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## **TOGETHER: A Day of Peace and Security**

**Asad Ejaz Butt and Tabeer Riaz**

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Asad Ejaz Butt<sup>\*</sup> and Tabeer Riaz<sup>†</sup>

**“If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy.  
Then he becomes your partner.”**

Nelson Mandela

The International Day of Peace is celebrated globally on the 21<sup>st</sup> September each year. The General Assembly has proclaimed this as a day devoted to strengthening the paradigm of peace, both within and among all the nations and peoples of the world. This day is also a reminder to the world to make collective efforts for the advancement of world peace and security and ensure that individuals, communities and countries live together with harmony and mutual love and respect for each other's beliefs and physical sanctities. This is in line with this year's theme; “Together for Peace: Respect, Safety and Dignity for All”.

Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations states that ‘*To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take the effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace*’.

The International day of peace is primarily meant to assert that the doctrine underlined by Article 1 on the International peace and security - with its provisions of the right to self-defense, right to sovereignty and jurisdiction and principle of non-intervention - is of utmost importance for all nations and people to pursue despite their social, political, religious and ethnic affiliations. The country and international governments must respect and recognize the dignity and sovereignty of all persons regardless of their group

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<sup>\*</sup> Asad Ejaz Butt is the Director of the Burki Institute of Public Policy and an Economics Instructor based in Lahore.

<sup>†</sup> Tabeer Riaz is a Research Associate at the Burki Institute of Public Policy.

belongings with a view to promote and ensure equality and justice; whether it be economic, social, political or redistributive in nature.

'TOGETHER' is particularly aligned with the objective to show solidarity with people who've been forced to make off their homes in search of a safe, secure and respectable life. 'TOGETHER' aims to unite bodies of the UN system, the 193 Member States, private sector, civil society, academia, state institutions and individual citizens. Whether it is ultimately successful in ending the current international, regional and geographic stalemates is obviously a fact yet to be determined however, its coincidence with the United Nations General Assembly session being convened in New York is no less than an impetus to bring the international political debate back to discussing regional conflicts that have run the greatest havoc on humanity; see for instance the regional conflict over Kashmir that was, prior to the Simla Deputation, on the priority agenda list of the United Nations Security Council or the Israel-Palestine stalemate; a resolution to which still remains largely subdued and unexpected.

In context of the developing international political situation that is marred with mass killings and exoduses of non-native persons from the various regions of the world, the need to extend support to refugees and migrants and to show solidarity with them is felt more than ever before. Hence, our prime focus should be to mobilize and engage people and governments through platforms like the United Nations General Assembly that is in process of concluding its 72<sup>nd</sup> session in New York to bring efforts to end manifestations of extreme forms of violence happening anywhere in the world. Of great neglect in the session is the discussion on the fate of the Rohingya a people while the arms control and non-proliferation in light of the developing situation vis-à-vis North Korean missile tests and Iran have found the greatest place in the deliberations. While that is an imperative too, it lays bare the fact that international platforms like the UNGA have been politicized to the extent that they only pander to issues that are of vital significance to the developed countries of the West.

While criminal apathy can be blamed for rising extremism and conflicts and also the failure of international organizations and key governments from around the world, there are other factors which should be duly brought into consideration. Factors like religious intolerance and ethnic differences that have been the reasons for both armed and non-armed conflicts, especially since the inception of the nation-state system. According to popular opinion, religious intolerance is a product of the fear of the religious 'other' or of the lack of knowledge of varying social, ethnic and political cleavages or other religions and beliefs that culminate in false opinion-making and antagonistic dispositions towards the people of other faiths.

This is being played out in the centuries-old ethnic conflict in Myanmar that is again making the headlines as fighting between the Rakhine Buddhists and the Rohingya Muslims has taken the form of massive killings. Many restrictions have been placed on the freedom of movement, education, access to medical and other basic services of the Rohingya Muslims. More than 350 innocent people have lost their lives already and a mass exodus of more than 150,000 Rohingya Muslims to neighboring Bangladesh has already happened in a short span of four weeks since August 25<sup>th</sup>. The international community has been largely silent on the plight of the Rohingyans, including both of the Buddhist and Muslim faith while strong criticism has been meted out to the Nobel Prize leader of Myanmar, Auu Sang SuuKyi. Clearly, internationally celebrated events like the International Day of Peace must become an impetus for agenda-setting and concerted efforts to bring an end to violence in all its forms and manifestations and to the use and threat of force as enunciated by the tents of the international law.

According to Global Peace Index (GPI), the world is becoming more hostile with each passing day and there are very few countries that are truly conflict-free and can be considered peaceful in the true sense of the term. Iceland is at the top with Denmark, Austria, and New Zealand in the list of the most peaceful countries of the world. On the other side, Pakistan is positioned as one of the least peaceful countries whereas Syria is at the top followed by Afghanistan, Iraq, South Sudan, and Yemen.