

## The Right to International Security and Peace in Light of Human Dignity: Challenges and Solutions (An Approach from International Law and Islam)

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### Abstract

The recurring outbreak of wars and armed conflicts, along with the growing threats of the use of force in international relations, has brought devastating material and moral consequences for humanity. These developments have underscored the fundamental need and urgent demand for international peace and security and the right to live within such a framework. In pursuit of this goal, scholars and legal thinkers have sought viable pathways to its realization. Efforts such as the prohibition of war and use of force in the United Nations Charter, the limitation and erosion of absolute state sovereignty through the formation of international organizations, and the adoption of human rights conventions and treaties, constitute key developments in this regard. Additionally, the emphasis on the peaceful resolution of international disputes and the encouragement of international and economic cooperation can also be understood within this framework. While these measures have, to some extent, succeeded in distancing parts of the international community from the shadow of war and conflict and in promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the current turbulent state of the world demonstrates that contemporary humanity still grapples with an environment hostile to peace and security, along with the persistent threats and destructive consequences of war and conflict. Yet, one of the few uncontested shared interests in today's world is the existence of international security and peace. Indeed, it seems that these constitute not only a necessary condition but perhaps the only viable chance for the survival of the international community in the face of numerous and growing global threats. Therefore, the necessity of peace must be understood as an objective, immediate, and permanent imperative. Despite this, the right to live in a safe and peaceful environment—where individuals and nations can lead a dignified life—faces

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major obstacles and challenges. The central question this article seeks to address is: From the perspectives of international law and Islamic teachings, what strategies are available to realize the right to international security and peace in today's chaotic world, and how can the barriers and challenges to its realization be overcome? In response, this article argues that the realization of the right to international security and peace, and overcoming the challenges it faces, is possible through upholding and respecting human dignity. To evaluate this hypothesis, the article employs a documentary-analytical method, exploring the feasibility of establishing the right to international security and peace through the lens of human dignity, from the dual perspectives of international law and Islam. The findings suggest that human dignity, as a foundational principle in both international law and Islamic thought, provides a solid theoretical basis for the realization of the right to international security and peace. Furthermore, it offers a framework for reforming the unjust structures and dynamics of the international order and confronting the political and economic roots of war, violence, and conflict. Ultimately, such an approach can pave the way for a just and peaceful international system.

### **Keywords**

International law, human rights, the right to peace, the right to security, human dignity, Islam.

## 1. Introduction

In the preamble of the *United Nations Charter* (1945), while emphasizing human dignity and worth, it states: "We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, ... better standards of life in larger freedom, ... have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims." As observed, according to the Charter, faith in the dignity and worth of the human person serves as the foundation for creating better living standards, which is later described in the following paragraph as living in peace with one another. This is achieved through the realization of the purposes and goals of the United Nations. On the other hand, it is clear that the primary goal emphasized by the United Nations Charter is the "maintenance of international peace and security." Additionally, the phrase "saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind" indicates that, from the perspective of the Charter, it is because of "the dignity and worth of the human person" that individuals have the right to live in peace and security. Moreover, the Charter posits that war is in direct contradiction to respecting and upholding human dignity. In other words, respect for "human dignity" serves as a fundamental criterion for realizing the right to peace and security, as well as the necessary response and confrontation to the wars and atrocities that occur during conflicts (Riley, 2010, p. 119). Respect for "human dignity" is also recognized as a fundamental principle in Islamic teachings, according to which all human beings, regardless of their characteristics, are endowed with human dignity. This recognition has legal implications, including the respect for human rights. Therefore, this article, while addressing the challenges facing the right to peace and international security, will analyze and examine the possibility of realizing these rights in the light of human dignity within both the international legal system and Islamic teachings.

## 2. Conceptual Framework

Examining the key concepts discussed in any topic is one of the crucial factors for a better understanding and more accurate analysis of that topic. This article will, thus, explore three concepts: the right to peace, the right to international security, and human dignity.

