

**Ask Bono to Stop Video Game that Attacks Venezuela**

*The sign-on letter below is intended ONLY for people who have a titled position in an organized religion (eg. Fr. Rev. Sr. Rabbi, etc.) or are lay officials such as Director, Episcopal Office of Peace and Justice. Those of us who are not religious leaders can participate by bringing this letter to the attention of those who are. We can also sign on to the secular letter to Bono posted on the Venezuela Solidarity Network website at [www.vensolidarity.org/Campaigns/index.php](http://www.vensolidarity.org/Campaigns/index.php). Sign on to either letter by sending an email to [VSN@afgj.org](mailto:VSN@afgj.org) with your name, organization (if any), city, state, and religious title (if any).*

To: All religious leaders  
FROM: Marie Dennis,  
Director, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

Rabbi Michael Lerner,  
editor of Tikkun magazine

Fr. Joe Nangle, OFM  
Pax Christi USA Ambassador for Peace

Dave Robinson,  
Executive Director, Pax Christi USA

Rev. A David Bos,  
founder of Interfaith Community Ministry Network

We are writing to ask you to become part of a growing worldwide campaign to stop the sale of a violent video game in which the player leads a mercenary force into Venezuela with the objective of killing a "power hungry tyrant" who has taken over the oil industry. The game, "Mercenaries 2," is produced by Pandemic Studios which has been subcontracted to create extremely realistic videos to be used as training games for the U.S. military. Pandemic Studios uses the same technology found in the training videos to make the scenes in "Mercenaries 2" as realistic as possible. Anyone who has spent time in Caracas can immediately recognize the city's streets and landmarks in the game. The aim of the video game is full devastation, so any "person" who moves should be "shot," and all the buildings, such as the headquarters of PDVSA, the Venezuelan public oil company, can be "destroyed."

Our concern is that this game will only deepen an already antagonistic relationship between the U.S. and Venezuelan governments. Millions of Venezuelans fear an invasion from the U.S.; knowing that a company that works for the U.S. military has created a game in which their country is completely destroyed will increase those concerns.

To promote the campaign, we are approaching one of the principal investors in Pandemic Studios, Bono, lead singer for U2 and one of Time's 2005 People of the Year, to ask him to use his considerable influence to stop the sale of the game. Bono is one of six members of Elevation Partners which has invested

\$300 million in Pandemic Studios. We hope that his history of involvement in justice issues such as debt and famine relief will sensitize him to the problems with this game.

We invite you to learn more about the case at <http://www.vensolidarity.org/Campaigns/index.php>.

In Peace,

Marie Dennis,  
Director, Maryknoll Office for Global  
Concerns

Dave Robinson,  
Executive Director, Pax Christi USA

Rabbi Michael Lerner,  
editor of Tikkun magazine

Rev. A David Bos,  
founder of Interfaith Community  
Ministry Network

Fr. Joe Nangle, OFM  
Pax Christi USA Ambassador for Peace

*To sign on to this letter as an organization or as an individual, send your name, title, organization and religious affiliation, city and state to by email: [VSN@afgj.org](mailto:VSN@afgj.org), by phone: 202-544-9355, or by fax: 202-544-9359.*

***Deadline for signatures: March 31, 2007. Please forward this email widely to your colleagues!***

Here follows the letter to Bono and to Pandemic Studios:

April 1, 2007

Bono (of U2)  
Principle Management  
30-32 Sir John Rogerson's Quay  
Dublin 2, 1111  
Ireland

Josh Resnick  
President, Pandemic Studios  
1100 Glendon Avenue  
19<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90024

Dear Bono,

We hope that this letter finds you well. We applaud your efforts to erase the plagues of debt and famine from our planet and hope 2007 will bring new energy and advances in

these struggles. We write with the hope that, while addressing these significant international issues, you will also use your considerable influence in a matter that is closer to home - a violent video game that has the potential to increase tensions between the U.S. and Venezuela while promoting violence in our communities.

Our faith traditions motivate us to confront the international debt problem that robs human dignity and calls us to counter the culture of violence that pervades our society today. The celebration of violence in much of our media, music and video games is poisoning our children. Games such as "Mercenaries 2" only serve to deepen the alienation that already exists in our society, creating fear that drives people away from each other. As people of faith, we are called to a different way of life. "Mercenaries 2" is an extremely realistic and vicious game in which the player leads a mercenary team to kill a "power hungry tyrant" that has taken control of oil supplies in Venezuela. Images of downtown Caracas are depicted as being completely destroyed during the game, and any "people" on the streets are to be killed.

Pandemic Studios, a company in which your investment partnership has financed hundreds of millions of dollars, is the creator of this game. Behavioral science research demonstrates that playing violent video games increases the likelihood of aggressive behavior, particularly in children and youth. A game like "Mercenaries 2" in which the player assumes the role of killer in scenes that appear very life-like is even more likely to provoke aggressiveness. Of equal concern is the fact that the game inevitably will provoke increased tensions between the U.S. and Venezuela. Pandemic Studios has made a similar training game for the U.S. military. This fact is not overlooked by Venezuelans, who see this as further evidence of U.S. government hostility toward their country.

We ask that you do whatever is necessary to see that "Mercenaries 2" is pulled from stores and not sold anywhere. We also ask you to reconsider your investment in a company that glorifies violence and militarization. Most of our organizations have reconsidered past investments in companies involved in life-draining activities and have reoriented our investments to support more life-encouraging companies. We hope that you will consider the same. We feel your connection with this game detracts from your image as a human rights defender. In the end, to paraphrase a statement of yours, we all know that history, like God, is watching what you do. We look forward to your response and would welcome a meeting to discuss these concerns further.

In Peace,

Marie Dennis,  
Director, Maryknoll Office for Global  
Concerns, Washington, DC

Rabbi Michael Lerner  
Editor, Tikkun magazine, Berkeley, CA

Rev. A David Bos, Presbyterian  
Minister and founder of Interfaith  
Community Ministry Network,  
Louisville, KY

Fr. Joe Nangle, OFM  
Pax Christi USA Ambassador for Peace,  
Washington, DC

Dave Robinson,  
Executive Director, Pax Christi USA,  
Erie, PA

*\*\*\*Names of thousands of Religious Leaders and Organizations!\*\*\**

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