

NO ONE WINS A NUCLEAR WAR



The United Nations Call for a Global Ceasefire

2020 WILPF Solidarity Season Resource Guide 13

STOP PRESS: 8/28/20, WILPF US CALLS FOR PERMANENT GLOBAL CEASEFIRE

To volunteer and get information on how branches and at-large members can take action in support of the Ceasefire and the WILPF US Call for Peace, and for national-level action, please email: President@wilpfus.org.

UN GLOBAL CEASEFIRE Timeline of News and Events

(from March 23, 2020 to July 1 approval to August 14, 2020)

Compiled by Dianne Blais, with editing by Cherrill Spencer & Darien De Lu

The timeline below tries to show the effects of the March 23, 2020 appeal by the UN Secretary-General for a GLOBAL CEASEFIRE: the many organizations, people and countries that supported it, the difficulties within the UN Security Council getting it passed – which they finally did on July 1, and the effects on global conflict as a result. All dates include the reference so you can read the article or speech in full or watch the video. [Note: This version of Resource Guide 13 has been edited to quote only that text which either is not copyrighted or is otherwise used in compliance with the guidelines of the originating website.]

At the end of the timeline is information about the numerous petitions for a global ceasefire, numerous organizations supporting them, and how to start your own petition. The petition by Avaaz, which various UN sites refer to, has almost 2.5 million signatories. WILPF US signed this petition. You can sign on as an individual: go to https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/global_ceasefire_loc/ and enter your e-mail address.

March 23, 2020 United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres' global ceasefire appeal via a "virtual press conference" broadcast over the internet from UN headquarters in New York.

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/03/1059972>

Excerpts:

Our world faces a common enemy: COVID-19. The virus does not care about nationality or ethnicity, faction or faith. It attacks all, relentlessly. Meanwhile, armed conflict rages on around the world.

The most vulnerable — women and children, people with disabilities, the marginalized and the displaced — pay the highest price. They are also at the highest risk of suffering devastating losses from COVID-19.

Let's not forget that in war-ravaged countries, health systems have collapsed. Health professionals, already few in number, have often been targeted. Refugees and others displaced by violent conflict are doubly vulnerable. The fury of the virus illustrates the folly of war.

That is why today, I am calling for an immediate global ceasefire in all corners of the world. It is time to put armed conflict on lockdown and focus together on the true fight of our lives.

To warring parties, I say: Pull back from hostilities. Put aside mistrust and animosity. Silence the guns; stop the artillery; end the airstrikes.

This is crucial... To help create corridors for life-saving aid. To open precious windows for diplomacy. To bring hope to places among the most vulnerable to COVID-19.

Let us take inspiration from coalitions and dialogue slowly taking shape among rival parties in some parts to enable joint approaches to COVID-19. But we need much more. End the sickness of war and fight the disease that is ravaging our world.

*It starts by stopping the fighting everywhere. Now.
That is what our human family needs, now more than ever.*

9-minute Video of the Secretary General speaking this plea; includes Q&A.

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/03/1059972>

March 29 Pope Francis call for all forms of hostilities to end, with corridors for humanitarian aid

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DJitfgLQHCM> (a 51 second video)

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-pope-ceasefire/pope-backs-un-chiefs-call-for-global-ceasefire-to-focus-on-coronavirus-idUSKBN21G0FD>

March 30 An international statement in support
<https://www.psr.org/blog/un-secretary-general-calls-for-a-global-ceasefire/>

53 nations, including Canada, Mexico, Japan and 24 European nations, issued a joint statement of support for the Global Ceasefire.

April 2 Secretary-General António Guterres Reiterated Appeal for Global Ceasefire
<https://www.un.org/press/en/2020/sgsm20032.doc.htm>

Excerpts:

There should be only one fight in our world today: our shared battle against COVID-19.

the global ceasefire appeal is resonating across the world. The call has been endorsed by an ever-growing number...To all, I express my deep gratitude.

parties to conflict have expressed their acceptance in the following countries: Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Colombia, Libya, Myanmar, the Philippines, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine and Yemen.

...four examples of this intense diplomatic push: Yemen, Syria, Libya, Afghanistan

.. we need to do everything possible to find the peace and unity our world so desperately needs to battle COVID-19. We must mobilize every ounce of energy to defeat it.

