

Over 900 Faith Leaders in the US Demand Christmas Truce in Ukraine

Faith leaders invoke the legacy of the 1914 Christmas Truce during WWI, calling for peace and negotiations in Ukraine

By [Peoples Dispatch](#)

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Ahead of the end-of-year holidays, nearly 1,000 faith leaders in the United States of major traditions are calling for a truce in Ukraine. With 14 million people displaced and over 6,700 confirmed deaths (although the true death toll is estimated to be greater), the war in Ukraine has resulted in enormous violence. Faith leaders are invoking the legacy of the 1914 Christmas Truce during WWI in calling for peace and negotiations in Ukraine. Led from the ground up by soldiers on both the British and German sides, during the 1914 truce troops defied their officers and ceased hostilities during Christmas all along the Western Front.

Almost 1,000 faith leaders have signed onto a statement that reads in part, "In the spirit of the truce that occurred in 1914 during the First World War, we urge our government to take a leadership role in bringing the war in Ukraine to an end through supporting calls for a ceasefire and negotiated settlement, before the conflict results in a nuclear war that could devastate the world's ecosystems and annihilate all of God's creation."

The statement was put together by US peace organizations CODEPINK, National Council of Elders, and Fellowship of Reconciliation-USA (FOR).

The recent escalations in Ukraine, especially on the part of the US, have raised worldwide concerns about the potential of a nuclear confrontation. Biden's Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), released on October 27, abandons Biden's 2020 campaign promise of supporting a "no first use" of nuclear weapons policy. It calls for a rebuilding of the US nuclear arsenal, citing threats from Russia and China, despite the fact that US intelligence has admitted that there is [no sign](#) that Russia is preparing to use nuclear weapons. The US has also [sped up](#) storage of upgraded nuclear warheads in Europe as the war rages on in the continent. As the Union of Concerned Scientists wrote in a [blog post](#), "the Biden NPR doubles down on

nuclear deterrence and the *status quo* approach to security that says we all must be prepared to die in less than an hour. That is not a world *any* of us should want to live in.”

While the US escalates, peace organizations call instead for negotiations. “Negotiation is not a euphemism for capitulation, nor is it a rationalization of Putin’s aggression,” says Medea Benjamin, cofounder CODEPINK. “It is simply a recognition that the end of this war cannot be achieved by more war. Any prospect for a pause in hostilities should be acted on.”

On November 19, peace organizations such as CODEPINK collaborated on an anti-war event hosted by the Peoples Forum and the ANSWER Coalition, also calling for negotiations to end the war in Ukraine. Speaking to the [condemnation](#) of progressive voices for peace in the United States, ANSWER Coalition direct Brian Becker said at the event, “Whenever people have organized and fought for and mobilized for peace, they draw the wrath of the warmakers...It doesn’t matter if their slogans are soft or mild, whether they talk about negotiations or overturning capitalism, just mobilizing the people against war is a great danger to the warmakers, because if the people finally say NO to war, the wars end. The ruling class can’t do the wars without the people.”

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Featured image: British and German soldiers fraternizing at Ploegsteert, Belgium, on Christmas Day 1914. Photo: Wikimedia

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