PATHFINDERS FOR
PEACEFUL, JUST AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES

The Movement to Halve Global Violence by 2030
A New Landscape of Cooperation in the time of COVID-19
28-29 July, 2020 Expert-level Virtual Workshop
The Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies together with Wilton Park, and with the support of the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID), the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) and German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO), convened more than 50 leading experts, thinkers and policy influencers working on issues of violence prevention and reduction.

This virtual workshop successfully secured support for a global movement to halve global violence by 2030 and deliver on the promise of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Leading experts across various fields of violence prevention provided new, bold and concrete ideas on how international organizations, cities, civil society and business can work together to reduce violence by 50 percent in the next 10 years under the UN Decade of Action and Recovery on SDGs.

Participants also discussed shared strategies on how to capture rising political leadership and momentum for change as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to exacerbate violence and instability around the world.

The meeting took place with the support of Wilton Park under Chatham house rules. The highlights below capture the main observations, ideas, and suggestions shared by the participants.

We would like to thank DFID and SDC for generously supporting the online convening at Wilton Park, as well as the key research and evidence review production in the lead up to the event.
How to Cut Violence in Half by 2030?

The devastating impact of violence is well known and studied. The cost of inaction is increasingly evident. While the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are yet to be fully understood, the effects of the novel coronavirus threaten to set back the peacebuilding gains and create new challenges. In response, our priorities must be to:

- **Forge a high ambition platform** that inspires political leadership, recruits champions, and drives national and local action on violence prevention and reduction.
- **Center COVID-19 recovery efforts** on rebuilding resilience, social cohesion and trust to circumvent a resurgence in social unrest, political conflict, and violence.
- **Focus on evidence-based strategies** informed by robust data and steered experimentation.
- **Double down on hotpots**, with cities as units of analysis, ambition, and action.
- **Unpack linkages between different forms of violence**, especially as the pandemic is shifting patterns of violence and conflict with lasting impact which might be experienced for generations.
- **Promote smart financing** that prioritizes evidence-based, high-impact solutions to reduce violence.
- **Rebuild multilateralism** and cooperation to prevent and reduce violence;
- **Partner with youth and local activists** to design solutions that can sustain future crises.

These shared priorities require shifting beyond single model of engagement to a portfolio approach that identifies a manageable set of projects tightly aligned with collective goals and resources. This will help bind relationships that are flexible enough to respond to different spectrums of violence, hone in on specific priorities based on need and opportunity, and span different countries and cities as partners discover new and context-specific strategies to achieve shared goals. It also provides a dynamic framework to break down existing silos, drive engagement and consensus across a range of stakeholders, and deliver tangible results.

While the path to success will look different in each context, local solutions and country actors should be front and center in our movement. Global and regional stakeholders can continue to play supporting roles, since the tangible progress can only be achieved through lasting partnerships, common language and common approaches.

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1. *Forecasting the Dividends of Conflict Prevention*, July 2020
Where to Focus our Efforts?

In interactive deep-dives, the question of how to have the most impact on violence reduction going forward, while making difficult tradeoffs with limited political and financial resources, guided the discussions.

Interpersonal Violence

Participants acknowledged that tackling violence against women and children is core to achieving the ambition of ‘halving’ global violence by 2030. Existing evidence\(^2\) demonstrates that interpersonal violence is preventable, and can serve as a foundation for a more systematic violence prevention strategy. There was also broad consensus on the following set of obstacles that must be overcome to drive measurable progress:

- **The pandemic has exposed cracks in some prevention measures**, and it is unclear to what extent authorities are incorporating violence prevention in long term recovery and stimulus packages.
- **Existing silos hinder real progress**, preventing policymakers and donors from leveraging existing synergies in the prevention of conflict, interpersonal violence, and other forms of violence that have multiple common drivers.
- **Limited evidence on attributing factors to violence reduction**, particularly in fields such as children nutrition, smoking, diabetes, mental health, education, jobs, and economic development.
- **Funding streams are drying up**, especially for community and advocacy groups as existing funding avenues become increasingly earmarked for specific interventions only (e.g. preventing violent extremism).
- **Interpersonal violence is being normalized**, ever more seen as a private matter not within the realm of the state.
- **Disconnected messaging is slowing global momentum**, with few champions to influence public policy and opinion alongside youth and child advocates.

