

# STATEMENT ON THE TSUNAMI DISASTER

COUNCIL OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS OF METROPOLITAN CHICAGO  
and  
THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR COMMUNITY AND JUSTICE (NCCJ)  
January 26, 2005

The waves that swept across the waters of the Indian Ocean, leaving devastation across the region, are painful reminders of the vulnerability of human life and the strength of the oneness of the human family.

As individuals and nations around the globe join in response to this tragedy, our diverse communities of faith accept a particular obligation to participate with great generosity and commitment. A call to prayer in support of those in need continues to be heard in our places of worship. Many will perhaps be willing to consider a day of fasting, with the money saved to be given to relief agencies. We encourage individuals and congregations to promote a diversity of ways to participate in supporting these efforts. .

There are many opportunities to join in this essential endeavor, and we are grateful to all the individuals and organizations who are leading the massive relief efforts. We particularly commend to the members of our religious communities the skilled and dedicated agencies which have long been in place to support such needs.

We have also gathered here today to emphasize that the need for generous giving will continue far into the future. It is important that attention not be diverted from this effort.

At the same time, we remind one another that there are many places on earth where individuals and communities are in desperate need of care and assistance. Giving to one need should not be at the expense of others. The time has come for both private and public sectors to address the larger issues of global poverty and disaster.

Much of the need and suffering around the globe is rooted in aggression and exploitation. These, too challenge people of faith to work with people of other faiths, cultures and value systems, to forsake war and violence and invest in peace and justice..

The natural causes of the Tsunami disaster are clear, but its meaning for our lives can only be discovered in the mystery of life that our various faiths explore. We know that God is not the cause of disaster or the One who wills our pain and suffering. We testify, therefore, both to the oneness of the human family and the presence of a gracious and merciful God who shares in our suffering and calls us, in turn, to bear one another's burdens.

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