

## VI. The Global Peace Index, 2016

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The 2016 Global Peace Index (GPI) is the tenth edition of the world's leading study on global levels of peacefulness. The GPI now ranks 163 nations and territories using 23 qualitative and quantitative indicators from highly respected sources, which gauge three broad themes: (a) the level of safety and security in society; (b) the extent of domestic or international conflict; and (c) the degree of militarization (see tables 6.5 and 6.6). The GPI is produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), guided by an international panel of independent experts and supported by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), which collates the data and calculates the rankings in conjunction with the IEP.<sup>1</sup> By generating and synthesizing new information on the state of peace at the national and global levels, the IEP hopes to contribute to a better understanding of how civil society, researchers, policymakers and governments can create a more peaceful society.

In 2016 the overall GPI score deteriorated, continuing the downward slide in global peacefulness since 2008. Four regions scored worse than the previous year, while three others improved and two remained the same during the measurement period (March 2015 to March 2016). Only minor deteriorations were recorded in Europe, Asia-Pacific and sub-Saharan Africa, whereas the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) accounted for the main deterioration in global peace. The overall deterioration continues to be driven by negative changes in only a handful of key indicators, principally those measuring: (a) the number of refugees and displaced people; (b) the impact of terrorism; and (c) the number of internal and external conflicts, and the associated number of battle-related deaths.

Regionally, there are some positive trends that counterbalance the overall negative trend. A regional improvement was recorded in Central America and the Caribbean, which was bolstered by improvements in Panama and Trinidad and Tobago. Europe maintained its position as the most peaceful region in the world, but it was negatively affected by the deterioration in peacefulness of countries on the periphery, such as Greece, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey. Turkey, for example, experienced its worst year-on-year deterioration in the history of the GPI with

<sup>1</sup> More information on the IEP is available at <<http://www.economicsandpeace.org/>>. The panel included the following experts in 2015–16: Kevin Clements, Chairman (University of Otago), Sabina Alkire (University of Oxford), Ian Anthony (SIPRI), Isabelle Arradon (International Crisis Group), Nick Grono (Walk Free), Manuela Mesa (Centro de Educación e Investigación para la Paz) and Ekaterina Stepanova (IMEMO).

**Table 6.5.** Countries with the greatest change in Global Peace Index scores, 2015–16

Country	Score, 2016	Change in score, 2015–16	Rank, 2016	Change in rank, 2015–16
<i>Top 5 risers</i>				
Panama	1.837	-0.136	49	24
Thailand	2.312	-0.120	125	9
Sri Lanka	2.133	-0.118	97	18
South Africa	2.316	-0.113	126	7
Mauritania	2.295	-0.104	123	8
<i>Top 5 fallers</i>				
Yemen	3.399	0.446	158	-9
Ukraine	3.287	0.237	156	-4
Turkey	2.710	0.224	145	-7
Libya	3.200	0.197	154	-3
Bahrain	2.398	0.161	132	-23

Note: A reduction in the GPI score indicates an increase in peace.

a score deterioration of 0.224, which resulted in the country falling to its lowest ever position in the index: 145 (out of 163).

The societal safety and security domain measuring internal levels of peacefulness showed countervailing trends with four of the ten relevant indicators improving and six deteriorating. While there were notable improvements in the indicators measuring police numbers, the incarcerated population and the qualitative violent crime indicator, there were larger deteriorations in the impact of terrorism, the number of refugees and internally displaced people and political instability. The size of the deteriorations in these indicators outweighed improvements and were the main contributors to the negative trend in global peace.

Regionally, it is notable that aside from sub-Saharan Africa, where criminality is often fuelled by ethnic strife and political unrest, Latin America clearly remained the world's most violent region in terms of crime, as highlighted by its poor results in most related categories. Over the 2015 measurement period, only MENA and South America saw rises in the level of violent crime, which improved or remained static in all other regions. Central America and the Caribbean recorded a small improvement, but it remains a region where many of the world's highest homicide rates can be found and where high levels of organized crime have a detrimental effect on everyday life.

