



PATHWAYS FOR PEACE: FIVE YEARS ON

A joint initiative of the United Nations and World Bank

Changes in the Global Conflict Landscape Since “Pathways for Peace”: How the UN system can meet new and emerging prevention challenges

By: *Dr. Adam Day*

March 2023



**UNITED NATIONS
UNIVERSITY**

Centre for Policy Research

This paper was written as a contribution to the UN-World Bank joint initiative on “Pathways for Peace: Five years on” and with funding from the UN DPPA PBSO Partnership Facility. The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in this work do not necessarily reflect the views of The World Bank, its Board of Executive Directors, or the governments they represent, nor of the United Nations.

The World Bank and United Nations do not guarantee the accuracy, completeness, or currency of the data included in this work and does not assume responsibility for any errors, omissions, or discrepancies in the information, or liability with respect to the use of or failure to use the information, methods, processes, or conclusions set forth. The boundaries, colors, denominations, and other information shown on any map in this work do not imply any judgment on the part of The World Bank or United Nations concerning the legal status of any territory or the endorsement or acceptance of such boundaries.

Nothing herein shall constitute or be construed or considered to be a limitation upon or waiver of the privileges and immunities of The World Bank and United Nations, all of which are specifically reserved.

1. Introduction

March 2023 will mark the fifth anniversary of the publication of the UN-World Bank report “Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict.” That report constituted a watershed moment in the multilateral system’s understanding of violent conflict, identifying a comprehensive set of interrelated causes underlying global conflict trends and articulating an evidenced-based argument in favor of greater investment in prevention. Since then, there has been evolution in both our understanding of global conflict dynamics, and also in the practice of peacebuilding and conflict prevention.

This paper contributes to a public reflection on Pathways five years on, focusing on how the global conflict landscape has evolved, what this means for the UN/WB approach to prevention, and whether any adjustments might be needed going forward. It is part of a broader process to assess the relevance and impact of Pathways across the multilateral system, and is meant to generate discussion with a broad range of actors, including civil society, youth, and member states.

The paper contains three main sections: (1) a brief overview of the core findings of the Pathways report, focusing on the assessment of conflict trends and drivers; (2) an analysis of geopolitical trends from 2018 to present, examining possible divergences from the Pathways findings; and (3) an assessment of implications of recent trends on the UN and the WB going forward, offering some questions that could guide the development of a “Pathways 2.0.”

2. The Pathways Conflict Analysis

The 2018 Pathways report was framed by a “surge in violent conflict,” which at the time had reached the highest levels for at least two decades. This surge was driven by a dramatic increase in the number and intensity of intra-state wars, leading to the largest number of battlefield casualties in 20 years. The report found, however, that this increase was “a surge, not a trend,” highlighting that the overwhelming number of casualties had taken place in three conflict settings (Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq).

The report further noted an internationalization of wars, with 18 out of 47 civil wars involving international actors. At the same time, it pointed to a significant increase in the number, diversity, and scope of armed groups in conflict, including a large number of violent extremists that coalesced around grievances and/or ideology. Indeed, a key finding was that the apparent spread of violent extremism was in large part linked to issues of political and economic exclusion in many parts of the world.

One of the most visible effects of these trends was the large numbers of forcibly displaced people worldwide. In the ten years leading up to Pathways, the number of internally displaced persons increased more than fivefold, while the number of refugees nearly doubled. More than half of the world’s refugees at the time were youth. Beyond displacement, the report noted significant demographic shifts, with more young people in the world than any time prior and the fastest growing populations also occurring in low-income countries.

Demographic shifts were occurring against increasingly uneven global economic growth. While the report noted broad economic improvement, the 2007 economic crisis was still having an effect: in 2016, trade growth fell for the fifth consecutive year, while foreign direct investment had declined for several years as well. Pathways noted that these trends did not themselves drive violent conflict, but they “put stresses on people and systems” and “increased the tendency for people to mobilize for perceived grievances.”

One of the most important insights from Pathways was the finding that the greatest risk of violence stemmed from the mobilization of the perceptions of exclusion and injustice. These perceptions, the report found, were rooted in horizontal inequality and exclusion across political, economic, and social groups. Exclusion enforced by the state, in particular via repressive forms of governance characterized by large-scale human rights violence, posed an especially acute risk of violent conflict. These findings built on new research demonstrating the central importance of inequality and exclusion, which had not been previously available in major multilateral reports (e.g. the World Development Report).

Inequality and exclusion manifested most starkly in the struggles over political power, access to natural resources, the delivery of basic services, and justice/security. In countries witnessing the greatest surges in violent conflict, divisions over these so-called “arenas of contestation” were deepest. In contrast, Pathways found that more peaceful countries had found inclusive approaches to governance and to distributing resources and rights.

