

2020 INTERNATIONAL ADVOCATE FOR PEACE AWARD

TWENTIETH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL ADVOCATE FOR PEACE AWARD HONORING MEDIATORS BEYOND BORDERS INTERNATIONAL

On September 23, 2020, the *Cardozo Journal of Conflict Resolution* presented its annual International Advocate for Peace Award to Mediators Beyond Borders International. What follows is a transcript of the event.

DEAN MELANIE LESLIE: Hello, I am Dean Melanie Leslie of Cardozo Law School and it is a pleasure to welcome you here tonight to celebrate the twentieth annual International Advocate for Peace Award. This is a very special tradition at Cardozo, and it is no less special tonight even though it is a virtual celebration. Indeed, during these turbulent times, it is really special to be able to have an evening like this where we can celebrate those who seek to assume good faith, minimize conflict, and work with parties to reach solutions that leave both parties better off. In this way it is inspirational to see people advancing the cause of peace in this world, which I think we also dearly hope for. This award is very special at Cardozo. I could list all of the wonderful people who received the award over the years but just to name a few it has been bestowed on Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, Senator George Mitchell, President Bill Clinton, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, playwright Eve Ensler, Peter, Paul and Mary, and last year Sir Paul McCartney.

It is a privilege to welcome everyone from Mediators Beyond Borders International here tonight. We are inspired by your work and it is an honor and a privilege to welcome you and have you with us. And I want to especially welcome the President and CEO Prabha Sankaranarayan. It is wonderful to have you. Your work has never been more important, and we stand in awe of your organization and all of the ways in which it works to achieve meaningful peace in the world. I'd especially like to thank the *Cardozo Journal of Conflict Resolution* and everyone on the staff who worked hard to bring this evening together, especially Editor-in-Chief, Zack Kriesberg, and Margo Cruz, the Symposium Editor. I also of course want to thank Lela Love and all of our Cardozo

faculty and staff who work at the Kukin Program for Conflict Resolution. They work hard every day to spread the gospel of ADR and to ensure that our graduates leave here with essential skills that are necessary to help people resolve conflict peacefully. And now I would like to turn this over to Lela Love, a professor of law at Cardozo Law School and the Director of the Kukin Program. Professor Love has been a Cardozo professor for more than 35 years and she has trained generations of Cardozo students. In 1985, she founded Cardozo's very first mediation clinic and she has been at the forefront of her field ever since. She is a pioneer in this field and we're very, very grateful to have her as part of our faculty. She has been an unstoppable force for good and it is my pleasure to introduce her to you now.

PROFESSOR LELA LOVE: Thank you so much Dean Leslie for your remarks, and thank you Zack Kriesberg and Margo Cruz for your organizational talent in bringing us all together. It has been such a privilege to work at Cardozo School of Law for the astonishing number of years that were just mentioned by the Dean. We started one of the first two law school mediation clinics in the country—perhaps in the world. We've had a long and good run. It's a dream to work on a program like our annual International Advocate for Peace award. The people we have met and the organizations that have come through Cardozo as our International Advocate for Peace are remarkable. So, hello friends of Mediators Beyond Borders. Welcome to Cardozo. We wish we were welcoming you with big hugs and handshakes, but virtually we are certainly doing that.

If we have been successful as a program, it is due to our wonderful students who participate while in law school and then become leaders in the field after graduation. It's remarkably fun to be in this role and watch our students fly by. Zack Kriesberg, the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal is one of those students, and when I finish a few short remarks, he is going to take over as master of ceremonies.

It's interesting that we have always struggled to choose our international advocate for peace. There are many terrific and admirable advocates for great causes who are put forward. This award, though, is looking for an: 1. "international" 2. "advocate" and 3. "for peace." Champions of peace are hard to find. On the list of former recipients that the Dean mentioned, and that Zack I believe will also mention, you will find many carefully culled stars selected. Those stars were chosen after deliberation and debate, and, like former recipients, today's awardee perfectly fits the bill.

