

IV. The Global Peace Index 2017

CAMILLA SCHIPPA AND THOMAS MORGAN
INSTITUTE FOR ECONOMICS AND PEACE

The 2017 Global Peace Index (GPI) is the eleventh 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. 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.¹ 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.

The overall GPI score improved in 2017, but the average country score is less peaceful now than in 2008. Three regions scored worse than the previous year, indicating deteriorating levels of peacefulness, while the six other regions all showed improvements in peacefulness. The largest deterioration in peacefulness occurred in North America, and there were smaller deteriorations in sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East and North Africa. The largest improvements in peacefulness occurred in South America, Russia and Eurasia, and the Asia-Pacific region.

North America recorded its biggest year-on-year deterioration in the GPI, owing to a reduction in peacefulness in the United States. Increased internal political tensions, partly seen in the divisive 2016 presidential elections, led to a worsening in the indicator measuring the intensity of internal conflict in the USA. There was also a deterioration in the level of perceived criminality in society, owing to a fall in the level of trust between citizens and recent increases in violent crime and homicides. There are signs that the deterioration in peacefulness in the USA might continue. Further entanglement in the Syrian civil war, increased military expenditure and worsening relations with China and Russia are all distinct possibilities.

The largest regional improvement in peacefulness occurred in South America, which improved across all three GPI domains, most notably in the

¹ More information on the IEP is available at <<http://www.economicsandpeace.org/>>. The panel was made up of the following experts in 2016–17: Kevin Clements, Chair (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 2.3. Countries with the greatest change in Global Peace Index (GPI) score, 2016–17

Country	Score, 2017	Change in score, 2016–17	Rank, 2017	Change in rank, 2016–17
<i>Top 5 national improvements in peace</i>				
Central African Republic	3.213	-0.119	155	2
Sri Lanka	2.019	-0.116	80	17
Cambodia	2.065	-0.103	89	15
Portugal	1.258	-0.098	3	2
Djibouti	2.196	-0.096	107	14
<i>Top 5 national deteriorations in peace</i>				
Ethiopia	2.477	0.193	134	-16
Burundi	2.641	0.14	141	-3
Saudi Arabia	2.474	0.136	133	-4
Mali	2.596	0.126	140	-3
Lesotho	2.066	0.125	90	-28

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

level of safety and security. The largest improvements occurred in Guyana and Argentina. Guyana held its first local elections since 1992 in March 2016, and there was a concordant fall in the likelihood of violent demonstrations, as well as a reduction in political instability. Similarly, improvements in the political climate in Argentina have resulted in improvements in two indicators: political terror and levels of political instability. In Colombia, the ramifications of the ceasefire and peace process between the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia–People’s Army (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia–Ejército del Pueblo, FARC–EP) (see section II) included a fall in the impact of terrorism and a reduction in internal conflict deaths. This also had positive spillover effects in Ecuador.

Both the largest improvement and the greatest deterioration in a single country occurred in the sub-Saharan Africa region: the Central African Republic had the biggest increase in peacefulness; Ethiopia recorded the largest decrease. Although the Central African Republic remains one of the world’s least peaceful countries and is ranked 155 on the index, a reduction in the number of deaths from internal conflict and a reduction in the level of political terror meant that its score improved considerably (see table 2.3). There were also improvements with regard to political stability, as successful elections in 2016 resulted in the imposition of term limits on the president and the creation of an upper chamber of the parliament.

Ethiopia recorded the largest deterioration in peacefulness. Its score fell by 0.193, and it fell 16 places from 118 to 134. This deterioration in peacefulness was reflected in the imposition of a state of emergency in Ethiopia in October 2016, following a year of protest-related violence. The increase in the intensity of internal conflict and in the number of deaths related to the

