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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. Thus, I hold that to kill another is a sin. In 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, and immoral to justify the means by the ends. Thus, it is my deeply held belief that all war is a sin.

My family has witnessed war from afar. My parents' generation grew up in an unaffiliated country during the Cold War and saw the horrific acts committed by the US and the USSR. I personally witnessed multiple fruitless American wars in the Middle East. These experiences contributed to my belief that war and militarism will not fix the problems of our nation and will only lead to more fighting, and that true peace will never be found through war.

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 the military-industrial complex as a combatant or noncombatant.

Sincerely,

Iniyan Joseph