The implications of the Pathways report were clear: If the international community was to address the root causes of violent conflict, it would need to recalibrate its approaches around a prevention paradigm focused on addressing inequality and exclusion. This would require a deep understanding of the political settlement in fragile and conflict-affected settings overlaid onto horizontal and socio-economic inequalities, while also engaging with the broader geopolitical factors that were exacerbating inequalities (such as the role of international actors in war, global financial trends, and the impacts of large-scale population changes). This paper explores some of the key shifts in global factors since the publication of Pathways.

3. Major Shifts Since Pathways

The Pathways report was published during one of the most rapid increases in conflict trends globally since World War II. Indeed, from 2011 to 2017, there was a sixfold increase in battle-related deaths in civil war, with 2015 the deadliest year since the end of the Cold War.¹ While these numbers reduced slightly from 2017 to 2020, the past two years saw a steady increase in global battle related deaths.² This has brought us to the highest levels of conflict-related violence since WWII, with the Deputy Secretary-General noting that two billion people, one quarter of humanity, now live in places affected by conflict.³

This section lays out some of the most important factors behind this continuing rise in conflict risks, identifying the most salient differences with the 2018 Pathways moment. While each of the following events and trends may be described in isolation, it is more useful to think of the past five years as the evolution of a complex, interconnected system which has been destabilized on several of its more important nodes. While direct causal pathways are difficult to identify with precision, broadly destabilization has appeared to accelerate some of the underlying drivers of violent conflict, potentially inhibited others, and may require a rethinking of how to take Pathways forward.

The pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic began as a health crisis but has had an impact on nearly every sector around the world. Beyond the numbers killed – and still emerging long-term impacts on health and education – the most salient impact has been on the global economy. Global poverty increased for the first time in a generation, while unemployment soared to levels not seen since

the Great Depression.⁴ Drastic reductions in the labor market, tourism, and production, along with disruptions of value chains around the world, contributed to a slowing of global markets and rapid decline of trade and commerce.⁵ This has had a dramatic impact on livelihoods, food systems, and access to health in a wide range of settings, particularly in already fragile settings with poor governance and infrastructure.⁶

The starkest trends have been in the spike in inequality globally. Almost all countries saw reversals in human development in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, while most low, medium, and high Human Development Index (HDI) countries saw continued declines in the second year.⁷ The World Bank estimates that the combination of the pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and inflation has driven 100 million more people into poverty, while the bottom earners experienced by far the greatest downturn in their average wages.⁸ In some parts of the world, this triggered the deepest recession in nearly a century, pushing an estimated 70 million additional people on the African continent into extreme poverty, as debt levels increased to 58% by 2020.⁹

The number of billionaires also shot up faster than at any rate in history.¹⁰ Growing rates of inequality were witnessed at the global level, but also within countries, where the poorest populations doubly suffered by also being more vulnerable to the health risks of COVID-19.¹¹ This led the World Bank to refer to COVID-19 as the “inequality pandemic,” an accelerator of nearly every form of social and economic disparity, including the extraordinarily different trajectories for countries’ recoveries from 2021 onwards.¹² There is also evidence that government responses to the pandemic in many settings – certainly not just fragile contexts – may have further eroded trust in state institutions.¹³

The pandemic had direct and indirect impacts on violent conflict rates as well. Several studies indicated that increased inequalities and a sense of marginalization heightened risks of violent conflict.¹⁴ In some settings, armed groups took advantage of poor government responses to generate public sympathy and drive recruitment.¹⁵ And globally, the pandemic appears to have generated a rise in political violence.¹⁶ In some cases, it was a trigger for broader social unrest and an increase in demonstrations, leading to a global increase in public unrest in 2020 and 2021.¹⁷ These effects are not uniform: one study indicated that the pandemic had increased violent conflict in the Middle East region, while having little to no effect elsewhere in the world.¹⁸ In wealthier countries, the pandemic in fact triggered far more ambitious social safety net programming, witnessing some of the most economically redistributive social policies in decades. In poorer countries, the opposite tended to be the case, as pandemic spending led to greater inequalities and fewer social protections.¹⁹

Broadly, it appears the pandemic has had three interrelated effects on violent conflict trends globally: (1) by increasing poverty and burdening already vulnerable groups in conflict-affected societies; (2) by offering new opportunities for violent actors to capitalize on instability for recruitment; and (3) by putting strain on already weak governance institutions that struggle to provide security and deliver basic services to their citizens.²⁰

A fourth trend is worth flagging here: the enabling environment the pandemic has created for transnational organized crime. While difficult to measure accurately, there is ample evidence indicating that organized crime has flourished during the pandemic, as groups took advantage of spikes in demand on the informal market, ruptures in global supply chains, declines in anti-corruption governance capacities, and even opportunities to benefit directly from the vaccine rollout itself.²¹

