

Only Virus Wins Conflict During Pandemic, Secretary-General Stresses, in Message on Day of Non-Violence, Reiterating Call for Global Ceasefire

Following is the text of UN Secretary-General António Guterres' video message on the International Day of Non-violence, observed on 2 October:



In marking the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, this International Day highlights the remarkable power of non-violence and peaceful protest. It is also a timely reminder to strive to uphold values that Gandhi lived by: the promotion of dignity; equal protection for all; and communities living together in peace.

On this year's observance, we have a special duty: stop the fighting to focus on our common enemy: COVID-19. There is only one winner of conflict during a pandemic: the virus itself.

As the pandemic took hold, I called for a global ceasefire. Today we need a new push by the international community to make this a reality by the end of this year. Ceasefires would ease immense suffering, help to lower the risk of famine, and create space for negotiations towards peace.

Deep mistrust stands in the way. Yet I see reasons for hope. In some places, we see a standstill in the violence. A great many Member States, religious leaders, civil society networks and others back my call.

Now is the time to intensify our efforts. Let us be inspired by the spirit of Gandhi and the enduring principles of the UN Charter.