I wanted to kick this off with two quotes from people who are inspirational to me and maybe will be to everybody as we jump into our award ceremony. Martin Luther King said about peace, “*I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war, that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality. I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word.*” And the Dalai Lama said more recently, “*the planet does not need more successful people. The planet desperately needs more peacemakers, more healers, restorers, storytellers, and lovers.*” About a decade ago, I went to a program that was for mediators. It was a full room of people and the first speaker said, “are there peacemakers in the house?” The house responded with a roar. There were peacemakers in the house! Like that house, as we see participants coming on this call, we too have many peacemakers in this house, on this call. I think it’s so important for us all to share fanfare, accolades, praise for peacemakers. If we could only open all mics, which I’ve been told we can’t do on this webinar, I believe you would hear enormous applause for Mediators Beyond Borders International—our award recipient today. Zack, I’m going to turn this over to you now. Following Zack’s presentation to the President and CEO of Mediators Beyond Borders, various leaders of that organization will speak.

ZACHARY KRIESBERG: Thank you, Dean Leslie, and thank you, Professor Love. Hello everyone. My name is Zachary Kriesberg, and I am the Editor-in-Chief of the *Cardozo Journal of Conflict Resolution*. We appreciate your presence and your taking the time out of your morning, afternoon or evening, depending on where you are in the world, to join us. The *Cardozo Journal of Conflict Resolution* is working on publishing its twenty-second volume this year and we are very honored to present Mediators Beyond Borders International with the twentieth Annual International Advocate for Peace Award.

Before hearing from our incredible group of speakers tonight here to honor this year’s award recipient, I’d like to share some of the history and meaning of the International Advocate for Peace Award. Each year, our journal awards an individual or organization with the International Advocate for Peace Award for their remarkable work in the field of peace building and conflict resolution. Since it is such an impressive list I’ll go through the full list: past recipients of the Award include Presidents Bill Clinton and Jimmy Carter, Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, Archbishop

Desmond Tutu, folk group Peter, Paul and Mary, Senator George Mitchell and Seeds of Peace, Eve Ensler, Betty Murungi, Ambassador Dennis Ross, Professor Jeffrey Sachs, Amira Dotan, Ambassador Stuart Eizenstat, Abigail Disney, John Marks, the Honorable Daniel Weinstein, Benjamin Ferencz, Dr. Rajiv Shah, Leymah Gbowee, and, most recently, Sir Paul McCartney. Our recipients, with different approaches and means, have helped shape a better, more peaceful and connected world for future generations. We are proud to add Mediators Beyond Borders International to this list.

Mediators Beyond Borders is an international organization devoted to developing a more peaceful world by enabling local people affected by conflict to use mediation and other collaborative methods to promote mutual understanding and, ultimately, lasting peace. Some of their many accomplishments include establishing mediation centers and restorative justice practices around the globe, launching the International Training Institute for Women in Mediation, and establishing a United Nations Working Group. Capturing the significance of Mediators Beyond Borders' accomplishments would be impossible to do in a few introductory sentences, so, in a moment, I will turn this over to Prabha Sankaranarayan, and others connected with Mediators Beyond Borders, to give you an intimate view of their work in the world—work which we found inspirational and worthy of recognition.

At this time, it is my great honor to present the twentieth annual International Advocate for Peace Award to Mediators Beyond Borders International for their unwavering commitment to peace building and conflict resolution. To accept the award on behalf of Mediators Beyond Borders is President and CEO, Prabha Sankaranarayan. Thank you.

PRABHA SANKARANARAYAN: Thank you, thank you, thank you. I want to thank the *Cardozo Journal of Conflict Resolution* for this deeply meaningful recognition, particularly at this time in our lives. A time that has been written about by many, more eloquent than me—a time that is fraught with risk and opportunity; and by the possibility for us as peace builders of moving beyond polarization to cohesion. Thank you to Lela, whose nomination is particularly meaningful as only one coming from one who challenges you to do better, can be.

