

Halve Global violence in a COVID-19 era

BY 2030



The [Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies](#) is a global coalition of about 35 governments with partners from all sectors committed to accelerating the implementation of the SDG targets for peace, justice, and inclusion. The program is hosted by the Center on International Cooperation (CIC) at New York University which provides the action platform, docking station, think tank and secretariat for the Pathfinders alliance.

The world is entering a volatile and unstable phase. With the COVID-19 pandemic set to persist for years, the global economy is headed into a significant decline. Structural inequalities, unemployment and food insecurity are likely to rise. The risks of social unrest, political violence, and armed conflict are growing more intense. There is already evidence of a sharp uptick in domestic and sexual violence. Communal tensions are flaring, with violent protests breaking out across the world.

The 2015 Sustainable Development Goals provide an unprecedented opportunity to build a world that reduces exclusion, fear and violence – all by 2030. This was never going to be easy. Even before COVID-19, powerful trends and interests held back progress towards peace, justice and inclusion (SDG16+). The world experienced dangerous levels of violence affecting one in six people. 89,000 people were killed in armed conflicts in 2018. More than 70 million people are currently dislocated as refugees or internally displaced. Almost 500,000 more people were murdered outside war zones. And up to 1 billion children are victims of some form of violence annually. With growing inequality, destitution and anger, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the failure of governments to adequately respond may accelerate these trends in the months and years to come.

Bold global, national and subnational leadership and high-level ambition will be critical to set priorities and deliver a lasting transformation towards peace on the ground. National and city governments, businesses, non-governmental and civic organizations require access to the highest quality knowledge and resources to scale-up what is working. They also need to form strategic coalitions to implement shared strategies, exchange information about policy options, and replicate success stories and solutions.

The Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies was set up to realize such goals and accelerate the delivery of SDG16+. Pathfinders are committed to launching and supporting a global movement to halve violence by 2030. It is partnering with at least 100 national governments, city authorities, international and national organizations, as well as business and philanthropic groups to prioritize and scale-up concrete and practical solutions to prevent and reduce multiple categories of violence. The movement coincides with the 75th Anniversary of the UN and the Decade of Action to accelerate the SDGs. Without dramatic action and achievements when it comes to violence, Agenda 2030 will fail. This document provides an overview of the Pathfinders' strategy for reaching the goals and assisting national and subnational decision-makers to mobilize support for, and implement, the goals to halve global violence.

PATHFINDERS

FOR PEACEFUL, JUST AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES

HOSTED BY THE NYU CENTER ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The Pathfinders

The Pathfinders identifies a number of high-profile 'grand challenges' that require sustained leadership and support if SDG16+ is to be achieved. In these areas, the Pathfinders aim is to set policy and learning agendas, raise ambition and increase political will.

The Pathfinders is unique, in that:

- **It is the only global action multi-stakeholder platform** exclusively focused on increasing political will and driving national action for promoting justice for all, preventing violence, and tackling exclusion and inequality
- **It has existing relationships with governments and civil society actors** that have been put to good, practical use in the early stages of the COVID-19 response
- **It is known for its powerful convening role** as a reliable external institutional body, to support results based on country needs and priorities
- **It has a proven track record of identifying politically viable, evidence-based strategies**, drawing upon the capacity, expertise and reach of its global network of countries and partners
- **It connects Pathfinder members to a broad network of partners**, promoting greater coordination and collaboration to achieve greater impact with less resources
- **It brings together a wide range of countries and partners committed to SDG16+ implementation**, fostering trust that enables in-depth sharing of experiences and unique learning opportunities

The Pathfinders' Roadmap, negotiated in 2016 and renewed in 2019, identifies areas where the secretariat provides catalytic support to Pathfinder members in order to accelerate national implementation and forge a powerful international movement for good governance, peace, justice and inclusion. New with this initiative on 16.1 is the inclusion of cities, through Peace in Our Cities (PiOC) and the Global Parliament of Mayors (GPM), with which we can build more efficient national delivery and stronger international campaigns. Building a positive, solutions-focused, evidence-based narrative is critical for driving action and raising ambition, as evident in successful global campaigns for disarmament and the climate change movement.

Pathfinders Member States as of July 2020



The Grand Challenge

The movement to halve violence by 2030 is not a radical proposition. There is already a binding political commitment by UN member states in SDG16.1 requiring signatories to “significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere”. With SDG16.3, states have also agreed to “eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation” and to “end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.” Moreover, there are many examples of countries and cities that have, with the right combination of leadership, interventions, resourcing and monitoring, delivered great reductions in violence in a short period of time.