Table 2.4. The Global Peace Index, 2017

Rank	Country	Score	Change	Rank	Country	Score	Change
1	Iceland	1.111	-0.081	48	Malawi	1.825	0.01
2	New Zealand	1.241	-0.044	49	Panama	1.835	-0.002
3	Portugal	1.258	-0.098	50	Namibia	1.838	-0.037
4	Austria	1.265	-0.013	51	France	1.839	0.01
5	Denmark	1.337	0.091	52	Indonesia	1.85	0.05
6	Czech Republic	1.36	..	53	Timor-Leste	1.866	-0.017
7	Slovenia	1.364	-0.044	54	Tanzania	1.876	-0.023
8	Canada	1.371	-0.017	55	Argentina	1.88	-0.076
9	Switzerland	1.373	0.003	56	Serbia	1.888	0.019
10	Ireland	1.408	-0.024	57	Albania	1.908	0.007
10	Japan	1.408	0.013	58	Kuwait	1.909	0.055
12	Australia	1.425	-0.039	59	Viet Nam	1.919	0.018
13	Bhutan	1.474	0.029	60	Senegal	1.929	-0.049
14	Norway	1.486	-0.016	61	Equatorial Guinea	1.93	-0.01
15	Hungary	1.494	-0.042	62	Moldova	1.938	-0.015
16	Germany	1.5	0.014	63	Togo	1.939	-0.015
17	Finland	1.515	0.086	64	Cyprus	1.94	-0.05
18	Sweden	1.516	0.054	65	United Arab Emirates	1.944	0.051
19	Belgium	1.525	-0.003	66	Ecuador	1.948	-0.072
19	Netherlands	1.525	-0.016	67	Montenegro	1.95	0.028
21	Singapore	1.534	..	68	Paraguay	1.961	-0.075
22	Mauritius	1.547	-0.012	69	Tunisia	1.977	0.023
23	Spain	1.568	-0.039	70	Oman	1.983	-0.033
24	Chile	1.595	-0.04	71	Peru	1.986	-0.071
25	Romania	1.6	-0.049	72	Kazakhstan	1.992	-0.026
26	Slovakia	1.611	0.009	73	Greece	1.998	-0.047
27	Botswana	1.622	-0.021	74	Nicaragua	2.002	0.027
28	Bulgaria	1.631	-0.014	75	Morocco	2.004	-0.082
29	Malaysia	1.637	-0.01	76	Kosovo	2.007	-0.053
30	Qatar	1.664	-0.062	77	Swaziland	2.01	-0.064
31	Croatia	1.665	-0.005	78	Mozambique	2.013	0.052
32	Latvia	1.67	-0.011	79	Benin	2.014	0.015
33	Poland	1.676	0.119	80	Sri Lanka	2.019	-0.116
34	Costa Rica	1.701	0.002	81	Guyana	2.021	-0.086
35	Uruguay	1.709	-0.016	82	Liberia	2.023	0.026
36	Estonia	1.712	-0.021	83	Haiti	2.026	-0.04
37	Lithuania	1.732	-0.003	84	Bangladesh	2.035	-0.012
38	Italy	1.737	-0.036	84	Bosnia and Herzegovina	2.035	0.083
39	Sierra Leone	1.76	-0.046				
40	Taiwan	1.782	-0.004	86	Bolivia	2.045	0.005
41	United Kingdom	1.786	-0.045	87	Gabon	2.052	0.022
41	Zambia	1.786	0.006	88	Cuba	2.056	-0.001
43	Ghana	1.793	-0.016	89	Cambodia	2.065	-0.103
44	Madagascar	1.797	0.034	90	Lesotho	2.066	0.125
45	Laos	1.8	-0.052	91	Burkina Faso	2.07	0.006
46	Mongolia	1.801	-0.038	92	Jamaica	2.072	-0.019
47	South Korea	1.823	-0.034	93	Nepal	2.08	0.052

Rank	Country	Score	Change	Rank	Country	Score	Change
94	Georgia	2.084	-0.048	129	Iran	2.364	-0.043
95	Jordan	2.087	-0.027	130	Cameroon	2.39	0.034
96	Guinea	2.089	-0.059	131	Bahrain	2.404	0.005
97	Papua New Guinea	2.095	-0.047	132	Azerbaijan	2.426	-0.024
97	Trinidad and Tobago	2.095	0.036	133	Saudi Arabia	2.474	0.136
99	Dominican Republic	2.114	-0.029	134	Ethiopia	2.477	0.193
100	Angola	2.116	-0.028	135	Chad	2.495	0.032
101	Uzbekistan	2.132	-0.084	136	Eritrea	2.505	0.045
102	Macedonia (FYR)	2.133	0.005	137	India	2.541	-0.024
103	Belarus	2.141	-0.062	138	Philippines	2.555	0.044
104	Myanmar	2.179	-0.079	139	Egypt	2.583	0.014
105	Uganda	2.182	0.036	140	Mali	2.596	0.126
106	Honduras	2.185	-0.05	141	Burundi	2.641	0.14
107	Djibouti	2.196	-0.096	142	Mexico	2.646	0.089
108	Brazil	2.199	0.024	143	Venezuela	2.652	-0.003
109	Algeria	2.201	-0.014	144	Israel	2.707	0.068
110	Gambia	2.211	0.115	145	Palestine	2.774	-0.058
111	Kyrgyz Republic	2.216	-0.083	146	Colombia	2.777	0.014
112	Armenia	2.22	0.003	146	Turkey	2.777	0.069
113	Rwanda	2.227	-0.096	148	Lebanon	2.782	0.026
114	United States	2.232	0.079	149	Nigeria	2.849	-0.028
115	El Salvador	2.239	0.002	150	North Korea	2.967	0.023
116	China	2.242	-0.045	151	Russia	3.047	-0.027
117	Guatemala	2.245	-0.025	152	Pakistan	3.058	-0.085
118	Tajikistan	2.263	-0.034	153	Congo, Dem. Rep. of	3.061	-0.051
119	Turkmenistan	2.27	0.068	154	Ukraine	3.184	-0.077
120	Thailand	2.286	-0.027	155	Central African Rep.	3.213	-0.119
121	Côte d'Ivoire	2.307	0.028	155	Sudan	3.213	-0.047
122	Guinea-Bissau	2.309	0.044	157	Libya	3.328	0.108
123	South Africa	2.324	0.007	158	Somalia	3.387	-0.027
124	Congo, Republic of	2.334	0.027	159	Yemen	3.412	0.013
125	Kenya	2.336	-0.042	160	South Sudan	3.524	-0.069
126	Niger	2.343	0.106	161	Iraq	3.556	-0.014
127	Zimbabwe	2.352	0.032	162	Afghanistan	3.567	0.029
128	Mauritania	2.355	0.067	163	Syria	3.814	0.008

