

# World Happiness Foundation Response to 'A Call for Peace: The End of Wars and Respect for International Law'

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NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, May 13, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Introduction and Context

The [World Happiness Foundation](#) warmly commends the High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, the Secretary General of Religions for Peace, and the President of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network for its 2024 joint Statement “A Call for Peace: The End of Wars and Respect for International Law.” This global call – launched amid widespread conflict and “a growing culture of militarization” – underlines that humanity

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Together, let us make peace, in all its dimensions, our legacy for future generations.”

*Luis Miguel Gallardo,  
President World Happiness  
Foundation*

development, and human flourishing.

Building on [SDSN](#), [UNAOC](#), and Religions for Peace, UNAOC, and Religions for Peace’s Ten Principles for Peace, the World Happiness Foundation offers an expanded set of formal recommendations to address urgent gaps and strengthen the global commitment to peace. These recommendations emphasize: (1) the urgent necessity of complete global disarmament



A Call for Peace

and demilitarization beyond just nuclear weapons; (2) a universal renunciation of violence as a means of conflict resolution, replaced by dialogue and restorative justice; (3) the democratic renovation of the United Nations to represent all of humanity and even the “more-than-human” world of nature; (4) the integration of Peace and Happiness curricula globally to cultivate inner peace, compassion, and empathy; and (5) key gaps in the

SDSN, UNAOC, and Religions for Peace statement that must be addressed to realize a truly peaceful world in 2025. These policy recommendations are presented in a structured, diplomatic format, consistent with international development discourse and the spirit of the United Nations Charter.



### 1. Complete Global Disarmament and Demilitarization

Urgent action for comprehensive disarmament is imperative. The SDSN, UNAOC, and Religions for Peace statement rightly calls for supporting the prohibition of nuclear weapons and channeling cuts in military spending toward sustainable development. The World Happiness Foundation strongly reinforces this by urging “general and complete disarmament” – the elimination of all forms of militarization and arms trafficking worldwide, far beyond nuclear arsenals. Today, humanity faces the paradox of being “over-armed, and peace is underfunded,” as former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon warned. Global military expenditure has reached record highs, diverting precious resources from human needs: for example, world military spending surged to \$2.72 trillion in 2024, the steepest rise since the Cold War. This escalating investment in arms comes at the direct expense of education, healthcare, and sustainable development. We must get our priorities right and, as Ban Ki-moon said, “stop spending billions on weapons instead of people”.

Disarmament beyond nuclear weapons means aggressively reducing and eventually abolishing conventional arms and the global arms trade. There are over one billion small arms and light weapons circulating worldwide – tools of violence that fuel civil wars, crime, and terrorism. Illicit flows of these weapons wreak havoc on communities and violate the UN’s goal to significantly reduce arms proliferation (as per SDG 16.4). We call for strengthening and expanding the Arms Trade Treaty to cover all categories of weapons and ensure no nation or non-state actor can funnel arms into conflict zones with impunity. All weapons of mass destruction – nuclear, chemical, and biological – must remain strictly outlawed, and recent gains like the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons should be universally adopted and implemented.

Militarization as a whole must be rolled back. This includes dramatically downsizing armed forces, closing foreign military bases that provoke tensions, and ending the political economies

dependent on arms manufacturing. The World Happiness Foundation echoes Pope Paul VI's vision (cited by SDSN, UNAOC, and Religions for Peace) of diverting military expenditures into a global fund for human needs. Each dollar not spent on a tank or missile can instead provide clean water, schools, and healthcare – true security for citizens. Indeed, evidence from peaceful nations shows that demilitarization yields dividends for development and happiness. For example, Costa Rica, which abolished its army in 1949, has demonstrated for decades that a nation can live securely without a military. The resources saved were invested in education, health, and social development, resulting in a more prosperous, egalitarian and stable society. This “unarmed democracy” stands as a model to the world, showing that voluntary disarmament is possible and conducive to human well-being.

#### Recommended Actions – Global Disarmament:

**Negotiate a Binding Global Disarmament Treaty:** The UN General Assembly should convene a special session on disarmament to chart a roadmap for general and complete disarmament under strict international control, an objective it first endorsed in 1959. This would set timelines to eliminate nuclear arsenals, dismantle chemical/biological weapon stockpiles, and progressively reduce conventional arms to minimal levels required only for legitimate defense and peacekeeping.

