



The Association for Trauma Outreach & Prevention (ATOP)
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ATOP MeaningfulWorld at United Nations
Celebrating United Nations International Day of Peace
On
Nurturing Sustainable Peace through EI
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What is the International Day of Peace? Why do we celebrate it? And why do we dedicate only one day to peace? The United Nations International Day of Peace is observed annually on September 21 as a day dedicated to strengthening the ideals of peace, nonviolence, and the cessation of hostilities. This year's UN theme is "Invest in Peace – For Everyone, Everywhere, Every Day." Established by the United Nations in 1981, it provides an opportunity for people and nations around the world to reflect on the importance of peace and renew their commitment to building a more peaceful world. But peace cannot be limited to a single day. The International Day of Peace serves as a reminder and a call to action, encouraging us to carry the values of peace into our everyday lives and work toward making peace a sustained commitment.

MeaningfulWorld celebrates the International Day of Peace annually. This year's theme "Nurturing Sustainable Peace through EI". MeaningfulWorld's observance reflected on what it means to invest in peace not only through collective action, but also through healing, empathy, forgiveness, and meaningful actions in our everyday lives. **Dr. Ani Kalayjian**, Founder & President of MeaningfulWorld, gave the opening remarks, highlighting the significance of the International Day of Peace and reflecting on why we celebrate a day of peace rather than a year, decade, or century of peace. She emphasized that peace cannot simply be imposed from outside; it must begin within each person through healing, empathy, forgiveness, and loving kindness.

The 21st of September has been proclaimed by the United Nations as a "Global Day of Ceasefire and Nonviolence," calling on all nations and people to honor a cessation of hostilities for the duration of the day. Dr. Kalayjian reflected on the continued violence and destabilizing conflicts around the world and highlighted our collective responsibility to demand an end to brutality and impunity. She called for the UN's "one day of peace" to become a sustained commitment throughout the year. Dr. Kalayjian raised a central question: If humanity can commit to peace for one day, what prevents us from extending it to a year, a decade, or even a century? Ultimately, she emphasized that creating peace depends on our collective choices, choosing love over hatred, acceptance over rejection, inclusion over exclusion, and peace over

violence. Although conflict continues around the world, MeaningfulWorld continues its commitment to creating peace one heart, one person, and one meaningful action at a time.



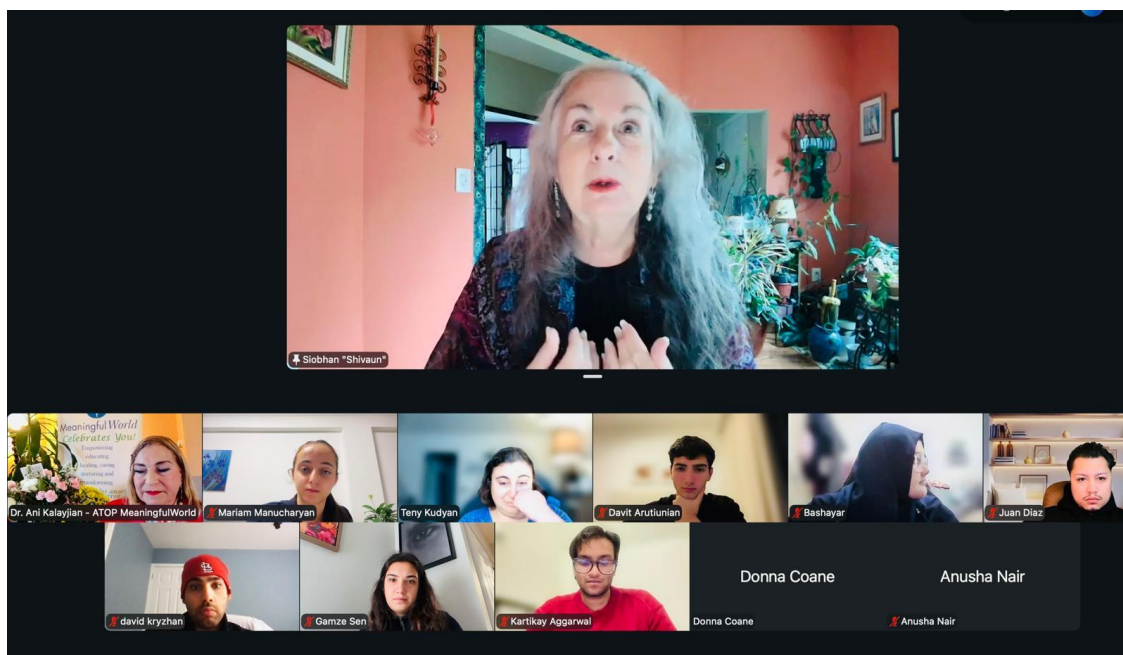
Dr. Peter Preziosi

Dr. Ani Kalayjian

Our keynote speaker, **Dr. Peter Preziosi**, President of the Conference of NGOs at the UN and CEO of True Merit, addressed emotional intelligence as a foundation of peace, highlighting empathy, self-awareness, and courage as core themes. He reflected on lasting peace efforts between Armenia and Azerbaijan and made a specific call for the release of Armenian Christian detainees held in Baku as a precondition for genuine reconciliation. He concluded by emphasizing that peace is an ongoing responsibility, rather than a one-time achievement or document.

The MeaningfulWorld Team reflected on “What Peace Means to Me,” sharing different perspectives on personal and collective peace. **Davit Arutiunian**, Outreach Intern, shared Peace means seeing humanity beyond labels and differences, allowing space for disagreement without letting it become dehumanization. **Mariam Manucharyan**, Social Media Intern, emphasized that peace means safety, dignity, memory, justice, and choosing dialogue and reconciliation while upholding human rights. **Bashayar**, Research Assistant, highlighted that peace begins within ourselves through kindness, compassion, forgiveness, and understanding, which we can then extend to others. **David Kryzhanovskiy**, Executive Assistant, noted that peace means choosing compassion, empathy, respect, and dialogue over conflict and working together to bridge our differences. **Kartikay Aggarwal**, Educational Coordinator, stressed that peace includes forgiving ourselves by learning from our mistakes and letting go of self-punishment, because we cannot pour peace into the world from a restless heart.

Our guest speaker, **Ms. Siobhan Hutchinson**, Holistic Health Practitioner and Founder of Next Step Strategies, shared breathwork as a practical peace practice through a live guided exercise. She also shared an anecdote about comforting a distressed child as an example of everyday peacebuilding. She highlighted mindfulness as a practical tool for finding peace within and supporting personal well-being.



Siobhan Hutchinson

The program reminded us that peace can take many forms — within ourselves, in our relationships, in our communities, and in humanitarian relief and outreach around the world. The conversations, reflections, and experiences shared during the event remind us that peace does not happen in a day. Let us carry these small acts of peace beyond the International Day of Peace and into our everyday lives, because the peace we create within ourselves can become the peace we extend to others. If we can choose peace for one day, we can choose it again tomorrow, and every day after that.

MeaningfulWorld has ongoing programs to help the healing, and nurturing peace through our weekly support groups, monthly educational workshops, daily loving kindness posts on social media, research on meaning-making, forgiveness, and healing, 88 YouTube films, and multiple publications. As we believe at MeaningfulWorld “When one helps another, BOTH become stronger!”