South America and Central America and the Caribbean were frequently the worst performers in the indicators relating to societal safety and security, with the only exceptions being the excessive incarceration rates in the United States and the large number of internal security forces in the MENA region. The latter indicator, however, improved in all regions in the 2015

measurement period except South Asia. Both political instability and political terror deteriorated on average, and on both indicators more countries in Europe deteriorated than improved. This reflects both the ongoing economic stress and the migration crisis that this region is dealing with.

The results for indicators related to ongoing domestic and international conflict also varied widely. The number of deaths from organized internal conflict decreased in three regions, including modestly in MENA, but increased in four other regions—particularly in Russia and Eurasia, where the Ukraine conflict continued throughout the first part of the measurement period. Although the score for the number of deaths in organized external conflict also worsened, the global score was more heavily skewed due to the results from MENA and to a lesser extent from South Asia—all other regions improved or stayed the same. The number and duration of internal conflicts improved in more countries than they worsened, although the average score deteriorated due to the persistence of the conflicts in Syria, Ukraine, the Central African Republic and Libya, which lowered the scores of their respective regions. A greater number of countries worsened in the rankings for the number, duration and role in external conflicts, and almost all regions did worse than in 2015. The biggest slump was seen in North America, where the USA remains involved in several Middle East conflicts.

The possibility of a political settlement in Syria or Yemen would certainly boost the outlook for domestic and international conflict in the coming year, but the persistence of the Islamic State as a threat to the region suggests that outside powers will remain engaged in the Middle East for some time. In line with heightened external tensions, relations with neighbouring countries worsened as well. Perhaps most worrying from an international security perspective is that the impact of terrorism indicator deteriorated to the greatest extent, even though three regions (Russia and Eurasia, Central America and the Caribbean, and South Asia) recorded improvements. After MENA, Europe was the region that suffered the most compared to 2015, with Turkey, France and Belgium most affected. Belgium and France have struggled with ‘home-grown’ Islamic terrorism, which was highlighted by the terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015.

Finally, the militarization domain was characterized by a widespread reduction in the number of armed services personnel. This was contrasted by an overall rise in military expenditure as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) in three key regions: sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and especially MENA. The arms trade also saw a decrease in inter-European transfers, both exports and imports, but the flow of Russian arms to the Middle East and Asia-Pacific continued. Much of this flow has been in support of Syrian Government forces against the rebels, which, in contrast, have received much lower quantities of arms from the West. A significant, positive development has been the decrease in nuclear and heavy weapon

capabilities. This trend has been most evident in some of the world's most militarized regions, such as Europe, Russia and Eurasia, and MENA—although in MENA this was partly due to losses incurred by Syrian Government forces in the civil war. This positive development, however, may prove to be short-lived if there is greater impetus for rearmament among North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries as a result of Russian aggression. This would be particularly evident in some of the NATO states bordering or close to Russia itself, but could also affect countries like Germany, which over the past few years have trimmed down their armed forces and stocks of heavy weaponry.

### **Interpreting the GPI score**

Each of the 23 indicators in the GPI are assigned a score ('banded') on a 1–5 scale and overall scores are produced for each country or territory. The overall scores are completely continuous between 1 and 5 with a score closer to 1 recording higher levels of peace. The GPI is a relative measure of what is termed negative peace, defined as the 'absence of violence and fear of violence'. Negative peace is a multidimensional concept that cannot be directly observed by one indicator and hence the GPI aims to holistically estimate the magnitude of peace in each country by producing one simple and easy to interpret number.

It should be noted that all of the country and regional deteriorations and improvements described here refer to changes in *GPI score* rather than changes in *GPI rank*. It is important to use the score change rather rank change to assess movements as these are indicative of actual changes in the underlying indicators of the GPI and therefore actual changes in peacefulness. Depending on where countries may be ranked in the index, small score changes can result in large rank changes and occasionally small score changes will not correspond to rank movements in the same direction. This is due to the movement of other countries ranked near the country of focus or especially if the country is ranked in the middle of the index where the scores are tightly clustered.

