



30 January 2017

An open letter to concerned citizens around the world,

As we witness the events unfolding in the United States, we at the United Religions Initiative (URI) reject any call from anyone that encourages behavior which diminishes the humanity of others. We are a global network comprised of people of all traditions, all beliefs, all nationalities, all races and cultures, all genders and sexualities, and all ages, and we choose to honor the wisdom and beauty of all our sisters and brothers in this global family. We are a movement of people of all religions, spiritual expressions, and Indigenous traditions who stand together against the forces of violence, extremism, oppression, and prejudice. We offer a different way to be in the world: a way that does not seek gain at another's expense, a way that does not demonize others to aggrandize oneself. Our way is the way of respecting the uniqueness of each other's lives and traditions, and working together for the good of our communities and the world - elevating the dialogue beyond political partisanship and appealing to our humanity. Our way is the way of uniting people to heal and protect the Earth, and to build safe places for conflict resolution and reconciliation, not dividing people through fear and hatred. Our work is rooted in nonviolent, compassionate action, to celebrate diversity, and manifest love and justice among all life in our Earth community.

Our Muslim sisters and brothers, and those refugees of all nationalities and beliefs fleeing persecution and violence, are being targeted by dehumanizing prejudice that has found its way into presidential pronouncements in the United States. **We stand together arm in arm, connected heart to heart with our sisters and brothers united in support of freedom of religion and spiritual expression and the rights of all peoples everywhere as set forth under international law.** We also unite in responsible cooperative action to bring the wisdom and values of our traditions to bear on the economic, environmental, political, and social challenges facing our Earth community.

In the face of the rise of extremism around the world, as Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, racism, gender and sexuality-based violence, and all forms of prejudice destroy lives and undermine the potential for peace among diverse peoples, let us stand together against all forces of dehumanization and the violence it brings, and unite to create cultures of peace, justice, and healing for the Earth and all living beings.

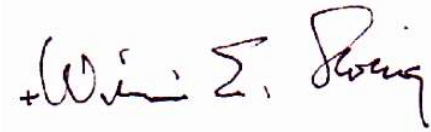
In peace,

[Kiran Bali, MBE JP](#)

Global Council Chair, United Religions Initiative

[The Rev. Victor H. Kazanjian, Jr.](#)

Executive Director, United Religions Initiative

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William E. Swing". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning of the first word.

[The Right Rev. William E. Swing](#)

Founder and President, United Religions Initiative

The United Religions Initiative (URI) is the world's largest grassroots interfaith peacebuilding network, operating in 97 countries. We respect the uniqueness of each other's lives and traditions, and work together for the good of our communities and the world. We unite people to heal and protect the Earth, and to build safe places for conflict resolution and reconciliation. [For more information, visit www.uri.org.](http://www.uri.org)