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January 12 2026

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Subject: Letter of Conscientious Objection

To whom it may concern,

It is the assumption of democracy and international law that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. That they are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood. That everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of person, regardless of any nationality or status.

No value is more universal across cultures and faiths than the care for human life. I personally believe that life is sacred. In valuing peace I that to kill another is a sin. In the nature of war, the lives of humans, regardless of their statuses as civilian or soldier, foreign, or domestic, are forfeit. I find that it is a morally weak position to respond to the effects and fear of one sin by committing another. The ends (a peace awaiting the next war) do not justify the means.

My family has witnessed war from afar and seen the pain it causes without the lens of nationalism. My parents generation grew up in an unaffiliated country during the Cold War, and saw the war crimes committed by the US and the USSR throughout Vietnam and the Middle East. I myself grew up witnessing fruitless American Wars in the Middle East. And these contributed to my belief that war and militarism will not fix the problems of our nation, and will only lead to more fighting.

And so I remember in the face of violence and fear the call to action of Martin Luther King Jr. in his “I Have a Dream” speech: “In the process of gaining our rightful place, we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred.” I remember the words of Jesus of Nazareth: “Blessed are the peacemakers”. I remember the words of George Fox: “We are a people that follow after those things that make for peace, love, and unity; it is our desire that others’ feet may walk in the same, and do deny and bear our testimony against all strife, and wars.”

And so, in clear conscience, I cannot join the military or work for the military-industrial complex.

Sincerely,

Iniyana Joseph