

## **After 150 years What remains of Gandhi's legacy?**

*An important step taken by Indian diplomacy is its decision to celebrate at the various Indian embassies in the world a century and a half after the birth of Gandhi, which coincided with the International Day of Non-violence adopted by the United Nations on 2 October. This date is the birth anniversary of the Indian philosopher and leader "Mahatma Gandhi". This celebration is an attempt to revive Gandhi's legacy and his cross-border philosophy, which inspired many figures and leaders after him to achieve their goals of struggle for freedom and victory for a culture of peaceful resistance in the face of the injustice of British colonialism... This is an important step recognized by nations and people that did not betray their leaders and remained loyal to their legacy in building societies after independence.*

In this context, the symposium organized by Ambassador of India in Tunis, Mr. Prashant Pise, was attended by a number of female students from New Delhi, accompanied by a number of diplomats, MPs, politicians and intellectuals, during which former Ambassador Ahmed Ounaies spoke of Gandhi's influence on Tunisian President Bourguiba and his decisions in the face of the French colonialism. Mr. Ounaies stressed that UN's rejection of racism and resistance against apartheid did not originate from Africa, as some believe, but from India, which was the first to call for resistance against apartheid in Africa. Here we can see the importance of Gandhi and his decisions not only in India's independence, but also in supporting liberation movements in the world.

### **Contradictions**

Ironically, Gandhi, the man who was closer to prophets in his morals, thought, humility, transcendentalism, and his adherence to all forms of peaceful struggle, would make his end bloody and bring about his assassination by a Hindu extremist of his minority because of his ideas and pro-minority attitudes supporting Muslims. In fact, Gandhi's personality, which is now returning to the scene to remind us of his struggle, remains worthy of admiration, honor, study and research to understand his philosophy. Gandhi turned his weakness into power by adopting civil disobedience as a popular weapon against the colonizer to challenge him. For instance, the Salt March in 1930, which occupied part of the book "Memoirs of Gandhi" talking about his ideas and peaceful orientations that will exceed the borders of India and turn into a method adopted by leaders who left their fingerprints in the struggle for liberation against colonialism, including the African leader Mandela, Bourguiba who adopted the policy of take

and claim, and Martin Luther King in his struggle against racism and for equality.

There is no doubt about the beginning of Gandhi from South Africa where he began practicing law and where he faced racial discrimination which motivated Indians in South Africa to defend their rights there.. The story of Gandhi, who was expelled from the train because the white refused to be with him on the same locomotive used for transporting eggs, will always be told. Gandhi strongly rejected the act of expelling him, an incident that will recur after half a century in Florida when the Rosa Parks refused to leave her seat for a white citizen, which led the leader Martin Luther King to adopt peaceful demonstration to eliminate racial discrimination and call for equality between blacks and whites in the U.S. Mahatma Gandhi was convinced that non-violence was not the weapon of the weak. On the contrary, he considered it the weapon of the strong. He succeeded in proving his peaceful ideology and culture in his country and getting India's minorities to coexist which made the country today the largest democracy in the world. Perhaps the question cannot be ignored today whether Gandhi's legacy and philosophy remain today in the life of the nations and people. Can Gandhi's philosophy today provide an alternative for people who continue to suffer the injustice of occupation and its corruption and violations in a world governed by interests and fierce competition to control water resources, oil fields and strategic routes? This is happening in a dangerously and rapidly evolving world to manufacture weapon, destroy, kill, and spread wars and terrorism and armed networks that themselves spread destruction and make deals at the expense people's security and their basic needs. Can Gandhi's policy to support the demands of the Palestinian people today for freedom, dignity and sovereignty against an enemy that has all the advanced military capabilities that make it outperform all the people of the region and all the Arab armies combined?

### **The role of India and China in imposing the appropriate balance of the world order**

It is important for the world to preserve the legacy, status and culture of Gandhi, an important issue that underlines the need of people for the philosophy of non-violence and peace in eliminating injustice, corruption, despotism and abhorrent racism. Salt March that Gandhi and his followers have made for about four hundred kilometers reflects Gandhi's misery and suffering to remove the British occupation from the Indian subcontinent. Gandhi was harsh with himself as he had been fasting and worshipping too much but a little spending or attachment to luxurious life. Gandhi was also honest and clear in his relations, leaving hypocrisy, committed to values and principles that he believed in as these qualities are rarely found in today's politicians.

India as part of the Non-Aligned Movement, achieved today its military and industrial superiority, economic and scientific development, cultural diversity, cultural balance, human heritage and struggle created by Gandhi, can be an active voice in the regional and international platforms, along with China and the rising powers. These powers can push more towards a more balanced, less unjust and disparate world between its poor and its rich, and between the exploited and the destitute.

### **Mahatma Gandhi's 150<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary**

Embassy of India has commemorated the 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi on 2<sup>nd</sup> October in the whole world as part of a year-long celebration. This date is also known as the International Day of Non-violence celebrated by the United Nations.

On this occasion, in cooperation with Faculty of Letters, Arts and Humanities at Manouba University, Embassy of India organized a celebration in Tunis on 2<sup>nd</sup> October to mark this anniversary. A symposium was also organized in cooperation with the International Center for Strategic, Security and Military Studies on “Relevance of Gandhian philosophy in today's world and the role of women in making the world free of terrorism”. Furthermore, Embassy of India in Tunis has released commemorative stamps on Mahatma Gandhi.