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URI URGES ACTION TO SUPPORT DEMOCRATIC GAINS IN MIDDLE EAST
Statement calls for coordinated action to stem the growing humanitarian crisis

San Francisco, CA July 19, 2011 – [United Religions Initiative](#) (URI), the world’s largest grassroots interfaith organization, issued [a statement](#) this week calling on local, regional and international actors to work together to support democratic freedoms and human rights in the Middle East.

Responding to the escalation of state and sectarian violence in recent months, URI urged government, civil society and religious leaders to join its 55 member organizations in the region in “working to protect the diversity of faith traditions, promote respect and understanding between and within communities, secure a place for dissenting voices in government and society, and actively interrupt the teaching of hate and derision.”

It further urged a united stance in the face of intransigent regimes that “have acted violently toward their own citizens by obstructing freedom of expression, brutally attacking innocents and fomenting civil war.”

“The successes the Egyptian people achieved in February, and continue to achieve through their vigilance are testament to the power of collective, grassroots action,” said URI Executive Director Charles Gibbs, “but consolidating those gains and extending them across the region will require action and vigilance at all levels of society and government.”

With members in Jordan, Egypt, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, UAE, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Iran, URI works across the region to promote cooperation among people of different faiths and cultures.

It is “committed to working with both community and international actors...so that the people of the Middle East and North Africa may live in peace and dignity and continue working together to build a freer, more secure and more prosperous future,” the statement said.

Click [here](#) to read the statement.

About URI:

URI is a global network of over 500 grassroots organizations, called Cooperation Circles, dedicated to peace and justice through interfaith and cross-cultural cooperation. Its nearly half a million members are overcoming distrust and hostility every day for the good of their communities—mediating religiously motivated conflict; building schools, orphanages and health clinics; campaigning for citizenship rights and more in 78 countries. They touch the lives of an estimated 2.5 million people.

Visit www.uri.org for information on URI's work in Africa; Asia; Europe; Latin America and the Caribbean; Middle East and North Africa; North America; and Southeast Asia and the Pacific.