Apr 17 UNICEF report: COVID-19: Global ceasefire would be a gamechanger for 250 million children living in conflict-affected areas
<https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/covid-19-global-ceasefire-would-be-gamechanger-250-million-children-living-conflict>

April 22 WILPF [International] and four other organizations form the consortium FIRE
<https://www.wilpf.org/feminist-consortium-releases-five-feminist-principles-for-a-meaningful-ceasefire/>

WILPF and Kvinna (Kvinna means woman in Faroese – the Faroe Islands are remotely located in the North Atlantic Ocean) till Kvinna Foundation, MADRE, medica mondiale, and the Nobel Women's Initiative form FIRE, an acronym for "Feminist Impact for Rights and Equality." FIRE developed five feminist principles for a meaningful ceasefire and supports the UN Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire.

May <https://www.peacewomen.org/node/103853>

PeaceWomen (the Women, Peace and Security Program of WILPF) publishes a new resource, "**Centering Women, Peace and Security in Ceasefires**", an urgent reminder that UNSC action on COVID-19, including any work it does to promote a global ceasefire, must be linked with recognition of the gendered

impacts of conflict and the importance and agency of women in promoting peace. Highlights case studies from Cameroon, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Syria, and Yemen, drawing from the recommendations of WILPF members and partners on the ground.

May 22 Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) appeals to UNSC members

<https://www.nrc.no/news/2020/may/armed-conflict-displaces-660000-since-un-call-for-global-ceasefire/>

Armed conflict forced more than 660,000 people around the world to flee their homes between March 23 and May 15, leaving people more exposed to COVID-19, and is preventing global efforts to control the pandemic.

“At a time when health experts tell us to stay at home, men with guns are forcing hundreds of thousands out of their homes and into extreme vulnerability,” said NRC’s Secretary General Jan Egeland. “This not only hurts those who are forced to flee, it seriously undermines our joint efforts to combat the virus.”

Of the 661,000 internally displaced in 19 countries in two months, the highest number by far was in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) where clashes between armed groups and the country’s military forced more than 480,000 people to flee their homes.

Even in countries where warring parties have expressed support for a ceasefire call, the fighting has not stopped. In Yemen, the Saudi-led coalition announced that they would implement a unilateral ceasefire. However, airstrikes have continued, and the other parties have undertaken armed operations resulting in the displacement of 24,000 people since March 23.

The Lake Chad region has also experienced an internal displacement surge. Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Syria, Somalia and Myanmar all saw more than 10,000 people displaced in the same period.

The UN Security Council has failed to provide leadership for ceasefires, peace talks or protection of civilians during the pandemic. While there is broad agreement on the call for a global ceasefire, powerful countries including the US and China, are stalling progress by bringing their bilateral disagreements into council deliberations.

“While people are being displaced and killed, powerful members of the UN Security Council squabble like children in a sandbox,” Egeland said. “World leaders must rise to the occasion and jointly push parties to cease their fire and unite in protecting all communities from Covid-19. Now is not the time for kindergarten politics.”

May 24 From over 40 countries, 237 international leaders appealed, in this time of pandemic, for disarmament and called for support for the UN Ceasefire.

<https://www.worldfuturecouncil.org/2020-appeal-international-womens-day-for-peace-and-disarmament/>

May 27 A call on governments to redirect part of their military budgets to medical and testing needs for COVID-19.

<https://rfp.org/interfaith-youth-call-for-global-ceasefire-during-the-covid-19-crisis>

June 7 [Lutheran World Federation] urges support of the ceasefire and attention to both humanitarian needs and action against the pandemic

<https://www.lutheranworld.org/news/lwf-urges-security-council-implement-global-ceasefire>

June 16 What's Happened to the UN Secretary-General's COVID-19 Ceasefire Call?
By Richard Gowan, UN Director

Gowan notes that, despite initial positive response from disputing armed groups, the logistics of ceasefires are not so easy, since the “architecture” must be worked out. He goes on to mention the power struggles in the Security Council, including US obstructionism.

<https://www.crisisgroup.org/global/whats-happened-un-secretary-generals-covid-19-ceasefire-call>

The first week to ten days after he made the appeal, we saw quite a lot of armed groups and governments acknowledging the call and promising to consider it. The UN estimated that conflict parties in eleven countries recognized this call by early April. Since mid-April, however, we have not seen a lot of momentum. Indeed, at the moment, if you look at conflict data globally, the ceasefire call appears to have had little effect on the overall level of violence worldwide. There are a number of reasons for that.

