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Advancing rule of law key to building peaceful, prosperous societies – Ban



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

11 April 2011 – [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon today stressed the urgent need to strengthen the rule of law worldwide, noting that it can assist in tackling some of the key global challenges the international community is currently facing.

[Addressing](#) the start of a one-day interactive debate of the General Assembly devoted to the subject, Mr. Ban said that one need look no further than the news headlines to appreciate the importance of today's discussion.

“Across the Arab world, people long denied basic rights and freedoms demand justice, dignity and rule of law,” he said. “In Africa, Asia and Europe, we hear the call for good governance... transparency and protections against corruption... effective, trustworthy legal systems... accountability for crimes and violations of civil rights...”

“The principle they champion is universal ... a bedrock belief in the supremacy of a government of laws, not of men.”

He stressed that the rule of law represents “our best hope for building peaceful, prosperous societies,” while noting that too often, in too many places, “we see the façade of rule of law, without steps to make it fully real.”

In the outcome of the 2005 World Summit, heads of State and government reaffirmed their commitment to an international order based on the rule of law, which is essential for peaceful coexistence and cooperation among States.

They also acknowledged that the rule of law at the national and international levels is essential for sustained economic growth, sustainable development and the eradication of poverty and hunger.

Mr. Ban highlighted four major challenges in advancing the rule of law – a lack of civilian capacity, a shortage of financial resources, a fragmented community of actors, and political obstacles that need to be overcome.

In this regard, he welcomed the Assembly's decision to hold a high-level event next year dedicated to the rule of law, which he said will be an opportunity to bring all players to the table and to renew commitment to advancing this important issue.

He added that respect for the rule of law implies respect for human rights and tolerance of differences in culture and religion. Condemning acts such as the recent burning of a Koran in the United States, he stressed that rule of law is grounded in respect and mutual understanding, not the demonization of 'the other.'

“In the same vein, those who respond to hate speech with violence must also be condemned. The killing of innocent people can never be justified, no matter what the provocation,” he said.

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