Three years ago, I met with Lela and she challenged us to describe the impact of our work. She said, “I hear a lot of the things you do, but what impact do you really have?” So, it is particularly meaningful to find her support in this nomination. We at

Mediators Beyond Borders have learned from all of our friends and our supporters and from those who constructively engage us in self-examination. Lela's students are a part of Mediators Beyond Borders International now and they are amongst the leaders within the organization. I want to thank the extraordinary board of Mediators Beyond Borders; and you will hear from two of them today. I want to thank the leaders of all of our working groups, our regional groups, our teams, our initiatives because they pour thousands of hours every year, contributing to the vision of a peace able world. Our donors come from all over and I will mention those who have made multi-year commitments from \$10,000 to hundreds of thousands over the years.

I thank Charlie Pillsbury for his vision and unwavering support over these years. Mary Zinn, in Colorado, who saw our potential at the first Congress at Saint-Malo; Dilip Kulkarni, who is working on his third Ph.D., who as a grandfather and businessman is focusing his work on future generations. Ian Lancaster in Canada, who sees the possibilities in our partnership with Rotary International. Fiona White, who is in England now, whose gentle presence and support is a constant reminder of the value of humility. And last is, Alan Gross, who is one of our founding members and has been a staunch supporter.

I have been asked over the years—what are you? A network, a movement, an organization? I have finally learned to say: yes, we are all of those. This community of Mediators Beyond Borders has three characteristics I would like to mention (it is also filled with thought leaders and you will hear from a couple of them today). The first is embedded in our founding story. At a time when the world was shifting from a *powerful nations* model to one that is *people-centered*, our founders saw the wisdom of focusing on building local capacity for peace. As the spaces for participation and engagement opened wide, we shifted in order to work with regional and subregional organizations, to increase the engagement of civil society, and to prepare people in all contexts to participate effectively. Second, we learned early the value of multinational, multidisciplinary teams.

The third characteristic I would like to mention is that we are multilingual. And I don't just mean the over forty languages that the community of Mediators Beyond Borders International speaks. I grew up speaking at least five languages, as many children in India do, and cannot help thinking that it was preparation for learning the languages of mediation, reconciliation, transformation,

trauma healing, and peacebuilding. We are unique in our ability as a community of practitioners; not only because we literally use many languages, but because we bridge the languages of mediation and peacebuilding effortlessly. This is an important skill that this community understands well as we navigate the wide ranging contexts from the boardroom to the bush! From the peace tables at Geneva to the jungles in Myanmar. From working with leaders of corporations and countries, to leaders of communities, advocacy organizations and movements; weaving connections, and sometimes re-stitching the fabric of community, *and our shared humanity*. Our name notwithstanding—the range of professionals in this community makes it possible for us to understand, adapt, and act with both humility and courage.

The one thing I want to end my words with before I introduce the rest of this community here that you see on this panel: we recognize the reality that globally, violence has been on the decline, *and* that we have seen an uptick in the last few years. And while the pandemic certainty has not changed the pace of that too much, family violence has increased. I am therefore convinced that the evolving identities of communities impacted by deep historical divisions and population migration, in the context of life-threatening resource shortages, present opportunities and challenges for conflict transformation professionals at every level. *Peace that does not address the legacy of a deeply divided past is temporary*. To grow into societies with new civic norms such as pluralism, partnership, and accommodation, we must build peace “able” communities by reducing and eliminating signs of retrenchment, tribalism and parallel living. These are situations that require courageous conversations and dangerous dialogues. And with that I cannot imagine celebrating anything in this community that I now call my family, without inviting those of you who are part of this community to speak also. You have all received the biographies of all of the speakers and given our precious time, I am going to ask Ken Cloke, who is the founder of Mediators Beyond Borders International to speak next. Please take the time to read their biographies you can find them all over the web and on our website.

