

**Conversations on Prevention for
Sustaining Peace**

We are beginning to understand what peace is—the structures, attitudes, and institutions that underpin it, and the motives that drive people to work for it. Still, peace remains largely an elusive goal, often negatively portrayed as the absence of violence.

It has been assumed that if we can understand the complexity of war and violence, we will be able to foster and sustain peace. We do not study peace, and therefore we tend to focus on the problems of conflict and aggression rather than the solutions associated with peace.¹ With this approach, prevention is viewed as a crisis management tool to address the destructive dynamics of conflict after they have occurred, typically through short-term and externally driven responses.

To address this peace deficit, IPI is seeking to reframe prevention for the purpose of sustaining peace rather than averting conflict through a series of conversations. The overarching aim will be to build a shared understanding of what sustaining peace and prevention look like in practice at the national and international levels.

This issue brief was drafted by Aïssata Athie and Youssef Mahmoud. The views expressed in this publication represent those of the authors and not necessarily those of the International Peace Institute. IPI welcomes consideration of a wide range of perspectives in the pursuit of a well-informed debate on critical policies and issues in international affairs.

This project is funded by ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen) with resources provided by the German Federal Foreign Office.

Introduction

In the dual resolutions passed by the UN General Assembly and Security Council in April 2016, “sustaining peace” is understood as a goal and a process to build a common vision of a society, ensuring that the needs of all segments of the population are taken into account.² Sustaining peace can be seen as “an explicit and deliberate policy objective for all states, regardless of whether or not they are affected by conflict.”³ Indeed, all societies possess features that contribute to sustaining peace, whether through their institutions, culture, policies, or other norms of interaction among individuals and between people and their states. Sustaining peace thus requires identifying the attributes and assets that have “sustained social cohesion, inclusive development, the rule of law and human security.”⁴

Sustaining peace further promotes a holistic approach integrating all three pillars of the UN’s engagement—human rights, peace and security, and development—so as not only to contain the immediate consequences of conflict but also to prevent the outbreak of violence by addressing the root causes of conflict.⁵ Human rights violations and lack of accountability and prosecution for such violations are often drivers of conflict.⁶ Monitoring human rights, therefore, could provide early warning of and help prevent destabilization of societies. Secretary-General António Guterres alluded to this in his April 2017 address to the Security Council, where he observed that “upholding human rights is a crucial element of prevention,” and “human rights are intrinsically linked to sustaining peace.”⁷

This paper seeks to demonstrate the role of human rights as a tool for prevention for sustaining peace. It reflects on three countries that, in part through their commitment to uphold and safeguard the rule of law and human rights, have managed to remain relatively peaceful, despite internal

1 Peter Coleman, “The Missing Piece in Sustainable Peace,” Earth Institute, November 6, 2012, available at <http://blogs.ei.columbia.edu/2012/11/06/the-missing-piece-in-sustainable-peace>.

2 Security Council Resolution 2282 (April 27, 2016), UN Doc. S/RES/2282; General Assembly Resolution 70/262 (April 27, 2016), UN Doc. A/RES/70/262.

3 Youssef Mahmoud and Anupah Makoond, “Sustaining Peace: What Does It Mean in Practice?,” International Peace Institute, April 8, 2017, p. 2, available at www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/1704_Sustaining-Peace-final.pdf.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), “Combating Impunity and Strengthening Accountability and the Rule of Law,” available at www.ohchr.org/EN/AboutUs/Pages/Combatingimpunityandstrengtheningaccountability.aspx.

