

## Gandhi institute to hold annual peace ceremony

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In the midst of global, political turmoil, Raj Kumar, president of the Honolulu-based Gandhi International Institute for Peace, feels his mission of instilling nonviolence and peace is more important than ever.

The institute holds its 12th annual celebration 5 to 6:30 p.m. Monday by the bronze statue of Mahatma Gandhi outside the Honolulu Zoo in Waikiki. The United Nations in 2007 designated Oct. 2 — Gandhi's birthday — as a Day of Nonviolence.

The state Legislature designated it eight years later as Mahatma Gandhi Day. Monday is the 148th anniversary of Gandhi's birth.

"The whole purpose of the celebration is to raise awareness of nonviolence and peace and inspire youth to practice love, compassion and respect toward others who are different or practice a different faith," Kumar said.

Besides a Hawaiian blessing and Indian spiritual invocation, the celebration features Chris Robinson, field office director of U.S. Immigration & Citizenship



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Services, as the keynote speaker. The free, public event also features multicultural dance performances, music and a dialogue between interfaith leaders on world peace.

Gandhi's statue, under a banyan tree, is a symbol of

**Raj Kumar, president of the Gandhi International Institute for Peace, on Wednesday stood by the statue of Mahatma Gandhi, where the group will hold its annual peace celebration on Monday.**

peace, nonviolence, equality, justice and freedom, according to Kumar. Founded on the symbolic day of Sept. 11, 2001, the institute's mission is to provide peace education and promote peace on Earth based on Gandhi's example of nonviolence.

"It reminds us that peace is possible even in the midst of turmoil," he said. "Gandhi united all religions and said that religious paths are different but 'Truth is one.' He emphasized that (the) world is one family and love is an invisible thread, which binds us together."

With so much unrest in the Middle East, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Ukraine and North Korea, he said, this message is more important now than ever.

Kumar said a path to peace is viable despite the world's many conflicts. "In the 21st century, there is more advanced technology to use and share the message of nonviolence and peace with the rest of the world," he said.

Hawaii, a melting pot of people from different walks of life, could set an example for the rest of the world. "Violence cannot be ceased by violence," Kumar said. "Violence can only be ceased by positive communication, love, compassion, kindness, forgiveness, tolerance and acceptance of others. It's time to bring Gandhi's teaching back to the world to maintain harmony and peace so we do not move toward World War III."