

## Press release

# **Peace Report 2023: Leading German Peace Researchers Call for Further Support for Ukraine and Expansion of Multilateral Arms Control**

In the second year of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, there is no end in sight to the violence, and the global implications are becoming increasingly apparent. European NATO countries should prepare for long-term support of Ukraine. This is the assessment of Germany's leading peace and conflict research institutes in their Peace Report 2023, which has been presented today. The institutes also recommend sanctioning the Wagner Group, expanding multilateral arms control, and strengthening unstable societies in the Global South. The Peace Report 2023, titled "Peace Is a Long Way Off" presents clear recommendations for German policy after the "Zeitenwende".

There is still a long way to go before there is peace in Ukraine. It is becoming apparent that the Russian invasion, which is against the international law, will develop into a war of attrition that will continue for a long time to come. The leading German peace research institutes expressly warn against ceasing military support for Ukraine and relying only on negotiations as some groups have demanded in recent months. As a consequence Russia would continue its expansionist drive and the security situation would worsen throughout Europe, the researchers say. Weapons deliveries and training assistance remain necessary so that Ukraine can defend itself. At the same time, negotiations should already be prepared now, which should be linked to extensive security guarantees for Ukraine. The German government could play a central role here and seek an international negotiating initiative.

### **Sanctioning the Wagner Group**

An increasingly important role in violent conflicts worldwide is played by non-state armed mercenaries, most notably the Russian Wagner Group. Since it often escapes the direct control of its clients, this group acts particularly brutally, undermines international peace missions and thus contributes to the destabilization of entire regions, such as in the Sahel. The peace research institutes demand that the German government classify the Wagner Group as a criminal group and place it on sanctions and wanted lists.

### **Africa Remains Crisis Hotspot**

In 2022, global conflict levels remained high. Half of the armed conflicts took place in Africa. One in two intra-state conflicts there involved transnationally operating jihadist groups, such as the so-called Islamic State (IS).

## **Sustainable Peace in a World of Multiple Crises**

Increasing poverty, the effects of climate change and social polarization are further risks to peaceful coexistence in Germany, Europe and worldwide. In times of these multiple crises and complex challenges, a “Zeitenwende” in terms of defense policy would not be sufficient that relies primarily on the expansion of military capacities. On the one hand, development policy strategies must be developed to strengthen the resilience of particularly vulnerable societies in the Global South and to guarantee the food security of the population. On the other hand, Western democracies also need strategies to counteract social polarization and protect themselves against disinformation campaigns and anti-democratic ideologies.

## **Do not Criminalize Political Protests**

Political protests should be understood as an expression of democratic vitality and should not be criminalized as long as they are not used for extremist messages and are non-violent. Tightening criminal law, preventive detentions and defamation are not an appropriate response to civil disobedience, such as the actions of climate activists, the researchers argue.

## **Trade Relations Support Peace**

Economic interdependence cannot guarantee peace, but it can at least promote it if certain economic dependencies, for example in the energy sector, are avoided. The scientists therefore warn against hastily and unilaterally reducing trade relations and economic interdependencies, e. g. between Western countries and China. Negotiations, dialogue and trade should continue to serve as a means of securing peace. Isolating Russia in major international organizations would not be strategically expedient, despite the blatant breach of international law regarding Ukraine. Particularly in the current situation, international forums for exchange such as the UN or the OSCE are urgently needed in order to engage in dialogue about de-escalation options and to be able to voice criticism.

## **Strengthen Multilateral Arms Control**

In view of the tense global political situation, everything possible should be done to prevent an arms race and the further proliferation of weapons of mass destruction as well as to reduce the risk of escalation. Among other things, it is important to ensure functioning communications and the security of command and control structures, especially in crisis situations. States that have not been at the center of arms control policy to date, such as Brazil, India or China, should be more closely involved than they have been to date.

## **Value Orientation in Foreign and Development Policy**

The Peace Report 2023 calls for a more consistent implementation of a value-oriented feminist foreign and development policy. It must position itself more decisively than before and openly discuss dilemmas.

## Presse contact

**Dr. Ursula Grünenwald**

Press and Public Relations Officer

Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF)

[gruenenwald@hsfk.de](mailto:gruenenwald@hsfk.de)

Phone +49 69 959104-13

## To the Current Peace Report

The central recommendations of the German peace research institutes to the German government can be found at: [https://www.friedensgutachten.de/user/pages/02.2023/02.ausgabe/03.stellungnahme/FGA2023\\_Statement.pdf](https://www.friedensgutachten.de/user/pages/02.2023/02.ausgabe/03.stellungnahme/FGA2023_Statement.pdf)

The complete Peace Report is available to download at: [www.friedensgutachten.de/en](http://www.friedensgutachten.de/en).

## Events

Following the Federal Press Conference, the institutes will present the Peace Report 2023 at the Federal Chancellery, the Office of the Federal President, the ministries and parliamentary groups. On June 14, starting at 6 p.m., the [Evangelische Akademie zu Berlin](#) invites you to discuss the peace report in an evening forum at the Französische Friedrichstadtkirche. Information on this and other events for the interested public can be found on the website of the Peace Report [www.friedensgutachten.de](http://www.friedensgutachten.de).



## About the Peace Report and the Publishing Institutes

The Peace Report is the annual publication of the Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies (BICC), the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt PRIF, the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy of the University of Hamburg (IFSH) and the Institute for Development and Peace (INEF) of University of Duisburg-Essen. In the peace report, the leading German peace and conflict research institutes analyze current international conflicts, highlight trends in international foreign, security and development policy and provide clear recommendations for policymakers. Interdisciplinary teams of authors work together on the chapters and contribute and contribute different perspectives.

The Peace Report is published by transcript-Verlag. The digital version (ISBN: 978-3-8394-6801-2) is available free of charge (open access) at <https://www.transcript-verlag.de/978-3-8376-6801-8/friedensgutachten-2023> and at [www.friedensgutachten.de](http://www.friedensgutachten.de). The print version (ISBN: 978-3-8376-6801-8) is available in bookstores for 15 euros.

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