### 2-1. The Right to Peace

Although the term "right to peace" is used in several human rights documents

that recognize this right, no clear definition of it is provided, and only some of its features are mentioned. For instance, in Article 1 of the resolution *Further Promotion and Encouragement of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*, adopted by the former Human Rights Commission in 1976, it states: "All people have the right to live in conditions of peace and international security and to fully enjoy economic, social, and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights" (UN Human Rights Commission, Resolution 5/XXXII). Additionally, in the *Declaration on the Preparation of Societies for Life in Peace*, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1978, while recognizing the inherent right of individuals and nations to live in peace, this right is stated as a necessary condition for progress and development (UN General Assembly Resolution 33/73). Moreover, the *Declaration on the Right to Peace*, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2016 as Resolution 71/189, is one of the most significant international documents regarding this right. It affirms that individuals and peoples are entitled to peace as one of the fundamental human rights. Additionally, in several other General Assembly resolutions—such as Resolution 69/176—the right to peace has been recognized as a vital necessity for the protection of all human rights. Based on the content of these documents, it appears that in order to provide a comprehensive definition of the right to peace, it must be understood as a multidimensional process encompassing conflict prevention, peace making, peace keeping, and peace building. This framework can serve as a foundation for achieving sustainable peace, and thereby realizing the right to peace (Firouzi, 2021, pp. 70–71). Accordingly, the right to peace can be summarized as the right of all individuals and peoples to live in an environment free from war, threats, and violence—an environment in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized. On this basis, the right to peace requires the absence of war, aggression, and systems of threat. Moreover, the full realization of this right necessitates the elimination of structural violence, such as poverty, ignorance, discrimination, underdevelopment, and similar conditions, so that an appropriate environment for the fulfillment of human rights and fundamental freedoms can be established.

## **2-2. The Right to Security**

Security is a multidimensional, interdisciplinary, complex, and evolving concept, encompassing individual, social, national, and international dimensions (Ashouri, 1997, p. 38). In the past, international security was primarily understood as the protection of a state from foreign aggression.

However, in contemporary times, various other forms of security have emerged, including economic security, cultural security, social security, political security, judicial security, environmental security, and others. Among the most recent of these is the concept of human security, which was highlighted in the 1994 Human Development Report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1994, p. 1). The aim and concern of human security is to identify and eliminate the factors that threaten the rights of individuals anywhere in the world. On this basis, "security" has acquired a significant position in the international legal system as a human right, even though no specific definition of this right has been provided. Instead, certain characteristics of this right have been acknowledged. Due to this importance, international human rights instruments often mention the right to security alongside two other fundamental rights: the right to life and the right to liberty. Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person." Similarly, Article 9(1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights provides: "Everyone has the right to liberty and security of person. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention ..." Article 5(1) of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (4 November 1950) also affirms that all individuals have the right to liberty and security of person. Article 6 of the American Convention on Human Rights (1969) prohibits slavery, while Article 7 recognizes the right to liberty and security of person. Likewise, Article 6 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981) acknowledges the right to security alongside the right to liberty. Based on these documents, the right to security enables individuals to live in a state where they can peacefully enjoy the benefits of life, and where their fundamental rights and freedoms are protected from violation. However, as noted in the Human Development Report, "hard security" alone is not sufficient to ensure individuals' right to security. Beyond hard security, human security must be realized. The report outlines various layers of security, including job security, health and medical security, environmental security, economic security, and others (UNDP, 1994, p. 3).

### **2-3. Human Dignity**

The Arabic term "karāma," equivalent to dignity in English, literally means greatness, honor, chivalry, generosity, preciousness, nobility, magnanimity, and liberality (Khūrī Shartūnī, 1995, p. 542; Muṣṭafawī, 1990, vol. 10, pp. 46–47). In terminology, it is used in two main senses: In the first sense,