In response, participants gave concrete recommendations:

- **Design a multi-stakeholder strategy**, that breaks down existing silos, propels joint action across different actors, and unifies common approaches and messaging.
- **Build linkages across dimensions of violence**, particularly in fragile and conflict settings as rates of violence against women are a strong predictor for conflict eruption.

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\(^2\) For more information, consult resources such as: A Review of the Evidence and a Global Strategy for Violence Prevention (March 2020), What Works to Prevention Violence Against Women, End Violence Against Children; INSPIRE: Seven Strategies for Ending Violence Against Children (2016); RESPECT Women: Preventing Violence Against Women (2019); Safe to Learn.
- **Make a compelling investment case**, aimed at mobilizing smart funding, scaling data-driven approaches, and propelling further research and innovation where there are evidence gaps and limitations.

- **Recruit influential leaders and champions**, charged with influencing policy, amplifying core messaging, and mobilize public support and resources. Advocates should be wide ranging and geographically diverse across survivors, policymakers, businesses, celebrities, and local and city authorities.

- **Invest in communities, cities and local authorities**, by building trust through dialogues, helping at risk group, particularly women and children, and reaffirming the legitimacy of authority in a time of global crisis.

**Urban Violence and Violent Crime**

The recognition that violence is spatially concentrated at neighborhood or street corner level set the tone for the discussion about urban violence and organized crime. Participants agreed prevention strategies must be informed by evidence and data, focusing on reducing risk factors and accelerating resilience and protection. There was also agreement around the following cluster of challenges to urban violence reduction and prevention:

- **Pandemic has concentrated in cities**, exacerbating underlying drivers of violence, such as self-harm and family violence, fueling conflict over limited resources, eroding public trust, and reinforcing organized crime.

- **Securitized responses are overshadowing evidence-based policymaking**, paired with high tolerance for what is thought of as “bad guys killing bad guys” trends in cities.

- **Limited policy attention and space on the local level** hinders programming, innovation and funding, especially in light of devolved authorities and, at times, rival national political forces.

- **Mixed messaging on urban violence**, especially as young men drive violence rates and the number of victims in Central America, South America, and Africa.

- **Relationship with other forms of violence is still unclear**, both geographic as well as thematically.

- **Few global champions on urban violence**, with existing advocates representing single issue, targeted campaigns.

To reverse this trend, participants provided the following recommendations:

- **Use cities as a unit of analysis, ambition and action**, with local organizations and city authorities at the forefront of the movement to halve violence in the coming decade.

- **Design a global strategy with a sub-set of initiatives**, each with tailored priorities set and driven by local, city and national leaders. This portfolio

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### What works to prevent urban violence

- ✓ Hot spot policing
- ✓ Focused deterrence
- ✓ Alternate sentencing/restorative justice
- ✓ Cognitive behavioral therapy & life skills development
- ✓ Early childhood interventions
- ✓ Targeted alcohol regulations
- ✓ Crime prevention by environmental design
- ✓ Security-related technologies
approach allows for greater flexibility, local ownership, and collaboration across different levels and actors.

- **Pilot new and innovations interventions to keep the city streets safe**, leveraging lock downs and temporary decreases in urban violence in some areas of the world.

- **Fill the gaps in our evidence base**, focused on hotspots and informed by available data and proven interventions to reduce violence in urban contexts.

- **Invest in positive alternatives to violence**, strengthening the quality of relationships between people, within communities and patterns of resilience and social cohesion.

- **Pursue quick wins**, immediate actions and policy solutions that show change in violence reduction is possible, drive engagement, and motivate collaboration.

