



CHARTER FOR A WORLD WITHOUT VIOLENCE

Violence is a preventable disease.

No state or individual can be secure in an insecure world. The values of nonviolence in intention, thought, and practice have grown from an option to a necessity. These values are expressed in their application between states, groups and individuals.

We are convinced that adherence to the values of nonviolence will usher in a more peaceful, civilized world order in which more effective and fair governance, respectful of human dignity and the sanctity of life itself, may become a reality.

Our cultures, our histories, and our individual lives are interconnected and our actions are interdependent. Especially today as never before, we believe, a truth lies before us: our destiny is a common destiny. That destiny will be defined by our intentions, decisions and actions today.

We are further convinced that creating a culture of peace and nonviolence, while a difficult and long process, is both necessary and noble. Affirmation of the values contained in this Charter is a vital step to ensuring the survival and development of humanity and the achievement of a world without violence.

We, Nobel Peace Laureates and Laureate Organizations,

Reaffirming our commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

Moved by concern for the need to end the spread of violence at all levels of society and especially the threats posed on a global scale that jeopardize the very existence of humankind;

Reaffirming that freedom of thought and expression is at the root of democracy and creativity;

Recognizing that violence manifests in many ways, such as armed conflict, military occupation, poverty, economic exploitation, environmental destruction, corruption and prejudice based on race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation;

Realizing that the glorification of violence as expressed through commercial entertainment can contribute to the acceptance of violence as a normal and acceptable condition;

In the knowledge that those most harmed by violence are the weakest and vulnerable;



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Remembering that peace is not only the absence of violence but that it is the presence of justice and the well-being of people;

Realizing that the failure of States to sufficiently accommodate ethnic, cultural and religious diversity is at the root of much of the violence in the world;

Recognizing the urgent need to develop an alternative approach to collective security based on a system in which no country, or group of countries, relies on nuclear weapons for its security;

Being aware that the world is in need of effective global mechanisms and approaches for nonviolent conflict prevention and resolution, and that they are most successful when applied at the earliest possible moment;

Affirming that persons invested with power carry the greatest responsibility to end violence where it is occurring and to prevent violence whenever possible;

Asserting that the values of nonviolence must triumph at all levels of society as well as in relations between States and peoples;

Beseech the global community to advance the following principles:

First: In an interdependent world, the prevention and cessation of armed conflict between and within States can require the collective action of the international community. The security of individual states can best be achieved by advancing global human security. This requires strengthening the implementation capacity of the UN system as well as regional cooperative organizations.

Second: To achieve a world without violence, States must abide by the rule of law and honor their legal commitments at all times.

Third: It is essential to move without further delay towards the universal and verifiable elimination of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. States possessing such weapons must take concrete steps towards disarmament, and a security system that does not rely on nuclear deterrence. At the same time, States must sustain their efforts to consolidate the nuclear non-proliferation regime, by taking such measures as strengthening multilateral verification, protecting nuclear material and advancing disarmament.

Fourth: To help eliminate violence in society, the production and sale of small arms and light weapons must be reduced and strictly controlled at international, regional, state and



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local levels. In addition there should be full and universal enforcement of international disarmament agreements, such as the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty, and support for new efforts aimed at the eradication of the impact of victim-activated and indiscriminate weapons, such as cluster munitions. A comprehensive and effective Arms Trade Treaty needs to be enacted.

Fifth: Terrorism can never be justified because violence begets violence and because no acts of terror against the civilian population of any country can be carried out in the name of any cause. The struggle against terrorism cannot, however, justify violation of human rights, international humanitarian law, civilized norms, and democracy.

Sixth: Ending domestic and family violence requires unconditional respect for the equality, freedom, dignity, and rights of women, men and children by all individuals, institutions of the state, religion and civil society. Such protections must be embodied in laws and conventions at local and international levels.

Seventh: Every individual and state shares responsibility to prevent violence against children and youth, our common future and most precious gift. All have a right to quality education, effective primary health care, personal safety, social protection, full participation in society and an enabling environment that reinforces non-violence as a way of life. Peace education, promoting non-violence and emphasizing the innate human quality of compassion, must be an essential part of the curriculum of educational institutions at all levels.

Eighth: Preventing conflicts arising from the depletion of natural resources, in particular sources of energy and water, requires States to affirmatively and, through creation of legal mechanisms and standards, provide for the protection of the environment and to encourage people to adjust their consumption on the basis of resource availability and real human needs.

Ninth: We beseech the UN and its member states to promote appreciation of ethnic, cultural and religious diversity. The golden rule of a non-violent world: Treat others as you wish to be treated.

Tenth: The principal political tools for bringing into being a non-violent world are functioning democratic institutions and dialogue based on dignity, knowledge, and compromise, conducted on the basis of balance between the interests of the parties involved, and, when appropriate, including concerns relating to the entirety of humanity and the natural environment.

Eleventh: All states, institutions and individuals must support efforts to address the inequalities in the distribution of economic resources, and resolve gross inequities which





create a fertile ground for violence. The imbalance in living conditions inevitably leads to lack of opportunity and, in many cases, loss of hope.

Twelfth: Civil society, including human rights defenders, peace and environmental activists must be recognized and protected as essential to building a nonviolent world as all governments must serve the needs of their people, not the reverse. Conditions should be created to enable and encourage civil society participation, especially that of women, in political processes at the global, regional, national and local levels.

Thirteenth: In implementing the principles of this Charter we call upon all to work together towards a just, killing-free world in which everyone has the right not to be killed and responsibility not to kill others.

To address all forms of violence we encourage scientific research in the fields of human interaction and dialogue, and we invite participation from the academic, scientific and religious communities to aid us in the transition to non-violent, and non-killing societies.



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