

Reconciliation of Civil Hearts
The ordinary voice of peace from Afghanistan

Salam, 'aleikum! - - سلام عليكم!

We welcome you and the possibility of peace to this forgotten but gorgeous place.

We thank you for your hearts of peace in joining us today.

We, the ordinary youth of Afghanistan, have a message of peace for you, for all the respected leaders of our disconnected world and in particular, for the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize Winner President Obama.

We are struggling because it seems that nowadays, the voice of war has its space and its rights; we wonder if the voice of peace has equal space and rights. We wish to raise our voice of peace to give it a chance, without fear or shame.

We are the youth of the mountains who do not represent any political or religious views except for those views which make us truly human, capable of acting in love and truth, in good times as well as in tragedy.

We are tired of war and we share with brothers and sisters everywhere a common aspiration to live in peace.

We face great problems indeed but we also have courage because the magnificent Afghan outdoors surrounds us and we have within us an even greater desire for creative, non-violent solutions.

We cannot remain silent to our conscience in firmly disagreeing with the current Afghan government/Taliban/US/NATO militarized approach to our country's problems.

America is the largest arms dealer in the world and the world's superpowers have enough nuclear war-heads to destroy this beautiful place, Afghanistan and our whole earth 10 times over. Thus, we think that neither America nor any other world power has a logical or moral right and capacity to bring us true peace.

In our collapsing world today, rhetoric has been shattered by actions that prove that the majority of the world's effort and wealth in Afghanistan is directed towards war, and our common and apparently worthless deaths prove again and again that no human being wins, so we ask to be spared the frustration, disappointment and grief of such discrepancies.

We desire reconciliation. It's time to struggle for a reconciliation of civil hearts instead of fueling a clash or confrontation of civilizations. We wish to converse as equal, fellow human beings, without the need for guns and bombs.

We desire to patiently build our nation. So, while we appreciate your friendship and partnership, we desire just as much to trek on our own paths, build our own parks and choose which of our own mountains to climb.

We desire the dignity of working with our own hands and walking with our own legs. We ask for assistance that builds factories, industries, roads and an economy that would help us to stand on our own.

We desire justice and truth. So, we ask for your support in denying space to corruption, fraud, lies and deceptions and in quenching the abusive greed for power and money that are destroying our society and humanity as much as violence and war are.

Many of us are suffering at the expense of a few, so though the few rich and powerful are loud and dominant, their monopoly is neither moral nor democratic. We may be suffering, but suffering eyes can still see, not with the sight that sees only appearances, but with the insight that sees beyond words to raw but real meanings.

Perhaps, we have deeper anger, hatred and fears but we believe that humanity cannot overcome such giants with bloodshed. We learn to overcome them when we understand each other, so we ask for the nurturing of wide-scale, local and international humane relationships that would build empathy for our shared human condition, restore trust, and tear down barriers.

We need to explore human relationships and non-violent options like we pursue science, so that we can fulfill the enormous generational responsibility spelled out in the original charter of the United Nations:

"We, the peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war... And for these ends to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbors...have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims."

Preamble, Charter of the United Nations



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Your soldiers individually mean well but we are not willing, like the majority of ordinary Americans and Europeans today, that any of them should perish, just as we're concerned that not one more of our countrymen should die a violent death.

The world should not move along the unilateral, one-track path of violence and militarism anymore. We cannot cope; no human can. We should work together to walk along the multiple treks that lead us to beauty, to dreams and to those values, virtues and thoughtful conversations that every heart longs for.

So please, we ask that the world shifts her engagement with our sovereign country to a civilian approach. We should have as many civil forums, as many civil negotiations, as many civil discussions and as many civil occasions for relationship-building as are imaginatively possible. We believe that these civil efforts cannot be accomplished through either our local military or any foreign military because humankind cannot build relations with weapons.

We desire to recover those friendships captured by Khaled Husseini, the UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador, in his book the 'Kite Runner', the kind of friendships in which we can say to one another and to all others, "For you, a thousand times over."

We desire the security that other peaceful nations have. The Taliban had wreaked havoc in this valley too. And killed many of us. Our people fled from them across this very Hindu Kush mountain range. We do not accept their violent actions just as we do not accept the violent solutions the world has been counting on. We have become a terror to one another, in our inconsiderate actions and in our cowardly silence, and this must stop.

We hope to continue the 10 years of security in Bamiyan by refusing violence and by refusing to take revenge. And we wish to refuse the 'insurgent' any further excuse to hurt us because of a foreign presence; brothers killing brothers, friends killing friends, humans killing one another.

Thus, while we understand the US/NATO coalition's concern with security, we desire just as much that they would leave us responsibly and leave us soon.

We want all violence and fighting to end.

We want the Taliban, all Afghan warlords including the many warlords holding power in our present government, all regional powerbrokers, and the US/NATO forces to cease their operations, and to be brought to account for the killings they each are responsible for.

We need to travel this history and this future on our own.

You need not fear. We, the youth of Afghanistan, will ask for your help again if our paths take us to un-manageable scenarios, even in open spaces as free and as quiet as this. For then, we expect nothing but what our humanity guides each of us to do, to help a brother, sister, friend or fellow human being in time of need.

Despite past betrayal, Hassan, the Hazara boy in Kite Runner wrote a letter to his Pushtoon friend Amir, which got to Amir only after Hassan's death. In it, we find some of our hopes too. *"We dream that God will guide us to a better day. We dream that our sons will grow up to be good persons. We dream that lawla flowers will bloom in the streets of Kabul again and rubab music will play in the samovar houses and kites will fly in the blue skies. And we dream that some day you will return to Afghanistan to revisit. If you do, you'll find an old faithful friend waiting for you. There is a way to be good again."*

We trust that the heart of peace in President Obama and in all men would help Afghanistan and the world towards true peace and reconciliation. Thank you very much or as we say in Afghanistan, *یک جهان تشکر* a world of thanks!

From the bottom of our hearts,

شجاع باشید! Be courageous!
خوش باشید! Be happy!
سلامت باشید! And be at peace!

The Afghan Youth Peace Volunteers

... on Our Journey to Smile

<http://ourjourneytosmile.com/blog>

<http://livewithoutwars.org>

<http://globaldayoflistening.org>

An additional thought :

Our voice for every heart, including ourselves – Humanity has taken too long and lost too many in implementing non-violent, civil ways to resolve human conflict. We human beings can do better than repeatedly resorting to force and war to address human hurts and needs. Stop the killings, stop killing one another, stop killing the people.

Stop killing us.