This latter point relates to the broader issue of rank robustness that must be considered in assessing any composite measure. On this particular issue, analysis by IEP shows that the GPI is at the same level of absolute robustness as the Human Development Index (HDI).

### **The inclusion of Palestine in the 2016 GPI**

For the first time in 2016, Palestine is included in the GPI. The GPI aims to measure the level of peacefulness experienced by as much of the world as possible, within the practical realities of existing and manageable data. The

**Table 6.6.** The Global Peace Index, 2016

Rank	Country	Score	Change	Rank	Country	Score	Change
1	Iceland	1.192	-0.007	57	Montenegro	1.884	-0.013
2	Denmark	1.246	+0.028	58	Tanzania	1.899	+0.003
3	Austria	1.278	-0.007	59	Viet Nam	1.906	+0.013
4	New Zealand	1.287	-0.025	60	Bosnia-Herzegovina	1.915	-0.007
5	Portugal	1.356	-0.092	61	United Arab Emirates	1.931	+0.033
6	Czech Republic	1.360	-0.083	62	Equatorial Guinea	1.940	-0.030
7	Switzerland	1.370	-0.008	63	Lesotho	1.941	+0.027
8	Canada	1.388	+0.019	64	Tunisia	1.949	-0.047
9	Japan	1.395	+0.043	65	Moldova	1.953	-0.004
10	Slovenia	1.408	-0.026	66	Togo	1.954	-0.007
11	Finland	1.429	+0.028	67	Argentina	1.957	+0.011
12	Ireland	1.433	+0.005	68	Mozambique	1.963	+0.003
13	Bhutan	1.445	-0.049	69	Nicaragua	1.975	-0.026
14	Sweden	1.461	+0.015	70	Senegal	1.978	+0.075
15	Australia	1.465	+0.035	71	Cyprus	1.994	+0.032
16	Germany	1.486	-0.028	72	Benin	1.998	+0.020
17	Norway	1.500	-0.028	73	Liberia	1.998	+0.044
18	Belgium	1.528	+0.051	74	Oman	2.016	-0.059
19	Hungary	1.534	-0.017	75	Kazakhstan	2.019	-0.058
20	Singapore	1.535	-0.012	76	Ecuador	2.020	-0.022
21	Netherlands	1.541	+0.019	77	Kosovo	2.022	+0.068
22	Poland	1.557	+0.049	78	Nepal	2.026	+0.112
23	Mauritius	1.559	+0.035	79	Gabon	2.033	+0.053
24	Slovakia	1.603	+0.051	80	Paraguay	2.037	-0.041
25	Spain	1.604	+0.043	81	Bolivia	2.038	-0.031
26	Croatia	1.633	+0.004	82	Greece	2.044	+0.038
27	Chile	1.635	-0.008	83	Bangladesh	2.045	+0.007
28	Botswana	1.639	-0.031	84	Trinidad and Tobago	2.056	-0.055
29	Bulgaria	1.646	-0.040	85	Georgia	2.057	-0.032
30	Malaysia	1.648	+0.040	86	Cuba	2.057	-0.013
31	Romania	1.649	+0.016	87	Peru	2.057	-0.030
32	Latvia	1.680	-0.029	88	Burkina Faso	2.063	+0.146
33	Costa Rica	1.699	0.000	89	Haiti	2.066	-0.023
34	Qatar	1.716	-0.043	90	Swaziland	2.074	-0.035
35	Uruguay	1.726	-0.055	91	Morocco	2.086	+0.034
36	Estonia	1.732	-0.032	92	The Gambia	2.091	-0.043
37	Lithuania	1.735	+0.010	93	Jamaica	2.091	-0.018
38	Madagascar	1.763	-0.026	94	Macedonia (FYR)	2.092	+0.084
39	Italy	1.774	+0.007	95	Guyana	2.105	+0.006
40	Zambia	1.783	-0.037	96	Jordan	2.127	+0.050
41	Taiwan	1.787	+0.035	97	Sri Lanka	2.133	-0.118
42	Indonesia	1.799	-0.012	98	Angola	2.140	+0.058
43	Sierra Leone	1.805	-0.022	99	Papua New Guinea	2.143	+0.065
44	Ghana	1.809	+0.002	100	Dominican Republic	2.143	+0.010
45	Malawi	1.817	+0.097	101	Uganda	2.148	-0.090
46	France	1.829	+0.025	102	Guinea	2.148	-0.066
47	United Kingdom	1.830	-0.030	103	USA	2.154	-0.027
48	Serbia	1.834	-0.024	104	Cambodia	2.161	-0.011
49	Panama	1.837	-0.136	105	Brazil	2.176	+0.016
50	Mongolia	1.838	+0.074	106	Belarus	2.202	-0.079
51	Kuwait	1.842	+0.106	107	Turkmenistan	2.202	0.000
52	Laos	1.852	+0.052	108	Algeria	2.213	-0.054
53	South Korea	1.858	+0.047	109	Uzbekistan	2.216	-0.065
54	Albania	1.867	-0.031	110	Armenia	2.218	-0.032
55	Namibia	1.873	-0.003	111	Honduras	2.237	+0.010
56	Timor-Leste	1.879	-0.025	112	El Salvador	2.237	-0.054