*karāma* refers to freedom from baseness and inferiority. A person with a noble and elevated spirit, free from any form of lowliness, is called *karīm* (noble). In this sense, *karāma* denotes nobility, honor, status, and dignity, in contrast to humiliation and disgrace (Jawadi Amoli, 1990, p. 21). In the second sense, *karāma* refers to a supernatural act manifested by saints and the righteous—distinct from miracles, which are exclusive to prophets. That is, it signifies a special capacity, worthiness, or elevated status granted by God to His close servants and pious followers. Through this divine grace, they are able to perform deeds or manifest phenomena beyond the capability of ordinary people (Saket, 2001, p. 243; Amid, 1996, p. 1953). What is intended in this article—and what is addressed in human rights discourse under the term “dignity”—is the first meaning of *karāma* mentioned earlier: that is, nobility, honor, worth, and status. In this view, human dignity carries both legal and ethical implications. It means that all human beings, regardless of their circumstances or condition, are inherently worthy of respect and entitled to fundamental and inalienable rights and benefits. As the renowned German philosopher Immanuel Kant put it, “Human dignity is the worth and value that all people inherently possess equally, by virtue of their intrinsic autonomy and capacity for independent thought” (Rahiminejad, 2011, p. 115). Therefore, within every human being—by virtue of simply being human—there is an inherent endowment that transcends ethnicity, nationality, gender, race, culture, religion, and creed. This is the fact that every human possesses an intrinsic dignity and respect. On this basis, certain actions must never be committed against any person, while, conversely, certain other actions must always be extended to every individual (Sharifi Tarazkouhi, 2004, p. 82).

### **3. Challenges to the Fulfilment of the Right to International Peace and Security**

We examine the challenges to the right to peace and international security in two areas: the Westphalian conception of sovereignty in the international arena, and the impacts and consequences of a sovereignty-centered approach.

#### **3-1. Westphalian Conception of Sovereignty in International Arena**

Although traditional international law, which once revolved solely around the concept of sovereignty, has undergone fundamental transformations under the influence of rapid global developments and the emergence of doctrines and concepts such as human rights, humanitarian law, humanitarian intervention, the responsibility to protect, good governance, globalization, universal

jurisdiction, sustainable development, human security, and similar ideas—all in favor of humanity and humankind—the perspective known as the Westphalian conception of sovereignty still retains a prominent presence within the structure of international law and the global community. This perspective continues to act as a serious obstacle to the realization of the right to international peace and security. In contrast to the sovereignty-centered approach, which poses a challenge to the realization of the right to international peace and security, what can help in achieving this right is a human-centered perspective on international rights and relations, grounded in human dignity. In this view, the international community is based on two principles: the limited sovereignty of states and humanity. The development of human rights, humanitarian law, human security, the establishment of international criminal institutions, and similar initiatives—which serve the interests of humanity—allegedly restrict and constrain state sovereignty but are considered central to this perspective.

### **3-2. Implications of the Sovereignty-Centered Approach**

A look at the history of the past century reveals that, within the sovereignty-centered approach, resorting to war and conflict as tools for pursuing national policies was not only uncontroversial, but governments often cultivated a spirit of militarism intertwined with national pride and emotions. In this context, the pursuit of peace and friendship with other political entities was often seen as a sign of weakness and fear. According to Immanuel Kant, in such an environment, every state should expect from its neighboring states the same kind of harm that humans experienced in the pre-political condition of society; a pessimistic atmosphere with violent structures where peace could only be maintained through a balance of power. A fragile and unstable peace in which a significant portion of the human and economic resources of societies has, instead of being directed toward the needs of development and population welfare, been devoted to war or arms competition. On the other hand, given the absolute nature of sovereign powers, international law naturally lacked the support of states for the development of norms and structures necessary to strengthen the foundations of lasting peace among nations. As a result, the reinforcement of international frameworks, especially with regard to the enforcement of rules related to human values, was perceived as a limitation and threat to the sovereignty's authority (Firouzi, 2017, pp. 335-352). Today, although most countries do not explicitly refer to the use of force as a tool of national policy, they pursue the same idea and perspective in other forms,

which is in conflict with the right of individuals and nations to international peace and security. A broad interpretation of Article 51 of the Charter and the attempt to justify preemptive actions and similar measures can be analyzed and assessed in this context. Moreover, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, unilateral sanctions, the expansion of organized terrorism, and similar issues are external manifestations of this viewpoint. Nevertheless, it seems that an analysis of events within recent decades reveals that the traditional approach to international law, based on state sovereignty, has been replaced by a perspective that relies more on "human rights" than on "sovereignty." This shift in outlook is clearly evident in the famous ruling of October 2, 1995, by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY, 1995). In this ruling, the tribunal explicitly states: "The sovereignty-based approach has gradually given way to a human rights-based approach," and that the principle of Roman law, which considered humans as the beneficiaries of all rights and established that "every legal system is created for the benefit of humans," has also found a solid foundation in the international community (Momtaz & Ranjbarian, 2008, pp. 58-59). The development and continuation of this approach could help realize the right of individuals and nations to peace and international security.

