

UPF International: Words Can Be Seeds of Peace

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The United Nations has proclaimed June 18 as the International Day for Countering Hate Speech. On this day, UPF offers this reflection on the power of language.

A word can open a door, or close one for many years. It can preserve the dignity of another person, or quietly make that person easier to ignore. Before violence enters institutions or homes, it passes through language. It learns to name a neighbor as a threat, a stranger as a burden, a believer as a danger, a nation as an enemy, or a wounded community as an obstacle.

For this reason, the [United Nations International Day for Countering Hate Speech](#) carries a meaning that is deeper than public communication. Established in 2021 by [United Nations General Assembly resolution A/RES/75/309](#), the day is rooted in the [UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech](#), launched in 2019.

UPF views this day through a moral lens. Every human being has a value that precedes argument, ideology or political identity. This conviction is central to the vision of UPF, founded by [Dr. Hak Ja Han](#) and the late [Rev. Sun Myung Moon](#). It is also the heart of UPF's understanding that humanity is one family under God.

Hate speech injures that belonging. It narrows the imagination until a person can no longer see a brother, sister, or fellow citizen in the one who stands on the other side. It tells a wounded person that contempt is strength. It tells young people that cruelty is courage. None of this is peace. The spiritual traditions of the world carry a deeper wisdom. They teach restraint when anger feels justified. They teach the discipline of loving one's enemy.

UPF's peacebuilding history contains many examples of this discipline in practice. In Nepal, during a time of tension, bitterness and hatred, the [South Asia Peace Initiative](#) carried a message of love, forgiveness,

reconciliation and living for the sake of others into a political environment where many believed dialogue would fail. In Jerusalem, the [Middle East Peace Initiative](#) created space for Jewish and Christian participants to stand together in repentance, seek forgiveness, and move toward healing and reconciliation.

In Latin America and Africa, the [UPF-Angola and UPF-Argentina forum "For a Peace Culture"](#) reflected on historical bonds between regions marked by a painful past, including the legacy of slavery. The speakers emphasized education, culture, family, dialogue, and the work of removing historical resentments, prejudice and discrimination.

In Northeast Asia, UPF has long encouraged people-to-people engagement across historical and national divisions. The 2024 report on [Korean and Japanese youth building a Future Leaders Network](#) describes efforts to promote interaction between Korean and Japanese youth, foster mutual understanding despite differences in language, culture, nationality and perspective, and create a shared sense of community.

The media also carries a special responsibility. At the launch of the [International Media Association for Peace](#), UPF speakers addressed media ethics, hate speech, political polarization, misinformation, and the danger of dehumanization.

Countering hate speech therefore begins before public policy. It begins in the heart, in the home, in schools, in religious communities, in editorial meetings, in parliaments, and in private conversations. On this International Day for Countering Hate Speech, UPF invites its Ambassadors for Peace and civil society partners to treat speech as a form of service. A word can serve peace when it protects dignity. Peace begins when the human face returns to our language.