Geopolitical Fracture

Levels of geopolitical polarization and competition have increased significantly since the Pathways report, due in large part to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. However, the war in Ukraine punctuates what has been a steady trend of geopolitical fracture and growing tensions over the past 15 years, and which was certainly part of the Pathways contextual analysis. Even more than in 2018, geopolitics has come to be understood as a transitional period where many of the familiar patterns and centres of power are put into question. The Secretary-General has referred to this as a rise of “multipolarity,” with a growing number of actors exerting influence on the world stage. Another expert called this a moment of “Westishness,” characterized by ambivalence about the role of American military hegemony (and indeed moral standing, given vaccine inequality), deep interdependence of Eastern and Western actors (e.g. European reliance on Russian oil and gas, American debt and trade dependence on China), and a proliferation of risks without a clear set of structures or rules to manage them.²² Similarly, the 2022 OECD States of Fragility report points to an “age of crises” for which the current system is poorly prepared.²³

The impacts of these geopolitical developments on conflict risks are difficult to assess, but some conclusions appear relatively clear. First, the risk of broader inter-state conflict beyond Ukraine is much higher than in 2018. This is evidenced by the rhetoric of world leaders around their willingness to use strategic weaponry, a prepositioning of military assets along national boundaries in eastern Europe in particular, and the move by Sweden and Finland to join NATO (Article 5 of which would require members to respond to any incursion across their borders). Beyond the Russia standoff, heightened rhetoric around Taiwan over the past year and an increase in long-range missile testing from the DPRK has kept tensions high in Asia.²⁴

Second, the war in Ukraine has prompted a significant increase in military spending and a relative drop in social spending. At the time of Pathways’ publication, military spending as a percentage of GDP had actually dropped steadily for a 15-year period, with falling armed service rates in 112 countries and proportional drops in military spending in 94 nations.²⁵ Spending on nuclear and heavy weapons had also fallen, with 108 nations reducing their overall holdings. However, many of these positive changes happened roughly a decade ago and have begun to reverse, with significant shifts expected as a result of the war in Ukraine. If NATO countries meet their current pledges, their spending will rise by 7 per cent in the coming few years alone, likely driving global militarization rates up as well. Increases in military spending usually lead to relative drops in spending on issues like education, social services, and ODA, all of which are crucial in addressing underlying causes of violent conflict.²⁶ As the economic sanctions on Russia continue and belts are tightened as a result of oil prices, the cuts to social spending are likely to run even deeper.²⁷

Third, growing great and middle power confrontation has been accompanied by a proliferation in the number of potential escalation points, in particular around under-governed areas like cyber, outer space, and nuclear weapons. Scenarios where anonymous cyberattacks threaten strategic weapons sites, or where an attack on an early warning system in outer space triggers a large-scale response, all indicate the real possibility that small points of conflict could spiral into wider forms of violence.²⁸ In particular, the increasing entanglement of nuclear weapons with conventional technologies has created uncertainties over the potential use of so-called tactical nuclear weapons and/or the blurring of the longstanding norm against nuclear weapons use.²⁹

Finally, the forums for de-escalation, confidence-building, and transparency appear to be less effective than ever before. Multilateral registries of military capacities (such as UNMILEX and UNROCA)³⁰ are in a state of decline, with major powers less interested in sharing information about their arsenals. Similarly, the NPT – the longest standing bulwark against nuclear weapons

use – is seen by many as unlikely to reduce the risks of nuclear use, while the US-Russia START treaty has barely survived to today.³¹ Reviving the Iran nuclear deal in this context seems a farfetched proposition. Moreover, the Security Council is at perhaps its lowest point since the 2003 invasion of Iraq, unable to act on any of the major conflicts today. Perhaps the strongest indicator of this crisis within the multilateral system has been the public statements by most of the P5 members that they would be open to reforming the Council.

The rise of authoritarianism, loss of social cohesion

The Pathways report was published in the midst of a trend of increasing authoritarianism which has continued for the past five years. Steady decreases in key areas like freedom of expression, economic rights, transparent elections, and distribution of political power have taken place in every region of the world.³² According to Transparency Index, eight in ten people worldwide live in countries that are now ranked as “partly” or “not” free, while a rising number of countries have witnessed further entrenchment of non-democratic forms of rule.³³ The number of coups or other non-democratic shifts in power was the highest in 2021 than the previous decade.³⁴ And there is growing evidence that alliances of autocratic regimes globally are working to thwart economic and political pressure by others in the international community.³⁵ The impact on social cohesion is difficult to quantify, but early analysis suggests a negative trend in terms of trust in institutions.³⁶ Worryingly, there is emerging evidence that interventions by the international community – including the UN and World Bank – are having little impact on these trends, in some cases even unintentionally bolstering authoritarian tendencies in some settings.³⁷

