



Cheryl Davila
Councilmember
District 2

ACTION CALENDAR
May 26, 2020

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmembers Cheryl Davila (Author) and Ben Bartlett (Co-Sponsor)

Subject: Support a Global Ceasefire During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic

RECOMMENDATION

1. Adopt a Resolution in Support of a Global Ceasefire during the COVID-19 Pandemic.
2. Send copies of this resolution to the United Nations Secretary-General, United States Senators Bernie Sanders, Kamala Harris, Dianne Feinstein, and United States Congressional Representatives Barbara Lee, Ro Khanna, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ilhan Omar, Ayanna Pressley, Rashida Harbi Tlaib, and Pramila Jayapa.

BACKGROUND

Infection by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) is non-discriminant by race, age, gender, ethnicity, religious belief, socioeconomic status, or nationality. Accordingly, the United Nations Secretary-General Guterres stated, "the virus has shown how swiftly it can move across borders, devastate countries and upend lives."¹ Despite this, there has been escalation of violence, the possibilities of war, and ongoing conflicts in several countries. Simultaneous to battling the coronavirus, countries such as Yemen, Syria, Cameroon, the Philippines, Afghanistan, and Somalia have prolonged political conflict. In response, the UN Secretary General continued, "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."²

The Berkeley City Council has a long history of promoting world peace and has a track record of opposing wars. For example, at the January 21, 2020 meeting, the Council unanimously approved a resolution opposing the United States' engagement of war with Iran³. At this critical moment when civilians are already struggling to battle the COVID-19 pandemic there is an urgent need for a global ceasefire. Our priorities should be focused on 'flattening the curve' and quelling the virus by sheltering in place. As we struggle to develop a vaccine, slow the spread, and provide healthcare workers adequate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), refugee

¹ <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/coronavirus-un-chief-praises-positive-response-to-global-ceasefire/>

² <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/coronavirus-un-chief-praises-positive-response-to-global-ceasefire/>

³ https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City_Council/2020/01_Jan/Documents/2020-01-21_Item_40_No_War_with_Iran.aspx

camps and other sites where displaced families have sought shelter should not continue to be struck by shelling.

The conflict in Syria will soon enter its tenth year. Under the auspice of the COVID-19 global pandemic, an immediate ceasefire is needed. This will require greater diplomacy, fortitude, and leadership, to put an end to the compounded misery elicited by both military violence and the public health crisis. Such actions are possible, as on March 16, 2020, President Rodrigo Duterte of the Philippines announced a unilateral ceasefire beginning March 19th to deal with the COVID-19 response.⁴ Likewise, on March 18, 2020, the Libyan Government concurred with the call from the United Nations to stop fighting and focus on dealing with COVID-19.⁵ On March 24, the Ukraine Foreign Minister announced support for a global ceasefire, joining the French and German Foreign Ministers to announce a joint statement. On the same day, the Syrian Democratic Forces and Syrian Opposition Coalition announced their support for a ceasefire and shifting their focus to combating COVID-19. Furthermore, on March 25, 2020, the Central African Republic called for a national ceasefire and signed on to a Peace Agreement. The Southern Cameroons Defence Forces likewise announced a temporary ceasefire.⁶ Beyond this, on March 26, 2020, the Afghanistan Government stated they have enlisted a team to negotiate with the Taliban. On March 27, 2020, the African Union Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat stated there is a “moral and humanitarian obligation for all warring parties to immediately stop fighting to facilitate the measures being taken by Member States and other actors to combat and defeat the coronavirus pandemic.”

On March 30, 2020, Pope Francis stated his support for a global ceasefire by urging an end to “any form of hostility, promoting the creation of humanitarian aid routes, openness to diplomacy, and attentiveness to those who find themselves in situations of grave vulnerability.” On April 1st, the Colombian National Liberation Army also announced a one month ceasefire. Furthermore, on April 20th, according to the Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations, 59 countries have also called for an immediate ceasefire. These include: Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cote d’Ivoire, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Guinea, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, The Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mali, Malta, Mexico, Montenegro, Namibia, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, and Uruguay.⁷

According to the World Health Organization COVID-19 Situation Report, as of May 4, there are a total of 3,435,894 global confirmed cases and 239,604 deaths globally to date.⁸ The World Health Organization has raised the risk assessment of COVID-19 to ‘very high’ at the global level. Everyday we are seeing increased cases in a number of countries, most recently on the African continent. Alarm for the virus should supersede any geopolitical conflict at this moment.

The United Nations Secretary-General Guterres has called for a Global Ceasefire, which has been gaining momentum by asking world leaders to participate in an [online campaign](#). The petition currently has over 1.8 million signatures from around the world. When advocating for the ceasefire Guterres stated, “our world faces a common enemy: COVID-19... It is time to put

⁴ <https://time.com/5809477/philippines-new-peoples-army-ceasefire-covid19/>

⁵ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/03/1060302>

⁶ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-52053738>

⁷ <https://onu.delegfrance.org/COVID-19-59-countries-support-Antonio-Guterres-s-call-for-an-immediate-global>

⁸ https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200504-covid-19-sitrep-105.pdf?sfvrsn=4cdda8af_2

armed conflict on lockdown and focus together on the true fight of our lives.” Recently, the UN Secretary General provided an update, stating “a substantial number of parties to conflict have expressed their acceptance for the call... Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Colombia, Libya, Myanmar, the Philippines, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine and Yemen”.⁹ This is very encouraging, and the City of Berkeley should also heed the call of the United Nations and support the Global Ceasefire.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

None.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Protecting humanity from future acts of violence during this crisis is itself an act of environmental sustainability.

