

Churches call for U.S. to pull out of Afghanistan

by [Jack Jenkins](#)

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WASHINGTON (RNS) As President Obama prepared plans to bring a limited number of U.S. troops home from Afghanistan, a group of 40 religious leaders called for the president to "bring the war in Afghanistan to an end."

Signers of an open letter, including high-profile religious leaders like Sojourners founder Jim Wallis, expressed frustration over the "deteriorating" state of affairs in Afghanistan and the rising military and civilian death toll, saying "the military situation is at best a stalemate."

The Tuesday (June 21) letter acknowledged that "legitimate ethical and moral issues are at stake" in Afghanistan, including U.S. national security and women's rights, but said "there is a better way than war to address these important issues."

Developmental aid provided by nongovernmental organizations was championed as an alternative to war, with the signers saying "it is time to transition toward a plan that builds up civil society and provides economic alternatives for Afghans."

The letter admitted that some signers initially supported military action in Afghanistan as a "justified response" to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, but said the representatives are now "united in the belief" that the war should end.

The letter boasted a number of signers affiliated with the National Council of Churches, including NCC General Secretary Michael Kinnamon.

Several leading NCC member churches -- including the Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America -- were notably absent.