Regional organizations in crisis

One of the less visible but troubling trends over the past five years has been the decline in the ability of regional organizations to respond coherently and effectively to conflict risks. Of course, the most salient of these examples is the OSCE, which has been unable to play a meaningful role in reducing tensions around Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.³⁸ But in Africa, several examples point to a withering of regional cohesion as well: IGAD has been barely relevant to the civil war in Ethiopia, unable to act in the face of the coups in Sudan, and has played little role in pushing forward the peace process in South Sudan. Indeed, a study of the UN’s regional strategy for the Horn of Africa indicated that 2018 was a sort of apex of optimism about the region, after which few of the predicted positive trends bore out.³⁹ In West Africa, successive coups in Burkina Faso and Mali – in the past a trigger for significant actions by ECOWAS and the AU – received muted responses over the past few years, leading some to question the role of regional organizations in responding to risks of instability.⁴⁰ While the security trends at the regional level may not be major deviations from the past, the inability of regional organizations to act in a unified manner does appear to be increasing.

Food systems and global health

The war in Ukraine and lingering effects of the pandemic have had deep impacts on our global health and food systems. Skyrocketing fertilizer and gas/oil costs have led to dramatic increases in food prices, without a commensurate increase in buying power in many parts of the world.⁴¹ While some experts indicate that the costs of food may be reaching an apex and could decline,⁴² the ripple effects across the world are likely to be felt for several years more at a minimum. And

as the Arab Spring underscored, there are clear links between livelihoods, basic services, and the willingness of populations to rise up in widespread unrest. The popular demonstrations before and during the COVID restrictions were another indicator that food and health are likely to be some of the most important aspects of our global conflict landscape in the immediate and longer-term future.⁴³

Climate and insecurity

While the pandemic contributed to a short-term drop in carbon emissions,⁴⁴ the past five years have witnessed a consolidation of the evidence that human-caused climate change is accelerating well beyond the 1.5 degree threshold established by the IPCC. Recent years have seen more record temperatures, fires and storms around the world, alarming reminders that the climate crisis marches on, alongside other planetary-level changes wrought by the Anthropocene. Biodiversity collapse is one of them. More than 1 million plant and animal species face extinction, while billions of people are already affected by changes to ecosystems.⁴⁵ Climate-driven shocks to food systems, livelihoods, migration patterns, and economies are increasingly frequent and intense. And while the impacts of climate change on insecurity are indirect and rarely the primary cause of conflict, there is growing consensus that climate-driven trends are having an unmistakable impact on the risks of violent conflict and the responses required.⁴⁶

Importantly, many of the most recent empirical studies have found that climate-driven shocks are disproportionately born by the most vulnerable and marginalized in a given setting, causing them to fall further behind other groups. Indeed, studies of deeply polarized settings like Nigeria, Somalia, and the Lake Chad region have indicated that climate-driven impacts on livelihoods have fueled disenfranchisement, perceived marginalization, and even at times recruitment into armed groups.⁴⁷ Various forms of maladaptation – where the state responds to climate trends in a way that increases risks – have been shown to drive conflict dynamics in some settings.⁴⁸

These findings align well with the Pathways framework, demonstrating the linkages between exclusion and the risks of violent conflict. While indirectly, they appear to indicate that climate-driven changes to livelihoods in particular is increasing levels of inequality and exclusion, in turn driving up the risks of violent conflict in some settings.

Technological risks

While certainly present in 2018, the past five years have witnessed an acceleration of the global risks posed by new and emerging technologies. The growth of cyber-capabilities amongst a range of state and non-state actors has spread globally, without a corresponding increase in global governance systems to address them. Similarly, AI-driven technologies pose risks in the areas of lethal autonomous weapons systems, biological weapons, potential conflicts in outer space, and deeper social fragmentation and polarization. Uncertainty over the future of work in many sectors that are influenced by technological advancements has driven concern of potential loss of livelihoods and even deeper levels of inequality globally. More generally, AI convergence with other spheres has meant that technological evolution has dramatically outstripped the ability of the multilateral system to manage these risks.⁴⁹

A state of “polycrisis”

A recent briefing by the President of International Crisis Group to incoming Security Council members offered a telling indication of current conflict trends, which she referred to as a “polycrisis – a series of global, systemic, mutually-reinforcing shocks, including COVID, inflation, food insecurity, and the climate crisis.”⁵⁰ Indeed, this polycrisis is accompanied by what many have called an increasingly polycentric world order, where the constellation of global powers, regional organizations, and multilateral institutions fail to fit together into a coherent whole. Much of this growing sense of instability was present before and during the 2018 drafting of Pathways, but the above trends have deepened and accelerated the polycrisis.⁵¹

As the following section explores, many aspects of the polycrisis reinforce the Pathways analysis of 2018, but may also point to a broader and somewhat different set of policy responses needed to meet today’s challenges.

