United Nations
SECRETARY-GENERAL’S MESSAGE

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF NON-VIOLENCE
2 October 2019

“This International Day of Non-Violence marks the 150th anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi, the renowned global icon of peace. His vision continues to resonate across the world, including through the work of the United Nations for mutual understanding, equality, sustainable development, the empowerment of young people, and the peaceful resolution of disputes.

In today’s turbulent times, violence takes many forms: from the destructive impact of the climate emergency to the devastation caused by armed conflict; from the indignities of poverty to the injustice of human rights violations to the brutalizing effects of hate speech.

Indeed, online and off-line, we hear loathsome rhetoric directed at minorities and anyone considered the “other”. To address this growing challenge, the United Nations has launched two urgent initiatives: a plan of action against hate speech and another on the protection and safety of religious sites. And last week, I issued a global call for a decade of action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals, our roadmap away from violence and towards peace, prosperity and dignity on a healthy planet.

Gandhi constantly highlighted the gap between what we do, and what we are capable of doing. On this International Day, I urge each and every one of us to do everything in our power to bridge this divide as we strive to build a better future for all.”
About the Day:

The International Day of Non-Violence is marked on 2 October, the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, leader of the Indian independence movement and pioneer of the philosophy and strategy of non-violence.

According to General Assembly resolution A/RES/61/271 of 15 June 2007, which established the commemoration, the International Day is an occasion to "disseminate the message of non-violence, including through education and public awareness". The resolution reaffirms "the universal relevance of the principle of non-violence" and the desire "to secure a culture of peace, tolerance, understanding and non-violence".

Introducing the resolution in the General Assembly on behalf of 140 co-sponsors, India’s Minister of State for External Affairs, Mr. Anand Sharma, said that the wide and diverse sponsorship of the resolution was a reflection of the universal respect for Mahatma Gandhi and of the enduring relevance of his philosophy. Quoting the late leader’s own words, he said: "Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man".

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