

Stop Supporting Ethnic and Religious Extremism

People who are concerned for peace need to understand that terrorists don't just manifest from a void, but are cultivated by organizations and nations that accept and propagate the politics of hate. All too often these hate groups besmirch the good names and efforts of the larger groups that they infest. In most cases, it is not religion or nations that openly or officially support and foster hate. Instead it is isolated extremist groups within religions and within nations and political parties that do so.

We oppose the actions of hate groups who demonize and/or terrorize minorities based on their ethnic ancestry or religious beliefs while recognizing that the larger groups within which they are embedded are filled with kind, loving, peaceful individuals who are blamed for the very atrocities that they themselves find abhorrent.

Peace-loving people must stand vigilant as these stormtroopers of hatred — who stole so many lives at the Al-Noor Mosque, the Linwood Islamic Centre, the Oak Creek Gurdwara, the Tree of Life Synagogue, the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, and so many other places — are seeking alliances and collaborations with supremacist movements on a global scale.

The same motivating spirit of xenophobia and ethnic supremacy is rising in organized form — and at a shocking pace — in Poland, the Ukraine, Hungary, Germany, France, Belgium, Sweden, Russia, Turkey, Australia, Brazil, the Philippines, and India. OF SPECIAL CONCERN is the ever growing threat of nuclear war in the area of the world which includes Israel, Syria, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. We must work to lower tensions and reduce the threat of war, not fan the flames of racial, ethnic and religious intolerance.

We absolutely support the First Amendment's guarantee of religious freedom for everyone. It is every human's unalienable right to be free to choose their own religious practices and it is also every human being's right to be free from the religious practices of others. We support the separation of church and state. In many ways, the United States was founded by people who were refugees who were trying to escape religious persecution. Government should never exert control over an individual's right to worship or to not worship.

The idea that everyone in a country should be of the same racial or ethnic origin or be required to follow the same religious practices violates what we in America consider to be an unalienable, God-given human right. We oppose religious discrimination and bigotry in all its forms, and we especially oppose state-sponsored racial, ethnic and religious nationalism.

We oppose religious nationalism in all its forms, whether it be Christian nationalism, Islamic nationalism, Jewish nationalism, Hindu nationalism or any other form of nationalism that might be based on religious exclusivism.

We oppose governments, organizations and individuals who support, or are supported by, organizations that espouse exclusion or hatred against minority groups as part of their charter or in their actions. We oppose the use of U.S. government funds to provide financial or military assistance directly or indirectly to the government of any country that supports or turns a blind eye to such hate organizations, and certainly not to the organizations directly.

It is a fact that racial prejudice in India has triggered a form of Hindu religious nationalism that is known as Hindutva. Those who promote Hindutva seek to remove non-Hindu influence from India in order to “purify” India and create a “Hindu nation”. Their belief is that to be Indian requires one to be Hindu. In and of itself, being proud of one’s culture and religion is acceptable, but when such nationalistic and religious pride leads to discrimination, violence and murder, something must be said.

Prime Minister Modi of India leads the BJP. Members of the BJP have clearly been indicated in atrocious acts against those who practice religions other than Hinduism that are far too numerous to overlook. Rather than fully investigate these atrocities and call for changes in the principles and actions of the BJP, Modi has denied that any such atrocities have ever occurred and holds his own party blameless. This is clearly NOT the case.

We do not support Hindu supremacy.

We do not support Hindu nationalism.

We do not support ethnic, racial or religious supremacy or nationalism anywhere on earth.

We encourage everyone to evolve their thinking to be more tolerant, and more accepting of a variety of religious beliefs that are different than their own personal religious practices.

The seeds of hatred that lead people to commit murder start small. The hatred begins long before the violence erupts. It starts with indifference to the plight of one’s fellow human beings, progresses into minimization of the sufferings of other people, and escalates into veiled racism, followed by discrimination, and eventually open calls for violence against anyone who is different. Hate speech by any official leader is absolutely intolerable.

We have to prevent the seeds of hatred from ever being sown. One of the first steps to doing so is education and awareness which requires examining nationalist ideologies, tracing how they connect to each other, exposing them at a global level, and then standing firmly in solidarity, unity, and love with all people who want a peaceful society where freedom, equality, and justice are the things which reign supreme.

We must all work for peace, inclusiveness, tolerance and cooperation.

Peace be with you
As-salamu alaykum
Shalom aleichem
Namaste
Aloha