4. Implications for Pathways Approaches

None of the shifts in the global conflict landscape over the past five years indicates a need to doubt or rethink the core Pathways analysis. Indeed, if anything, the coincidence of rising inequalities and conflict risks in many parts of the world resonates with and reinforces Pathways. At the same time, some of the trends may require re-focusing efforts in areas that were not central to the Pathways analysis in 2018. Some of the most important areas and key questions that could shape a “Pathways 2.0” are considered here.

Ukraine: a blind spot or an epiphany?

The war in Ukraine has dominated discourse on global conflict risks and may have created a distortion in how the international community views conflict risks. Indeed, in a recent internal discussion within the UN, there was a recurrent comment that Ukraine had “changed everything,” when in fact the above analysis points to a continuation of many conflict trends.⁵² More worrying still, the war in Ukraine appears to have justified hawkish positions within the West, leading to greater military spending, an abandonment of many key climate-friendly commitments, and a questioning of commitments to ODA.⁵³ As the Pathways report indicates, under-investment in social spending tends to lead to greater inequalities in fragile settings in particular, contributing to heightened risks of violent conflict. And delays in the green transition are likely to lead to accelerated climate-security impacts of the kind described above.

Questions: How much does the war in Ukraine change the basic Pathways analysis around inequality? Rather than a blindspot, was Ukraine actually an eye-opener for many to finally come to grips with geopolitical polarization? Should there be focus more on the ways military spending increases and consequent decreases in social spending may lead to greater conflict risks? Does Ukraine impact the Pathways findings around Middle Income Countries and conflict?

Beyond the “fragile, conflict-affected” paradigm

Many of the key trends in the past five years have deeply affected middle-income countries, underscoring the need for a prevention lens that expands beyond the so-called “fragile, conflict-affected” grouping of states.⁵⁴ In particular, the erosion of the social contract in richer countries may indicate that accelerating loss of trust could lead to far more pervasive changes globally than our current systems anticipate.

Questions: How to move beyond the FCV paradigm and think of prevention as a universal prerogative? What implications would such a shift have on donor approaches, prioritization of spending, and the peacebuilding work of the multilateral system? Could all countries be asked to act and report on their respective prevention obligations?

The planetary transformation

Perhaps the highest priority globally today is generating the resources and collective political will to take forward a just, green transition. This will involve transformational changes to our energy production, industry, trade, approach to intellectual property, and livelihoods. It has the potential to create a new generation of jobs and growth that could address many of the negative trends identified here, but also a real risk that wealthy countries and industries will take a quantum leap forward and leave vulnerable regions further behind.

Questions: How can the major transformations required to address the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution be used to address the underlying issues of inequality and social fracture? How can the multilateral approaches to conflict prevention be climate sensitive, but also how can our global climate response be conflict sensitive?

Food and health systems

The pandemic and war in Ukraine both point to the central role that health and food systems play in global stability. Rather than question the Pathways approach, this seems to emphasize the need to consider how food systems and access to health may impact horizontal inequality. This may require a multi-scalar and multidisciplinary approach, looking at how global supply chains play out in highly localized settings.

Questions: How can the causal chains involving food and health be more meaningfully brought into the Pathways analysis? Should Pathways 2.0 have a greater focus on trade, food chains, and the global health system?

The role of transnational organized crime and corruption

While certainly mentioned in the Pathways report, TNOC plays a relatively minor role in the overall analysis. Given the evidence over the past few years of the large and growing role that TNOC plays in undermining good governance, enabling armed group activities, and extending the lifespan of conflicts, it may be worth considering how Pathways could emphasize this issue going forward.

Questions: How much should Pathways 2.0 emphasize good governance, anti-corruption, and combatting illicit transnational flows of goods?

Emerging risks, static institutions

The tectonic changes that have occurred over the past five years suggest that the multilateral system is too slow, fractured, and non-inclusive to respond to new risks. Certainly, the pandemic response underscored this, but other trends around AI evolution, bio-risks, cyberthreats, and the cascading effects of climate change are all outstripping our global governance institutions. Indeed,

one of the biggest risks may be that our responses will provide benefits to only a few, heightening inequalities and ultimately creating new conflicts. This means the Pathways process going forward may need to think more about maladaptation and unintended consequences than previously.