7 UN Secretary-General, “Remarks at Security Council meeting on ‘Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Human Rights and the Prevention of Armed Conflict,’” April 18, 2017, available at www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2017-04-18/secretary-generals-remarks-security-council-meeting-maintenance.

vulnerabilities and external pressures: Mauritius, Senegal, and Tunisia. Unlike previous issue briefs published as part of this series, where the primary focus was on conflict-affected contexts, this paper focuses on what relatively peaceful societies can teach us about sustaining peace.⁸

Human Rights as Tools for Prevention for Sustaining Peace

As stated by Secretary-General Guterres in his address to the Human Rights Council in February 2017, “Perhaps the best prevention tool we have is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights—and the treaties that derive from it. The rights set out in it identify many of the root causes of conflict; but equally they provide real world solutions through real change on the ground.”⁹ Indeed, human rights monitoring and analysis can provide early warning of grievances that, if left unaddressed, may lead to violence. Widespread human rights abuses can be an indicator of future instability or a harbinger of the imminent risk of violent conflict. Human rights can thus serve as a preventive tool for sustaining peace.

When looking at human rights as a prevention tool, it is necessary to consider the full spectrum of rights—not just political and civil rights but also economic, social, and cultural rights (i.e., rights related to the workplace, social security, family life, participation in cultural life, and access to housing, food, water, healthcare, and education, among others).¹⁰ Discrimination and inequalities—particularly horizontal inequalities between ethnic, religious, and other population groups, whether in the form of differential access to public goods and

services, limitations on freedom of expression, or denial of economic participation—can be powerful drivers of human rights violations, which pose a direct threat to peace.¹¹

HUMAN RIGHTS AND POSITIVE PEACE

Human rights cement the bond between individuals and promote peaceful coexistence, thereby making societies more resilient. Research from the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) has shown that there is a strong connection between respect for human rights and peacefulness, or “positive peace.”¹² IEP defines positive peace as the attitudes, institutions, and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies.¹³ This is further enshrined in Johan Galtung’s “positive peace” framework, according to which peace is not merely the absence of violence but also the presence of factors associated with peaceful societies.¹⁴ Positive peace thus represents the capacity of a society to meet the needs of its citizens, reduce the number of grievances that arise, and resolve remaining disagreements without the use of violence.¹⁵ As such, a state that respects and upholds human rights and the rule of law to prevent and address grievances is more likely to witness peace and stability.

One of the “pillars” IEP uses to measure positive peace is composed of human rights indicators: the “Acceptance of the Rights of Others” pillar (or the “rights pillar”).¹⁶ According to IEP, “Formal laws guaranteeing basic human rights and freedoms and the informal social and cultural norms that relate to behaviors of citizens serve as proxies for the level of tolerance between different ethnic, linguistic, religious, and socio-economic groups within a country.”¹⁷ IEP found that “the level of acceptance of the rights of others heavily impacts how individ-

8 Douglas P. Fry, “Conclusion: Learning from Peaceful Societies,” in *Keeping the Peace: Conflict Resolution and Peaceful Societies around the World*, Graham Kemp and Douglas P. Fry, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2004).

9 UN Secretary-General, “Remarks to the Human Rights Council,” February 27, 2017, available at www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2017-02-27/secretary-generals-human-rights-council-remarks.

10 OHCHR, “Frequently Asked Questions on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,” 2008, p. 2, available at www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/ESCR/FAQ%20on%20ESCR-en.pdf.

11 OHCHR, “Early Warning and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,” 2016, available at www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/ESCR/EarlyWarning_ESCR_2016_en.pdf.

12 Institute for Economics and Peace, “Human Rights and Sustaining Peace,” background note, October 2017.

13 Institute for Economics and Peace, “Global Peace Index 2017,” p. 78, available at <http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2017/06/GPI17-Report.pdf>.

14 Johan Galtung, “Violence, Peace, and Peace Research,” *Journal of Peace Research* 6, no. 3 (1969).

15 Mahmoud and Makoond, “Sustaining Peace.”

16 Institute for Economics and Peace, “Pillars of Peace: Understanding the Key Attitudes and Institutions That Underpin Peaceful Societies,” September 2013, available at www.gpplatform.ch/sites/default/files/Pillars%20of%20Peace%20Report%20%20IEP.pdf.