**Eliminate the Arms Trade:** Establish an enforceable universal ban on the export, import, and sale of weapons for warfare. Strengthen the Arms Trade Treaty with robust verification and accountability, and extend its scope to include stricter controls on small arms and light weapons (which cause the vast majority of conflict casualties). Major arms-producing states must lead by example in shutting down the global arms pipeline, much like international treaties have curtailed landmines and cluster munitions.

**Redirect Military Expenditures to Peace:** Commit all nations to annual reductions in military budgets, reallocating those funds to a global peace dividend. In line with SDSN, UNAOC, and Religions for Peace's principle, establish a UN-administered Sustainable Development Peace Fund where savings from arms reductions are pooled to fight poverty, climate change, and pandemics. Cutting even a fraction of the \$2.7 trillion spent on militaries would unleash enormous resources for the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Promote Demilitarized Security Models:** Encourage regional demilitarization agreements (e.g. nuclear-weapon-free zones, limits on heavy weapon deployments) and support countries that choose to downsize or abolish their standing armies. International incentives (debt relief, development aid, recognition) should reward demilitarization efforts. Peaceful nations like Costa Rica provide a blueprint for resolving threats through international law and diplomacy instead of force. Their experience should be studied and shared as a best practice in building security without militaries.

**Address New Forms of Weaponry:** Expand disarmament discussions to emerging threats such as

autonomous lethal weapons (“killer robots”), cyber weapons, and space-based weapons. A complete disarmament framework must anticipate future arms races – for instance, by banning autonomous weapons systems that lack human control, in order to prevent a destabilizing new frontier of violence.

By embracing comprehensive disarmament, the international community would remove the fuel of war. Disarmament is not a utopian dream but a practical necessity: as SDSN, UNAOC, and Religions for Peace’s call highlights, humanity stands “89 seconds to midnight” on the Doomsday Clock due to the continued existence of nuclear weapons. We must pull back from that brink by eliminating all instruments of mass violence. In doing so, we heed the wisdom that “the world is over-armed and peace is underfunded” – and we begin to correct that imbalance in favor of life, development, and happiness.

## 2. Enshrining Non-Violence in Conflict Resolution

Peace cannot be achieved by violent means. The World Happiness Foundation joins the SDSN, UNAOC, and Religions for Peace in affirming that there is never a valid excuse to resort to war or violence – conflicts must be resolved through dialogue, diplomacy, and justice. To truly “end the scourge of war,” the international community should establish an unambiguous norm: a universal and total ban on the use of violence for resolving conflicts. In essence, war itself should be seen as an illegal and obsolete institution. This principle flows naturally from the UN Charter, which already prohibits “the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state”. It is time to strengthen this norm, closing loopholes and ensuring that non-violence is the inviolable standard in both domestic and international disputes.

Promote dialogue and preventive diplomacy: All conflicts – whether between nations or within them – should be approached with the mindset that “wars do not end on the battlefield, but precious lives do. Wars end at the negotiating table.”. We urge states to commit never to abandon diplomatic efforts, even in the midst of crisis. As the SDSN, UNAOC, and Religions for Peace statement notes, it is never too early or too late to negotiate. To operationalize this, the UN’s mediation and conflict prevention capacities must be expanded. A robust system of international mediation teams and peace envoys (potentially under a revamped UN Peace and Conflict Resolution Commission) should be on standby to step into any emerging dispute. Dialogue platforms should be institutionalized at regional and global levels, bringing adversaries together before disputes harden. The habit of dialogue can be cultivated through regular peace conferences, “track II” diplomacy involving civil society, and back-channel communications – all with UN support to facilitate compromise.

Ban violence as a policy – domestically and internationally: The World Happiness Foundation recommends that nations adopt, perhaps via a new UN General Assembly resolution or international treaty, a pledge of non-violence in resolving conflicts. This would mirror on a global scale what some constitutions have done nationally. (For example, Japan’s constitution renounces war as a sovereign right, and Costa Rica’s constitution forbids a standing army.) A global pledge would commit states to forswear aggression, retaliatory war, and the use of armed

force, except in the narrowly defined case of UN-sanctioned collective security or legitimate self-defense against an armed attack as per the UN Charter. Even internal law enforcement and security operations should emphasize minimum force and protection of human rights. Militarized responses to social or political problems only breed further hatred and suffering; instead, non-violent tools must be the default. This norm can be supported by strengthening international law: for instance, reinforcing the accountability for war-making by recognizing unprovoked aggression as the supreme international crime. The International Criminal Court's jurisdiction over the crime of aggression is a step in this direction; all leaders who initiate wars of aggression or atrocity violence should know they face personal accountability before international justice.

