

UNITED NATIONS



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**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF NON-VIOLENCE**

**2 October 2021**

It is no coincidence that we mark the International Day of Non-Violence on the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi.

For Gandhi, non-violence, peaceful protest, dignity and equality were more than words. They represented a guiding light for humanity, a map to a better future.

They also provide a template to address today's troubled times. Conflicts and climate change. Poverty and inequalities. Mistrust and divisions. All under the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic, which continues to devastate people and economies alike.

The solution to these challenges is in our hands: solidarity. We need to recognize, as Gandhi did, that what unites us is far greater than what divides us. That peace provides the only pathway to a better future for all.

Addressing the challenges of our world means coming together as one human family, and embracing peace like never before.

We call on combatants around the world to lay down their arms and focus on defeating humanity's common enemy — COVID-19 — not one another. We urgently need to deliver lifesaving vaccines and treatment, and support countries in the long road to recovery ahead.

We need to intensify our work to reduce inequalities and end poverty.

We need a bold global plan of action to heal our planet.

Most of all, we need to renew trust in one another. Hatred, division, conflict and mistrust have had their day. It is time to usher in a new era of peace, trust and tolerance.

On this International Day of Non-Violence, let us heed Gandhi's message of peace, and get down to the business of building a better and more peaceful future for all.

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