17 Institute for Economics and Peace, “Positive Peace Report 2016,” available at <http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2017/02/Positive-Peace-Report-2016.pdf>.

uals and groups will respond when a conflict arises” and that there is a relationship between the acceptance of the rights of others and peacefulness.¹⁸ When expressing their grievances in functional democracies, individuals are less likely to resort to violence because they know that their rights are guaranteed by robust, inclusive, permanent, and independent institutions. Such grievances will most likely be handled through relatively peaceful and constitutional means.¹⁹

Often hailed as an example of stable democracy in West Africa,²⁰ Senegal is an example of a country

that has remained peaceful in part through its commitment to pluralism and acceptance of the rights of others (see Box 1).

HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the sustaining peace agenda share common principles related to “national ownership, universality, inclusivity, people-centered approaches, long-term perspectives, and a call for coherent implementation across the three UN pillars.”²¹ The value of the

Box 1. Senegal

In a region where political violence and instability are recurrent, Senegal has managed to remain relatively stable and peaceful, despite being home to one of sub-Saharan Africa’s longest-standing insurgency movements in its Casamance region. According to IEP’s 2017 Global Peace Index, Senegal is the sixtieth most peaceful country out of 163. Several factors account for this notable score. Senegal enjoys strong and independent institutions that control the ways power is acquired and exercised in accordance with the constitution, as well as a strong civil society capable of holding the government accountable. This was demonstrated in practice when, prior to the 2012 presidential elections, Abdoulaye Wade attempted to run for a third term (despite the constitutional two-term limit); protests led by the “Y’en a marre” citizen movement (“we are fed up”) succeeded in mobilizing popular opposition against this move, and Wade eventually relented.²²

Another key element of Senegal’s stability is its attachment to inclusion, diversity, and pluralism.²³ Senegal’s political leaders have cultivated the idea that pluralism is a core part of the country’s national identity, and it has been common for political leadership to emphasize that Senegal is “a diverse but unified nation.”²⁴ Despite 95 percent of its population being Muslim, Senegal is a secular state, and freedom of religion is guaranteed by the constitution. The fact that this predominantly Muslim country’s first president, Léopold Sédar Senghor, was Christian hints at the nation’s commitment to these values. The constitution also recognizes six official languages in addition to French, and national legislation prohibits the formation of political parties based on religion or ethnicity.²⁵

Although its society is diverse and plural, Senegal has faced challenges to its territorial integrity from the Casamance region’s independence movement. However, rather than seeking to marginalize the separatist movement (through military force or coercion), the choice was made to include moderate members of the movement in the political sphere at the national level.²⁶ The language of the region’s Joola ethnic group was also enshrined in the constitution as one of the country’s official languages.

18 Ibid, p. 64.

19 Institute for Economics and Peace, “Human Rights and Sustaining Peace.”

20 See, for example, Dan Robinson, “Obama Praises Senegal, Calls Mandela ‘Hero for World,’” *Voice of America*, June 27, 2013, available at www.voanews.com/a/obama-pays-tribute-to-mandela/1690242.html.

21 Delphine Mechoulan, Youssef Mahmoud, Andrea Ó Súilleabháin, and Jimena Leiva Roesch, “The SDGs and Prevention for Sustaining Peace: Exploring the Transformative Potential of the Goal on Gender Equality,” November 2016, p. 1, available at www.ipinst.org/2016/11/sdgs-goal-gender-equality.

22 Tanguy Berthemet, “Au Sénégal, la voix montante des ‘Y’en a marre,’” *Le Figaro*, February 23, 2012, available at www.lefigaro.fr/international/2012/02/23/01003-20120223ARTFIG00638-au-senegal-la-voix-montante-des-y-en-a-marre.php.

23 Scott Straus, *Making and Unmaking Nations: War, Leadership and Genocide in Modern Africa* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), p. 226.

24 Ibid, p. 207.

25 Ibid, pp. 229–230.

26 Ibid.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is that, like human rights and sustaining peace, they are universal and applicable to all countries regardless of their level of development (unlike the Millennium Development Goals, which only applied to “developing countries”).²⁷ The link between development and the upholding of human rights could thus be an entry point for dialogue and engagement with states.

