

Press release

A Rudderless World: Germany's Leading Peace Research Institutes Present Peace Report 2024

Berlin, June 10, 2024 – The global death toll from wars and conflicts is at an all-time high: The wars in Ukraine and Gaza, military coups and jihadist violence in Africa result in tens of thousands of victims. At the same time, the fight against climate change, poverty and hunger falters. In Europe and the USA, authoritarian and extremist movements are putting democracies under pressure. This is the global political starting point for the Peace Report 2024, in which Germany's leading peace research institutes make recommendations to policymakers on how to reduce the causes of conflict and break the spiral of violence.

Many of the political successes of the 1990s and 2000s seem to have vanished: Multilateral treaties have eroded, international institutions have lost influence and democratic achievements, such as the independence of the judiciary or freedom of the press, have been curtailed even in European countries. In this world, which seems to no longer have a compass, Germany's leading peace research institutes offer points of reference in the latest Peace Report.

Brutal Attack and Human Suffering: Gaza as a New Trouble Spot

The Hamas attack on October 7, 2023 has deeply shaken Israel: more than 1,000 people were murdered in the brutal massacre and another 250 were abducted. The atrocities committed by Hamas, which denies Israel's right to exist, have shocked the international community.

Despite the right to self-defense, the peace research institutes are critical of the Israeli army's military response in the Gaza Strip due to the many civilian casualties. According to the peace researchers, Israel is violating international humanitarian law and the German government should advocate for Israel's compliance with the decisions of the international courts. The report insists that in order to provide short-term relief for the people on the ground, the first priority must be to improve the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, work towards the release of the hostages and achieve a ceasefire. At the same time, work must be done on a viable peace solution for the entire region. Despite all political resistance, the German government should work towards an internationally responsible transition phase for the Gaza Strip after the end of the war that allows for humanitarian supplies, economic recovery and political prospects. In the long term, the German government should work towards a two-state solution, even if this is hardly feasible at present.

Weapons, Diplomacy and International Support for Ukraine

In the war against Ukraine, military logic and diplomatic approaches must be intelligently combined. The peace report's experts advocate for maintaining pressure on Russia – for example, in the form of sanctions, and continuing to support Ukraine militarily. In order to be able to enter into peace negotiations with Russia in the medium term, Ukraine needs reliable security guarantees from the West. The form and content of peace negotiations should be prepared now and potential third parties should be sounded out.

Defining Development Cooperation with Putschists and Autocrats

More than half of the world's violent conflicts take place in sub-Saharan Africa, mostly as battles between governments and jihadist armed groups. In recent years, seven coups d'état in West Africa have exacerbated the unstable situation. The three military regimes in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger have found a new security partner in Russia in particular. All three countries play a central role in the further development of the Sahel region. In addition, their humanitarian and security policy development is of transnational importance, especially with regard to migration and illegal trade. Germany should therefore continue its diplomatic and development policy engagement in the region and define guidelines for dealing with putschists and autocrats.

Poverty, Hunger and Violent Conflicts are Mutually Dependent

Limiting climate change and combating poverty, hunger and social inequality have not been as successful as they should be. Only 15% of the Sustainable Development Goals set by the global community in 2015 have been achieved so far. The experts in the Peace Report recommend involving local actors and structures more responsibly in development cooperation in the future and at the same time embedding them in international and national aid structures.

2023 was the warmest year since weather records began. Crop failures, flooding and other consequences of climate change are destroying livelihoods. Poverty and social inequality are on the rise, particularly in countries of the Global South – the most common causes of violence, as the military coups in West Africa show. If the number of armed conflicts increases, the number of displaced people also rises.

Reducing the Risk of Nuclear Escalation Through Arms Control

In 2023, global arms spending increased. An effective arms control policy can contain expensive arms-race dynamics, the risk of further military confrontations and the danger of nuclear escalation. New technologies such as artificial intelligence and unmanned weapons systems revolutionize warfare. At the same time, they increase the ability to react on the battlefield and thus increase the risk of escalation in conflicts. Internationally binding rules for the development and use of these technologies are urgently needed. Additionally, IT systems and critical infrastructures should be better protected against cyber attacks.

Strengthening the Resilience of Democratic Institutions

While wars and conflicts determine foreign policy, democracies are also under pressure domestically: Many people have lost trust in democratic institutions. Populist, extremist and authoritarian movements have gained influence. Politicians should take dissatisfaction and social grievances seriously and protect and strengthen democratic institutions to ensure their independence even in the face of changing majorities.

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Link to the Current Peace Report

The central recommendations of the German peace and conflict research institutes to the German Federal Government can be found at:

https://www.friedensgutachten.de/2024/ausgabe/stellungnahme/FGA2024_Statement.pdf.

The complete Peace Report with detailed information, figures and assessments on the individual aspects is available to download at: www.friedensgutachten.de

Events

Following the Federal Press Conference, the institutes will present the Peace Report 2024 at the Federal Chancellery, the Office of the Federal President, the ministries and parliamentary groups. On June 11, starting at 6 p.m., the Evangelische Akademie zu Berlin invites you to discuss the Peace Report in an [evening forum at the Französischen Friedrichstadtkirche](#). Wolfgang Ischinger will give the keynote speech. Information on this and other events for the interested public can be found on the website of the Peace Report 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 Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg (IFSH), the Institute for Development and Peace (INEF) at the University of Duisburg-Essen and the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF). 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 different perspectives.

The Peace Report is published by transcript-Verlag. The digital version (ISBN: 978-3-8394-7421-1) is available free of charge (open access) at <https://www.transcript-verlag.de/978-3-8376-7421-7/friedensgutachten-2024> and at www.friedensgutachten.de. The print version (ISBN: 978-3-8376-7421-7) is available in bookstores for 15 euros.

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