CONTACT PERSON

Cheryl Davila
Councilmember District 2
510.981.7120
cdavila@cityofberkeley.info

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution

REFERENCES:

CBS News: “UN chief praises positive response to global ceasefire”

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/coronavirus-un-chief-praises-positive-response-to-global-ceasefire/>

No War With Iran, City of Berkeley City Council Item. Introduced Jan 21, 2020

https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City_Council/2020/01_Jan/Documents/2020-01-21_Item_40_No_War_with_Iran.aspx

United Nations COVID-19 Response

<https://www.un.org/en/un-coronavirus-communications-team/update-secretary-general%E2%80%99s-appeal-global-ceasefire>

BBC News: “Cameroon rebels declare coronavirus ceasefire”

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-52053738>

TIME Magazine: “Philippine Rebels Declare Ceasefire to Heed U.N. Chief’s Call”

<https://time.com/5809477/philippines-new-peoples-army-ceasefire-covid19/>

⁹ <https://www.un.org/en/un-coronavirus-communications-team/update-secretary-general's-appeal-global-ceasefire>

United Nations News: “UN chief calls for ceasefire as Yemen braces for possible COVID-19 outbreak”

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/03/1060302>

Democracy Now: “U.N. Calls for Global Ceasefire So Countries Can Unite in Fight Against Coronavirus Pandemic”

https://www.democracynow.org/2020/3/24/headlines/un_calls_for_global_ceasefire_so_countries_can_unite_in_fight_against_coronavirus_pandemic

United Nations April 2, 2020 Report: Update on the Secretary-General's Appeal for a Global Ceasefire

https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/update_on_sg_appeal_for_ceasefire_april_2020.pdf

United Nations News: "The fury of the virus illustrates the folly of war"

<https://www.un.org/en/un-coronavirus-communications-team/fury-virus-illustrates-folly-war>

Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations: "COVID-19: 59 countries support Antonio Guterres' call for a global ceasefire"

<https://onu.delegfrance.org/COVID-19-59-countries-support-Antonio-Guterres-s-call-for-an-immediate-global>

United Nations Secretary-General Guterres Update:

<https://www.un.org/en/un-coronavirus-communications-team/update-secretary-general's-appeal-global-ceasefire>

World Health Organization COVID-19 Situation Report

https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200504-covid-19-sitrep-105.pdf?sfvrsn=4cdda8af_2

RESOLUTION NO. XXXX

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL FOR THE CITY OF BERKELEY IN SUPPORT OF A GLOBAL CEASEFIRE ESPECIALLY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

WHEREAS, The Coronavirus (COVID-19) is non-discriminant of gender, age, ethnicity, nationality, religious belief, or socioeconomic status; and

WHEREAS, The United Nations Secretary-General Guterres stated that "the virus has shown how swiftly it can move across borders, devastate countries and upend lives. We need to do everything possible to find the peace and unity our world so desperately needs to battle COVID-19"; and

WHEREAS, Despite this, there has been escalating violence, the possibilities of war, and ongoing conflicts in several countries simultaneous to battling the coronavirus; particularly in Yemen, Syria, Cameroon, the Philippines, Afghanistan, and Somalia ; and

WHEREAS, The Berkeley City Council has a long history of promoting world peace and a track record of opposing wars, and on January 21, 2020, the Council unanimously approved a resolution opposing the United States' engagement of war with Iran; and

WHEREAS, Under the auspice of the COVID-19 global pandemic an immediate ceasefire is needed, requiring greater diplomacy, fortitude, and leadership to put an end to the compounded misery elicited by both military violence and the public health crisis; and

WHEREAS, Such actions are possible, as for example as on March 16, 2020, the Philippines, Libya, Syria, the Central African Republic, the Southern Cameroons Defence Forces, Afghanistan Government, the African Union, and the Colombian National Liberation Army have concurred with the call from the United Nations to stop fighting and focus on dealing with COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, On March 30, Pope Francis stated his support for a global ceasefire by urging an end to "any form of hostility, promoting the creation of humanitarian aid routes, openness to diplomacy, and attentiveness to those who find themselves in situations of grave vulnerability"; and

WHEREAS, 59 countries have also called for an immediate ceasefire. These include: Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cote d'Ivoire, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Guinea, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mali, Malta, Mexico, Montenegro, Namibia, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Uruguay; and

WHEREAS, According to the World Health Organization COVID-19 Situation Report, as of May 4, 2020 there are a total of 3,435,894 global confirmed cases and 239,604 deaths globally to date; and

WHEREAS, The World Health Organization has raised the risk assessment of COVID-19 to 'very high' at the global level; and

WHEREAS, It is agreed upon by faith leaders like the Pope, as well as political leaders, that alarm for the virus should supersede any geopolitical conflict at this moment; and

WHEREAS, The United Nations Secretary-General Guterres called for a Global Ceasefire, which has been gaining momentum by asking world leaders to participate in an [online petition campaign](#);

WHEREAS, The petition currently has over 1.8 million signatures from around the world; and

WHEREAS, the UN Secretary General provided an update stating, “a substantial number of parties to conflict have expressed their acceptance for the call... Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Colombia, Libya, Myanmar, the Philippines, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine and Yemen”; and

WHEREAS, The City of Berkeley should also heed the call of the United Nations and support the Global Ceasefire; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Berkeley City Council supports a Global Ceasefire during the COVID-19 Crisis; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution will be sent to the United Nations Secretary-General, United States Senators Bernie Sanders, Kamala Harris, and Dianne Feinstein, as well as United States Congressional Representatives Barbara Lee, Ro Khanna, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ilhan Omar, Ayanna Pressley, Rashida Harbi Tlaib, and Pramila Jayapa.