



**September 21, 2024**

### **Alliance for Shared Values Message for International Day of Peace**

The Alliance for Shared Values (AfSV) stands with the United Nations (UN) and the global community in celebrating the International Day of Peace, a day that reaffirms our collective commitment to advancing the values of peace, mutual respect, and dignity for all.

The 2024 theme, "Cultivating a Culture of Peace," commemorates the 25th anniversary of the United Nations General Assembly's Declaration and Program of Action on a Culture of Peace. This milestone serves as a profound reminder that peace transcends mere conflict avoidance; it is a dynamic process grounded in dialogue, mutual understanding, and cooperation. The Declaration highlights the crucial importance of respecting human rights, promoting non-violence, and committing to peaceful conflict resolution, all core values of Hizmet.

Hizmet participants are unwavering in their dedication to fostering a culture of peace through education and intercultural and interfaith dialogue. Hizmet volunteers around the world have established schools, dialogue centers, and humanitarian initiatives that bridge divides among diverse communities.

Despite facing severe persecution under Turkey's authoritarian regime, Hizmet participants steadfastly have defended human rights and democracy through legal and peaceful means, demonstrating their remarkable resilience and dedication for a decade. Since 2014, when the persecution of Hizmet participants in Turkey began, more than 600,000 people have been investigated and more than 100,000 of them have been imprisoned amid reports of torture and forced disappearances. In 2021, the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention stated that widespread or systematic imprisonment or other severe deprivation of liberty in violation of the rules of international law may constitute crimes against humanity.<sup>1</sup> Amnesty International reported that the Turkish Government "weaponized" counter-terrorism laws to target civil society.<sup>2</sup>

The pursuit of peace is an arduous journey. As we near the end of the first quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, there is no shortage of violent conflict or oppression around the world. In many of these regions, the suppression of civil society and human rights is met by silence or indifference, highlighting the urgent need to nurture a global culture of peace.

As the International Day of Peace is observed, it stands as a reminder to reinforce our commitment to cultivating a culture of peace through education, dialogue, mutual understanding, and cooperation at the local, national, and global levels.

### **About Alliance for Shared Values**

The Alliance for Shared Values (AFSV) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that serves as a voice for cultural organizations affiliated with Hizmet, a civil society movement inspired by prominent preacher and peace advocate Fethullah Gülen. The Alliance strives to promote peace and social harmony by helping reduce

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<sup>1</sup> See [https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Detention/Opinions/Session89/A\\_HRC\\_WGAD\\_2020\\_84.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Detention/Opinions/Session89/A_HRC_WGAD_2020_84.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> See <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/EUR4442692021ENGLISH.pdf>

misinformation and false stereotypes about any or all ethnic, cultural and religious communities. To learn more about the Alliance, please visit [www.afsv.org](http://www.afsv.org).

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