

**UPFI: One Family under God - Afghanistan Independence Day - Standing with the People**

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On the occasion of Afghanistan's Independence Day, the Universal Peace Federation extends its heartfelt congratulations to the people of Afghanistan. This day, celebrated each year on August 19, marks the proud moment when Afghanistan regained full sovereignty and independence in 1919. It is a day of unity and shared national dignity, honored by Afghans of all traditions and communities. May this celebration inspire renewed hope and solidarity among all who cherish Afghanistan's future.

The Universal Peace Federation (UPF) expresses deep concern for the situation in Afghanistan while holding firm to a message of hope and solidarity. After decades of conflict, Afghanistan stands at a critical juncture. With violence reduced, an opportunity has emerged to secure lasting peace. Yet the Afghan people continue to face urgent humanitarian challenges including poverty, displacement, and limited access to healthcare.

**Honouring Afghanistan's Strengths and Culture**

Afghanistan is home to one of the world's most ancient and enduring civilizations, with a history stretching back more than 5,000 years. From the early cultures of the Oxus and Bactria-Margiana to its role as a center of Islamic learning and trade, the Afghan land has long stood at the crossroads of civilizations. Drawing wisdom from the legacy of respected community and religious leaders throughout Afghanistan's long and dignified history,

UPF honors Afghanistan's proud history, cultural heritage, and the deep faith that sustains its people. The Afghan nation is defined not by decades of conflict, but by the resilience, spirituality, and generosity of its people. The values of faith, family, and community that are cherished in Afghan society are a wellspring for renewal. We believe that these strengths - the wisdom of religious and community leaders, the devotion of parents to their children's future, and the traditional virtues of hospitality and honor - provide a strong foundation upon which to build peace and national unity. In respecting Afghanistan's culture and religious heritage, the international community can find genuine common ground for partnership.

**The Meaning of True Peace**

UPF affirms that true peace, a precious gift of God, is more than the absence of war; it requires trust, cooperation, and recognition of shared humanity. Every individual in Afghanistan deserves a chance to live in dignity, to learn and grow, and to contribute to their nation's future.



**Spiritual Foundations for Lasting Peace**

UPF's engagement in Afghanistan, as always, is guided by universal principles and values. These include a recognition of our shared spiritual heritage and the importance of interreligious dialogue; the strengthening of families as the cornerstone of a healthy society; a culture of volunteerism and service to others; and an unwavering commitment to peace built on trust and mutual understanding. The founders of UPF, Dr. Hak Ja Han and the late Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon, taught that God is one for all the peoples and is the source of truth for all religions. This conviction affirms our belief that mutual respect and shared faith in the Divine can unite people across differences.

## Our Experience and Regional Engagement

UPF recalls its past initiatives in Afghanistan and the surrounding region that fostered unity through the South Asia Peace Initiative ([SAPI](#)), including conferences in Kabul with Afghan leaders, scholars, and faith representatives in 2012. We have also worked with a network of Ambassadors for Peace in Afghanistan - dedicated individuals from various sectors of society committed to dialogue and reconciliation. In addition, in the early 2010s, UPF-Afghanistan carried out educational seminars, youth programs, and cultural events in Kabul as part of global observances such as the International Day of Peace and International Day of Families. These initiatives emphasized moral education and the spirit of service in harmony with Afghanistan's cultural and religious traditions..

## International Engagement for the Common Good

We also acknowledge and support the vital work of the United Nations agencies and other international organizations that continue to serve the Afghan people, often under challenging conditions. In particular, we commend those initiatives that have found constructive pathways for cooperation with Afghan authorities, including programs focused on children's education, public health, cultural heritage, family livelihoods, and climate-related dialogue. This includes joint attention to transboundary challenges such as water resource management and climate adaptation, which directly affect livelihoods across the country and region. We are encouraged by concrete examples of practical coordination. These include UNICEF's community-based education reaching over 140,000 children, WHO-led health programs supporting thousands of medical facilities, and Afghanistan's constructive engagement in international climate dialogues focusing on regional water cooperation and adaptation planning. Such efforts demonstrate that even in difficult circumstances, shared values and mutual respect can enable meaningful progress for the good of all. Their contributions on the ground are building blocks for peace and trust.