#### **4. International Law and Fulfilment of the Right to International Peace and Security in Light of Human Dignity**

In this section, the capacity of international law to realize the right to international peace and security in light of human dignity will be analyzed and examined in two areas: international instruments and international judicial practice.

##### **4-1. Examining International Human Rights Documents**

Although international human rights documents do not provide a precise definition of human dignity, they place special emphasis on the respect for the dignity of individuals. In these documents, human dignity is considered the foundation and basis for the respect of human rights, and any violation of it is regarded as a breach of human rights. Consequently, fundamental human rights, based on human dignity and worth, are considered inalienable rights of individuals against the state and society, and as a result, states are obligated to respect and uphold them (Mehrpour, 1996, p. 203). Accordingly, several documents have been adopted, some of which we will refer to. As mentioned in the introduction, the Charter of the United Nations, as one of the most

important and fundamental international documents, emphasizes "the dignity and worth of the human person" and the commitment of states to achieve "international peace and security" by protecting future generations from the scourge of war, which brings inexpressible suffering to humanity. It reiterates the necessity of respecting fundamental human rights, dignity, and the value of human personality in order to create conditions for a better life, free from war and armed conflict. It is clear that what the Charter insists upon is that belief in the dignity and worth of the human person is the core and foundation of creating better living standards, and in the words of the Charter, achieving life in peace with one another. What can be inferred from the preamble of the Charter is that when peace and peaceful coexistence prevail, the dignity and high status of the human person are preserved, and humanity regains its true position. However, when peace and security are threatened, human dignity is also violated. Therefore, these two must be considered interdependent.

In the preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the inherent dignity and worth of the human person is introduced as the foundation and basis for international peace and security. It states: "... recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world ...". It then goes on to say: "... disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind." In another section of the preamble of this declaration, it is stated: "... the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom ...". In this phrase, the dignity and worth of the human person is established as the foundation for achieving a free environment and better conditions, which, naturally, will be accessible with the realization of the right to peace and security. Similar to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the issue of human dignity is also referred to as a foundation for peace in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The preamble of the Covenant states: "... recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world, ... these rights derive from the inherent dignity of the human person." Additionally, Articles 7, 8, 10, and 17 emphasize the respect for the dignity and integrity of individuals.

Another document that considers human dignity as the foundation of human

rights is the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, adopted in 1984. Its preamble explicitly states that "those rights derive from the inherent dignity of the human person." Accordingly, the foundation for realizing the right to peace and international security must be sought in the observance of human dignity. The Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam, also known as the Islamic Declaration of Human Rights, likewise refers to human dignity in Article 1, section (a), titled "Human Dignity." It states: "All human beings form one family whose members are united by their subordination to Allah and descent from Adam. All men are equal in terms of basic human dignity and basic obligations and responsibilities, without any discrimination on the basis of race, colour, language, belief, sex, religion, political affiliation, social status or other considerations ..." Article 11 of this declaration also prohibits any action that would harm the dignity of individuals, stating: " Human beings are born free, and no one has the right to enslave, humiliate, oppress or exploit them, and there can be no subjugation but to Allah the Almighty." Based on this, Article 18, section 1, of the declaration states: " Everyone shall have the right to live in security for himself, his religion, his dependents, his honour and his property." As observed, the right to live a peaceful life inherently includes the right to live in peace and security, a principle that international documents also emphasize.