.. = not applicable.

conflict led the government to adopt sweeping powers as part of the declaration of a state of emergency, such as the ability to impose curfews and suspend due process.

At the global level, two of the three GPI domains recorded increases in peacefulness. Both the militarization and the societal safety and security domains improved in 2017 compared to the 2016 GPI. Only the ongoing international and domestic conflict domain recorded a decrease in peacefulness. Although more countries improved than deteriorated in this domain, the magnitude of the deterioration in several countries—most notably Ethiopia,

Saudi Arabia, Libya and the Gambia—meant that the average country score deteriorated (see table 2.4). There was a noticeable worsening in relations between neighbouring countries from those recorded in the previous edition of the GPI. Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland all witnessed deteriorations in peacefulness in this area, for example, all as a result of increasing tensions with Russia.

The impact of terrorism increased in 2016, continuing a decade-long trend. Sixty per cent of the countries included in the GPI have experienced an increase in terrorism since 2007, and the impact of terrorism has more than doubled in 22 countries. At the global level, deaths from terrorism rose from just over 11 000 in 2007 to over 29 000 in 2015, although the number of deaths peaked at 32 765 in 2014. The total number of terrorist incidents increased by 326 per cent over the same period, from approximately 2800 attacks in 2007 to just over 12 000 in 2015.

Although the level of ongoing conflict in the world is of serious concern, there have been some improvements in the level of militarization over the past year, echoing a much longer-term trend that has seen military expenditure, and the number of heavy weapons, fall in the majority of countries around the world. Sixty-five per cent of countries in the GPI have seen military expenditure fall as a percentage of GDP since 2008, 40 per cent have reduced the number of heavy weapons and 72 per cent have decreased the size of their armed services.

Interpreting the GPI score

Each of the 23 indicators in the GPI is assigned a score ('banded') on a scale of 1 to 5 and overall scores are produced for each country or territory. A score closer to 1 records a higher level 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 a single indicator. The GPI therefore 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 above refer to changes in *GPI score* rather than changes in *GPI ranking*. It is important to use score change rather than 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 are ranked in the index, small changes in score can result in large changes in ranking, and occasionally small score changes will not correspond to movements in ranking in the same direction. This may be 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 is related to the broader issue of the robustness of rankings that must be considered when assessing any composite measure. On this issue, analysis by the IEP shows that the GPI is at the same level of absolute robustness as the Human Development Index (HDI).

Methodology

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 2016 to 15 March 2017, but some indicators are based on available data from 2014 and 2015.

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) the number, duration and role in external conflicts, with weight 2.28; (b) the estimated number of deaths from organized external conflict (Uppsala Data Conflict Program), with weight 5; (c) the number of deaths from organized internal conflict (International Institute for Strategic Studies, IISS, Armed Conflict Database), with weight 5; (d) the intensity 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) the 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 (Gibney, M. et al., The Political Terror Scale, 1976–2015, retrieved 1 March 2017, <<http://www.politicalterrorscale.org>>), with weight 4; (e) terrorism impact (Institute for Economics and Peace, IEP, and Global Terrorism Database, University of Maryland), with weight 2; (f) the number of homicides per 100 000 people (UN Surveys on Crime Trends and the Operations of Criminal Justice Systems, CTS), with weight 4; (g) the level of violent crime (EIU), with weight 4; (h) the likelihood of violent demonstrations (EIU), with weight 3; (i) the number of prisoners per 100 000 people (Institute for Criminal Policy Research, Birkbeck, University of London, World Prison Population List), with weight 3; and (j) the 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) the number of armed services personnel per 100 000 people (IISS, *The Military Balance*), with weight 2; (c) the volume of transfers of major conventional weapons (imports) per 100 000 people (SIPRI Arms Transfers Database), with weight 2; (d) the 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 UN 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), 2017 *Global Peace Index* (IEP: Sydney, June 2017), Appendices A and B.