2014 Global Peace Index:
Seven year trend in violence overturns 60 years of increasing peacefulness
New model identifies countries at risk of descending into violence and unrest

- The ten countries most likely to deteriorate in peace in the next two years are Zambia, Haiti, Argentina, Chad, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Nepal, Burundi, Georgia, Liberia and Qatar.
- Global violence impacted the global economy by US$9.8 trillion or 11.3% of GDP in the last year, an increase of US$179 billion YOY, through upward revisions of China’s military expenditure and the number and intensity of internal conflicts.
- Syria displaces Afghanistan as the world’s least peaceful nation while Iceland maintains its status as the most peaceful country in the world.
- Georgia showed the largest improvement in peace levels, while South Sudan experienced the largest drop and now ranks as the third least peaceful country.

LONDON, June 18, 2014 – Terrorist activity, the number of conflicts fought, and the number of refugees and displaced persons were the key contributors to the continuing deterioration in global peacefulness last year. This confirms a seven year gradual, but significant downward slide, which overturns a 60-year trend of increasing global peacefulness dating back to the end of the Second World War.

The economic impact of containing and dealing with the consequences of global violence last year was estimated to be US$9.8 trillion, according to the latest Global Peace Index (GPI) released today. This is equivalent to 11.3% of global GDP – equal to twice the size of the 54 countries in the African economy.

Steve Killelea, founder and Executive Chairman of the IEP observed, “Many macro factors have driven the deterioration in peace over the last seven years including the continued economic repercussions of the Global Financial Crisis, the reverberations of the Arab Spring, and the continued spread of terrorism. As these effects are likely to continue into the near future; a strong rebound in peace is unlikely.

“This is resulting in very real costs to the world economy; increases in the global economic impact of violence and its containment are equivalent to 19% of global economic growth from 2012 to 2013. To put this in perspective, this is around $1,350 per person. The danger is that we fall into a negative cycle: low economic growth leads to higher levels of violence, the containment of which produces lower economic growth.”

The Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), which produces the report, has also developed new statistical modelling techniques to identify the 10 countries most threatened by increased levels of unrest and violence in the next two years. These models have a 90% historical accuracy. Countries with higher levels of risk include Zambia, Haiti, Argentina, Chad, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Nepal, Burundi, Georgia, Liberia and World Cup 2022 host Qatar.

The new methodology analyses a data set stretching back to 1996, and compares countries with the performance of states with similar institutional characteristics.

“What is transformational in this analysis is our ability to compare a country’s current level of peace with the potential for it to increase or decrease in violence in the future. A country’s potential for peace is shaped by many positive factors including sound institutions, well-functioning government, low levels of corruption and a pro-business environment which we call the Pillars of Peace. These models are revolutionary for assessing country risk; positive
peace factors tend to align over longer periods of time with actual levels of violence thereby allowing real predictive accuracy,” said Steve Killelea.

“Given the deteriorating global situation we cannot be complacent about the institutional bedrocks for peace: our research shows that peace is unlikely to flourish without deep foundations. This is a wake up call to governments, development agencies, investors and the wider international community that building peace is the prerequisite for economic and social development.”

In the IEP’s current assessment, Cote d’Ivoire recorded the second biggest improvement in the GPI 2014 with reductions in the likelihood of violent demonstrations and in the number of displaced persons, while the largest improvement occurred in Georgia, as it gradually returns to normality following its 2011 conflict with Russia.

The most peaceful region of the world continues to be Europe while the least peaceful region is South Asia. Afghanistan has been displaced at the bottom of the index by Syria due to a slight improvement in its peace while Syria continued to deteriorate. South Sudan experienced the largest drop in the index this year falling to 160th and now ranking as the third least peaceful country. Major deteriorations also occurred in Egypt, Ukraine and Central African Republic.

OTHER REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Europe once again leads the world in terms of its overall levels of peace, with the Scandinavian countries performing particularly well. The top five positions remain unchanged from 2013. Most of the improvements in peace are in the Balkans, an area that has traditionally been the most turbulent in the region.

North America’s score deteriorates slightly, mostly on account of a rise in terrorist activity in the US, related to the Boston-marathon attack in April 2013. The region retains its position as the second-most peaceful in the world, largely on account of Canada’s score.

The Asia-Pacific region remains among the most peaceful in the world: it ranks third, behind Europe and North America, and suffers only a very modest deterioration from its 2013 score. The Philippines saw a deterioration in its ‘relations with neighbouring countries’ score on the back of tensions with China relative to the South China Sea dispute. Countries in the Indochina sub-region, as well as North Korea, continue to be at the bottom of the region. In contrast, New Zealand, Japan, Australia, Singapore and Taiwan all rank in the top 30.

South America scores slightly above the global average, with the strongest improvements coming from Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay. In contrast Uruguay, which retains its position as the region’s most peaceful country, sees its score deteriorate as a result of a rise in the number of police and security forces. Internal tensions underline the trends in the two lowest scoring countries in the region, Colombia and Venezuela.

Peace in Central America and the Caribbean remains challenging, but the region manages to improve slightly compared to its 2013 score and ranks only slightly below the global average. Jamaica and Nicaragua are the biggest improvers through improvements in their domestic safety and security scores. Mexico, which continues to be mired in a vicious drug war, falls slightly due to an increase in the number of internal security officers.

Sub-Saharan Africa sees the second largest deterioration in the regional scores but still fares better than Russia and Eurasia, Middle-East and North Africa as well as South Asia. Four out
of the ten countries with the largest negative score changes come from this region, topped by South Sudan and the Central African Republic.

Russia and Eurasia shows a modest improvement in the rankings, and benefits from positive score changes from all but four of the twelve states in the region. Undoubtedly, the key event in the region is the crisis between Russia and Ukraine. This caused both Ukraine and Russia's performance in domestic and international conflict to tumble. Russia remains the least peaceful country in the region and one of the poorest performers globally, ranking 152nd.

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) remains in the headlines as numerous conflicts stemming from the Arab Spring continue to escalate. Egypt and Syria are, unsurprisingly, the two countries that see their overall scores deteriorate most, with Egypt suffering the second-steepest decline globally.

South Asia remains at the bottom of the overall regional rankings; however its score did improve more substantially than any other region. All countries in South Asia improved their overall scores, especially their domestic peace. The recent elections in Afghanistan proceeded without major incident in early April, with its political terror score improving, however being partly offset by increased terrorist activity and military expenditure. Other improvements are in the levels of political terror, as well as in the number of refugees and displaced people in Sri Lanka and Bhutan.

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NOTES TO EDITORS
GPI report, video, and interactive maps are available at www.visionofhumanity.org
Twitter: https://twitter.com/GlobPeaceIndex (#peaceindex)
Facebook: www.facebook.com/globalpeaceindex

About the Global Peace Index
The GPI is the world's leading measure of global peacefulness produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP). It gauges on-going domestic and international conflict, safety and security in society, and militarisation in 162 countries by taking into account 22 indicators.

About the Institute for Economics and Peace
IEP is an international and independent think tank dedicated to shifting the world's focus to peace as a positive, achievable, and tangible measure of human well-being and progress.

About the Risk Assessment Models
A number of country risk models have been developed by IEP based on its unique data sets. These models measure peace and violence in order to assess the relative probability of countries deteriorating or improving in peace. The output of these models proved to have good predictive capabilities when compared against history. Using a combination of two models Ukraine, Syria and Egypt were all identified as being in the top 20 countries at risk in 2008. IEP's model has, on average, a 90% predictive validity in identifying the ten countries most likely to deteriorate in peace in the ensuing two years. The validation was run for five two-year periods from 2006 to 2010.

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