Furthermore, in other international documents, human dignity is also recognized as the source and foundation of human rights. One such document is the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted at the World Conference on Human Rights on June 25, 1993, in Vienna, which asserts that all human rights stem from human dignity and worth. In the second paragraph of the preamble of this declaration, it is stated: " Recognizing and affirming that all human rights derive from the dignity and worth inherent in the human person, and that the human person is the central subject of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and consequently should be the principal beneficiary and should participate actively in the realization of these rights and freedoms."As can be observed, the concept of human dignity in these documents reflects the recognition of an inherent value for human beings. In other words, what is meant by inherent dignity in human rights documents is the value and respect that every person possesses simply by virtue of being human. This dignity is inalienable and indivisible, and no one can be deprived of it. Furthermore, factors such as color, race, gender, religion, or belief have no impact on the possession of this characteristic. Therefore, from the

perspective of important human rights documents, the requirement to uphold human dignity entails respecting the recognized rights of humanity. As a result, any form of war or conflict that threatens international peace and security, or endangers the right of individuals to live in a peaceful and secure environment, is considered a violation and infringement of human dignity.

#### **4-2. Examining the International Judicial Practice**

In some rulings issued by international courts, human dignity is recognized as a fundamental rule and the basic foundation of human rights, and based on this, it has been cited by the judges of international tribunals. For example, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in its 1998 ruling in the *Prosecutor v. Anto Furundzija* case, concerning a Bosnian Croat commander, referenced the "general principle of respect for human dignity as the basic underpinning of international humanitarian law and human rights law" in defining rape as a crime against humanity (*The Prosecutor v. Anto Furundzija*, Trial Chamber II, Para.183-185). Furthermore, in many cases, the tribunal has specifically addressed the violation of human dignity as an independent crime, in addition to breaches of the Geneva Conventions, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide, which are considered clear examples of violations of human dignity (Ghorbannia, 2008, p. 132). Therefore, as stated in international documents, from the tribunal's perspective, any act that leads to the violation of human rights is in conflict with human dignity and is prohibited. One of the factors that can threaten international peace and security as a human right is the use or threat of using nuclear weapons. In a separate opinion by Judge Weeramantry regarding the International Court of Justice's Advisory Opinion on the Legality of the Threat or Use of nuclear weapons issued in 1996, he clearly argued for the prohibition of these weapons by referencing the principle of human dignity and its role in international law (International Court of Justice (ICJ), 1996, July 8). Judge Weeramantry emphasizes that an evolved legal system, in addition to explicit commands and prohibitions, also includes a series of general principles that, depending on the time, can be applied to issues and events lacking explicit rulings. According to him, nuclear weapons are the ultimate violation of the principle of human dignity, and no weapon in human history, except nuclear bombs, has been found to so blatantly negate human dignity and values (Elhovie Nazari, 2013, p. 41). From this, it follows that the right to live in peaceful and secure conditions is directly linked to human dignity and is its prerequisite. Any situation that contradicts these conditions

and environment will be a violation of human dignity. Therefore, the implication of human dignity is the right of all individuals and nations to peace and security.

## **5. Human Dignity and the Fulfilment of the Right to International Peace and Security in Islamic Teachings**

This section, with a comparative analytical approach, explores the connection between human dignity in Islam and the realization of the right to international peace and security. It demonstrates how Islamic teachings can provide a strong foundation for achieving peace and security within the international system.

### **5-1. Inherent Human Dignity as the Ground of Fundamental Human Rights**

Verses from the Quran explicitly emphasize the inherent dignity of all human beings, regardless of any differences or incidental factors. This existential dignity grants fundamental rights to humans, which are also highlighted in international human rights documents. Rights such as the right to life, the right to freedom, the right to benefit from the blessings of a dignified life, and others, are among these rights, the realization of which depends on international peace and security. This Quranic perspective aligns with the international legal view that considers inherent dignity as the foundation of human rights. One of these verses is verse 70 of Surah al-Isra, where Allah says: "Certainly We have honoured the Children of Adam, and carried them over land and sea, and provided them with all the good things, and preferred them with a complete preference over many of those We have created" (Quran 17:70). Arguing from this verse requires the explanation of several premises and points: First, in terms of Arabic grammar and style of expression, the verse places strong emphasis on "human dignity." Second, in this verse, God attributes the act of dignifying humans to Himself, and throughout the Quran, this expression is used only in reference to humans. The third and most important point is the universality of the verse, which applies to all human beings, regardless of factors such as color, race, gender, religion, belief, or other distinctions. The beings honored in this verse are "Banī Ādam" (the children of Adam), and there is no doubt that the intended meaning of this term refers to the descendants of Adam. The use of this term may imply that part of this honor and dignity stems from humans' lineage to a being (Adam) who, during his creation, was shown special favor by God, and to whom the