Both the sustainable development and sustaining peace agendas promote a focus on prevention to identify and address the factors that put countries at risk of crisis or violence.²⁸ The rationale of the 2030 Agenda is that fulfilling the SDGs will “foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence.”²⁹ This provides a connection between peacefulness and human rights, as the 2030 Agenda seeks to “achieve and protect the human rights of all,” with 156 of its 169 “integrated and indivisible” targets having either a direct or an indirect link to human rights.³⁰ Indeed, the seventeen SDGs address various human rights standards, including access to food, water, sanitation, quality education, healthcare, and housing.³¹ The 2030 Agenda also strives to “leave no one behind” and commits to equality and nondiscrimination, two fundamental principles of human rights.³²

Mauritius, which has stood out as a socio-economic and democratic success story in Africa, is an interesting case for analyzing the correlation and interdependence between social and economic rights and sustaining peace (see Box 2).

EFFECTIVE AND INDEPENDENT INSTITUTIONS TO GUARANTEE HUMAN RIGHTS

States are obligated to respect, protect, and fulfill the fundamental human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As such, they need to ensure access to effective mechanisms

and institutions to address grievances and put an end to cycles of discrimination and marginalization. Whether judicial or non-judicial, these mechanisms and institutions must seek to provide redress to victims and ensure accountability for perpetrators of violations. As noted by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), “Justice delivery involves the ability of the State to ensure the peaceful resolution of disputes, the prosecution and punishment of crimes, and effective remedies for violations of rights.”³³ Solid, independent institutions able to address grievances in a manner that respects human rights reduce the likelihood that individuals or groups will resort to violence when disputes arise. The state must also guarantee equal access to these institutions for all (women, youth, minorities, etc.).

National human rights institutions can play an important role in promoting and monitoring the implementation of international human rights standards at the national level. These can take different forms, including ombudspersons, human rights commissions, hybrid institutions with multiple mandates, or consultative and advisory bodies.³⁴

Civil society organizations can also help to create space for debate and dialogue. They play a key role in driving local reform processes and promoting tolerance, justice, and human rights, all of which are essential to sustaining peace. As described by OHCHR, “An active and functioning civil society is the foundation for ensuring the accountability of the Government and its law and policies.”³⁵ Indeed, as stated by former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, “If leaders do not listen to their people, they will hear from them—in the streets, the squares, or, as we see far too often, on the battlefield. There is a better way: more participation; more democracy; more engagement and openness. That means maximum space for civil society.”³⁶

27 OHCHR, “Human Rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, available at <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/MDG/Pages/The2030Agenda.aspx>.

28 Ibid.

29 UN General Assembly Resolution 70/1 (September 25, 2015), *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, UN Doc. A/RES/70/1.

30 Institute for Economics and Peace, “Human Rights and Sustaining Peace.”

31 UN General Assembly Resolution 70/1.

32 OHCHR, “Human Rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”

33 OHCHR, “Early Warning and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,” p. 18.

34 OHCHR, “Principles Relating to the Status of National Institutions (The Paris Principles),” December 20, 1993, available at www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/StatusOfNationalInstitutions.aspx.

35 OHCHR, “Early Warning and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,” p. 18.

36 United Nations, “At High-Level Event in Support of Civil Society, Secretary-General Says ‘They Protect Our Rights: They Deserve Their Rights,’” September 23, 2013, available at www.un.org/press/en/2013/sgsm15314.doc.htm.