**Restorative justice and reconciliation:** In many conflicts, deep grievances and trauma drive the cycle of violence. The World Happiness Foundation advocates for the widespread use of restorative justice approaches as alternatives to punitive or violent "solutions." Rather than responding to violence with more violence, societies should respond with justice that heals. This means prioritizing truth-telling, forgiveness, reparations, and the restoration of relationships. The world has seen powerful examples of restorative justice in action: South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), for instance, offered a model of addressing grave human rights abuses through public truth-telling and amnesty conditioned on confession. This process, though not without critics, helped prevent a spiral of retribution after apartheid and is credited with laying a foundation for a more peaceful, unified nation. Similar truth commissions and community reconciliation processes in countries like Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Colombia have allowed victims to be heard and offenders to make amends – fostering healing in lieu of vengeance. We recommend that any peace agreement or post-conflict strategy include mechanisms like truth commissions, community dialogues, and reparative justice programs to address harm done. These mechanisms should be locally designed (drawing on cultural practices where appropriate) and aim to reintegrate former combatants and victims into a shared society. By focusing on accountability with amnesty (in cases of genuine remorse) and reparations rather than punishment alone, restorative justice breaks the cycle whereby today's victims become tomorrow's perpetrators.

**Culture of non-violence and communication:** To banish violence as a means of problem-solving, we must also change mindsets and skills at the individual and community level. The World Happiness Foundation stresses the importance of non-violent communication (NVC) and conflict resolution skills as a core societal competency. Governments and civil society should invest in training programs for dialogue facilitation, mediation, and NVC – from grassroots community mediators who can defuse local tensions, to diplomats trained extensively in empathy and listening. UNESCO's Culture of Peace framework already calls for education in tolerance, solidarity, and dialogue to replace cultures of war. We urge full implementation of the UN's Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (1999), which outlines how media, education, and citizen engagement can cultivate non-violent norms. Non-violent communication techniques, as developed by experts like Marshall Rosenberg, have proven effective in de-escalating interpersonal and intergroup conflicts by reframing how parties express grievances and

recognize each other's needs. Introducing such training in schools, workplaces, and government institutions worldwide would equip people with peaceful tools to handle disputes without anger or aggression.

#### Recommended Actions – Non-Violent Conflict Resolution:

**Adopt an International Declaration of Non-Violence:** The UN General Assembly, with support from all member states, should pass a landmark resolution (or even initiate a treaty) declaring that violence shall not be used to resolve any conflict, whether between or within states. This declaration would reinforce existing international law, commit states to peaceful dispute resolution, and serve as a moral beacon (much like the 1928 Kellogg-Briand Pact renouncing war, but updated and strengthened for the 21st century).

**Strengthen Peaceful Dispute Mechanisms:** Expand the mandate and resources of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and arbitral bodies so that states in conflict are encouraged to submit their disputes to legal adjudication or arbitration instead of resorting to force. Making ICJ jurisdiction compulsory for all UN members (with limited exceptions) could be a transformative step. Additionally, empower regional organizations (African Union, EU, ASEAN, etc.) to mediate local disputes, and link them with UN good offices.

**Invest in Mediation and Early Warning:** Establish a permanent UN Mediation Corps – a professional cadre of mediators and conflict-resolution experts who can be rapidly deployed to emerging crises. Pair this with improved early warning systems (using data and local input to detect signs of escalating tensions) so that diplomatic action is taken before violence erupts. The earlier the engagement in dialogue, the better the chances violence can be averted.

**Implement Restorative Justice in Peace Processes:** The UN, together with regional bodies, should make restorative justice a pillar of conflict resolution. This includes setting up Truth and Reconciliation Commissions or similar bodies after conflicts to address wounds (drawing on successful models in South Africa, Rwanda, and Colombia). It also means incorporating traditional and community-based justice practices that emphasize healing. Donors and international agencies should fund training in restorative practices for local peacebuilders.

See the rest of recommendations here:

<https://worldhappiness.foundation/blog/leadership/world-happiness-foundation-response-to-a-call-for-peace-the-end-of-wars-and-respect-for-international-law/>

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