



## FIRST DRAFT

# CHARTER FOR A WORLD WITHOUT VIOLENCE

## Human violence is a preventable disease

*Note: This is a preliminary draft for distribution and further contribution by Nobel Peace Laureates and Nobel Peace Laureate Organizations.*

November 19, 2006

No state or individual can be secure in an insecure world. The values of nonviolence in intention, thought, and practice have grown from an option to a necessity.

We are convinced that adherence to the principles of nonviolence will usher in a more peaceful, civilized world order in which more effective and fair governance, respectful of human dignity and the sacredness of life itself may become a reality.

Our cultures, our histories, and our individual lives are interconnected and our actions are interdependent. Especially today as never before, we believe, a truth lies before us: our destiny is a common destiny. That destiny will be defined by our intentions, decisions and actions today.

We are firmly convinced that creating a culture of peace and nonviolence, while a difficult and long process is a necessary and noble purpose. Affirmation of the principles contained in this Charter is a vital first step to ensuring the survival and development of humanity and the achievement of a world without violence.

We, the Nobel Peace Laureates and representatives of Laureate Organizations present in Rome at the Seventh World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates,

*Reaffirming* our commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

*Moved by* concern for the need to end the spread of violence at all levels of society and especially the threats posed on a global scale;

*Reaffirming* that freedom of thought and expression is at the root of democracy and creativity;

*Recalling* that violence manifests in many ways, such as, armed conflict, military occupation, poverty, economic exploitation, environmental destruction, and prejudice based on race, religion, gender, or sexual preference;



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*Realizing* that the cult of violence as expressed through popular culture accustoms the acceptance of violence as a normal and acceptable condition;

*In the knowledge* that violence harms most the weakest and vulnerable;

*Remembering* the insight of Martin Luther King that peace is not only the absence of violence but that it is the presence of justice;

*Realizing* that the failure of States to sufficiently accommodate ethnic, cultural and religious diversity is at the root of much of the violence in the world;

*Being aware* that non-violent approaches to conflict resolution are most successful when applied at the earliest possible moment;

*Acknowledging* the natural right of oppressed people to peacefully resist oppression;

*Affirming* that persons invested with power carry the greatest responsibility to end violence where it is occurring and to prevent violence whenever possible;

*Asserting* that the principles of nonviolence must triumph at all levels of society;

Invite the global community to advance the following principles:

**First:** In an interdependent world, the prevention and cessation of armed conflict between and within States requires the collective action of the international community, which in turn requires strengthening the reforms of the UN system as well as regional cooperative organizations in order to empower it and to advance a system of global security.

**Second:** To achieve a world without violence, States must abide by the rule of law and honor their legal agreements.

**Third:** It is essential to eliminate nuclear and other immoral weapons of mass destruction through legal prohibitions which must be universal, verifiable and enforceable. States possessing such weapons are morally bound to ensure no such weapons of mass murder will ever be used. There is a universal obligation of all states to conclude negotiations toward the elimination of nuclear weapons.

**Fourth:** To reduce violence in society, the production and sale of small arms and light weapons should be reduced and strictly controlled at international, state and local levels. In addition there should be full and universal enforcement of international disarmament agreements and support for new efforts aimed at the eradication of the impact of victim-activated and indiscriminate weapons.





**Fifth:** We strongly condemn terrorism because violence begets violence. The struggle against terrorism cannot, however, justify violation of human rights, international humanitarian law, civilized norms, and democracy.

**Sixth:** Ending domestic and family violence requires unconditional respect for the equality, freedom, dignity, and rights of women, men and children by all individuals, institutions of the state, religion and civil society. Such protections must be embodied in laws and conventions at local and international levels.

**Seventh:** Every individual and state shares responsibility to prevent violence against children and youth, our common future and most precious gift, and to advance educational opportunities, access to primary health care, personal safety, social protection, and an enabling environment that reinforces nonviolence as a way of life rather than a Utopian dream. Peace education should be part of the school curriculum.

**Eighth:** Preventing conflicts arising from the depletion of natural resources, in particular sources of energy and water, requires States to affirmatively and, through creation of legal mechanisms and standards, provide for the protection of the environment and the adjustment of their consumption on the basis of resource availability and real human needs.

**Ninth:** We call on the international community and states to consider ways and means of promoting the meaningful accommodation of ethnic, cultural and religious diversity in multi-community national states. A golden rule of a non-violent world: Treat others as you wish to be treated.

**Tenth:** The principal political tools, for bringing into being a non-violent world are dialogue, negotiation, compromise, conducted on the basis of balance between the interests of the parties involved, but also taking into consideration concerns relating to the entirety of humanity.

**Eleventh:** All states must devote sufficient resources to address the integrity in the distribution of economic resources, and resolve gross inequities which create a fertile ground for violence.

**Twelfth:** Civil society in all its articulations must be recognized as essential to building a non-violent world. Conditions should be created to enable and encourage civil society participation in political processes at the global and local level – this includes ensuring the empowerment and protection of human rights defenders, peace and environmental activists whose activities often place them at risk.

