

# Statement of the Universal Esperanto Association on the occasion of the International Day of Non-Violence 2020

Each year the United Nations observes October 2 as the International Day of Non-Violence – a day on which we celebrate the power of peaceful ideas to move humankind toward the good. On this day in 1869, precisely 150 years ago, the great pioneer of the philosophy and strategy of non-violence, Mahatma Gandhi, was born.

Recently, on July 17, 2020, one of the great leaders of the non-violent movement in the United States, John Lewis, died. Shortly after his passing, his final message was published. It should continue to inspire us. In this message he stated: “Though I may not be here with you, I urge you to answer the highest calling of your heart and stand up for what you truly believe. In my life I have done all I can to demonstrate that the way of peace, the way of love and nonviolence is the more excellent way. Now it is your turn to let freedom ring.”

The Universal Esperanto Association gives special emphasis to the power of language as an instrument of non-violence. Through speech and writing, humankind can persuade, insist, reason – without recourse to violent confrontation. But this is possible only when both sides speak the same language. All too often, communication collapses because of language difference, or the inability of speakers of different languages to bridge those differences, despite the often heroic efforts of interpreters and translators. And, all too often, when people cease to understand they begin to fight.

The International Language Esperanto was created to bridge the differences of languages, constituting a foundation for non-violent communication and the furtherance of understanding. The Universal Esperanto Association’s constitution states that “good international relations and respect for human rights, as these are defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other internationally recognized instruments, are essential conditions for the work of UEA.” On the basis of this requirement of our constitution, the Association unequivocally condemns all forms of violence.

On the occasion of the International Day of Non-Violence the Universal Esperanto Association reaffirms its co-operation with the United Nations in creating a more peaceful and understanding world in the spirit of Mahatma Gandhi, John Lewis, and the other pioneers of non-violence.

And, as John Lewis emphasized, now it is our turn...

**Universal Esperanto Association Office for Liaison with the United Nations, 777 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017. [1] 212-687-7041. [www.esperantoporun.org](http://www.esperantoporun.org).**

Office of the Universal Esperanto Association at the United Nations  
777 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017.  
212-687-7041