angels bowed.<sup>1</sup> This quality is common among all human beings and is not exclusive to monotheists or Muslims (Nobahar, 2003, p. 616). Ṭabāṭabā'ī, a contemporary exegete of the Quran, also explains in his *Tafsīr al-Mīzān* that "the purpose of the verse is to describe the state of the humankind, disregarding the specific dignities and spiritual virtues that may be exclusive to some. Therefore, this verse includes polytheists, disbelievers, and sinners as well" (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 2001, vol. 13, p. 152). Accordingly, human dignity is not exclusive to Muslims, believers, or the righteous. As Ṭabāṭabā'ī emphasizes, it includes all human beings across all places and times.

The fourth point is the existential and intrinsic nature of human dignity. Existential dignity means that a being, in the hierarchy of existence, holds a high and evolved status that other beings do not possess. In other words, God has granted humans a level of existence that inherently demands respect and dignity. Thus, this verse refers to a reality in the creation of humans, which also has legal and ethical consequences (Nobahar, 2003, p. 617). As a result, based on this verse, all human beings, regardless of their various characteristics such as religion, belief, race, color, ideology, gender, and so on, possess human dignity. This dignity implies that every human being, regardless of who they are, should be treated with respect, and their honor and personality should be preserved. Naturally, the necessary condition for this is that they have the right to live in a safe and peaceful environment, free from war, violence, and conflict, and to access a dignified life where they can fulfill both their material and spiritual needs. Therefore, providing the conditions for the realization of individuals' right to live in peace and security is an inherent part of human dignity and a manifestation of honoring the dignity and worth of humanity. Any obstacle to the realization or fulfillment of this right would be contrary to the requirements of human dignity.

In addition to the Quran, the traditions and practices of the religious leaders also highlight that the dignity of human beings is recognized, irrespective of their individual characteristics. Imam Ali, in a letter to his appointed governor, reminds him of the basis and requirement of the dignity and honor of all humans with the following instruction: "And make compassion towards your subjects a covering for your heart, and foster love and kindness towards them. Do not behave like a predatory animal that sees their consumption as a prize. For the people are of two kinds: some are your brothers in faith, and others are

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1. "When We said to the angels, 'Prostrate before Adam,' they prostrated, but not Iblis" (Quran 2:34; 17:61; 18:50).

your equals in creation" (Nahj al-Balagha, Letter 53). In this hadith, Imam Ali provides two criteria for rulers in dealing with people: one is "being a Muslim," and the other is "being human." Based on this, he instructs that the dignity and respect of all human beings, including non-Muslims, must be observed. From an Islamic perspective, all individuals are worthy of respect, and Islam does not permit the humiliation or degradation of anyone, even if they are non-Muslim.

The important point is that this statement by the Imam can serve as a legal basis for political relations between people, nations, and states, applying to all times and places. Attention to human dignity is not merely reflected in rigid legal rules; rather, the Imam, through his own actions, emphasizes this principle and engages in culture-development (Mohaghegh Damad, 2001, vol. 5, p. 51). Thus, when Imam Ali inquired about the condition of an elderly man who had become disabled and was begging, and was told that he was a Christian, Imam replied: "You made him work until he grew old, and now that he is helpless and destitute, you withhold from him? His expenses should be paid from the public treasury" (Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī, 1995, vol. 15, p. 66). This hadith suggests that a person is worthy of respect simply because of their "humanity," and that environmental factors, biological conditions leading to differences in shape, form, color, and so on, or particular inclinations resulting in varying beliefs and ideologies, or lineage and descent, should never cause discrimination in the enjoyment of human rights or in benefiting from divine and natural blessings. All human beings are equal, and all are brothers, standing on equal footing (Marefat, 2001, p. 12). Therefore, although these hadiths do not specifically mention the right to peace and security, the infallible leaders of Islam set forth a general principle and rule: the dignity, respect, and honor of human beings must be preserved under all circumstances. In light of this respect and dignity, all individuals are entitled to basic rights, including the right to live in peace and security. From what is found in Islamic sources, it can be inferred that the essence and requirement of human dignity and respect is the enjoyment of a dignified life, where the honor and status of individuals are preserved. Anything that prevents a person from living a respectable life would be contrary to the essence of human dignity. Clearly, the requirement of human dignity is the guarantee and protection of people's right to live in peace and security, both domestically and internationally. This peace and security must be just and sustainable, free from war and armed conflicts, colonization and exploitation, poverty and underdevelopment, discrimination and inequality, ignorance and illiteracy, and disease.