## Grassroots Efforts that Matter

Equally vital are the contributions of numerous non-governmental organizations and Afghan civil society groups - such as the [Afghan Red Crescent Society](#) and the [Aga Khan Development Network](#) - which continue to deliver education, healthcare, vocational training, and rural development services across provinces. Alongside them, many other organizations are contributing tirelessly to relief and peace efforts at the grassroots level. UPF deeply appreciates these collective efforts, which embody the spirit of international solidarity. Every life saved, every child educated, and every community strengthened through these initiatives contributes to the foundation of peace.

## Peace Through Trust: A Global Campaign

UPF's worldwide 100-day campaign leading up to the UN International Day of Peace on 21 September 2025 is inspired by the call to "Act Now for a Peaceful World" - we reaffirm that Afghanistan's peace and recovery are integral to peace everywhere. The lessons of the [International Year of Trust](#) emphasize that trust is the currency of peace. In Afghanistan, building trust - between communities, between the nation and the international community, and among neighboring countries - is essential for overcoming the wounds of the past and creating a future of mutual respect.



## Peace and Development Go Hand in Hand

The pursuit of peace goes hand in hand with development. We affirm the importance of the UN Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) as a roadmap for Afghanistan's progress - from eradicating extreme poverty and hunger to ensuring quality education, healthcare, and economic opportunity for all. Achieving these goals in Afghanistan will help create an environment where peace can flourish. In particular, improving access to schooling at all levels, empowering youth with skills and jobs,

supporting family livelihoods, and strengthening institutions of accountability will address root causes of conflict and give people hope for the future.

## A Call for Inclusive Cooperation

In the spirit of cooperation, we call upon all stakeholders to join hands in a common cause of peace for Afghanistan's future. To our brothers and sisters in Afghanistan - community elders, religious scholars, tribal leaders, educators, business owners, women and youth - we appeal for unity and dialogue. Your collective wisdom and collaboration are indispensable for solving local challenges and nurturing a culture of peace. We also respectfully encourage Afghanistan's current authorities to engage constructively with

all segments of society and with international initiatives that support the common good. Inclusive governance that reflects the nation's rich tapestry of cultures and voices will strengthen Afghanistan's stability and its standing in the world.

### **Renewing Global Commitment to Afghanistan**

Likewise, we call on the international community - including neighboring countries, donor governments, and multilateral organizations - to renew and continue constructive engagement with Afghanistan. Now is not the time to turn away; it is the time to build trust through dialogue and creative forms of partnership, especially in the fields of humanitarian assistance, developing education and skills, and economic exchange. We urge all sides to increase communication, transparency, and cooperation on issues of shared concern - such as countering extremism and illicit trafficking, facilitating the delivery of humanitarian aid, expanding educational and cultural exchanges, and safeguarding human rights and fundamental freedoms. Small steps, taken in mutual respect, can gradually build the confidence needed for larger agreements. A strategy of isolation helps no one; a strategy of outreach and understanding can open the door to solutions. By working together with patience and goodwill, the international community and Afghanistan can foster an environment where no one feels compelled to take up arms again. In such an environment, the national focus can finally shift from conflict to development and hope.

### **Looking Ahead with Hope**

As we approach the [International Day of Peace](#) 2025, UPF stands in solidarity with the people of Afghanistan and all those working for peace in that land, mindful that we are one human family and that the peace of any nation is inseparable from the peace of all. Let us use this occasion to reaffirm our partnership for Afghanistan's future. Together, let us move forward with faith and determination, knowing that the unshakable spirit of the Afghan people, who have endured and overcome centuries of trials, assures us that the dawn of peace and renewal will surely come.

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