

Last night, three men were fatally shot and nine others were injured in a shooting at a Halloween party. Tanenbaum's *Peacemakers in Action Network*—religious peace activists from across the globe—took note that once again, the U.S. suffers from such violence. They are both concerned and outraged at the escalating rate of mass shootings taking place in the U.S. I am proud to share their words.

We are Tanenbaum's *Peacemakers in Action Network*: Religiously motivated peace activists from armed conflicts across the world and recipients of the *Peacemakers in Action Award*. Spanning different religions, beliefs and conflicts, we have experienced violence and reconciliation. We know the pain of loss, the destruction engendered by hatred, and the possibilities of peace.

The *Peacemakers in Action Network* is dedicated to conflict transformation and reconciliation. Our vision is to build a more peaceful, just, and sustainable world. As individuals who work to resolve armed conflicts, we stand together and raise our collective voice to denounce developments that threaten peace and human security.

Today, with profound sadness, we call on the people and the lawmakers of the United States to stop the proliferation of dangerous weapons across the U.S. and the rhetoric of hate that is fueling America's epidemic of mass shootings.

This summer alone, mass shootings have left over 120 people dead, and many more survivors and families who will long carry their wounds. Tragedy struck again in California yesterday, where 3 people were killed at a Halloween party. As a *Network*, we are deeply pained and outraged. We work in 23 global conflicts and dedicate our lives to peace within our own communities—and we are heartbroken to see the United States, once a beacon of hope for all of us, devolve into repeated outbreaks of preventable violence.

Responsible societies throughout the world regulate and control weapon ownership and availability, especially military style weapons of war along with high capacity ammunition. As a result, the citizens of these responsible countries live in greater security and safety. Incomprehensibly, this responsibility continues to elude the United States government at the expense of thousands of victims every year.

To those who support the current legislative inaction, ignore the overwhelmingly popular demand for change, and oppose comprehensive reform, we say to you: Your choice is tantamount to participating

in these crimes. The guilt of those who fire the weapons at innocent civilians is shared with those who stand in the way of reasonable and responsible laws and policies.

We stand in solidarity with the women and men across the United States, and the world, urging U.S. lawmakers and weapons manufacturers to take overdue action on these crimes fueled by hate and misunderstanding. Only by doing this can the U.S. put an end to the reactionary cycles of violence that have become systemic in a nation once revered for its ideals and freedoms, and halt the spread of the very same weapons that go on to enable violence and conflict around the world.

Protecting humanity is a primordial need, and it is through reflecting inward, to the wisdom of our faith traditions, that we are reminded of our interdependence and that violence perpetrated against one group of people is violence directed at us all.

As Christians, Muslims, Jews, and Buddhists, we offer these reminders from the books of Genesis and the Quran:

Genesis, Chapter 1, verse 27

*"So God created humankind in God's own image, in the image of God He created them;
male and female God created them."*

Al Quran 7:56

*"And create not disorder in the earth after it has been set in order
and call upon Him in fear and hope.
Surely, the mercy of Allah is nigh unto those who do good."*

Life is sacred, and it is our mission not to harm it, but to protect and honor it.

Peacemakers in Action Network

Dr. Sarah AK Ahmed – Iraq
José “Chencho” Alas – El Salvador
Betty Bigombe – Uganda
Abuna Elias Chacour – Israel/Palestine
Ricardo Esquivia – Colombia
Maria Ida “Deng” Giguiento – Philippines
Azhar Hussain – Pakistan
Dr. Ephraim Isaac – Ethiopia
Father Sava Janjic - Kosovo

Dishani Jayaweera – Sri Lanka
Hind Kabawat – Syria
Dr. Yehezkel Landau – Israel/USA
Dr. William Lowrey – USA/South Sudan
Rev. Jacklevyn Manuputty – Indonesia
Friar Ivo Markovic – Bosnia & Herzegovina
Rev. Canon Andrew White – Iraq
Pastor James Movel Wuye – Nigeria

Joyce S. Dubensky, CEO, Tanenbaum