

Dear _____,

I am writing this letter to ask for your support and participation in an important grassroots peace initiative being conducted by civil society groups and individuals throughout the world.

In 1981, the United Nations General Assembly established the International Day of Peace (IDP). It was in 2001 that the UN modified the resolution and fixed September 21st as the annual date of the IDP. The intention of the new resolution is to have the entire world observe a full day of "global ceasefire and nonviolence." The potential impact is enormous as individuals, communities and countries in conflict lay down their arms and share a full day of peace. This is the vision behind the United Nations' resolution for an International Day of Peace. Building peace one day at a time.

As one way of observing the Day, many peace based NGOs and individuals representing a wide variety of religious and spiritual traditions, are advocating an "International Day of Peace Vigil" with the following objective:

"To encourage worldwide, 24-hour spiritual observations for peace, nonviolence and global ceasefire on the International Day of Peace, 21 September in every house of worship and place of spiritual practice, by all religious and spiritually based groups and individuals and by all men, women and children who seek peace in the world."

These global 24-hour spiritual observations for peace are meant to demonstrate the power of prayer and other spiritual observations in promoting peace and preventing violent conflict. They will also help raise public awareness of the International Day of Peace and can directly support the establishment of a global ceasefire.

You can personally support this worldwide initiative by committing to conduct a spiritual observation and promulgating the Vigil idea among religious and peace-based groups in your community. Please register your commitment to participate in a spiritual observation on the International Day of Peace Vigil website at: www.idpvigil.com, or mail it to: International Day of Peace Vigil, 777 UN Plaza, Concourse Level, New York, NY 10017. Indicate the name of the individual or group participating, a contact person and the number of people participating in the Vigil. All commitments will be posted on the website.

Your participation in this worthwhile effort is most appreciated. Please assist by passing this on to other individuals and groups that might be interested in participating in spiritual observations.

Find below the United Nations Resolution passed by the General Assembly on International Day of Peace and global ceasefire, as well as frequently asked questions and ideas about spiritual observations

Sincerely,

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/55/L.95 and Add.1)]
55/282. International Day of Peace

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 36/67 of 30 November 1981, by which it declared that the third Tuesday of September, the opening day of the regular sessions of the General Assembly, shall be officially proclaimed and observed as International Day of Peace and shall be devoted to commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace both within and among all nations and peoples,

Recalling also its other relevant resolutions, including resolution 55/14 of 3 November 2000,

Reaffirming the contribution that the observance and celebration of the International Day of Peace makes in strengthening the ideals of peace and alleviating tensions and causes of conflict,

Considering the unique opportunity it offers for a cessation of violence and conflict throughout the world, and the related importance of achieving the broadest possible awareness and observance of the International Day of Peace among the global community,

Desiring to draw attention to the objectives of the International Day of Peace, and therefore to fix a date for its observance each year that is separate from the opening day of the regular sessions of the General Assembly,

1. Decides that, with effect from the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, the International Day of Peace shall be observed on 21 September each year, with this date to be brought to the attention of all people for the celebration and observance of peace;
2. Declares that the International Day of Peace shall henceforth be observed as a day of global ceasefire and non-violence, an invitation to all nations and people to honour a cessation of hostilities for the duration of the Day;
3. Invites all Member States, organizations of the United Nations system, regional and non-governmental organizations and individuals to commemorate, in an appropriate manner, the International Day of Peace, including through education and public

awareness, and to cooperate with the United Nations in the establishment of the global ceasefire.

111th plenary meeting

7 September 2001

Frequently Asked Questions:

What is a "Vigil"?

A Vigil is a period of "watch" or "wakefulness." In the context of the International Day of Peace Vigil, it could be done in the form of prayer, meditation or other form of spiritual observance with an objective on peace awareness. It could also be a commitment to peaceful thoughts and acts of kindness and love throughout the day.

Why a "24-hour vigil"?

The IDP Vigil idea corresponds with The United Nations resolution that calls for entire day of global cease-fire and non-violence and invites "all nations and peoples to honour the cessation of hostilities for the duration of the Day". A global day-long spiritual observation focused on peace would be a powerful force in promoting the cessation of violence and creating a more peaceful state among peoples.

What is the meaning of "peace" in the context of the Vigil?

The International Day of Peace has a very tangible goal of a day-long period and global cease-fire. The cessation of conflict for that day is one form of peace. The resolution also states, however, that the day should be focused on strengthening the ideals of peace and alleviating tensions and causes of conflict among peoples and governments. In its broader sense it is more than just alleviating violence, peace is an internal state of concord and tranquility.

How can my group participate in the Vigil?

Groups are asked to participate by focusing the group's awareness on the cessation of violent conflict throughout the world and in promoting peaceful behaviour for the entire 24 hour period on 21 September 2003. The group may wish to observe the Vigil by designating different individuals at different times to pray, meditate or otherwise celebrate the day in that group's house of worship or other suitable places.

How can I, as an individual, participate?

An individual can participate in many different ways. She/he might perform a day-long prayer, meditation or fast. One might also complete his/her daily Vigil by keeping an awareness of peace in all daily activities and by striving to think peaceful and loving thoughts throughout the day.

Can I still participate if I cannot commit to a 24-hour period?

Yes. Not everyone will be able to commit to a 24-hour duration. Do whatever you can

while keeping the goals of the Vigil in mind.

Other Ways to Participate:

- *Invite other faith traditions to join you in a prayer service for international peace.
- *Work with other faiths in your community to have a Peace Pilgrimage traveling throughout your community stopping at various houses of worship to pray for peace in the tradition of that particular faith. Or the pilgrimage could stop to pray at places in need of peace and nonviolence within your community.
- *Ring a Peace Bell at the beginning and end of your spiritual observation. Ask your municipality to formally declare their observance of the day (perhaps ringing a peace bell). Invite other houses of worship to ring their bells for peace.
- *Involve your religious leaders and educators in designing a special project to observe the vigil.
- *Suggest to local school districts that lesson plans focus on conflict prevention and resolution.
- *If you have a Peace Pole, use this as a gathering space for part/all of your spiritual observance. Or you may choose to plant a Peace Pole on this day within the context of a prayer service for peace.
- *If you have a gift for creating prayer services or prayers for such occasions, again, please send them to us, and we will post as many as we can on our website as resources to share with others.

www.idpvigil.com