KEN CLOKE: Thank you Prabha, and congratulations! And many thanks to Cardozo for this award, it is quite wonderful. I think it could not come at a more opportune time. We are now in a moment of escalating conflict around the world and the need for peace building, for conflict resolution, has never been greater. I’d like to take us back to the beginning of this idea for me, which was

sitting and watching the television coverage of the “shock and awe” bombing of Baghdad. As I watched the B-52s dropping their bombs over the city, as a mediator of course, I began to empathize with those on the ground below. In response, I had a little fantasy, and imagined that instead of bombs, out of the B-52s would parachute mediators by the tens of thousands. That gave me a nice smile as I was watching the television program. But then I asked myself the question: if I were one of those mediators, what would I do when I hit the ground? And my answers to that question became an article about Mediators Beyond Borders, and a group of us got together and started the organization. When we began, we had a very rough idea of what we wanted to do. The very first thing that happened was we received an email from a child soldier in a refugee camp in Buduburam, Ghana, saying, “can you help us?” And I thought, “well we haven’t even started yet and don’t really know what we’re doing, so I’ll send him a copy of the training manual I have.” So, I sent him the training manual and he wrote back and said, “thank you very much, I appreciate the manual but we don’t have enough money to afford the paper to print it on.” And of course, it became quite clear that this was not a small commitment. We moved from working with child soldiers in the Buduburam refugee camp and teaching them conflict resolution skills into Liberia where we created a multi-faceted project, and on to Kenya where a group of pastoralists were close to civil war. Prabha went to Kenya to meet with them and find out what this was about, and that began the Kenya project. We also began working with Somali refugees in the United States, and then went on to New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. We were the only mediation organization in the world to take on the project of child soldiers in refugee camps; the only ones to work with refugees in the U.S., foreign refugees—immigrants; the only ones to work in the lower 9th Ward in New Orleans. We sent a delegation of mediators from around the world to the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference. And we were the only mediation organization to show up in Copenhagen—not in order to advocate for climate change, but to advocate for peacebuilding, for mediation, for negotiation, for collaboration, for working through our problems with one another.

And we come across a similar, very difficult situation today, as we continue to work around the world. Earlier this week, Rachel Wohl, a member of Mediators Beyond Borders, conducted a virtual training in Cambodia for a mediation association that is oper-

ating there. Every one of us can touch people in other countries who are going through difficulties, and contribute something just at the basic levels, so they don't feel they are alone. The difficulty we encounter is that we have thought of political conflicts as being outside of peacebuilding and conflict resolution. But I don't think we have the luxury to think that anymore. We now have to realize that these conflicts, which are shaping our political landscape in the United States and around the world, are just as much conflicts as those between couples and families. We have to develop higher order skills in order to be able to resolve them, and we can't do that using the ordinary means of advocacy that we learn primarily through law school and the legal profession. We have to develop a more advanced form of advocacy, which consists of advocating for communication and listening on both peoples' sides, for acting collaboratively, for our ability to work with one another. So, for me the last fourteen years have been exciting and exhilarating, and a gift—a deep and profound gift to me. I believe that I have gained more than I have been able to give over the course of these years, and what I'd like to end with is the idea Prabha mentioned earlier in her talk, which is: how do we know who we've touched, or what kind of impact we have had. I have a metaphor for this, and the metaphor is: you can count the number of seeds in an orange but you can't count the number of oranges in the seed. And Mediators Beyond Borders is the seed that is creating multiple oranges, creating the possibility for people to lead fundamentally different lives. So, I join everyone here in celebrating our common efforts over these years, and look forward to many more in the future. Thank you very much.

DAVE JOSEPH: On behalf of the Board of Directors of Mediators Beyond Borders International, let me add my deep appreciation to what Ken and Prabha have said to Cardozo for this honor, and for the opportunity to join such a distinguished group of previous recipients.