Box 2. Mauritius

Since obtaining independence in 1968, successive Mauritian governments have committed to investing in human capital and the creation of a favorable business environment, both of which are key positive peace pillars, according to IEP.³⁷

A “high level of human capital” refers to “a country’s stock of skills, knowledge and behaviors” and includes education, access to healthcare, and the provision of essential services such as water.³⁸ IEP notes that a greater level of human capital tends to increase “social cohesion, economic development and peace.”³⁹ For example, Mauritius’s provision of free education up to the university level has contributed to the creation of a productive and reliable workforce, and in 2016 the literacy rate was 90.6 percent—the highest in Africa.⁴⁰ Further, the Mauritian state guarantees free and accessible healthcare to all and has made it a priority to provide all of the population access to safe drinking water (99 percent of the population currently has access).⁴¹ In 2016 Mauritius ranked second in Africa (after the Seychelles) on the UN Development Programme’s (UNDP’s) Human Development Index (and sixty-fourth globally), and life expectancy at birth in Mauritius is 74.6 years compared to the African average of 60 years.⁴²

Another of IEP’s pillars of positive peace is the presence of a “sound business environment,” referring to the ability to conduct business in a fair and open marketplace.⁴³ In Mauritius, this is illustrated by policies that aim to encourage and facilitate foreign and domestic investment, including the country’s low corporate tax rate, training opportunities, simplified administrative procedures, and access to financing.⁴⁴

IEP highlights the interdependent nature of its pillars of peace; strengthening one will strengthen the others.⁴⁵ In Mauritius, investment in human capital and an open and favorable business environment, combined with strong rule of law and good governance, can thus be credited as contributing to this success story.⁴⁶

Mauritius has faced internal vulnerabilities and external pressures such as ethnic tensions, trade shocks, and the impact of climate change on the agricultural sector (notably the sugar cane industry) and the livelihoods of farmers.⁴⁷ But despite these pressures, according to the Global Peace Index, Mauritius is the twenty-second most peaceful country in the world.⁴⁸

Tunisia, the epicenter of the 2011 “Arab Spring,” has a history of a robust and vigilant civil society. Many observers credit this robust civil society for fostering the country’s progress toward democratization and “facilitating dialogue and compromise across political divides” at times of national stress or when the formal political institutions hit an impasse (see Box 3).⁴⁹

Addressing Concerns and Challenges

Some states have raised concerns about linking human rights to sustaining peace. One of these concerns is that discussions on human rights, particularly within the UN, are often perceived as a selective “naming and shaming” exercise primarily

37 Jeffrey Frankel, “Mauritius: African Success Story,” Harvard Kennedy School Faculty Research Working Paper Series, September 2010, p. 25, available at https://dash.harvard.edu/bitstream/handle/1/4450110/Frankel_MauritiusAfrican.pdf?sequence=1.

38 Institute for Economics and Peace, “Pillars of Peace,” p. 40.

39 Ibid.

40 UN Development Programme (UNDP), “Mauritius: Human Development Indicators,” available at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/MUS>.

41 Ibid; Joseph Stiglitz, “The Mauritius Miracle, or How to Make a Big Success of a Small Economy,” *The Guardian*, March 7, 2011, available at www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/mar/07/mauritius-healthcare-education; Jeffrey Frankel, “The Little Economy That Could,” *Foreign Policy*, February 2, 2012, available at <http://foreignpolicy.com/2012/02/02/the-little-economy-that-could/>.

42 UNDP, “Mauritius: Human Development Indicators.”

43 Institute for Economics and Peace, “Pillars of Peace,” p. 17.

44 Frankel, “The Little Economy That Could.”

45 Institute for Economics and Peace, “Pillars of Peace,” p. 2.

46 Frankel, “The Little Economy That Could.”

47 Jean-Michel Jauze, “Maurice, petit pays, grandes ambitions,” *European Journal of Geography* (2012).

48 Institute for Economics and Peace, “Global Peace Index 2017.”

49 Eva Bellin, “Drivers of Democracy: Lessons from Tunisia,” Crown Center for Middle East Studies, August 2013, p. 4.

Box 3. Tunisia

In the Middle East and North Africa region, Tunisia is transitioning to a nascent democracy despite economic, security, and governance challenges, as well as regional and global pressures. Tunisia has maintained its commitment to uphold human rights and create an environment where citizens can express their needs and aspirations freely and peacefully. This is exemplified by the space given to civil society organizations and the government's practice of consulting these groups in decision making, as was done during the drafting of the 2014 constitution.⁵⁰ Civil society's involvement in the transition process, in particular the role of the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet in easing political crises, has been credited for helping keep the process on track.⁵¹