## **5-2. Prohibition of War and Violence as Manifestation of Respecting the Human Dignity**

War and armed conflict, while depriving people of the right to life and creating fear and terror, also tarnish human dignity and are contrary to its essence. Islam, by prohibiting the aggression and violation of those who do not seek war or conflict with Muslims, and emphasizing the preservation of human life, condemns such wars. In contrast, Islam values peace and security as fundamental principles. From certain verses of the Qur'an, it can be understood that those who do not seek hostility with Muslims and desire a peaceful life have the right to live with Muslims in a peaceful environment and enjoy the right to life in peace and security. Accordingly, verse 190 of Surah al-Baqara<sup>1</sup> permits fighting only against those who are waging war or conflict with Muslims, not others. Therefore, it forbids any action that constitutes aggression or violation against others. This approach aligns with the rules of international law on the use of force, especially Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, which limits the use of force to self-defense. Therefore, any action that contradicts human dignity and respect, and conflicts with the right of humans to live a safe and peaceful life, is against religious teachings, even if this behavior is directed toward non-Muslims or even enemies. Based on this, Imam Ali, in his enduring letter to Mālik al-Ashtar, considers the realization of a dignified life, along with public security and well-being in all financial, physical, and psychological aspects, to be possible only in peace and peaceful conditions. He says: "And do not reject the peace that your enemy offers you, and in which there is the pleasure of God, for in peace there is comfort for your soldiers, relief from your worries, and security for your cities" (Nahj al-Balagha, Letter 53). This precious statement carries valuable lessons for today's turbulent world and for the future of humanity, as it underscores the right to peace and security for all. What is currently emphasized in international law regarding the peaceful resolution of international disputes to prevent the use of force and war is in harmony with this statement of Imam Ali.

## **5-3. International Peace as the Prerequisite of Peace and Security**

As mentioned earlier, from the perspective of Islamic teachings, waging war and conflict against those who do not seek war or conflict with Muslims is not

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1. "Fight in the way of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress. Indeed Allah does not like transgressors"

only contrary to human dignity but also constitutes aggression, violation, and injustice, all of which are forbidden by God. Based on this, verse 7 of Surah Al-Mumtahina<sup>1</sup> recommends doing good and practicing justice toward non-Muslims who do not seek hostility with Muslims. There can be no doubt that the most evident form of doing good and upholding justice toward non-Muslims is recognizing their right to live in peace and security, in an environment free from war and conflict. In other words, the requirement of justice toward them is the prohibition of war and the recognition of their right to peaceful coexistence. Therefore, scholars agree that waging war against disbelievers who do not seek conflict and wish to live peacefully with Muslims is an example of aggression (Javadi Amoli, 2006, vol. 9, p. 577). Therefore, Islam's emphasis on the observance of justice and equity, as a fundamental principle, creates the conditions for the realization of international peace and security. This is because adherence to such an important principle is not limited to the behavior between individuals within a society or country; rather, its scope extends beyond the domestic realm to include relations between nations and states, and it can serve as an inspiration for international life. Thus, factors contrary to justice in the international arena—such as poverty and inequality between countries, underdevelopment in certain societies, oppression and injustice toward weaker nations, domination and colonialism, foreign occupation, and so on, all of which are causes of war and violence—are not only contrary to the essence of human dignity but also contradict the equitable distribution of opportunities, resources, and divine blessings for all. Based on this, it can be said that in light of the inspiring Islamic teachings that uphold human dignity, all individuals and nations, who are encompassed by the term "Banī Ādam" (the children of Adam) in God's word, can lead a more honorable life in a world characterized by more just relations, peace, and security.

