

Press Release

Peace Researchers Urge in Ukraine War: Increase Pressure for Negotiations, Mitigate Global Repercussions

Berlin, June 21, 2022. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has political, economic and social consequences worldwide. These are the focus of the Peace Report 2022, which was presented today by Germany's leading peace research institutes at the Federal Press Conference. Rising commodity and food prices threaten African countries in particular with food crises and political unrest. Possible geostrategic implications include the emergence of a Russian-Chinese coalition of interests, but also the risk of nuclear escalation. The report presents recommendations to the German government for the planned National Security Strategy and a new European peace order.

Russia's war against Ukraine has brought immeasurable suffering to the civilian population and destroyed large parts of the country. The European security architecture is also in ruins. In their peace report presented today, Germany's leading peace research institutes take a stand: what led to this war and what options are there to escape the logic of confrontation, violence and war? In their concrete recommendations to the German government, they show how policymakers can succeed in balancing the need for defense and pressure on the one hand with the ability to achieve peace on the other.

Monitoring (Mis)successes of Sanctions and Exerting Pressure for Negotiations

Arms deliveries to Ukraine and sanctions against Russia should serve the purpose of exerting pressure on the aggressor and moving him towards serious negotiations. The EU has reacted swiftly, comprehensively and with great unity to the Russian war of aggression. The sanctions imposed on the aggressor are unprecedented in their severity and contributed to the invasion by supposedly militarily superior Russia being successful only to a limited extent thus far. As an instrument of foreign policy, sanctions can be used as a means of exerting pressure against a state that violates international rules. However, they do not solve any crises and in the worst case they can exacerbate hardships and promote political repression and corruption. Therefore it is important to communicate sanctions clearly and to monitor their (mis)success), according to the scholars.

Response to the Dangers of an Arms Race: Renunciation of Nuclear First Use by NATO

The war in Ukraine massively increases the risk of nuclear escalation – and this in a time when international treaties on nuclear arms control are expiring or eroding and the negotiations on the Iranian nuclear program have stalled. A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. Germany should therefore work to prevent the proliferation and expansion of nuclear arsenals, the peace and conflict researchers urge. They also suggest that NATO declare its renunciation of nuclear first use.

Developing Strategies for a New European Peace Order

It is of importance even now to plan for the period after the war and to develop strategies for a new European peace order. The European Union must react to the turning point in foreign and security policy. Its most pressing task now is to become more agile and capable of acting in foreign and security policy and, amongst others, to accelerate the decision-making processes within the EU, the researchers demand.

Keeping an Eye on the Global Repercussions of the Ukraine War

The Ukraine war has caused raw material and food prices to rise sharply worldwide. Especially the African developing and emerging countries are threatened with a food crisis. Mediterranean countries and many East African states are dependent on grain supplies from Russia and Ukraine. These countries are highly volatile politically. In the past, rising food prices were frequently cause for so-called “bread riots” and led to an escalation of violence. The Peace Report 2022 addresses these consequences of the Ukraine war as well as its geostrategic implications, which include the possible emergence of a Russian-Chinese axis. Nevertheless, the authors warn against elevating the antagonism between democracy and autocracy to a new systems conflict.

Feminist Foreign Policy Highlights New Perspectives

Crises and conflicts exacerbate the already high risk of women and LGBTQI* minorities becoming victims of violence. Additionally, authoritarian regimes worldwide try to roll back progresses in gender equality. Feminist foreign policy focusses on societal and international power imbalances that underly many conflicts, and it shows how imperial claims are justified based on a dangerous understanding of masculinity. Its operative focus is on the prevention of violence.

Numerous Violent Conflicts Worldwide – Africa as a Hotspot

Notwithstanding the Ukraine war, the number of violent conflicts has increased again worldwide. Of the total number of 128 conflicts that were counted in 2020, 78 took place on the African continent. This can be ascribed especially to the strengthening of jihadist groups. Al Qaeda, the Islamic State (IS) and allied groups dominate the conflicts. It can be observed that militant Islamism is increasingly characterized by Salafist ideologies. This poses major challenges for the international community. Negotiated solutions with jihadist groups are difficult to achieve. But the path of negotiation should be attempted with those who have distanced themselves from transnational jihadism and violence against the civilian population. A restrictive arms export policy, targeted diplomatic initiatives and a strengthening of regional organizations can help contain the conflicts.

Democratic Control of Domestic Security Institutions

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the rise of extremism, and most recently the Corona pandemic have led to a steady expansion of the powers and authority of Western security agencies. Many of the original temporary regulations have been made permanent law. New and tougher laws have been passed despite declining casualty rates. Future security laws should therefore be accompanied by an independent commission, the researchers demand.

Events

Following the Federal Press Conference, the institutes will present the Peace Report at the Federal Chancellery, the Office of the Federal President, ministries and parliamentary groups. There will also be several events for interested members of the public.

Further information can be found here: <https://friedensgutachten.de/2022/aktivitaeten>

On the Peace Report

The Peace Report is the annual publication of the Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies (BICC), the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF), the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg (IFSH) and the Institute for Development and Peace (INEF) at the University of Duisburg-Essen.

Since 1987, the leading German peace and conflict research institutes have been analyzing current international conflicts, highlighting trends in international foreign, security and development policy and making clear recommendations for policymakers. Interdisciplinary teams of authors from political science, sociology, anthropology, physics and religious studies work together on the chapters and contribute different perspectives.

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