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Global Catholic peace group: UN, not US, needed in Syria

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Washington — The international group that styles itself as the global Catholic peace movement called Thursday for dialogue, not military intervention, on the situation in Syria, saying it "pleads with the nations of the world to recognize the responsibility and authority" of the United Nations in the matter.

Instead of escalating violence, Pax Christi International writes in a statement on its website, the international community should "cooperate fully on an arms embargo and ... unequivocally back dialogue that alone can end the horrific violence."

Pax Christi, which is headquartered in Brussels, Belgium, is an international coalition akin to Amnesty International that maintains separate national groups in many countries. First founded in 1945 as a work of reconciliation between French and Germans, it maintains special consultative status at several international organizations, including: the UN, the African Union, and the Council of Europe.

While Thursday's statement from the group does not specifically mention the possibility of a U.S. military strike in Syria, its title states: "Dialogue is the only way towards an end of the violence in Syria."

The group also suggests that Pope Francis should join with other faith leaders in putting together a "peace force" that would "accompany the Syrian people through this time of great danger and suffering."

The group ends the statement by saying it is praying "in a special way for those courageous peacemakers who have resisted violence and who have tried to work for positive change in nonviolent ways."

Pax Christi International is led by two co-presidents: Marie Dennis, an American who previously led the

Washington, D.C.-based Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, and Rustenburg, South Africa Bishop Kevin Dowling.

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