

What is peace? Can I define the word peace in one sentence? Can there be peace in the whole world?

This was the first questions which came to my mind when I started thinking about peace. Theoretically, we all understand what peace means, but when it is necessary to convey this meaning through the words, some difficulties arise.

A few months ago, personally I would have formulated this idea fairly quickly: peace is freedom from disturbance or just the state of tranquility. Yet, this concept turns out to be broader.

In recent months, the cruelest and bloodiest war, which Europe has witnessed since the horrors of World War II, has come to my country. The majority of Ukrainians are living in the reality of constant shelling, missile strikes and fear for the lives of relatives and friends.

I've started recognizing peace by its absence. Thus, I've come to the definition of peace as a state opposite to war. Actually, peace is what defeats war, it is an environment that protects you from the fears of war.

Peace is good conquering injustice, when all those responsible for human suffering are punished, when evil is called evil unconditionally.

Moreover, because of the tragedy of my nation, I have realized how blind we can be to the problems of others when those problems do not relate to us.

We are used to think that in today's world peace is to be provided as granted. This is not true. The duty of everyone in the globalized world is to contribute to building global peace as much as possible.

Today, I am grateful to the University of Tuscia, which showed its attitude to the war taking place thousands of kilometers away, hospitably receiving Ukrainian students fleeing the hostilities. We really appreciate the efforts put by the university to promote the idea of peace among Italian and foreign students.

In this regard, I would like to talk about another criterium of peace which I have defined for myself here in Italy. Peace it is an opportunity to feel safe in that part of your country or the world where you want to be. Unfortunately, 7.5 million of my compatriots are deprived of this opportunity at the moment. Hundreds of thousands of families are separated, hundreds of thousands of children don't know whether they will see their fathers again or those fathers will pay the highest price for peace and freedom.

So, what a conclusion to draw? Maybe, as follows. In order to build peace, humanity must realize – there are no wars to be considered foreign. The rule of justice but not power should be the main argument. Peace is something that comes at a very high cost so we must defend it and fight for it.

As a final word I want to cite a small poem written by a Ukrainian soldier to his daughter who is now far away from him but in a safe place in a foreign country.

Don't write to me about the war,
Tell if there's a garden next to your front door.
Can you hear the grasshoppers and cicadas humming loudly?
Can you see little snails crawling over the ivy?

Which names do people in those far-away lands?
Give to their beloved cats?
My biggest wish among this madness
For you to write without any sadness.

Do cherry trees already have flowers?
If someone brings a bouquet you like
Don't tell them about scary missile strike
Just tell them about the good times in our life

Please invite all the people you've found
To visit Ukraine when this war is over
We'll show them our gratitude for knowing
Our children are safe and sound.

From my side, I strongly believe that very soon I'll be able to invite you to my beloved and peaceful Kyiv. I wish peace to everyone. I believe all of us deserve it.

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