Rank	Country	Score	Change	Rank	Country	Score	Change
113	Niger	2.239	-0.074	139	Philippines	2.511	-0.025
114	Congo, Republic of	2.249	+0.002	140	Mexico	2.557	+0.009
115	Myanmar	2.256	-0.083	141	India	2.566	+0.014
116	Guinea-Bissau	2.264	-0.006	142	Egypt	2.574	+0.117
117	Guatemala	2.270	+0.046	143	Venezuela	2.651	+0.088
118	Côte d'Ivoire	2.279	+0.088	144	Israel	2.656	-0.003
119	Ethiopia	2.284	+0.003	145	Turkey	2.710	+0.224
120	China	2.288	-0.003	146	Lebanon	2.752	-0.004
121	Djibouti	2.292	+0.116	147	Colombia	2.764	-0.033
122	Tajikistan	2.293	+0.047	148	Palestine <sup>a</sup>	2.832	..
123	Mauritania	2.295	-0.104	149	Nigeria	2.877	-0.065
124	Kyrgyz Republic	2.297	-0.007	150	North Korea	2.944	-0.032
125	Thailand	2.312	-0.120	151	Russia	3.079	-0.021
126	South Africa	2.316	-0.113	152	Congo, Dem. Rep. of	3.112	-0.002
127	Zimbabwe	2.322	+0.020	153	Pakistan	3.145	-0.003
128	Rwanda	2.323	-0.021	154	Libya	3.200	+0.197
129	Saudi Arabia	2.338	+0.094	155	Sudan	3.269	-0.081
130	Cameroon	2.356	+0.026	156	Ukraine	3.287	+0.237
131	Kenya	2.379	+0.016	157	Central African Rep.	3.354	-0.082
132	Bahrain	2.398	+0.161	158	Yemen	3.399	+0.446
133	Iran	2.411	-0.080	159	Somalia	3.414	+0.105
134	Azerbaijan	2.450	+0.016	160	Afghanistan	3.538	+0.036
135	Eritrea	2.460	+0.052	161	Iraq	3.570	+0.021
136	Chad	2.464	-0.063	162	South Sudan	3.593	+0.003
137	Mali	2.489	+0.027	163	Syria	3.806	+0.040
138	Burundi	2.500	+0.153				

.. = not applicable.

<sup>a</sup>Palestine has been added to the GPI for the first time and therefore has no prior rank or score.

geographical definition of Palestine for the purposes of the GPI includes the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, as well as the Gaza Strip.