Researchers are also starting to understand, based on evidence from around the world, what kinds of policies and programs may diminish conflict, crime and sexual and gender-based violence. Armed with this evidence, the Pathfinders and its partners have the power to help reduce violence further. While COVID-19 may well exacerbate multiple forms of political and social unrest and armed violence, this outcome is not inevitable. Countries, cities and communities *can* rapidly accelerate reductions in violence if they ground strategies in the best available evidence and learn from pioneers from around the world.

We already know that we can:

- **Reduce urban violence** by investing in hot spot policing; focused deterrence; alternate sentencing/restorative justice; cognitive behavioral therapy and life skills development; early childhood interventions; targeted alcohol regulations; crime prevention through environmental design; security-related technologies.
- **End violence against women and girls** by strengthening relationship skills; empowerment of women; services that protect women; reduction of gender-based poverty and inequality; making environments more safe and secure; preventing child and adolescent abuse; transformed attitudes, beliefs and norms.
- **Eradicate violence against children** by implementing and enforcing child protection legislation; norms and values that favor child protection and development; safe environments and spaces for children; parent and caregiver support; income and economic strengthening; responses and support services; education and life-skills.
- **Pursue disarmament and arms regulation and control** through evidence-based strategies. Greater access to firearms is linked to more armed violence – whether measured in terms of homicide, suicide, rape or unintentional injuries. The ownership and carrying of guns do not inhibit crime. There are no protective effects of looser gun legislation. Strengthened background checks, mandatory waiting periods, and permit-to-purchase of firearms and ammunition have strong positive effects in reducing violence.
- **Prevent conflict-related violence** by promoting macro-economic stability; democratic participation; expanding and enhancing gender equality; promoting more peaceful narratives and behaviors; ensuring fair and high-quality service delivery; supporting early-warning systems; fostering mediation; promoting inclusive dialogue for peace processes; fostering power-sharing and engaging in security sector reform.
- **Prevent human rights abuses and mass atrocities** by strengthening national strategies and enhancing the capacity of national and local institutions to prevent it; ensuring training of the security and justice sectors; promoting plural and diverse civil society; advocating for international instruments; establishing systems of historical memory and transitional justice; building mechanisms to end torture in all its forms.

- **Prevent violent extremism** by avoiding and limiting repressive security measures; strengthening social and economic inclusion for at-risk groups; supporting the opening-up more space for civil society engagement; fostering public dialogue to promote tolerance and non-violence.

Pathfinders will mobilize broadly around these clusters. The prior four areas above may get particular focus in the first 1-2 years, given their particular relevance for the post-COVID-19 period and where it may be urgent to empower civil society and local actors to build **cohesion and community resilience to withstand emerging threats and crises**.

Coordinated by the Pathfinders, the movement will be directed by several partners – each of which will activate their respective networks. A shortlist of key partners includes agencies such as WHO, PBSO, UNODC, UNICEF, UNDP, UN Habitat, UN Women and major global partnerships; regional organizations, especially in regions that share a disparate burden of violence; humanitarian and development organizations involved in community violence prevention such as DDG, IRC, Oxfam and others, as well as grass-roots mobilizers, think tanks and the business sector.

Homicidal violence tends to be hyper-concentrated in metropolitan and urban spaces. Getting more cities on board a broader movement to reduce violence is therefore crucial. National governments must lead efforts to end violence, but mayors and city networks such as GPM and PiOC have a central role to play, including a virtual resolution with 10 actions to prevent and reduce violence at an urban scale. Both the GPM and PiOC will accelerate city commitments to halve violence between 2021 and the end of 2024. They will do this by expanding signatories to a common declaration, providing technical expertise to mayors and city planners to prevent and reduce violence, and by identifying conditional financing opportunities to the world's most badly affected urban centers, especially in Africa, the Middle East, South and South Asia and Latin America.

Latest Publications



23 April 2020

World Economic Forum: We urgently need major cooperation on global security in the COVID-19 era



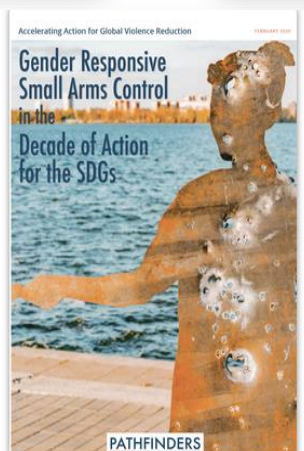
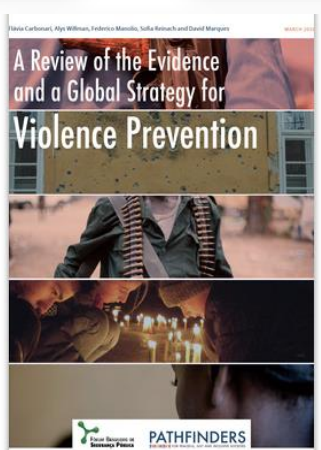
14 April 2020