...even where you had seeming good-will among conflict parties to pause violence in response to COVID-19, there was often a lack of ceasefire architecture for taking advantage of these offers. It is one thing for an armed group to say it wants to reduce violence, but another to translate that wish into a technical ceasefire agreement with clear terms and some sort of security guarantee that all sides can accept. Obviously, this has been a bad period for international mediators and international peacekeepers to try to set up architecture of that type, that can sustain a ceasefire: we're in a period when international mediators are unable to travel to conflict zones. We're in a period where many are in lockdown or have limited freedom of movement. It is very hard to go through the hard, technical work of turning offers of ceasefires into actual pauses in violence.

In Cameroon, SOCADEF, one of a number of Anglophone rebel groups, was quick to endorse the global ceasefire in late March, but the government simply ignored it. The fighting never stopped and both sides appear to have increased their targeting of aid workers since the UN appeal.

...in Colombia, the ELN rebel group instituted a month-long pause in violence but demanded quite extensive political talks with the government in Bogotá in order to extend it, which the government was not willing to offer. The ELN ended its ceasefire at the end of April.

In Yemen the Saudi coalition supporting the UN-recognized government offered a freeze of hostilities in early April (and subsequently renewed this offer), and the Huthi rebel group refused to accept it.

In the Philippines, the government called a unilateral pause in operations against the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) rebels before the UN appeal. The CPP did not initially reciprocate, but it did offer a ceasefire after the UN call. Yet it didn't work, partly because the two sides had no real way to operationalize their commitments. They pursued overlapping but uncoordinated ceasefires through April, with messy results. Soldiers and communist rebels would inadvertently cross paths and end up in skirmishes. Violence increased to pre-COVID-19 levels and the CPP ended its ceasefire in April.

Had the Council, at France's suggestion, moved quickly in late March or early April to adopt a resolution endorsing the idea, that would have given it extra political credibility and nudged conflict parties to take it more seriously. It would not have resulted in world peace, but it would have firmed up and given momentum to the Secretary-General's call.

Instead, what we have seen is that for about six or seven weeks, the Council was unable to agree to a resolution endorsing the ceasefire idea, not because anyone objected to the ceasefire idea, but instead because all members supported it with caveats. At first, the U.S. and Russia insisted that they be allowed to continue counter-terrorism operations, for instance. Then the U.S. and China came to a complete deadlock over whether there should be a paragraph somewhere in the resolution saying something nice about the World Health Organization (WHO). **It got to the point that the U.S. torpedoed a resolution that all fourteen Council members had accepted** because it contained a small, indirect reference to the WHO.

The consequence of this great power arm wrestling is that the UN Security Council has been paralyzed and marginalized. Sadly, the ceasefire call is less powerful than it seemed when the Secretary-General made it. UN officials concede that the call has "fizzled".

June 24 This item provides, among other reports, the **170 signatories who endorse the UN chief's global ceasefire appeal (more influential nations are in bold)**. [Note the absence of the US]

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/06/1066982>

Excerpt:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, **Argentina**, **Armenia**, **Australia**, **Austria**, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, **Belgium**, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, **Bolivia**, **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, Botswana, **Brazil**, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, **Cambodia**, **Canada**, Central African Republic, **Chile**, **China**, **Colombia**, Comoros, **Costa Rica**, Côte D'ivoire, **Croatia**, **Cyprus**, **Czech Republic**, **Denmark**, Djibouti, Dominica, **Dominican Republic**, **Ecuador**, **Egypt**, **El Salvador**, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, **Estonia**, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, **Finland**, **France**, Gambia, Georgia, **Germany**, Ghana, **Greece**, Grenada, **Guatemala**, Guinea, Guyana, **Haiti**, **Honduras**, **Hungary**, Iceland, **Indonesia**, **Iraq**, **Ireland**, **Italy**, **Jamaica**, **Japan**, **Jordan**, Kazakhstan, **Kenya**, **Korea**, **Laos**, **Latvia**, **Lebanon**, Lesotho, Liberia, **Libya**, Liechtenstein, **Lithuania**, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Macedonia, Mauritania, Mauritius, **Mexico**, Micronesia, Moldova, **Monaco**, **Mongolia**, **Montenegro**, **Morocco**, **Mozambique**, Namibia, **Nepal**,

Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Palau, Palestine, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe and the European Union.

June 24 Zoom webinar with 9 notable speakers organized by Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament, Women Legislators' Lobby and World Future Council. Supported by UNFOLD ZERO.

<http://pnnd.org/event/un2020-enhancing-peace-disarmament-and-role-women>

July 1 UN Global Ceasefire passed by Security Council! Security Council resolution 2532 adopted, backing UN's global humanitarian ceasefire call

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/07/1067552>

Excerpt:

The two-page resolution – drafted by France and Tunisia - was adopted 111 days after the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 to be a global pandemic. No ceasefire would apply for ongoing military operations against Council-designated terrorist groups. It requested the Secretary-General to instruct the United Nations' 13 peacekeeping missions to support host country efforts to contain the coronavirus, and to provide updates on UN efforts to address the pandemic in conflict zones and humanitarian crisis areas.

July 5 Pope Francis: Implement global ceasefire effectively and promptly.

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2020-07/pope-implement-global-ceasefire-effectively-and-promptly.html>

Pope Francis said, "The call for a global and immediate ceasefire, which would allow the peace and security essential for providing the humanitarian assistance so urgently needed, is commendable." He said he hoped that "this decision will be implemented effectively and promptly for the sake of the many people who are suffering" throughout the world. Pope Francis prayed that the Security Council resolution might "become a courageous first step towards a peaceful future."

July 19 Pope Francis insists on global ceasefire

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C8hLp36VV1Y>

July 21 In some of the most volatile parts of the world, namely the Middle East and North Africa, the appeal of ceasefires, without any means of negotiation or enforcement, proved fleeting. That's mentioned in Arab News, which does not allow providing links.

The report goes on to note that, while violence in some areas has been reduced, the situation of children in areas greatly affected by the pandemic remains serious.

Aug 4 Salvaging the Security Council's Coronavirus Response by Richard Gowan and Ashish Pradhan

The writers observe what little has happened since the historic passage of the Ceasefire – Resolution 2532 – and suggest that we can learn a lot about the Security Council by following this situation.

<https://www.crisisgroup.org/global/salvaging-security-councils-coronavirus-response>

Resolution 2532 centers on a call for “all parties to armed conflicts to engage immediately in a durable humanitarian pause” lasting 90 days in response to the pandemic. This document will earn a footnote in histories of the UN, as **it is the first time the Council has advocated such a global ceasefire**. But beyond that, it seems unlikely to be widely remembered, as its practical effects have been all but nil. Only one conflict party – Colombia's National Liberation Army or ELN – has explicitly cited the resolution in offering to suspend hostilities and the Colombian government rejected the overture. Elsewhere, governments and armed groups engaged in fighting have shown no sign of heeding the Council's call.

Resolution 2532's lack of impact to date is disappointing in part because, earlier in the pandemic, it briefly looked like the Council could lend momentum to Secretary-General Guterres' aspirational but worthy ceasefire effort, and so play a part in the global response to COVID-19. Guterres first floated the ceasefire idea in late March, and he declared that armed groups in almost a dozen countries had responded positively by early in April. Yet rather than seizing the moment to back the initiative, the Council stumbled into three months of fighting about it, while many of the armed groups that welcomed the UN appeal resumed hostilities.

With Council members looking forward to an August lull in business – especially after the tedium of months of online meetings – it is time for them to take stock of what the Council's halting reaction to the pandemic reveals about the body, and to consider how the Secretary-General and Council members might still salvage something useful from Resolution 2532.

Aug. 13 At an open video conference, the Secretary-General noted the sad lack of serious efforts to stop hostilities, as well as the behavior of some groups in seizing the occasion for greater violence. (This link has his whole speech from the conference on “Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace: Pandemics and the Challenges of Sustaining Peace”

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2020/sqsm20204.doc.htm>

Excerpt:

With a global spike in violence against women and girls, the Spotlight Initiative has repurposed some \$20 million towards the COVID-19 response, much of this in fragile, conflict-affected or humanitarian settings. But this is only a fraction of what is needed to tackle what has been termed a “shadow pandemic”. Gender-based violence is a pervasive form of violence and insecurity that undermines our best efforts to build sustainable peace.

Former secretary-general (2007-16) Ban Ki-moon spoke to the Security Council that same day. He was quoted by many news organizations, such as here:

<https://apnews.com/a9c6ddb18d7ed0d027436fba648a58a3>

(The entire August 12 Security Council meeting was on UN TV:

<http://webtv.un.org/watch/pandemics-and-the-challenges-of-sustaining-peace-security-council-open-vtc/6180583486001> .)

PETITIONS IN SUPPORT of the UN GLOBAL CEASEFIRE

1) UN recommends signing this petition and a Veteran’s for Peace petition led to:

https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/global_ceasefire_loc/?copy

Avaaz—meaning "voice" in several European, Middle Eastern and Asian languages—launched in 2007 with a simple democratic mission: organize citizens of all nations to close the gap between the world we have and the world most people everywhere want. The Avaaz community campaigns in 15 languages, served by a core team on 6 continents and thousands of volunteers. We take action -- signing petitions, funding media campaigns and direct actions, emailing, calling and lobbying governments, and organizing "offline" protests and events.

2) <https://womenmediators.net/the-mwmn-has-signed-the-un-secretary-generals-appeal-for-a-global-ceasefire/>

The Mediterranean Women Mediators Network signed the petition.

3) http://www.mercymidatlantic.org/PDF/Action_alert_call_for_ceasefire.pdf

Please consider signing the Avaaz petition. Thank you for joining us in responding to this appeal, Sisters of Mercy Justice Team

4) <https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/global-ceasefire-now>

Sponsored by [World Beyond War](#) & [RootsAction.org](#):

To: World's Governments Fully and publicly commit to engaging in a global cease-fire now.

5) <https://www.iipvienna.com/news-reports-publications/2020/4/3/petition-for-a-global-ceasefire>

From the [International Institute for Peace](https://www.iipvienna.com/) (IIP):

Now more than ever, we believe states should commit to a global ceasefire to prevent further suffering. Sign the petition for a global ceasefire sponsored by World BEYOND War

6) <https://sign.moveon.org/petitions/we-demand-a-global-ceasefire>

Note that this petition has only 228 sigs on August 25.

TO: U.S. Congress and President Trump: We Demand a Global Ceasefire

7) Moveon.org lists many Win Without War campaigns

<https://sign.moveon.org/partnerships/win-without-war-1> but could not find this petition on WWW's website !

8) <https://www.presbypeacefellowship.org/ceasefire-petition/>

[Peace Churches of the Presbyterian Church \(USA\)](https://www.presbypeacefellowship.org/) and the undersigned call upon the Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Director of the Office of Public Witness in Washington, D.C. to endorse the UN Secretary-General's call for an immediate global ceasefire in all corners of the world. We also request the Stated Clerk to communicate this endorsement to President Donald J. Trump, Secretary of State Michael Pompeo and UN Ambassador Kelly Craft.

9) <https://veteransforpeace.salsalabs.org/globalceasefirepetition/index.html>

This petition has 533 signatures.

BRITISH PETITIONS

1) <https://actions.oxfam.org/great-britain/global-ceasefire/petition/>

Silence the guns **save lives, open a window for inclusive, locally-led peace** – petition to urge the Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab to do all he can for people in conflict-affected states.

<https://www.oxfamapps.org.uk/coronavirus/>

2) <https://www.caat.org.uk/get-involved/act-now/global-ceasefire>

Global ceasefire: Tell Dominic Raab to end UK arms sales UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab has backed the call for a global ceasefire. Now he must turn these words into action. Call on the Foreign Secretary to take a lead at the UN Security Council in building a unified backing for a global ceasefire; and turn these words into action by ending UK arms sales, which only fuel and exacerbate tensions and divert spending away from critical human needs. Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) is a UK-based organisation working to end the international arms trade.

START YOUR OWN PETITION

(National WILPF may initiate a petition. For info: Info@wilpfus.org)

1) https://secure.avaaz.org/community_petitions/en/start_a_petition/

Community Petitions by Avaaz **empowers** people with online tools to help realize the world most people want. Community Petitions is a new web platform that gives people around the world the power to start and win campaigns at the local, national, and international levels.

Community Petitions is a crowd-sourced part of Avaaz, the largest-ever global web movement bringing people-powered politics to decision-making everywhere. Start your own petition right now. It will just take a few minutes

2) <https://sign.moveon.org/petition/new?source=header>
(See item 6 above for reference.)

Start your own petition right now with “moveon.org”. It will just take a few minutes, and we'll be here to support you.

[Watch for updates on how branches and at-large members can take action in support of the WILPF US Call for Peace in the next eNews.](#)
