

UN chief calls for Olympic truce as games begin in Paris

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International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Thomas Bach (R) meets with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres ahead of the opening ceremony of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games in Paris on July 26, 2024. (Photo by AFP)

United Nations, July 26 (RHC)-- The Secretary General of the United Nations Antonio Guterres says all countries should end armed conflict and respect “the Olympic truce” as the Paris 2024 Olympics and Paralympics open.

In a meeting with International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach on Friday, Guterres described the international event as a chance for peace. He expressed the United Nations’ “total support” for the IOC as the UN General Assembly adopted overwhelmingly a resolution in November to observe the truce in Paris.

“We live in a divided world where conflicts are proliferating in a dramatic way – the horrendous suffering in Gaza, the seemingly endless war in Ukraine, terrible suffering from Sudan to the DRC [Democratic Republic of the Congo], from the Sahel to Myanmar,” the UN chief said.

“At a moment like this, it is important to say that the first recorded in history, real peace initiative was the Olympic truce.”

Guterres emphasized that the Olympic Games symbolize “cooperation and loyal competition, instead of division and conflict.” The UN chief attended the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games on Friday. More than 10,500 athletes representing 206 nations and territories are participating in the games which will end on August 11th.

While not a full member of the United Nations, Palestine has an official national Olympic committee.

"So this is the moment in which my strong appeal is for countries to come together with the same spirit as athletes will be coming together during the Olympic Games in Paris," Guterres said.

More than 39,100 Palestinians, mostly children and women, have been killed in the war that Israel began on October 7, 2023, following a retaliatory operation by the Palestinian territory’s resistance movements.

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