The inclusion criteria in the GPI is on the basis that a country has a population of at least one million people or a landmass of greater than 20 000 km<sup>2</sup>. These criteria are not based on any specific political judgements or assumptions. Smaller countries present unique challenges for the measurement and comparability of data on direct violence. Beyond these thresholds for the minimum size of a country, inclusion in the Index is dependent on the availability, reliability and practicality of the data for each of the GPI's 23 indicators. The treatment of Palestine as a country-unit is substantiated by increasing international recognition of the State of Palestine, including (a) being granted non-member observer status by the United Nations in 2012, considered a *de facto* recognition; (b) being formally recognized by more than 130 other countries; and (c) being admitted as a member of the International Criminal Court in 2015. In addition, the State of Palestine administers its own bodies and institutions, such as a police force and a parliament, making it measurable from a data perspective.

## Sources and methods

The GPI's 23 indicators are divided into three thematic categories: (a) ongoing domestic and international conflict; (b) societal safety and security; and (c) militarization. EIU country analysts score the qualitative indicators, and gaps in the quantitative data are filled by estimates. The GPI is intended to review the state of peace in countries over the period 16 March 2015 to 15 March 2016, but some indicators are based on available data from 2013 and 2014.

Weights are assigned to each indicator, based on their relative importance, on a 1–5 scale. Two subcomponent weighted indices are then calculated from the 23 indicators: (a) measuring a country's level of internal peace; and (b) measuring a country's level of external peace (its state of peace beyond its borders). The overall composite score and index are then calculated by applying a weight of 60 per cent to the measure of internal peace and 40 per cent for external peace. A heavier weight is applied to internal peace on the assumption that a greater level of internal peace is likely to correlate with a lower level of external conflict.

1. *Measures of ongoing domestic and international conflict.* The six indicators in this category are (a) number, duration and role in external conflicts, with weight 2.28; (b) estimated number of deaths from organized external conflict (Uppsala Data Conflict Program), with weight 5; (c) number of deaths from organized internal conflict (International Institute for Strategic Studies, IISS, Armed Conflict Database), with weight 5; (d) level of organized internal conflict (EIU), with weight 5; (e) relations with neighbouring countries (EIU), with weight 5; and (f) the number and duration of internal conflicts with weight 2.56.

2. *Measures of societal safety and security.* The 10 indicators in this category are (a) perceptions of criminality in society (EIU), with weight 3; (b) number of refugees and internally displaced people as a percentage of the population (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Statistical Yearbook and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre), with weight 4; (c) political instability (EIU), with weight 4; (d) political terror scale (Mark Gibney, Linda Cornett, Reed Wood, Peter Haschke and Daniel Arnon, *The Political Terror Scale, 1976–2015*), with weight 4; (e) terrorist activity (Institute for Economics and Peace, IEP, and Global Terrorism Database, University of Maryland), with weight 2; (f) number of homicides per 100 000 people (UN Surveys on Crime Trends and the Operations of Criminal Justice Systems, CTS), with weight 4; (g) level of violent crime (EIU), with weight 4; (h) likelihood of violent demonstrations (EIU), with weight 3; (i) number of prisoners per 100 000 people (International Centre for Prison Studies, King's College London, World Prison Population List), with weight 3; and (j) number of internal security officers and police per 100 000 people (CTS), with weight 3.

3. *Measures of militarization.* The seven indicators in this category are (a) military expenditure as a percentage of GDP (IISS, *The Military Balance*), with weight 2; (b) number of armed services personnel per 100 000 people (IISS, *The Military Balance*), with weight 2; (c) volume of transfers of major conventional weapons (imports) per 100 000 people (SIPRI Arms Transfers Database), with weight 2; (d) volume of transfers of major conventional weapons (exports) per 100 000 people (SIPRI Arms Transfers Database), with weight 3; (e) funding for UN peacekeeping operations (IEP calculations from United Nations Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts), with weight 2; (f) nuclear and heavy weapons capability (IEP calculations from IISS, *The Military Balance*), with weight 3; and (g) ease of access to small arms and light weapons (EIU), with weight 3.

For the precise definition of each indicator see Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), *2016 Global Peace Index* (IEP: Sydney, 2016), Appendix B.