

UN Secretary-General António Guterres delivers New Year's Address



"In 2023, let's put peace at the heart of our words and actions," António Guterres implored.

United Nations, December 30 (RHC)-- United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres on Wednesday beseeched humanity to "make 2023 a year when peace is restored to our lives, our homes, and our world," a message that came as dozens of wars and armed conflicts rage around the world.

"Every new year is a moment of rebirth. We sweep out the ashes of the old year and prepare for a brighter day," Guterres said in his speech. "In 2022, millions of people around the world literally swept out ashes. From Ukraine to Afghanistan to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and beyond, people left the ruins of their homes and lives in search of something better."

"In 2022, millions of people around the world literally swept out ashes." "In 2023, we need peace, now more than ever," he insisted. "Peace with one another, through dialogue to end conflict. Peace with

nature and our climate, to build a more sustainable world. Peace in the home, so women and girls can live in dignity and safety. Peace on the streets and in our communities, with the full protection of all human rights. Peace in our places of worship, with respect for each other's beliefs. And peace online, free from hate speech and abuse."

"In 2023, let's put peace at the heart of our words and actions," Guterres added.

In a speech earlier this month, Guterres noted that "geopolitical divides have made global problem-solving ever more difficult—sometimes impossible."

However, the U.N. chief stressed that "we can't accept things as they are. We owe it to people to find solutions, to fight back, and to act" to tackle humanity's biggest challenges, from wars to the climate emergency.

Guterres continued:

In Ethiopia, efforts by the African Union to broker peace are a reason for hope. A cessation of hostilities and implementation agreements are in place. A pathway to assistance in the northern part of the country is emerging.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, diplomatic efforts led by Angola and the East African Community have created a framework for political dialogue to resolve the crisis in the eastern region of the country.

The truce in Yemen has delivered real dividends for people. Since then, even if very fragile, there have been no major military operations in a conflict where innocent people have been paying the highest price. Civilian flights have resumed from Sanaa. Vital supplies are finally getting through the port of Hudaydah.

And even in the brutal war in Ukraine, we have seen the power of determined, discreet diplomacy to help people and tackle unprecedented levels of global food insecurity. Despite ongoing challenges, the Black Sea Grain Initiative to facilitate exports of food and fertilizers from Ukraine -- and a memorandum of understanding for unimpeded exports of Russian food and fertilizers to global markets -- are making a difference.

"I am more determined than ever," the secretary-general added, "to make 2023 a year for peace, a year for action."

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