

**Statement of the Secretary General of Religions for Peace  
On the Florida Qur'an Burning and Ensuing Violence in Afghanistan**

1 April 2011

A Florida pastor recently burned the Qur'an at the Dove World Outreach Center. This reprehensible act has inflamed tensions, set back the progress of years of interreligious cooperation, and, most regrettably, led others in Afghanistan to take innocent lives in retaliation. Both the disrespectful act of desecration and the deplorable violent responses are wrong.

The Qur'an burning is the act of a single man already condemned by global religious and political leaders for his previous threats and actions.

The seven deaths include Afghanis and United Nations aid workers. As a result of last year's threat of Qur'an burning by this same pastor, five persons were killed at NATO facilities in Afghanistan.

The overwhelming majority of Christians and Muslims firmly reject and feel deeply grieved and grossly manipulated by these vulgar actions.

The members of *Religions for Peace*—the world's largest multi-religious coalition solely dedicated to advancing principled cooperation for peace—condemn the desecration of sacred texts and abhor the use of violence as a form of reaction to it.

More principled multi-religious dialogue, cooperation, and solidarity are the necessary responses in the present situation. They are the only effective antidote to extremism.

Yours in partnership,



Dr. William F. Vendley  
Secretary General

**RELIGIONS FOR PEACE**—the world's largest and most representative multi-religious coalition—advances common action among the world's religious communities for peace. *Religions for Peace* works to transform violent conflict, advance human development, promote just and harmonious societies, and protect the earth. The global *Religions for Peace* network comprises a World Council of senior religious leaders from all regions of the world; six regional inter-religious bodies and more than eighty national ones; and the Global Women of Faith Network and Global Interfaith Youth Network.

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