Questions: How to ensure our climate responses does not consolidate resources and power in an elite few? How could AI development accelerate inequalities, and what does this mean for global governance of emerging technologies? What can we do to ensure a more equitable approach to the next pandemic? How can we develop institutions that are less static and rooted in big power politics, more able to respond nimbly to emerging risks? How can Pathways 2.0 more meaningfully place inclusion at the heart of its work? Are there opportunities around the Our Common Agenda process – e.g. the Emergency Preparedness Platform, the New Agenda for Peace, the new Social Contract – where these issues can come together?

Implications for prevention and peacebuilding responses and programming

While a forthcoming UNU paper will go more into programmatic, the trends over the past five years raise some important questions for how the UN, World Bank, and others approach programming.

Questions: Should programming be more explicitly about perceived patterns of exclusion and inequality? Can we develop indicators for addressing horizontal inequality that could be baked into programming, shifting goals more directly into the root causes of conflict? Can we have better analytics on perceptions of grievances and whether those grievances are political, social, or economic in nature to ensure more responsive and effective action? Could the UN/WB approaches become less nationally-driven and more multi-scalar? Could the two organizations develop regional strategies that draw on broader trends (e.g. climate, food systems, migration) that then drive national and local programming? Current discussions within the UN and WB have focused on global debt fragility, upscaling of IFIs, and the need to focus more on MICs. What does all this mean for the likely of resources and/or political attention being focused on deeper dynamics of exclusion and injustice per Pathways? Addressing conflict is now being reframed as a “Global public good.”⁶⁵ Is this a step forward or back for conflict prevention and sustaining peace?

¹ Sebastian von Einsiedel, Louise Bosetti, Cale Salih, Wilfred Wan, James Cockayne, *Civil War Trends and the Changing Nature of Armed Conflict* (Tokyo: United Nations University, 2017); Julie Jarland, Håvard Mogleiv Nygård; Scott Gates; Emilie Hermansen & Vilde Bergstad Larsen, *How Should We Understand Patterns of Recurring Conflict?*, (Oslo: Peace Research Institute Oslo, 2020).

² Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *SIPRI Yearbook 2022: Armaments, Disarmament, and International Security* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022).

³ See, UN Security Council press statement, 26 January 2023, available at <https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15184.doc.htm>.

⁴ World Bank World Development Report, Chapter 1, available at <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr2022/brief/chapter-1-introduction-the-economic-impacts-of-the-covid-19-crisis>; See also, Andy Sumner, Eduardo Ortiz-Juarez & Christopher Hoy (2022) Measuring global poverty before and during the pandemic: a political economy of overoptimism, *Third World Quarterly*, 43:1, 1-17, DOI: [10.1080/01436597.2021.1995712](https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2021.1995712).

⁵ See, Espitia, A., Mattoo, A., Rocha, N., Ruta, M. and Winkler, D. (2022), Pandemic trade: COVID-19, remote work and global value chains. *World Econ*, 45: 561-589. <https://doi.org/10.1111/twec.13117>.

⁶ See joint statement of WHO, ILO, IFAD, and FAO, 13 October 2020, available at <https://www.who.int/news/item/13-10-2020-impact-of-covid-19-on-people's-livelihoods-their-health-and-our-food-systems>.

⁷ UNDP Human Development Report 2021, available at <https://hdr.undp.org/content/human-development-report-2021-22> (page 12). See also, OECD States of Fragility Report 2022, available at, <https://www.oecd.org/dac/states-of-fragility-fa5a6770-en.htm>.

⁸ Saima Sidik, How COVID Has Deepened Inequality, *Nature*, available at <https://www.nature.com/immersive/d41586-022-01647-6/index.html>.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ IMF, Inequality in the Time of COVID, available at <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fanddd/2021/06/inequality-and-covid-19-ferreira.htm#:~:text=Inequality%20in%20the%20Time%20of%20COVID%2D19&text=The%20severe%20impact%20of%20the,and%20a%20massive%20global%20recession.>

¹¹ Saima Sidi, *infra*, <https://www.nature.com/immersive/d41586-022-01647-6/index.html>; see also Al-Thaqeb, SA, Algharabali, BG, Alabdulghafour, KT. The pandemic and economic policy uncertainty. *Int J Fin Econ*. 2022; 27: 2784–2794. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ijfe.2298>, available at <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/ijfe.2298>.

¹² World Bank 2021 Year in Review, available at <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2021/12/20/year-2021-in-review-the-inequality-pandemic>.

¹³ Deslatte, A. (2020). The Erosion of Trust During a Global Pandemic and How Public Administrators Should Counter It. *The American Review of Public Administration*, 50(6–7), 489–496. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0275074020941676> available at <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0275074020941676>; see also, Orkun Saka, “The political scar of epidemics: why COVID-19 is eroding young people’s trust in their leaders,” London School of Economics, available at <https://www.lse.ac.uk/research/research-for-the-world/politics/the-political-scar-of-epidemics-why-covid-19-is-eroding-young-peoples-trust-in-their-leaders-and-political-institutions>.

