

Halving Global Violence – A Crucial Step Towards Peaceful Societies

On the International Day of Peace 2021, an international group of leaders, thinkers, and practitioners on violence reduction proclaim: now is the time to transform the aspiration to live in peaceful societies into a concrete mission to halve global violence by 2030.

When adopting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, UN member states set out an ambitious mandate to “*significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere*” (SDG16.1). Six years on, we are off track. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, experts feared that the world would see an **increase in violent deaths by 2030** if decisive action was not taken without delay. The pandemic brought with it significant increases in violence against women and children in many households. Potential triggers of violence – such as inequality and polarization – are on the rise, as is social unrest in many countries. In order to turn things around, we need heightened ambition to envision a safer world – and decisive leadership to enact it.

In the absence of a clear and shared target, the international community is unlikely to be galvanized into transformational action. The Pathfinders’ Grand Challenge on **Halving Global Violence** establishes a concrete target – a 50% reduction in violence – as a NorthStar, one that is ambitious but feasible. We have formed a future-facing platform, the **Halving Global Violence Task Force**, made up of national and local leaders, prominent international practitioners, thought leaders, activists, and researchers in the broad field of violence prevention. We are all deeply committed to driving stronger collective action and delivering tangible outcomes to reduce global levels of violence by 50 percent by 2030. We aim to identify solutions, draw on national and city experiences, and “**build linkages across dimensions of violence**”, “**bridging the silos**” between conflict, urban violence and interpersonal violence.

The Halving Global Violence Task Force reflects a broad coalition, in which different communities of practice and knowledge can connect, engage, and act, aiming to become a unified voice that will elevate the efforts of all constituting communities, with prevention as our guiding principle.

We are thrilled that the newly unveiled vision for the UN Secretary-General's second term, *Our Common Agenda*, has endorsed Halving Global Violence under the proposed New Agenda for Peace. Noting that “reshaping our responses to all forms of violence” would “more effectively address violence holistically”, the SG suggests this could be done “through a multi-stakeholder effort to reduce violence significantly worldwide and in all its forms, including against women and girls, in line with target 16.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals, and building on the **movement to halve global violence by 2030**”. We look forward to supporting *Our Common Agenda's* emphasis on prevention and renewed multilateralism, as well as working together to achieve measurable reductions across all forms of violence.

Now is the time for decisive action. The still elusive ‘post-pandemic’ period offers a tipping point and window of political opportunity to shift narratives and adapt multilateral solutions towards complex global problems. As we celebrate the Halving Global Violence Task Force's public launch during this year's **Peace One Day** and warmly welcome *Our Common Agenda*, we call on the international community to join us, echoing the urgent need to reduce global violence levels and helping translate the audacity of our mission into reality.

This Joint Statement was endorsed by the following Members of the Halving Global Violence Task Force.

CO - CHAIR :

H.E. Fiorella Salazar, Minister of Peace and Justice,
Costa Rica

MEMBERS :

Dr. Vasu Gounden (ACCORD)

Óscar Escobar (Mayor of Palmira, Colombia)

Dr. Helder da Costa (G7+)

Dr. Howard Taylor (Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children)

Ilona Szabó (Igarapé Institute)

Dr. Najat Maalla M'jid (Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children)

Dr. Peter Batchelor (UNDP)

Verlaine-Diane Soobroydoo (UN Women)

Dr. Etienne Krug (WHO)

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE TASK FORCE:

www.sdg16.plus/hgv-task-force

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Convened by the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies – a **group** of 39 states with international organizations and civil society – Halving Global Violence by 2030 (**HGV**) draws on the best available **evidence** and a belief in robust **partnerships** between Member States, the UN system and civil society to deliver on the promise of SDG16.1, the international community's mandate “to significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere”.

As the initiative's political and **strategic** steering group, the **HGV Task Force** is led by four UN member states at ministerial-level (Co-Chairs from Costa Rica, South Africa, Switzerland and Liberia), 15 members from diverse UN agencies (SGSR VAC, WHO, UNDP) and heads of thematically- and geographically-diverse civil society organizations (Igarapé Institute, ACCORD, Small Arms Survey, BRAC, End Violence Against Children). Moreover, ten **Expert Advisors** currently serve as its policy and research ‘brain trust’. In addition, the Task Force boasts representation from highly-visible youth leaders and two initiatives, **Peace in Our Cities** (with the Mayor of Palmira, Colombia) and **GENSAC**, which ensure cross-fertilization with the arenas of urban violence and city leadership, and small arms control and gender equality, respectively. On June 15 and 16, the Task Force convened for the first time – still virtually “at” **Wilton Park** – to begin drawing the blueprint for this unprecedented mobilization to reduce violence.