The 2011 revolution, which was deeply rooted in socioeconomic grievances, enabled civil society groups to expand their advocacy and activism to economic, social, and cultural rights, which have often been neglected in favor of political and civil rights.⁵² Civil society groups successfully advocated for the 2014 constitution to enshrine the right to work and to a decent salary and to consolidate women's rights.⁵³ Indeed, Tunisia's constitution devotes a full chapter to universal freedoms and rights, including women's rights inscribed in the 1956 Personal Status Code. It also goes beyond the 1959 constitution's freedom of belief to recognize the freedom of worship and emphasizes the concept of citizenship.⁵⁴ The constitution decrees the creation of a Constitutional Court as a guarantor of these rights with the power to invalidate laws deemed not in conformity with the human rights standards affirmed in the constitution.

To further consolidate women's rights, in July 2017 the Tunisian parliament adopted a landmark law criminalizing all forms of violence against women.⁵⁵ The following month the president established a committee to look into individual freedoms and gender equality issues not addressed by the new law, such as possibly reforming the inheritance law, which only entitled female heirs to half as much property as their male family counterparts.⁵⁶

On the economic and security fronts, however, Tunisia continues to however face challenges. With an unemployment rate of 15 percent (32 percent for young people) and the presence of violent extremist groups in the region, the situation remains of concern.⁵⁷

targeting developing countries.

A second core concern is that human rights violations (perceived or otherwise) have, in some cases, been used to justify politically motivated foreign interventions and regime change.⁵⁸ For instance, the 2011 intervention in Libya, which was first presented as a "humanitarian intervention"

aimed at protecting civilians from violations, subsequently revealed ulterior political motives, including regime change.⁵⁹ Linking human rights to sustaining peace could be challenging if states feel that they are being selectively targeted or that there are hidden political motives.

A third challenge to human rights in general

50 Asma Noura, "Origins, Evolution and Challenges to the Human Rights Movement in Tunisia," Arab Reform Initiative, September 2017, pp. 14–16.

51 Margaret Williams and Youssef Mahmoud, "The New Tunisian Constitution: Triumphs and Potential Pitfalls," *IPI Global Observatory*, February 27, 2014, available at <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2014/02/the-new-tunisian-constitution-triumphs-and-potential-pitfalls/>; Council of Europe, "La transition politique en Tunisie," April 26, 2017, p. 9, available at <http://website-pace.net/documents/18848/3421624/20170426-La-transition-politique-Tunisie-FR.pdf/384874b9-b421-4399-9db7-72a3da857040>.

52 Noura, "Origins, Evolution and Challenges to the Human Rights Movement in Tunisia."

53 Constitution of Tunisia, 2014, Art. 40, available at www.constitutionnet.org/vl/item/tunisia-constitution-2014.

54 José Vericat, "Women's Struggle for Citizenship: Civil Society and Constitution Making after the Arab Uprisings," October 2017, available at www.ipinst.org/2017/10/womens-struggle-for-citizenship-after-the-arab-uprisings.

55 Youssef Mahmoud, "Tunisia's New Protections for Women: A Legislative Revolution and Missed Opportunity," *IPI Global Observatory*, August 9, 2017, available at <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2017/08/tunisia-violence-against-women-law/>.

56 Antonia Blumberg, "Tunisia Just Took a Big Step forward on Muslim Women's Rights," *Huffington Post*, September 15, 2017, available at www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/tunisia-muslim-women-marriage_us_59bc42ffe4b02da0e142181f; Youssef Mahmoud, "In Tunisia's March Toward Women's Rights, Finish Line Is in Sight," *IPI Global Observatory*, August 17, 2017, available at <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2017/08/tunisia-women-rights-islam/>.

57 Council of Europe, "La transition politique en Europe."

58 Eric A. Heinze, "Waging War for Human Rights: Toward a Moral-Legal Theory of Humanitarian Intervention," *Human Rights & Human Welfare* 3 (2003).