¹⁴ European Institute for Security Studies, “From Bad to Worse? The Impacts of COVID-19 on Conflict Dynamics, June 2020, available at <https://www.iss.europa.eu/content/bad-worse-impacts-covid-19-conflict-dynamics>.

¹⁵ UN University event on armed groups and the pandemic, available at <https://cpr.unu.edu/events/archive/event/covid-19-and-conflict-how-armed-groups-are-instrumentalizing-the-pandemic.html>; Audu Bukarti, “How I Boko Haram Responding to COVID 19?” Institute for Global Policy 2020, available at <https://institute.global/policy/how-boko-haram-responding-covid-19>; Ashley Jackson, “For the Taliban, the Pandemic is a Ladder,” *Foreign Policy* May 2020, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/05/06/taliban-afghanistan-coronavirus-pandemic/>; Human Rights Watch, “Colombia: Armed Groups’ Brutal COVID Measures,” <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/07/15/colombia-armed-groups-brutal-covid-19-measures>.

¹⁶ ACLED, “A Year of COVID-19: the Pandemic’s Impact on Global Conflict and Democracy Trends,” April 2021, https://acleddata.com/acleddatanew/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/ACLED_A-Year-of-COVID19_April2021.pdf.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Mehrl, M., & Thurner, P. W. (2021). The Effect of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Global Armed Conflict: Early Evidence. *Political Studies Review*, 19(2), 286–293. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1478929920940648>, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1478929920940648>.

¹⁹ Oxfam report, available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/oxfam-over-third-population-without-safety-net-cope-covid-19-economic-crisis>.

²⁰ European Institute for Security Studies, “From Bad to Worse? The Impacts of COVID-19 on Conflict Dynamics, June 2020, available at <https://www.iss.europa.eu/content/bad-worse-impacts-covid-19-conflict-dynamics>

²¹ See, Tamara Schott and Mercedes Abdalla, “The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Serious and Organised Crime Landscape,” CEPOL 2014, available at, <https://bulletin.cepola.europa.eu/index.php/bulletin/article/view/485>; <https://www.asisonline.org/security-management-magazine/articles/2021/07/a-pandemic-pivot-organized-crime-finds-a-way-to-thrive-in-the-new-abnormal/>; <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/a-pandemic-and-organized-crime/>.

²² Jeremy Cliffe, *The War that Changed the World*, New Statesman, August 2022, <https://www.newstatesman.com/world/europe/ukraine/2022/08/ukraine-invasion-six-months-that-changed-world>.

²³ OECD, *States of Fragility 2022* (Paris: OECD, 2022).

²⁴ See, Nuclear Threat Initiative, <https://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/cns-north-korea-missile-test-database/>; Justin McCurry, “What’s behind the sudden increase in missile tests from North Korea,” *the Guardian*, October 2022, available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/oct/06/whats-behind-the-sudden-increase-in-missile-tests-from-north-korea>; Lindsay Maizland, “Why China-Taiwan Relations Are So Tense,” Council on Foreign Relations, August 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/china-taiwan-relations-tension-us-policy-biden>; Yvette Tan, “China-Taiwan: Beijing speeding up plans for unification, Blinken says,” *BBC News*, October 2022, available at, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-63296105>.

²⁵ Institute for Economics and Peace, *Global Peace Index 2022* (Sydney: Institute for Economics and Peace, 2022).

²⁶ See United Nations and World Bank, *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2018).

²⁷ SIPRI, “World Military Expenditure Surpasses \$2 trillion for first time,” available at <https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2022/world-military-expenditure-passes-2-trillion-first-time>.

²⁸ See, Nina Tannenwald, “Life beyond Arms Control: Moving toward a Global Regime of Nuclear Restraint & Responsibility,” *Dædalus: The Journal of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences* Vol. 149 No. 2, (Spring 2020), 205-221; Wilfred Wan, *Nuclear Risk Reduction: A Framework for Analysis* (Geneva: United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, 2019).

²⁹ Lyndon Burford, “A Risk-Driven Approach to Nuclear Disarmament,” European Leadership Network, June 25, 2019, <https://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/commentary/a-risk-driven-approach-to-nuclear-disarmament/>.

³⁰ See, <https://www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/milex/>; <https://www.unroca.org/>.

³¹ Nuclear Threat Initiative report, available at, <https://www.nti.org/education-center/treaties-and-regimes/treaty-between-the-united-states-of-america-and-the-russian-federation-on-measures-for-the-further-reduction-and-limitation-of-strategic-offensive-arms/>;

Reuters, “Putin: Russia suspends participation in last remaining nuclear treaty with U.S.,” 21 February 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/putin-russia-suspends-participation-last-remaining-nuclear-treaty-with-us-2023-02-21/>; Arms Control Association, “Addressing the NPT’s Midlife Crisis,” <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2020-01/focus/addressing-npt-midlife-crisis>;

International Crisis Group, “Is Restoring the Iran Nuclear Deal Still Possible?” September 2022, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/b087-restoring-the-iran-nuclear-deal.pdf>.

