

Media Update

31 December 2016

United Nations

Secretary-General Message

The Secretary-General Appeal for Peace New York, 1 January 2017

On my first day as Secretary-General of the United Nations, one question weighs heavily on my heart.

How can we help the millions of people caught up in conflict, suffering massively in wars with no end in sight?

Civilians are pounded with deadly force. Women, children and men are killed and injured, forced from their homes, dispossessed and destitute. Even hospitals and aid convoys are targeted.

No one wins these wars; everyone loses. Trillions of dollars are spent destroying societies and economies, fueling cycles of mistrust and fear that can last for generations. Whole regions are destabilized and the new threat of global terrorism affects us all.

On this New Year's Day, I ask all of you to join me in making one shared New Year's resolution:

Let us resolve to put peace first.

Let us make 2017 a year in which we all – citizens, governments, leaders – strive to overcome our differences.

From solidarity and compassion in our daily lives, to dialogue and respect across political divides... From ceasefires on the battlefield, to compromise at the negotiating table to reach political solutions...



Peace must be our goal and our guide.

All that we strive for as a human family – dignity and hope, progress and prosperity – depends on peace.

But peace depends on us.

I appeal to you all to join me in committing to peace, today and every day. Let us make 2017 a year for peace.

Thank you.

Video links of Secretary-General António Guterres' Appeal for Peace

International: Wetransfer: <https://we.tl/vNS7FAOKgp>

English: Wetransfer: <https://we.tl/G5tDyYzfLF> and <https://we.tl/D5ktQVLZ9F>

Youtube link: <https://youtu.be/rWYcRAzODEg>

Wetransfer link: English, (Without Quotes) <https://we.tl/D5ktQVLZ9F>

YouTube link: English (Without Quotes): <https://youtu.be/Tgu8SDIvbVo>

Title: "Let us make 2017 a year for peace" - UN Secretary-General António Guterres

Description: In his first message on his first day as United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres appeals to the world for one shared new year resolution - to "put peace first" in the year 2017

António Guterres – Biography



António Guterres, the ninth Secretary-General of the United Nations, took office on 1st January 2017.

Having witnessed the suffering of the most vulnerable people on earth, in refugee camps and in war zones, the Secretary-General is determined to make human dignity the core of his work, and to serve as a peace broker, a bridge-builder and a promoter of reform and innovation.

Prior to his election as Secretary-General, Mr. Guterres served as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees from June 2005 to December 2015, heading one of the world's foremost humanitarian organizations during some of the most serious displacement crises in decades. The conflicts in Syria and Iraq, and the crises in South Sudan, the Central African Republic and Yemen, led to a huge rise in UNHCR's activities as the number of people displaced by conflict and persecution rose from 38 million in 2005 to over 60 million in 2015.

Before joining UNHCR, Mr. Guterres spent more than 20 years in government and public service. He served as prime minister of Portugal from 1995 to 2002, during which time he was heavily involved in the international effort to resolve the crisis in East Timor.

As president of the European Council in early 2000, he led the adoption of the Lisbon Agenda for growth and jobs, and co-chaired the first European Union-Africa summit. He was a member of the Portuguese Council of State from 1991 to 2002.

Mr. Guterres was elected to the Portuguese Parliament in 1976 where he served as a member for 17 years. During that time, he chaired the Parliamentary Committee for Economy, Finance and Planning, and later the Parliamentary Committee for Territorial Administration, Municipalities and Environment. He was also leader of his party's parliamentary group.

From 1981 to 1983, Mr. Guterres was a member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, where he chaired the Committee on Demography, Migration and Refugees.

For many years Mr. Guterres was active in the Socialist International, a worldwide organization of social democratic political parties. He was the group's vice-president from 1992 to 1999, co-chairing the African Committee and later the Development Committee. He served as President from 1999 until mid-2005. In addition, he founded the Portuguese Refugee Council as

well as the Portuguese Consumers Association DECO, and served as president of the Centro de Acção Social Universitário, an association carrying out social development projects in poor neighbourhoods of Lisbon, in the early 1970s.

Mr. Guterres is a member of the Club of Madrid, a leadership alliance of democratic former presidents and prime ministers from around the world.

Mr. Guterres was born in Lisbon in 1949 and graduated from the Instituto Superior Técnico with a degree in engineering. He is fluent in Portuguese, English, French and Spanish. He is married to Catarina de Almeida Vaz Pinto, Deputy Mayor for Culture of Lisbon, and has two children, a stepson and three grandchildren.
