

## Murree Peace Statement

### Aman Ittehad – *insaf, adm tashadud aur barabari*

Representatives of 35 organizations from across Pakistan belonging to trade unions, media, youth organizations, minority groups, NGOs, academia, business, and the legal profession, gathered in Murree from 9 to 11 October to deliberate over the current situation in the country and to discuss pathways to peace. They unanimously agreed on the indivisibility of peace for all citizens, irrespective of gender, class, nationality, religion, occupation, age, etc.

They agreed to work together to redefine the state's relationship with citizens, and help create a paradigm shift in its priorities from a security state to one that is responsive to the needs of all its citizens, especially the socially, politically, and systemically excluded. They rejected all forms of religious extremisms and the use of violence.

The following obstacles to peace were identified:

1. Trust deficit at all levels – between citizens and the state including its institutions; and, also among citizens
2. Fear, violence and the fear of violence, suspicions, and helplessness among citizens
3. The role of the state as an imposer, oppressor, and non-deliverer
4. Lack of equality – in how the state treats its citizens and also between citizens, provinces, nationalities, genders and different categories of workers
5. Dominance of religion in the functioning of the state
6. Dominant role of the military and its agencies in political and governance processes
7. Weak democracy, democratic institutions, and civil society
8. Inadequate access to information – related to rights, responsibilities, historical facts, and realities of people
9. Distorted and parallel education systems
10. Negative and biased portrayal by a dominant part of the media
11. Citizen exclusion from decision-making, control over resources and their distribution

The following pathways to peace were agreed upon:

1. A Social Contract, with constitutional cover, between the state and the citizens based on the 1940 Resolution establishing equal rights of citizens (regardless of gender, religion, ethnicity, etc.), provinces, nationalities.
2. A continuous democratization process and the supremacy of the parliament.
3. Accountability of the state and public representatives.
4. Recognition of ownership of resources and their equitable distribution by the federating units.
5. Establishment of the rule of law and justice through the reform of the judiciary, police and prisons.
6. Celebration of diversity and promotion of pluralism.
7. Reclaiming and expanding public spaces.
8. Promoting and reviving cultural activities like melas, mushairas, etc.
9. Access to information, demystification of the constitution, rights, laws.
10. Uniform and quality educational system; and equal opportunities.
11. Expression of solidarity with the oppressed and the marginalized.
12. Continuous engagement with parliamentarians, decision-makers, and those whose struggles we have supported (watchdog role of civil society).

13. Elimination of the space for external or internal non-state actors, especially religious extremists.
14. Internal cohesion and self-reliance to eliminate external interference and dependency on foreign aid.
15. Redefinition of the relationship with neighbouring countries and others like the US, Saudi Arabia, etc. based on the principle of non-interference
16. Recognition of our natural identity as South Asians including Afghanistan and making regional forums like SAARC effective

The Aman ittehad decided upon the following actions to promote peace:

1. Promote connectedness between citizens and citizen organizations
2. Engage rural and urban youth, students, and workers
3. Organize public dialogue with political parties and public representatives
4. Engage with parliamentarians and political parties to influence constitutional amendments and policies
5. Engage with state institutions, the government, and the military
6. Engage with people, express solidarity, restore trust through people's assemblies, exchanges, demonstrations, marches, cultural events, music, art, writers' forums
7. Undertake research; develop profiles of violence-affected areas, monitor activities of religious extremist groups; correct the distortions in history
8. Strengthen relations with the media to project the voices of citizens and apply code of ethics; with business towards promoting corporate social responsibility
9. Develop and disseminate special messages, short videos in different languages, etc., for filling the information gap on rights, demystification of the constitution, laws, etc.
10. Celebrate Peace Week
11. Promote regional citizen to citizen exchanges