#### **5-4. International Cooperation: An Islamic Solution for Attaining Peace and Security**

One of the consequences and requirements of recognizing the dignity of all human beings is the necessity of cooperation and collaboration among humans and nations, with the goal of strengthening international cooperation to achieve global peace and security. The concept of "one united community"

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1. "Allah does not forbid you from dealing with kindness and justice with those [polytheists] who did not make war against you on account of religion and did not expel you from your homes. Indeed Allah loves the just."

(*umma wāḥida*) mentioned in verse 92 of Surah al-Anbiya,<sup>1</sup> as well as the practice of Prophet Muhammad in establishing peace treaties with followers of other religions, reflects this approach. In the present age, interfaith dialogue, as well as dialogue between nations and countries, is essential for international relations and can play an effective role in achieving international peace and security. This is because the destinies of nations and countries are intertwined, and no country can shield itself from the consequences of global events. Therefore, international cooperation and solidarity, in light of human dignity, can help nations face global challenges in pursuit of the shared human goal of a developed world, accompanied by peace, security, and greater prosperity. Thus, in verse 2 of Surah al-Ma'ida,<sup>2</sup> God calls everyone to cooperate and collaborate in good and righteous matters. What is stated in this verse is, first of all, an expression of a social rule, not an individual one (Javadi Amoli, 2006, vol. 21, p. 548). Secondly, it conveys a general principle, and the subject and object of the command and prohibition in this verse are unrestricted, encompassing all political, economic, social, cultural, legal, ethical matters, and so on. Observing this principle also applies to international relations and can have a positive impact on international interactions and relationships (Makarem Shirazi & et al., 1998, vol. 4, p. 253).

### **5-5. Inherent Dignity: A Global Criterion to Measure the Behavior of States**

The recognition of intrinsic human dignity, which is not only derived from international documents but also from the verses of the Quran, as a universal and global principle, can serve as a standard for assessing the behavior and actions of states in the international arena. Accordingly, any violation of human rights by states, including the right of humans to international peace and security, is considered a violation of human dignity. Therefore, states, as members of the international community, are obligated to respect this legal and Islamic principle and work toward its realization.

In this light, Islamic teachings, by establishing the inherent human dignity as the foundation and standard, provide a solid basis for assessing the respect for and observance of human rights, including the right to international peace and security, and its realization. These teachings, while aligning with the

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1 "Indeed this community of yours is one community, and I am your Lord. So worship Me" (Quran 21:92).

2 "Cooperate in piety and Godwariness, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression" (Quran 5:2).

principles and rules of international law and the goals of the United Nations Charter in this regard, can serve as a foundation and standard for promoting and strengthening international cooperation and addressing common global challenges that threaten international peace and security.

## **6. Conclusion**

International peace and security, as a human right, is not only a moral matter but also a political necessity for maintaining global stability and security. The realization of this right requires a revision of the global power structure, reforming unjust international relations, and addressing the political and economic roots of war, violence, and conflict. It cannot be denied that with the existence of weapons of mass destruction and the arms race, the right to international peace and security will be jeopardized, and as a result, the level of global security will decrease. Human dignity, as a fundamental principle in both international law and Islam, provides a solid theoretical foundation and justification for realizing the right to international peace and security. Respecting this principle obliges political actors to refrain from resorting to force, war, and violence, and to make efforts to establish a just and peaceful international order. In addition to states, international organizations and non-governmental actors will also be mobilized to play their crucial role in achieving and maintaining international peace and security. In light of respecting "the dignity and value of human personality," the political and legal consequences of this principle can be observed in the limitation and prohibition of weapons of mass destruction, armed conflicts, violence, extremism, terrorism, environmental destruction, war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, and aggression. It also underscores the necessity of disarmament, international cooperation, the peaceful resolution of international disputes, the promotion of a culture of peace and tolerance, dialogue, interaction, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals, regardless of transient characteristics such as color, race, gender, ethnicity, religion, belief, and the like.

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