



## Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

### 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



*“By 2030, 193 Heads of State and Governments agree to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels and –*

- *significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates*
- *end the abuse, exploitation, trafficking, torture and violence against children*
- *promote the rule of law and ensure equal access to justice for all*
- *significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows*
- *combat all forms of organized crime – and –*
- *substantially reduce corruption in all its forms ”*

UN Sustainable Development Goal 16

**Good News:** The UN was founded to ‘save succeeding generations from the scourge of war’ – and it has more or less succeeded: the number of deaths due to war has fallen from 12.4 per 100,000 in 1946 to 1.2 per 100,000 in 2016

**Bad News:** Though fewer people are dying in wars, the number of civil wars (internal domestic conflicts) has risen from 10 in 1946 to 49 in 2016.

*There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development*



*Young British ISIS recruits prepare to execute prisoners for Islamic State*

SDG16’s main aim is to secure Peace and an end to violence across the world, through stable governments free from corruption. Both fundamental to sustainable development.

Though media headlines rarely stress this, we are currently living in the most peaceful, non-violent time in all of human history. Executions, murder, torture and slavery used to be much more commonplace. The purpose of this SDG is to eliminate them entirely, and set up the institutions that will secure that peace and non-violence for ever for future generations.



## Balance Sheet

### Achievements

125 countries have Freedom of Information laws allowing individuals access to information held by governments. 31 of them have adopted such laws since 2013[3]

Countries are establishing National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs). 60% of countries have applied to have their NHRIs accredited, and 39% of countries have been successful. [3]

Globally, 73% of people have had their births registered. Some regions have reached near 100% coverage. [3]

More trafficking victims are being detected - an increase of 104 detected victims per country from 2010 to 2016. [3]

### Work Left to Do

The legal frameworks in many of these cases could be improved further; 40 of the 123 countries lack laws giving a person the right to independent appeal. [3]

There was only a 3% increase in the number of NHRIs being accredited as compliant with UN standards between 2015 and 2018. If this slow pace continues, only half of all countries will be compliant by 2030. [3]

An estimated 1 billion people, including 625 million children, are 'invisible', since they lack documentation to prove their birth or citizenship. These people mainly live in Sub-Saharan Africa or Southern Asia, where birth registration rates are 46% and 68%, respectively. [1], [3]

This could, however, reflect a rising trafficking problem, rather than increased detection by authorities. 83% of female victims were trafficked for sexual exploitation, while 82% of male victims were trafficked for forced labour in 2016. [3]



## Achievements

The [absolute number of wartime deaths has been declining since the end of the Second World War](#). Over 540,000 people died in war in 1950, compared to 87,000 in 2016. The number has generally remained low, at around 30,000-50,000 throughout the second half of the 20th century, other than certain 'peaks' such as the Korean war (1950) and the Vietnam war (1970). [4]

Public trust in the [UK Police Force](#) is rising – up from 76% to 78% in the last ten years.

[90 countries](#) have adopted laws covering freedom of the press and/or access to information. (2013) [2]

## Work Left to Do

Whilst conflicts between states have largely ceased, and overall fewer people are dying in wars, the number of civil wars have increased since 1946. There were 10 such conflicts in 1946, compared to 49 in 2016. The number of such civil conflicts with foreign intervention has also increased in the 2010s. [4]

Public trust in in the [US institutions of government](#) has dropped from a high of 77% in 1964 to less than 17% now.

Murder rates for human rights defenders - journalists, trade unionists, activists etc. - increased in 2018 to an average of nine people per week (up from seven per week). [3]



## Sources

1. [UNDP - SDG16](#)
2. [SDG Knowledge Platform - Goal 16](#)
3. [SDGs Report 2019 - Section 16](#)
4. [Our World in Data - War and Peace](#)
5. [Agenda 2030](#)
6. [Our World in Data - Peacekeeping](#)

## Points to Ponder

- Do you think we are living in the most peaceful time than ever before in human history?
- Does peace necessarily bring contentment? – or do you think that human beings love the excitement of a fight or a war?
- What makes for a “Strong Institution”? Public trust in it – or Public fear of it?
- Given that there are so many institutions – including some governments, but perhaps mainly oil and coal companies – who care about their profits more than climate change, don't you think that we have to fight harder to achieve these goals, rather than just meekly campaign for them? Doesn't violence have to be met with violence?
- What do you think are the values that make some one a “Peace Child”? (Clue: we've always said it is 'Selflessness and integrity' – two of the main items of the [Nolan Principles for Standards in Public Life](#).)



## Take Action

- Do a Performance of Peace Child – to raise awareness and explore how to make institutions like the UN and its agencies work.  
(see: [www.peacechildthemusical.com](http://www.peacechildthemusical.com))
- Find out about local Peace and Justice groups in your area: the Quakers are always a good place to start.
- Think about Conflict management / conflict transformation next time you have an argument with your parents or one of your siblings. How can you can transform the energy you are putting into the conflict into constructive energy?