My involvement with MBBI began in 2008, and we have already heard a little bit about it. Ken talked about the request for mediation training from the refugee camp in Ghana. I, along with a couple other members, went over there and met with people there to help teach them about conflict resolution and later, to join their efforts toward reconciliation and community-building, in the wake of the 14-year civil war. Over the next five years, we partnered with the National Ex-combatants Peacebuilding Initiative, which was composed of former fighters who wanted to atone

for the devastation that they had wreaked upon their neighbors and their country. Our shared work focused on the re-knitting of community and the reintegration of former fighters, male and female, back into society.

I'd like to share with you some of the values and principles that guided that work and that continue to underlie our approach as we strive to build local capacity for peace and to fulfill our vision of creating a more peaceable world. In many of the contexts in which we've worked, we're "outsiders," so it's essential for us to view the work in terms of collaboration and partnership because it's always the local people who must be at the center of these kinds of efforts. And it's the people themselves who build the peace, not outsiders. As we share our mediation, dialogue, reconciliation, and other practices in response to local requests, it's always with a deep awareness of the importance of adapting them to the local context and culture.

Peace is not just the absence of conflict, but rather it's a positive commitment to the values of voice, connection, and community. We view our role as elevating, amplifying, and supporting the voices of local people. "Voice" is a core value for us. Our role as mediators and peacebuilders, is to help create the spaces in which local voices can be heard, by each other and by those in power. One of the most basic human needs is to be heard. The power of narrative, of people telling their stories, expressing their needs and being deeply heard, lies at the heart of conflict transformation, connection, and community.

We also value "ubuntu," the South African term that speaks of social connection and relationship. "I am because we are," the sense that we are all connected and all human beings, and that our differences don't inherently need to lead to conflict. The poet Audre Lorde said that "it's not so much our differences that divide us, but rather how we deal with those differences." Imam Muhammed Sani Isah, of Nigeria's Interfaith Mediation Center says, "your approach is about using words to deal with our differences, rather than machetes." The challenge so often is for people to learn how to live together or how to live together again. And what we know is that connection and relationship make it possible and likelier for people to co-exist, acknowledging their similarities, as well as their differences.

"Sangha," the Sanskrit word for "community" also connotes the value that is at the heart of our approach. Supporting and enhancing local communities and their resilience is critical as it's at

the community level that healing takes place most effectively for societies dealing with trauma. Our work in Liberia (and all over the world) is characterized by creating and strengthening community. It's by harnessing the power of sangha to address the healing that's needed so often in our work, whether it's in Liberia, in Indonesia, in Colombia, or in the United States.

Our approach to building local capacity for peace is also distinguished by its focus on re-humanization of the "other." By creating spaces within which people can again experience each other as neighbors, as community members with aspects of shared identity, as well as differences, and as three-dimensional human beings, not simply as the stereotypes we are prone to experiencing the "other" at in times of conflict and polarization.

In closing, I'd like to share the words spoken by one of our local Liberian partners at the conclusion of a workshop that we did there as we began our work, "as a former rebel, I think that perhaps if we had known about this approach, we would not have had a civil war." Again, thank you for this honor Cardozo Law School and I hope that all of who are watching today will consider joining in our shared work.

GWENDOLYN MEYERS: Thank you. Thank you so much Prabha. So, I would like to say first all, all protocols observed, and I would like to express my deep appreciation to Cardozo for the well deserving and prestigious 2020 International Advocate for Peace Award given to Mediators Beyond Borders International, MBBI. I'd like to recognize also Ken. Thank you for everything. Thank you for helping us to reach this far. We really appreciate you. Also, I would like to recognize our chair for the board of directors at MBBI, Dave. Thank you so much for always making sure we have this going. And to also the head and CEO of MBBI, Prabha. I really want to say thank you for your strong leadership and commitment to peace and mediation efforts across the world. It's a great pleasure to be speaking today and on this special occasion. I'm humbled by this opportunity to be included.

