

In conjunction with the International  
Peace Day on Sept 21

# Walking for global peace

KUALA LUMPUR: On Sept 7 in 2001, the United Nations General Assembly (Unga) had passed Resolution 55/282 that declared Sept 21 as the International Day of Peace.

To commemorate this day, ex-servicemen worldwide would take part in an event named Walk for Peace.

This year, some one million former servicemen worldwide are expected to take part in this event, organised by the World Veteran Federation (WVF).

WVF is an international body comprising 175 ex-servicemen organisations from 90 nations. It is a non-governmental organisation that has consultative status with the United Nations.

This federation that represents the interest of more than 25 million former soldiers worldwide has a Malaysian as its president, Lt Pol (Rtd) Datuk Abdul Hamid Ibrahim.

Malaysia would be holding its inaugural Walk For Peace on this Sept 21, to be staged at Dewan Merdeka, Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) in Kuala Lumpur.

It is the effort of the Malaysian Armed Forces Veterans Council (MAVTM) with the collaboration of Friends To Mankind.

Organising committee chairman, Maj Jen (Rtd) Datuk Khairuddin Abu said that about 3,500 participants including former servicemen would be taking part in the event.

Among the Malaysian armed forces veterans organisations that have confirmed participation are the MVATM, Royal Malay Regiment Officers Club, Malaysian Commando Veterans Club, Malaysian Intelligence Corps Veteran Club, Ex-Malaysian Military Police Association, Ex-Services Association of Malaysia and Ex-British Army Club of Malaysia.

Apart from Friends to Mankind, the other NGOs participating in this event are Seniman Malaysia, Salam Foundation, Aman Malaysia, Malaysian Indians Cultural Foundation and Malaysian Muslim Consumers Association as well as several schools.

As this year's event will be held during the fasting month of Ramadan, Khairuddin said all activities are to be held at the Dewan Merdeka in PWTC.

Among in the list of itinerary are the recital of the Message of Peace from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the performance of the song Hari Yang Aman (Day of Peace) specially composed by Khir Rahman and his wife Siti Jasmina Ibrahim.

At the stroke of noon, simultaneously with the other similar events held worldwide, a one-minute silence would be observed.

Khairuddin said the organiser hoped that the Walk for Peace would create public awareness that peace is priceless for mankind.

"Via this event, we wish to create interaction that will bring out the love for unity and peace among Malaysians of various ethnic groups.

"Unity is hand in hand with peace. We should refrain from creating racial issues as this creates tension among us.

"If all quarters maintain unity and are respectful of each other, the nation would continue to enjoy peace and security," said Khairuddin who had served with the Malaysian Battalion (MalBat) in Somalia in 1995.

During his six months tour of duty in Somalia, Khairuddin had witnessed the massive destruction of properties and sufferings of people in this war-torn country.

Khairuddin could still remember clearly the poignant and heart-wrenching faces of the child-carrying Somali women who came to beg for food at the camp where he was based.

"The crops were devastated, residences destroyed, there was nothing left. The people suffered, children were not schooling and the economy was shattered," he said.

Khairuddin also recalled seeing children loitering around and sleeping at the railway station



Khairuddin



Yasotha

“...I threw out a piece of dried capati outside, people were scrambling for that piece of food. I can never forget such experience.”

— Khairuddin

while he was attending a course in India in the early 1980s.

"During a train trip from New Delhi to Srinagar, what wrenched my heart was when I threw out a piece of dried capati outside, people including children were scrambling for that piece of food. I can never forget such experience.

"I hope Malaysians are aware the high price to achieve peace and prosperity. They should do away with trivial matters," said Khairuddin.

Khairuddin is hoping that the participation of school children in the Walk for Peace would nurture the love for peace and unity among them.

A believer in the start them young concept, Khairuddin said the youngsters should be taught to live in harmony with everybody, regardless of their respective race.

In conjunction with the Walk for Peace, an exhibition on war-caused sufferings and destruction would also be staged at the PWTC.

Meanwhile, Friends to Mankind vice-president Yasotha Kishna said the NGO supported MAVTMs move to organise the Walk for Peace event as both organisations propagate peace as the objective.

However such efforts should be shouldered by all, and not only confined to groups or associations.

"Each individual has a responsibility towards peace. It is not just a group or association to carry the burden, all must play a part for this calling for peace.

"One of the principles of Friends to Mankind is in considering you consider another. When this principle is lived, then in whatever you do, you will consider another," said Yasotha who is hoping that more would join the Walk for Peace event.

Those who are interested to participate in the event can forward their enquiries and registration at the MVATM, ATM Public Affairs Department, Defence Ministry, Menara TH Perdana, Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman or call 03-4297 1743 or visit [www.mvatm.org](http://www.mvatm.org).

Participation is free of charge.— Bernama