³² <https://bti-project.org/en/reports/global-report>;

³³ Freedom House World Report 2022, available at <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2022/global-expansion-authoritarian-rule>.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Statement by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 3 August 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2022/08/crisis-and-fragility-democracy-world>; <https://bti-project.org/en/reports/global-report>; <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0275074020941676>; <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-021-03358-w>.

³⁷ Adam Day, et al, “Peacebuilding and Authoritarianism,” UN University, 2021, available at <https://cpr.unu.edu/research/projects/peacebuilding-and-authoritarianism-the-unintentional-consequences-of-un-engagement-in-post-conflict-settings.html#outline>; Sarah von Billerbeck and Oisín Tansey, “Enabling Autocracy,” *European Journal of International Relations*, January 2019, available at <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1354066118819724>;

³⁸ Centre for Strategic and International Studies, “Can the OSCE Help Resolve the Russia-Ukraine Crisis?” January 2022, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/can-osce-help-resolve-russia-ukraine-crisis>.

³⁹ David Passarelli and Adam Day, “Stress Testing the UN’s Regional Prevention Approaches,” UN University, 2021, http://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:8780/UNUCPR_StressTesting.pdf.

⁴⁰ Interview with DPPA, September 2022; see also, <https://gga.org/coups-in-west-africa-a-critical-analysis-of-au-and-ecowas-responses/>; <https://africanarguments.org/2020/10/why-cant-the-au-seem-to-deter-coups/>; <https://fragilestatesindex.org/2022/07/08/breaking-the-cycle-military-coups-in-west-africa/>.

⁴¹ World Bank, available at <https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/food-prices-continued-their-two-year-long-upward-trajectory>;

⁴² Morgan and Stanely, available at <https://www.morganstanley.com/ideas/rising-food-prices-2022-outlook>.

⁴³ IMF Blog, available at <https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2022/05/20/social-unrest-is-rising-adding-to-risks-for-global-economy>.

⁴⁴ Ram L. Ray, Vijay P. Singh, Sudhir K. Singh, Bharat S. Acharya, Yiping He, What is the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on global carbon emissions?, *Science of The Total Environment*, Volume 816,

2022, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0048969721065815>;

⁴⁵ UNDP Human Development Report 2022, <https://hdr.undp.org/content/human-development-report-2021-22>.

⁴⁶ See, Adam Day and Jessica Caus, “Conflict Prevention in an Era of Climate Change,” UN University 2020, <https://cpr.unu.edu/research/projects/climate-security.html#outline>.

⁴⁷ <https://cpr.unu.edu/research/projects/climate-security.html#outline>; See also Adelphi Lake Chad report, available at <https://www.adelphi.de/en/system/files/mediathek/bilder/Lake%20Chad%20Climate%20Risk%20Assessment%20FINDINGS%20September%202018.pdf>;

⁴⁸ Adam Day, Bangladesh Case Study, https://i.unu.edu/media/cpr.unu.edu/post/3856/ClimateSecurity_Bangladesh.pdf; Jessica Caus, Nigeria Case Study, https://i.unu.edu/media/cpr.unu.edu/post/3856/ClimateSecurity_Nigeria.pdf.

⁴⁹ See, Eleonore Pauwels, “The new geopolitics of converging risks,” UN University 2019. <https://cpr.unu.edu/research/projects/the-new-geopolitics-of-converging-risks-the-un-and-prevention-in-the-era-of-ai.html#outline>;

⁵⁰ Comfort Ero: Hitting the Ground Running Keynote Address (Greentree, 17/11/22) [on file with author]

⁵¹ See, UNDP Human Development Report, 2022, <https://hdr.undp.org/content/2022-special-report-human-security#:~:text=New%20data%20and%20analysis%20in%20years%20of%20upwards%20development%20success..>

⁵² DPPA internal brainstorming, 8 November 2022, notes on file with author.

⁵³ See, <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/GPI-2022-web.pdf>;

<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2022/05/14/1098000374/the-u-s-pledged-billions-to-fight-climate-change-then-came-the-ukraine-war>.

⁵⁴ For perhaps the best analysis of this, see Rachel Kleinfeld, *A Savage Order: How the World’s Deadliest Countries Can Forge a Path to Security*, Pantheon, 2018.

⁵⁵ <https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2022/12/21/countries-hurt-by-war-and-fragility-need-strong-global-partnerships-resources>.