We owe so much to MBBI for the inclusion of young females to the abode, despite the fact that peace negotiation and mediation still excludes women twenty years after countries pledged to include them. Young people, especially women in Africa, bring a lot of innovation and creativity to peacebuilding if given the platform to do so. The work of Mediators Beyond Borders International is cut out, especially now, and more than any other period in the era of humanity. In the wake of COVID-19 and in the face of escalat-

ing issues of gender-based violence, and when the world is confronted with tackling systemic forms of inequality from patriarchy to intergenerational injustice, from the income disparity to xenophobia, young people are no longer immune to these flights and questions have been asked. It is our preference belief that the work of MBBI is going across the world. We hope to respond to these triggers of conflict.

As Messengers of Peace Liberia Incorporated, the organization that I run in Liberia, managing over 1,500 young people, we have taken full advantage of MBBI's vast experience in community mediation to address issues of potential conflicts in Liberia, training young community-based peace peer mediators during the last presidential and general elections. MBBI's exemplary work in the field of conflict resolution, capacity building, transfer of skills, and empowerment is helping to build a society of young mediators in Liberia. We are proud of this recognition, and we are optimistic that the good work of MBBI will help to transcend societal issues of discrimination, hate, overwhelming social injustice across the globe, and inequality.

This award could not have come at a better time; a time when we need to uphold our shared humanity and values and redouble our efforts to support peacebuilding programs across the globe. We are proud to be affiliated with Mediators Beyond Borders International, and our commitment to peace building in this region remains strong. We will leverage the benefits of this award to permeate all our work to building a peaceable society. Thank you so very much and congratulations to Mediators Beyond Borders International. Thank you.

MARY MONTAGUE: Thank you, Prabha. I'm not on mute. But being from Ireland, I have to start with a joke and tell you that my husband, he's here beside me, and he would love me to be always muted [on Zoom]. However, first of all, can I again, like others from MBB, thank Cardozo for this wonderful prize. It's such a privilege to receive this when we look at the list of previous organizations and previous people who have received this award. We started off, as we listened to Lela, with a quotation, and in that quotation, she mentioned a number of people who are core and heroes to many of us who are peacebuilders included in this list.

I can say that I didn't choose to be a peacebuilder, and I often say this: a war came to my doorstep and a choice had to be made. I have been very blessed, on this journey that I had to make, to have many companions alongside me that have been a great influence,

great support, and who have nurtured me, especially even now, at times when I think things are not going change, when the times are dark, and you feel very low. And a lot of those people are members of Mediators Beyond Borders International. So, it is a great privilege to be amongst those who I see tonight receiving this award. But in a very special way I want to mention our institute, our international training institute, because one of my dreams, and Lela, you had mentioned about dreaming, one of my dreams was shared with Prabha. We met in Valencia in Spain at a conference, and we dreamt about an institute that would support the development of women mediators across the world. Through MBB, that dream became a reality.

I have been privileged also to welcome to Belfast some of the women that we have trained. They come to learn not just from us, but with us, and we have learned from them. They helped us look at new ways to further develop a sustainable peace in my country. I would say about women is this:

We carried the coffins or walked behind them. We visited the prisons. We faced the gender violence even more so in other parts of the world. So it is so important to have our voice at peace tables. We suffer the impact of violence and trauma, then we should be given the privilege of finding change and a new way forward.

The women that I have made a journey with across the world, have been cohorts from the Middle East, North Africa, Asia, South America, and Russia. Think of all of those different places, where women are working for peace. We are not just training these women; we are walking alongside them. We invite them to make this journey. We invite their communities to make a journey with us, and we coach our mediators as they put into practice the skills that we share with them. But it's like everything in life: you step out every day and you learn a lesson. I have learned so much from the women. That they think I'm the expert, no not true. I'm only an expert when I stop learning, and I'm still learning. The people that are teaching me are so humble. I'm so privileged to share the spaces that I do with them in their lives, because that's the wonderful privilege of being a mediator—people share their lives with us in a very deep and meaningful way.

