

New York, October 8, 2001

Kofi Annan
General Secretary
United Nations

Dear Mr. Secretary-General:

The undersigned Nobel Peace Laureates have come to New York to express our rejection of the military actions initiated yesterday in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11 and to present to the United Nations, the joint Appeal which eight Nobel Laureates have launched. In that Appeal we express our conviction that violence cannot be fought with more violence, and we call on the General Assembly of the United Nations, which is meeting here now, to avoid more suffering and to insure a peace founded in justice and liberty through the application of the legal and institutional order in which the coexistence among nations is based.

At the same we reiterate our condolences and solidarity with the victims of the tragedy, their families, and all the people of the United States, and our rejection of all forms of terrorism under any circumstances. We furthermore express our strongest rejection of the double standard which promotes the carrying out of military aggression alongside humanitarian assistance. This aggression forces thousands of men, women, and children from their homes and livelihoods, and increases the humanitarian disaster without resolving the root causes of the conflict. The world community must seek justice, not vengeance.

These terrorist attacks have placed at the forefront the need for strong international instruments to enable that those who are responsible be investigated, taken before competent tribunals and sanctioned, as part of the indispensable reparation of the victims. In order to insure that abhorrent crimes do not continue to be committed in the name of freedom and under the shadow of impunity, we call furthermore for the strengthening of a universal jurisdiction for the trying of crimes against humanity and the prompt establishment of an International Criminal Court.

We express our conviction that recent events demand more global reflection on the multiple inequalities and injustices that feed impotence and desperation and take thousands of lives daily. The battle that must be waged is the battle against the silent bomb of hunger, poverty, and social exclusion; a bomb that is produced by the structural injustice, both economic and political, that is suffered by the majority of the worlds' peoples.

No military action can be unleashed unilaterally by any country or group of countries outside the decisions of the pertinent organs of the United Nations. We have come here not only to demand a flexible but firm response, but also to offer our support in order to make it possible for peace to be imposed not only as a moral but also a legal imperative that denounces the absurdity of any arms race and prevents war from continuing to function as the engine of the economy and the underpinning of new hegemonies.

We support a pluralistic and democratic order, respectful of the dignity of all peoples and cultures, and we therefore denounce as illegitimate any attempt to curtail or condition the liberty of any people by confusing peaceful dissidence with treason, in the name of security.

We support the call of the United Nations' Secretary-General in the recent World Conference against Racism, that a world movement arise from within civil society against all forms of discrimination and exclusion and we urge all States to reaffirm the commitment assumed in the Declaration of the Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for Children of the World, to build a respectful and fraternal coexistence among all peoples.

We call on the General Assembly to insure an immediate ceasefire and establish a political and legal framework through which a peaceful solution to the conflict may be found.

We are convinced that there are alternatives to war and that the great desire in the hearts of all members of the human family for peace can be achieved.

Another world is possible. We invite all world leaders to confront violence with wisdom and the law; all international organizations to respect the pacific nature of their origins and mandate, to not second any military intervention, nor reduce their responsibility to attend the humanitarian crises provoked by them; all churches and religions to allow that the infinite kindness of their Gods take care of life and harmony between all beings of creation; all teachers to promote respect, solidarity and critical thinking; all media to avoid alarmism and inform objectively; and all youth, men and women of all peoples to join in this commitment towards the establishment of a safe and peaceful world for all, a just world for all, a dignified world for all, and finally, and very simply, a world for all.

Mairead Corrigan Maguire

Adolfo Pérez Esquivel

Rigoberta Menchú Tum