**Human Rights Abuses, Conflict, Fragility and Violence**

The current global geo-political situation has created an environment ripe for clashes between citizen and security forces and decreased trust between citizens and institutions. The ongoing pandemic has further worsened the human rights and violence trends. Participants outlined the following challenges to addressing rising human rights abuses, conflict, fragility and violence:

- **Emergency measures are heavy-handed**, increasing the abuse of civil liberties and human rights and compounding confrontations between citizens and state, and igniting discrimination, stigmatization, and hate speech.

- **Marginalized communities face the highest risks**, including racial and ethnic groups, religious minorities, women, immigrants, and people living in or being forced to flee conflict zones towards borders that are now closed. These populations are also the most likely to experience challenges in accessing resources, public services and healthcare.

- **Civil society space is shrinking**, restricting outlets for peaceful protest, avenues to resolve grievances, and opportunities to counter misinformation.

- **Rapid urbanization is shifting conflict to cities**, deepening structural problems as economies have not transformed to provide jobs, basic needs and people-centered services for all.

To trigger joint action, participants suggested to:

- **Design and enforce response and recovery measures fairly**, by complying with human rights standards, introducing safeguards for at-risk communities, and supporting partnerships with local communities.

- **Reinforce existing prevention mechanisms**, including national human rights institutions and oversight parliamentary committees, to scrutinize new policies and ensure fair and effective implementation.

**What works to prevent human rights abuses**

- ✓ Build state capacity & strengthen national institutions and legal frameworks

- ✓ Support strong and diverse civil society & peaceful movements

- ✓ Rebuild trust between citizens & the state by support transitional justice processes

**What works to prevent conflict**

- ✓ Build state capacity & strengthen institutions

- ✓ Set permanent national negotiation & mediation structures

- ✓ Promote peace education & intracommunity dialogue

- ✓ Establish early warning systems

- ✓ Mediation, prevention actions from international actors

- ✓ International assistance
- **Promote intergenerational and community-based dialogue**, by helping communities to influence and monitor public service delivery, identify and respond to abuses by the security services, and combat hate speech.

- **Strengthen state and local capacity**, by training authorities responding to violence, equipping local actors with knowledge and skills in conflict mediation, and investing in security sector reform.

- **Elevate champions to promote peace and tolerance**, including community elders and religious leaders building local capacity for peace and social cohesion all the while expanding civic space.

- **Boost UN human rights analysis**, including through the creative use of human rights mechanisms (e.g. Special Rapporteurs) and ensuring that human rights are fully integrated into recovery plans.

- **Integrate transitional justice mechanisms** to rebuild trust, promote dialogue and exchange of experiences, and address the socio-emotional impact of the pandemic on affected populations.
3 | Where Do We Go from Here?

While the appetite for global cooperation is quickly dissipating, there is greater intolerance to the status quo, more awareness of the nature of the problem of violence, a deepening evidence base of what works, and new forms of social mobilization and movements demanding for change.

The Pathfinders presented a bold goal to convene a global movement to halve violence for the coming decade, building on the efforts of partners and participants present. The goal would be to set high level targets, accelerate unity of effort, expand financing, and deliver measurable results in terms of lives saved, victims assisted, and future violence prevented. This requires a portfolio approach defined across achievable units of time.

- **In the immediate term**, between now and the end of 2020, we need to consolidate the movement and set out a concrete strategy. This starts with assembling and mobilizing a powerful multi-stakeholder coalition of national and city governments, leading international agencies, dedicated NGOs, business groups and philanthropic actors. Central to this effort is establishing a task force of key member states and a network of city mayors, driven by the Peace in Our Cities initiative. Pathfinders is also partnering with Peace One Day³ to ignite a global movement for peace supported by tens of millions around the world. The violence reduction agenda will also be squarely included in the Decade of Action.

- **In the medium term**, from 2021 to 2023, we need to disseminate the most informed ideas about what works, support national and subnational governments and civil society groups deliver solutions, and involve the voice of young people and the private sector. We expect to see the task force members also bringing in additional national and subnational partners, and developing innovative to finance comprehensive strategies. Pathfinders will be amplifying the "success stories" across different areas - conflict prevention, crime reduction, SGBV efforts, and extremist violence. We will need to ensure that we work toward - and track - real impacts and report back on results no later than 2023.