The other thing I think that we have to remember in today's world is the whole issue of trauma. My experience here and the trauma that I suffered from—I'm still recovering from—is a subject that MBB and our institute recognizes as being one that we have to learn about more and more. The wonderful new neurosciences and

the new developments that field I am glad to say that we are open to learning about. Understand that peace cannot come about unless we face our trauma and unless we help the healing. I am still healing, but the wonderful thing is I heal through my interaction with others. And, again, the interaction with my colleagues in Mediators Beyond Borders International helps to heal me.

In today's world we're facing hate speech. Violent acts do not just come as an act of physical violence, but are promoted through hate speech, hurting others by words. Even in public life there is poor leadership demonstrated by those that use negative language and articulate negative attitudes towards other in society. People coming to our shores from other parts of the world, coming from societies that face conflict and death every day and need to escape are not being welcomed but moved on or sent back to desperate situations. We are being told to think of them as unimportant and less human than the us. These words and attitudes lay the seeds for huge violent future conflicts. Every day I have to remind myself about my prejudices. I have to examine myself. I am a mediator, I am a peacebuilder, but I am a human being. I invite you all as we leave this today and think about this wonderful prize to remember to look at ourselves. I ask myself things like: am I creating a sustainable peace? Am I putting down anyone? Am I treating somebody else differently because of their race, their color, their religious beliefs, or their sexual orientation? We're the people who examine ourselves every day, and who build peace through the tiny acts of love towards one another. That's what we do in MBBBI, and that's what I acknowledge MBBBI for helping me on my journey to learn more about myself, to be a better person. I just want to close with a poem. I love poetry. Irish people, we love our culture. And this is from John O'Donohue, who is an Irish poet. It's a blessing. This is for peace:

As the fever of day calms towards twilight
May all that is strained in us come to ease.

We pray for all who suffered violence today,
May an unexpected serenity surprise them.

For those who risk their lives each day for peace,
May their hearts glimpse providence at the heart of history.

That those who make riches from violence and war
Might hear in their dreams the cries of the lost.

That we might see through our fear of each other
A new vision to heal our fatal attraction to aggression.

That those who enjoy the privilege of peace
Might not forget their tormented brothers and sisters.

That the wolf might lie down with the lamb,
That our swords be beaten into ploughshares

And no hurt or harm be done
Anywhere along the holy mountain.

Many blessings to you all this evening, and many blessings to the people who tonight are facing the conflicts anywhere in the world, our hearts are with them. Thank you so much.

SHADIA MARHABAN: Salam. Greetings of peace. Thank you very much Prabha for the introduction. I want to say thank you to the Cardozo School of Law for giving this prize to Mediators Beyond Borders International. Warm greetings and welcome to all familiar faces today. Prabha and Ken Cloke, whom I hadn't had chance to meet, but this is true Zoom, so I want to say thank you for creating this wonderful network, which I think is really important for healing the world. As you heard from Prabha, I represent the work in Southeast Asia, where people often ask me, like, are there conflicts there, because all they think about is Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines, or the nice shopping malls and buildings and good, fast transportation. But I've always said that it doesn't mean anything, because here, conflict and developments are joined together. I don't know how they do it, but we're kind of an expert in doing development and also conflict at the same time.

In a region that is dynamic, economically growing, and politically vibrant, it's a different level of challenge in addressing conflict in this region, but I would say most of the countries in Southeast Asia emerged right after World War II. So, most of us still have what we call a post-colonial syndrome in everything, including how our mental state is, how we address conflict, how we talk about conflict. Everything still behind us is a big World War II catastrophe. We haven't really fully healed yet, because most of our conflict came right after the Second World War.

Now, how MBB started in Southeast Asia. Actually, when I sat with Prabha in D.C., I remember it was a lovely, shiny day, and she said that she always wanted to go back to Asia and do some work there. So, I started to think how can we engage MBB in Southeast Asia where we can also work together with people

across the globe? Since then, we've been engaging with different conflict actors and armed groups. And I would say if China has a Silk Road, I would say MBBI, through its peace mediation advocates, created a Silk Road in Asia, and I can map out for you how many people we have in this region for working peace.

