religious Society of Friends.
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