59 Michah Zenko, "The Big Lie about the Libyan War," *Foreign Policy*, March 22, 2016, available at <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/03/22/libya-and-the-myth-of-humanitarian-intervention/>.

relates to the lack of enforcement and states' use of the principle of sovereignty to justify their refusal or reluctance to engage on human rights. Human rights tools and mechanisms are treaty-based; they derive from legal commitments voluntarily made by member states in accordance with this principle of sovereignty. However, some human rights, such as the right to life, freedom of conscience and religion, and prohibition of torture, are non-derogable at any time under any circumstances, meaning they are applicable even to states that have not ratified the conventions around them.⁶⁰ Yet none of the core human rights treaties provide for solid mechanisms to ensure accountability for their non-fulfillment or violation.

Further, existing monitoring mechanisms within the UN have had little impact. For example, the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review, by which all member states periodically undergo an assessment of their human rights records, basically consists of states reviewing their own track record, with little space given to other stakeholders such as civil society organizations.⁶¹

Despite these challenges, it remains in a state's best interest to uphold the rule of law and human rights. Indeed, according to IEP's 2017 Global Peace Index, the most peaceful countries are those with the most solid human rights records. While this is not to suggest a simple or linear relationship between upholding human rights and peace, the data indicates that violating or failing to uphold human rights does not sustain peace or make societies peaceful.

Conclusion

Connecting the human rights and sustaining peace agendas offers a unique, strategic entry point to help shift from a culture of crisis management to one of prevention, especially in a global context where human rights tend to be restricted or attacked in the name of security.⁶² The UN's Human Rights Up Front Initiative, which requires the entire "UN system to be alert to deteriorating human rights situations," is a step in the right direction and should be strengthened across all UN pillars.⁶³ Furthermore, human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent, and interrelated, meaning they are rules that can be referred to and claimed by any individual (regardless of his or her nationality) at any time. The legitimacy of human rights as a result of their universality makes them a solid foundation for building and fostering self-sustaining peace. This is further demonstrated through the strong and positive correlation found by IEP between the "acceptance of the rights of others" and states' levels of peacefulness.⁶⁴

The cases of Mauritius, Senegal, and Tunisia demonstrate that, despite internal vulnerabilities and external pressures, countries can sustain peace, in part because of a strong commitment to upholding human rights. Their resilience to political, economic, and social shocks is an important factor accounting for their relative peacefulness. As human rights often spark suspicion and distrust, these positive examples can demonstrate how human rights can be used as a tool for prevention and could facilitate engagement and dialogue with skeptical states. Emphasizing what works rather than what does not is at the core of the sustaining peace concept, and all three countries offer valuable lessons as the international community struggles with the practical meaning of sustaining peace.

60 OHCHR, "Core Human Rights in the Two Covenants," September 2013, available at <https://nhri.ohchr.org/EN/IHRS/TreatyBodies/Page%20Documents/Core%20Human%20Rights.pdf>.

61 OHCHR, "Universal Periodic Review", available at www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/UPRMain.aspx.

62 OHCHR, "Human Rights, Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism," available at www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/Factsheet32EN.pdf.

63 OHCHR, "Early Warning and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights."

64 Institute for Economics and Peace, "Human Rights and Sustaining Peace."

The **INTERNATIONAL PEACE INSTITUTE** (IPI) is an independent, international not-for-profit think tank dedicated to managing risk and building resilience to promote peace, security, and sustainable development. To achieve its purpose, IPI employs a mix of policy research, strategic analysis, publishing, and convening. With staff from around the world and a broad range of academic fields, IPI has offices facing United Nations headquarters in New York and offices in Vienna and Manama.



777 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017-3521, USA

TEL +1-212-687-4300 FAX +1-212-983-8246

Freyung 3, 1010 Vienna, Austria

TEL +43-1-533-8881 FAX +43-1-533-8881-11

52-52 Harbour House, Bahrain Financial Harbour

P.O. Box 1467, Manama, Bahrain

www.ipinst.org