

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE

New York, 21 September 2006

My dear friends,

For some of us, peace is a day-to-day reality. Our streets are safe; our children go to school. Where the fabric of society is strong, the precious gifts of peace can almost go unremarked.

But for far too many people in the world today, those gifts are only an elusive dream. They live in chains: a climate of insecurity and fear. It is mainly for them that this day exists.

Twenty-five years ago, the General Assembly proclaimed the International Day of Peace as a day of global ceasefire and non-violence. The United Nations has observed it ever since. It is meant to get people not just thinking of peace, but doing something about it.

Yet, on this day as on the other 364, violence continues to claim innocent lives. And these last few weeks have seen tragic new escalations of conflict in several parts of the world.

The United Nations works for peace in many ways. We are doing our utmost to prevent further bloodshed. And we have had some successes.

States are paying more attention to preventive diplomacy. UN peacekeeping missions -- and our efforts to support democracy and promote human rights -- are making a difference. And individual citizens everywhere, men and women in every society, are working to relieve suffering, and to build bridges between people of different faiths or cultures.

In fact, there are fewer wars today than in previous decades. But still far too many. Every casualty of conflict is a failure, which reminds us how much more there is to do.

In that spirit, I call on people everywhere to observe one minute of silence today, in the name of peace. Let us remember the victims of war. And let each of us pledge to do more, wherever we can make a difference, to bring about lasting peace.