I want to say the special thing about MBBI is how we nurture, how we engage with conflict actors, beat armed groups, and beat these groups with women's religious leaders and community leaders. We spend time and invest in nurturing. We spend time and invest in relationships. This is something that I don't find common in any other organizations, but in MBB we experience two things that I learned in Southeast Asia. I'm going to use a Sanskrit word which is also an Indonesian word. The first one is "rasa". It means to feel. To rasa. It's taste, it's feeling, which you don't really learn about peacebuilding until you taste, until you feel it, and this is very important. The second word is also in Sanskrit and Indonesian, and it is "jiva." It means soul, and you don't get this feeling and taste until you feel the soul, the jiva. So, it's the rasa and jiva, both, that I found very special in working at MBBI, in particular working with all sorts of different conflict actors in the region.

I remember the day when I sat with Rohingya refugees, from the border in Bangladesh to Myanmar, to a cell prison in Malaysia, to an open market somewhere in Southeast Asia. I learned from them so much; that is if you don't feel, if you don't take your own soul deeply, you'll never understand this. How can you understand someone who fled their own country to find refuge? In the open ocean it can take fourteen, sometimes twenty days risking your life in the open ocean, and yet the world never recognizes you as a citizen. Your own country did not recognize you as citizen, and this is something that I feel unless you have these two deep instincts, you couldn't understand this, because you only see them as victims. They are not victims. They are human beings that should be treated with respect, dignity, and understanding. And this is what I learned at MBBI, and I want to openly say this to all of us here that the special meaning of this jiva and rasa, to me, is deeper than just being a peacemaker. It is what makes me human. It is what makes me who I am. And the relationship that I have with Prabha, with Mary, with Dave, with all of us, it's based on this true principle of understanding. I think this is the most important thing for others to know about how we run MBBI in Southeast Asia.

People often ask how I run this, because people imagine I would have loads of funding. How could I run this project in a

shoestring budget? Sometimes people cannot understand how we do this, but when you dive deeply into our understanding of how conflict and mediation should be treated, then you understand that actually we are rich. We have gold, we have diamonds, and we have our own heart and strength that we always think that peace is the number one thing that we should achieve. I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you for this wonderful opportunity, for the journey, and for remembering all the dead that suffered and people who suffered during the war. People who might have talked and then lost their life. You don't know how devastated I am. And sometimes those women who already I spoke with and then they disappeared; I couldn't find her anywhere. How many people who you might touch their heart, speak to them, and all of a sudden, I didn't hear anything from them. And what connects me with them is actually the spirit of the *jiva* and *rasa*. So, I want to thank you again for this opportunity. Greetings of peace and thank you again to the Cardozo School of Law for giving MBBi this prize. Thank you.

PRABHA SANKARANARAYAN: Now you see why nothing at MBBi is complete without hearing from these voices. This is our soul, our spirit. This is how we work together. I want to thank all of you, my teachers, my teachers' teachers. *Zack it's yours.*

ZACHARY KRIESBERG: Thank you so much to all of the incredible speakers and to the over 150 attendees for making the twentieth annual (and first virtual) International Advocate for Peace Award a truly special event. Mediators Beyond Borders is so deserving of this award and especially in times like these, when hope is low, your work inspires hope for the future. For those who are interested, Mediators Beyond Borders International invites you to attend another Zoom meeting with the MBBi panelists for more open discussions. That link to join that separate Zoom meeting is now in the chat. So, if you are interested please copy and paste or click that link which will be started after this award ceremony ends. As you leave the video conference, I will play "To Be Human" a musical piece by the Seattle Iranian Choir and Seattle Chorus Action Ensemble that was chosen by our award recipient. Following the completion of the video, this Zoom webinar will end. Thank you all so much.