Foreign Policy: We Can Make the Post-Coronavirus World a Much Less Violent Place



27 March 2020

Global Dashboard: Peace and Pandemics: How COVID-19 will impact violence and what we can do about it



Launching the Global Movement to Halve Violence by 2030

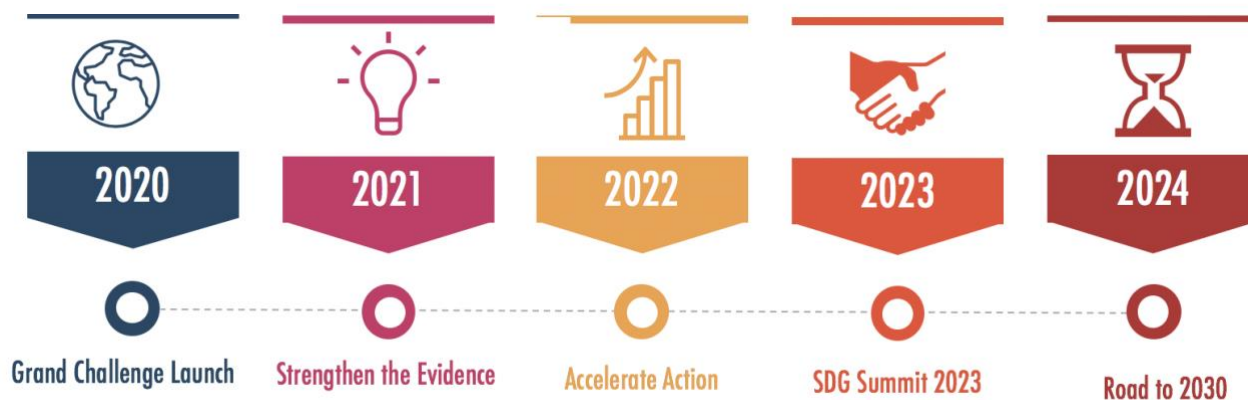
In September 2020 during Peace One Day, Pathfinders will launch a global movement to halve all forms of violence by 2030, with a view to developing a shared action agenda for policymakers worldwide.

The remainder of 2020 will be devoted to forming a *high-level taskforce* composed of no more than 15 people with senior level representation (ministerial level and organizational leaders), and will meet twice a year (2021 – 2023). The task force will deliberate over a draft *strategic plan* developed by the Pathfinders, in consultation with global experts during 2021. The strategic plan will clearly account for the realities of COVID-19, including the likelihood of a severely depressed economy and growing tension in many countries facing persistent infectious disease outbreaks. That strategy will later be refined into annual action plans as we see the effects of broad government and city action; monitored amongst others by the *violence monitoring dashboard* we aim to develop, and supported by a powerful communication platform.

Clusters of work and *applied research work* will be formed around the areas of: domestic violence; violence against children; urban violence; violence against women as well as extremism, conflict-related violence and mass atrocities in order to assure regularly updated information and research in key areas, highlighting prevention, solutions, best cases, and experiences for the task force to take forward. Working with globally renowned research partners, Pathfinders will generate insights on specific geographical areas with a view to supporting the task force in taking the ambitions, plans and strategy forward.

The coalition to halve violence will for the time being be mobilized around a 4-5 year plan. The aim is to build a broad movement with regional and national activities throughout 2021/2022. The goal is to assist members to convert commitments made in 2020 to deeds, and to report progress in yearly HLPF gatherings thereafter. We will craft a powerful *strategic communications plan* to broaden membership—especially at the city and grassroots levels—and promote support for the halving violence agenda. The focus will particularly be on the countries and cities that are most dramatically affected by violence. *Evidence-based strategies* and *regularly updated research* will form the platform of the outreach and communication strategy.

Key Milestones



The existing *Peace in our Cities* Campaign will continue and should be part of the broader halving violence strategy. The network is currently coordinated by the Pathfinders. It is under-resourced but has great potential and is gaining traction. It currently has 16 cities in the network, but is among others in talks with the Global Mayors for Peace about mergers, and is receiving considerable interest from many holds.

By late 2023, the movement will provide targeted technical support to national and city counterparts in selected countries to help deliver violence prevention and reduction efforts. On the basis of defined paired partnerships—between two or more participating states—Pathfinders will offer demand-driven advice to accelerate violence prevention and reduction efforts. Working in partnership with the Pathfinders, the movement will host a review conference to assess results in 2024, including exploring opportunities to adjust goals, metrics and partnerships.

PATHFINDERS
| | | | | | | | | | FOR PEACEFUL, JUST AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES

HOSTED BY THE NYU CENTER ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION