



Vatican COVID-19 Commission

Executive summary: Security Taskforce



Loading rounds, by The US Army

SEE: Security in a time of COVID-19

Everything is related, everything is connected

The coronavirus pandemic is a **huge global challenge** for our planet. According to the International Monetary Fund, it will cause a global recession in 2020 and this could exacerbate conflicts. At the same time, existing conflicts, which have already caused so much human misery, will hamper measures to fight COVID-19.

The world was not prepared for the pandemic and now that it is here, the virus is undermining our capacity to solve conflicts. Peace-making efforts have ceased because of travel restrictions and **economic instability** has increased, making future conflicts more likely – particularly in fragile states.

Meanwhile, in some areas the pandemic has provided a reason to cancel elections or public protests, restrict the media and extend the power of **authoritarian regimes**.

The coronavirus crisis will have a direct impact on food supply, both in international and local markets, according to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

It will also have an indirect impact on food security because the crisis has decreased both purchasing power and the capacity to produce food.

Millions of people depend on food trade for their livelihoods. The crisis could intensify within weeks as key fruit and vegetables come into season.



Pope Francis has asked the Vatican COVID-19 Commission to consider the key issues arising from the pandemic, and to reflect on new socio-economic-cultural approaches that are needed to enable us to build a better future for everyone.



Stuck in the conflict trap

Countries with a low or declining GDP, a youth bulge, a history of conflict and an economy dependent on natural resources, are more likely to remain stuck in the 'conflict trap', in recurring cycles of violence, according to the World Bank.

JUDGE: Armed conflict and poverty are linked

We are facing the same storm but we are not all in the same boat

Conflicts undermine the implementation and effectiveness of measures to fight against COVID-19. The impact will not be the same for all countries and all people but will particularly affect poor countries and social groups, as well as rural populations – we are facing the same storm but we are not all in the same boat.

To prevent further outbreaks, preparations for war and other military activities, which negatively impact the natural and social environment and disrupt ecological stability, have to stop.

Without controlling arms, it is impossible to ensure security. Without security, economic development is impossible.

Also, the economic cost of conflict wastes resources which could be reallocated to fighting against the

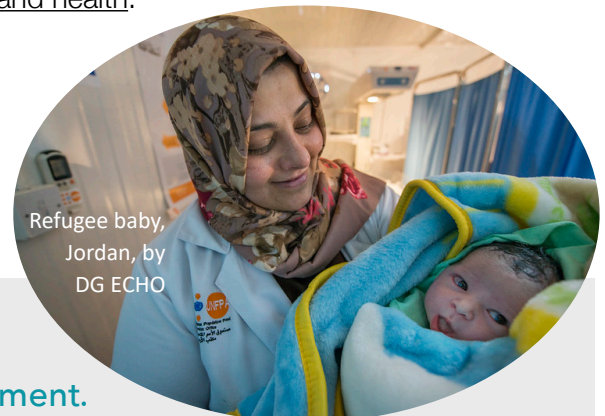


Bomb damage, Yemen, by Felton Davis

pandemic and promoting a new global health system that will reflect a **new universal solidarity**.

Armed violence and conflict and poverty are linked in a cycle that **prevents peace**, furthers human rights abuses and hampers development.

Human security, the dominant concern of policy and international relations, cannot be restricted to military security, but is also about the security of people's rights and health.



Refugee baby, Jordan, by DG ECHO

ACT: To reduce armed conflicts, we need a strategy that is focused on prevention and disarmament.

- **Ceasefire:** The UN call for a global ceasefire needs to be strengthened and sustained. It could be useful to release an inter-religious and inter-disciplinary call for unity and solidarity.
- **Freeze:** Weapons production and the supply of weapons of all kind need to be frozen by states. The Church and other religious institutions could propose an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council to discuss an arms race suspension.
- **Track and Report:** Interstate confidence, security-building measures, and a global public-access weapons tracking system can reinforce freezes in production and supply.
- **Limit:** In the short term, the Church and other religious institutions could call for the extension of the new START Treaty. In the long run, they could promote the adoption of a comprehensive disarmament treaty that would include both conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction, such as the Strategic Concept for the Removal of Arms and Proliferation (SCRAP).
- **Eliminate:** Weapons of mass destruction might be eliminated under a supervision mechanism built on the UN mechanism developed for Iraq in the 1990s and various other existing and prototype mechanisms. In the case of biological weapons, the Church and other religious institutions could support the introduction in the Biological Convention of measures to ensure compliance, including sanctions, and establish a permanent legally binding mechanism to ensure transparency and verification.