



Message

Claiming our “Right to Peace” on International Peace Day

As we celebrate International Peace Day today on September 21 under the theme “*The Right to Peace*”, we as a nation ought to do some introspection regarding our path to achieving this goal. We must also assess if we have failed to create a peaceful society as defined by the United Nations, where there is justice and equality for all.

With data revealing the number of children murdered in double digits since the start of the year, it becomes clear that more action is required to achieve the goal of peace, because we are failing to protect the most vulnerable among us, our children.

Our children have a right to peace. We cannot continue to shield the perpetrator(s) of these heinous crimes against our children. It is time for us to speak out and provide the information to the security forces so that the perpetrators can be brought to justice thereby, sending a strong message that the murdering of our children will not be tolerated.

In the meantime, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 16, which speaks to “Peace, Justice and Strong institutions” calls for the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels by 2030.

As a party to the UN, we are obligated to implement initiatives to achieve Goal 16. The question arises do we as a nation, change course and create an environment where our people including the most vulnerable feel safe? While we recognize that there is no lone solution to reducing and preventing violence, we are very clear that ALL of us have a role to play in making a difference. The task may seem monumental now, however the strong participation of individuals and a network of sectors working together, can put us on a path towards peace.

Today as we recognise International Peace Day, I urge you to be apart of the solution in preventing crime and violence. Adopt a non-violent approach to problem solving; report crimes and potential crimes to the authorities. Let us begin to claim our “*Right to Peace!*”.

Elizabeth Ward, Chair
Violence Prevention Alliance