- **In the longer-term**, efforts towards 2025, we will be focusing on both areas of highest need and quick wins, i.e. areas of impact where modest interventions and innovative solutions can drive big reductions in most serious forms of violence. There are opportunities to achieve rapid and dramatic declines in violence, as well as to make investments in generation structural transformation. We need to show progress is possible, and durable violence prevention and reduction requires multiple forms of engagement. Pathfinders will also host a review conference by 2025 to assess results.

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³ Check [here](#) to learn more about the Peace One Day Live Global Digital Experience 2020
In response, participants provided feedback and further ideas on direction and strategic actions needed to build a global movement to halve all forms of violence worldwide in the next 10 years. Participants recognized that the energy to halve violence will not always come from the national level, and that solutions and results at the local level must also drive the campaign.

Participants also discussed three different engagement approaches with countries and cities:

- **Option One**: working closely with a small set of countries to generate quick wins, momentum for change, and success stories to demonstrate progress is achievable.

- **Option Two**: pursuing Option One while also working with a larger set of countries to showcase measurable progress at the city level.

- **Options Three**: engaging all countries and cities that are willing to join.

On the objectives and priorities of the movement, participants recommended a portfolio approach based on a sub-set of projects with tightly aligned objectives. This approach would be sufficiently nimble to allow countries and cities to set priorities based on their specific context and needs. It would also establish a dynamic, bottom-up framework to drive progress on different, crosscutting dimensions of violence and recruit advocates and champions from around the world.
Participants also noted that anchoring the movement in a set of values will be challenging if the movement is predominately State-based. They highlighted the need to mitigate some significant risks around the recent wave to ‘rebuild multilateralism’, with some actors using counter-terrorism as a basis to forge cooperation.

Participants also pointed out the need to identify a set of common definitions, language and messaging. For example, defining parameters around halving different dimensions of violence. Relatedly, participants also called for a better understanding of the economic underpinnings of violence, including a case for investment with incentives. Participants also highlighted the importance of gender responsive approaches, emphasizing the need to strengthen the evidence on gender-based violence and clarify gender roles and masculinity in the perpetration of violence.

While issues of violence and conflict have not ranked high on the UN agenda as it nears its 75th anniversary, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and mobilization of the broader community around the movement to halve global violence is a unique opportunity to change this. The highlights of the report, paired with recommendations that feed into the crowd-sourced UN75 initiative, will inform the direction of the thinking and action of the global policy community for years to come.

**Workshop Material**

**Meeting Agenda**

**Participants List and Biographies**

**Presentation during Wilton Park Workshop**

**Pathfinders Publications**

**Halving Global Violence in a COVID-19 Era**

**A Review of the Evidence and a Global Strategy for Violence Prevention**

**Forecasting the Dividends of Conflict Prevention from 2020-30**

**Future Trends in Homicide – Extrapolations from 2019-2030**

**The Roadmap for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies**
Resources Exchanged

- What Works to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls Global Programme, *Evidence Hub: What works resources*
- Pathfinders, *Justice for All and the Economic Crisis* (July 2020).
- Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS), *Fighting COVID-19, Building Peace - a civil society perspective* (July 2020).
- Rachel Locke and Laura Bailey, *#BuildaBridgeToBetter: Recommendations to Drive Pandemic Responses* (April 2020).
- United States Institute of Peace et al., *Ceasefires in a Time of COVID* (July 2020).
- Saferworld, *The role of the security sector in COVID-19 response: An opportunity to ‘build back better’?* (July 2020).
- International Center for Non-profit Law & European Center for Non-Profit Law, *COVID-19 Civic Freedom Tracker*
- The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), *COVID-19 Disorder Tracker*
- World Bank Fragility Forum Event, Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice at the University of San Diego, *A Mayor’s Call: Making the Case for Peace in Our Cities* (July 2020).
- Global Parliament of Mayors, *Invitation to support GPM Resolution to reduce violence by 50% in 2030* (June 2020).
- Global Parliament of Mayors, Resolution on Reducing Violence in Cities (June 2020).
- UN75, UN75 Survey Data Results (2020).