

REMARKS BY
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70TH PLENARY SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK
28 SEPTEMBER 2015

In the name of God, most Compassionate, most Merciful,

Mr President,

Mr Secretary General,

Your Excellencies:

Thank you. It is an honour to stand before this distinguished General Assembly. I am here representing Jordan, and as a God-fearing, God-loving human being. I am here as a father who wants his children, like yours, to live in a compassionate and more peaceful world.

Such a future is under serious threat from the *khawarej*, the outlaws of Islam that operate globally today. They target religious differences, hoping to kill cooperation and compassion among the billions of people, of all faiths and communities, who live side-by-side in our many countries. These outlaw gangs use suspicion and ignorance to expand their own power. Worse still is the free hand they grant themselves to distort the word of God to justify the most atrocious crimes.

All of us here are united by our conviction that these forces must be defeated. But before we ask how to achieve this objective, let us ask: What if they were *not* defeated? What would our world look like? Can we tolerate a future where mass murder, public beheadings, kidnapping and slavery are common practices? Where the persecution of communities is law? Where humanity's cultural treasures, preserved for thousands of years, are systematically destroyed?

I've called this crisis a third world war and I believe we must respond with equal intensity. That means global collective action on all fronts.

But make no mistake; the more important war is the one we wage on the battlegrounds of the heart, soul and mind. And in this fight, all countries, all people, must come together.

Jordan has been proud to work with your countries to spearhead global initiatives for tolerance and dialogue. This has been reflected in the Amman Message, and A Common Word, and, four years ago, we helped create the UN's Global Interfaith Harmony Week, an annual event to focus all people, especially young people, on the essentials of tolerance and co-existence.

These efforts must continue, and the UN has a central role. But all of us, as individuals and as leaders, must help build the road ahead. Let me suggest seven essential steps.

First, let's get back to basics, to the essence and shared spirit of our respective faiths and creeds. It seems to me that we can sometimes lose sight of the larger picture. What separates humanity is miniscule, compared to what we hold in common: deep values of love, peace, justice and compassion.

In the name of God, most Compassionate, most Merciful,

وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ (الاعراف 156)

'And My mercy embraces all things' (Al A'raf 156)

Second, let's change our tone. On my travels not long ago, I saw a roadside sign that said 'Fear God'. A few miles down the road, was another, saying the same thing, then another and then a final one, saying: '...or you will go to Hell'. I thought: When and how did fear and intimidation creep so insidiously into our conversations, when there is so much more to be said about the love of God? Most people may think they have nothing to do with the hate expressed by extremists. But our world is also threatened when violence, fear and anger dominate our discourse, whether in school lessons or weekly sermons or international affairs.

Third, let us act upon our beliefs. And here, I mean more than praying, fasting or *zakat* [giving alms]. I mean integrating our values into every part of our daily lives, every hour of every day. By loving our neighbour, showing respect to those different from us, being kind to our own children, each one of us can do something to reflect the spirit of our creator.

Fourth, let's amplify the voice of moderation. It is one of the greatest ironies of our time that extremist voices use advanced media to propagate ignorant ideas! We must not let our screens, airwaves, broadband and social media be monopolised by those who pose the greatest danger to our world. We too must populate our media, and more important, the minds of our young people, with the purity and power of moderation.

Fifth, let us recognise deceit. When we examine the motives of these outlaws, the *khawarej* – and indeed, the motives of extremists on all sides – we find hunger for power and control: of people, of money, of land. They use religion as a mask. Is there a worse crime than twisting God's word to promote your own interests? Is there a more despicable act than feeding on the vulnerable and innocent, to recruit them to your ranks?

In the global Muslim community – 1.7 billion good men and women, one quarter of humanity – today's outlaw gangs are nothing but a drop in the ocean. But a drop of venom can poison a well. We must protect the purity of our faith from worldly contamination. As Muslims, this is our fight, and our duty.

Sixth, by all means, let us be intolerant of intolerance! Extremists rely on the apathy of moderates. But moderation does not mean accepting those who trample on others and reject all who differ. Today's global fight is not between peoples, communities or religions. It is between all moderates, of all faiths, against all extremists, in all religions. Leaders of every country, every belief, every neighbourhood, need to take a clear and public stand against intolerance of any kind. This includes respecting all places where God is worshipped, whether mosque, church, synagogue or temple.

And nothing can be more important and can have more impact in framing this respect and coexistence than Jerusalem. The Hashemite Custodianship of Jerusalem's Islamic and Christian Holy Sites is a sacred

duty, and we join Muslims and Christians everywhere in rejecting threats to the Holy Places and the Arab character of this Holy City.

My friends,

Our seventh step is hyper-connectivity. In our era, ‘connectivity’ defines how we live and interact: in our work, our communities, our schools, our lives. Only a few years ago we had the Internet of Computers; now we talk about the Internet of Things. But above them all must be the Internet of Humanity – a hyper-connection, bringing us together in collective consciousness and common cause.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

By gathering here today, we acknowledge that the power of working together far exceeds any individual effort. This great General Assembly must address urgent world issues: sustainable, inclusive development that can deliver more opportunity, especially to young people and peaceful political solutions to regional crises.

It is the world’s obligation to find solutions and provide relief for the millions of refugees in my region. Today, we are still facing huge shortfalls, cuts and threats to vital UN programmes and agencies, including UNRWA, UNHCR and WFP.

Today, we are haunted by the images of thousands of refugees on the shores and borders of Europe seeking hope far away from their homeland. In Jordan, we have been faced with this challenge since the beginning of the Syrian crisis. Today, Syrian refugees alone constitute 20 per cent of my country’s population.

We have been taking on a significant part of the burden of this humanitarian disaster off the international community’s shoulders since the beginning. However, support to our country has been a small fraction of the cost we have endured. It is high time that the international community acts collectively in facing this unprecedented humanitarian crisis, and support

countries like Jordan and Lebanon which have been carrying the brunt of this burden over the past four years.

My friends,

In all these areas, we must act, collectively, for the future of our world. And connectivity is key. The values we share – equality, compassion and hope – need to be connected to everything we do. And we must keep ourselves connected to each other, for the good of all.

These bonds are the power and promise of our United Nations. Here, together, we can and must create the future our people need: a safer, stronger world of coexistence, inclusion, shared prosperity and peace. Seven steps can bring us closer to our destination. God willing, our countries and peoples will achieve these and many more.

Thank you.

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