



Peace and Justice

Evaluating for Goal 16 in Arab region during 2023



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Introduction:

Amidst the raging conflict in Sudan, Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip in Palestine, the security crises caused by the Houthi militia in Yemen, and escalating attacks by extremist groups, the Arab world finds itself in a highly tense reality. The region has been characterized by security, political, and economic turmoil for several years. Therefore, it has become crucial to pursue a development path that aims to establish peace and justice in Arab countries. Monitoring and addressing the security and political crises in the region have become of utmost importance, particularly as sustainable development in the Arab region aims to support peace, justice, and the establishment of robust institutions. SDG 16, focusing on peace, justice, and strong institutions, has become a top priority for the Arab region.

In line with its commitment to localize the Sustainable Development Agenda in the Arab region, with a particular focus on peace, justice, and strong institutions, **Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights** has released a new study titled "**Peace & Justice Duality: Assessment of SDG 16 in the Arab Region in 2023.**" This study has two axes; firstly, it assesses the state of SDG 16 in Arab countries most affected by conflicts and disputes in 2023. Secondly, it presents monitoring and statistical data on SDG 16 across all Arab countries during the same period. The study concludes with a set of recommendations to strengthen the development path toward peace and justice in the Arab region.

Axis 1: Arab Countries Affected in 2023:

During 2023, the Arab region experienced a series of complex and interconnected events that hindered the progress of SDG 16 in the region. Gaza witnessed systematic genocide by Israeli occupation forces, while most of Sudan remained embroiled in an ongoing and highly complicated civil war. These circumstances raise concerns about the future of peace, justice, and the developmental paths needed in the Arab region. The following section examines the human rights and development situation in Palestine and Sudan during 2023.

First: Sudan - Political Conflict Escalating to Deadly Civil War:

Since April 2023, Sudan has been engulfed in severe political and security unrest among rival political factions, resulting in a deadly civil war. This conflict has obstructed the advancement of human rights and development efforts towards achieving SDG 16. Sudan currently ranks 155th out of 163 countries in the Global Peace Index, falling into the "**very low**" category. In the Arab world, Sudan ranks 18th on the Peace Index, making it the third least peaceful country in the Middle East and East Africa. The ongoing violence and fighting have led to the displacement of over 6.7 million Sudanese people, while 17.7 million suffer from severe food insecurity. Additionally, 4.9 million Sudanese are facing emergency levels of hunger due to the continued conflict.¹

As the war continues to escalate in various regions of Sudan, the death toll and casualties continue to rise. By the end of December, the total number of deaths had reached 12,190, with over 7 million people displaced both within and outside the country.² Tragically, between May and September 2023, 1,200 children under the age of five lost their lives in nine Sudanese refugee camps due to measles and malnutrition resulting from a lack of food and humanitarian supplies. These figures were reported in the latest update from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.³

The conflict in western Sudan has taken on the disturbing character of ethnic attacks. The Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in Western Darfur, particularly in areas like El Geneina, have launched targeted assaults against the Masalit and non-Arab populations, who constitute the largest demographic group in the city. These attacks have forced tens of thousands of residents to flee to neighboring countries such as Chad. In the El Geneina area alone, 5,000 civilians were killed and 8,000 others injured between April 24 and June 12.⁴

¹ السودان، تقرير الحالة، أوشيف، OHCHR، <https://bitly.ws/36DI6>

² سكاى نيوز عربية، السودان في 2023.. حرب ودمار وآلاف القتلى وملايين المشردين، 1 يناير 2024، الرابط: <https://cutt.ly/ZwHGh7di>

³ UNHCR, WHO warn of deteriorating health conditions as 1,200 children die of suspected measles, malnutrition in Sudan, September 19, 2023. <https://bitly.ws/Vx5r>

⁴ Wagner Support for RSF Leads to Carnage in Darfur, adf, July 5, 2023. <http://bitly.ws/RMMP>

Wad Madani state has also witnessed the onslaught of the RSF, prompting 300,000 people to flee to different regions and states, including Al-Jazira, Sennar, and Gedaref, since December 15, 2023.⁵

Furthermore, **the war has severely undermined the pursuit of justice within Sudan**, with gender-based violence becoming a deeply troubling aspect of the conflict. Since the outbreak of the war, more than 4 million Sudanese women have been at risk of experiencing violence and sexual exploitation from both sides involved in the conflict.⁶ In the first three months of the war alone, over 88 cases of rape were recorded, likely representing only 2% of the actual number of cases.⁷ This suggests that there may have been around 4,400 cases of sexual violence during that period. In November, 50 cases of rape and sexual violence were documented, affecting 105 victims. Notably, 70% of these cases were committed by the Rapid Support Forces. It is deeply concerning that these violations continue to occur without any judicial accountability from the legitimate authorities in Sudan.⁸

Second: War on Gaza - Five Months of Genocide

The protracted conflict in Palestine continues to obstruct efforts towards peace and justice, as the occupied Gaza Strip endured a harrowing period of armed conflict amounting to genocide by the Israeli occupation forces in the latter half of 2023. The Israeli aggression against the residents of the Strip escalated,⁹ with intensified armed attacks resulting in a devastating loss of life. By December 2023, more than 90 days after the start of a continuous Israeli military operation on the Gaza Strip, the death toll stood at over 21,000 Palestinians, and the number of wounded reached 56,000, mainly comprising children and women. During the same period, Israel also arrested 3,000 individuals from Gaza.¹⁰

Increasing Israeli raids targeting various infrastructure and residential buildings in Gaza caused extensive damage. A total of 113 health facilities and 51% (267) of

⁵ السودان: نهب وسلب وخوف من "عنف جنسي" في ولاية الجزيرة مع تقدم الدعم السريع نحو الجنوب، فرانس 24، <https://bitly.ws/38WUn>

⁶ Violent Conflict in Sudan Has Impacted on Nearly Every Aspect of Women's Lives, Relief web, <https://bitly.ws/36DXy>

⁷ Sudan: Children as young as 12 raped and assaulted, as sexual violence rips through the country, Relief web, <https://bitly.ws/T5H3>

⁸ Sudan: Alarming reports of women and girls abducted and forced to marry, held for ransom, United nations human rights, <https://bitly.ws/36E5X>

⁹ رصد مخطط حماس.. لماذا فشلت الاستخبارات الإسرائيلية؟، سكاى نيوز عربية، <https://bitly.ws/38Tvc>

¹⁰ أعداد ضحايا القصف الإسرائيلي على غزة تتجاوز 75 ألفا بين قتيل وجريح، والأمم المتحدة تحذر من أن دخول المساعدات بات مستحيل، بي بي سي عربية، <https://bitly.ws/38Tvc>

educational facilities were affected.¹¹ Additionally, 100 Palestinian historical sites fell victim to Israeli bombings, endangering cultural heritage within the Strip.¹² By the end of November, 37,379 buildings had been damaged, with 10,000 of them destroyed. The northern sector of Gaza suffered the most significant destruction, with 29,732 out of 37,000 buildings demolished.¹³

The targeting, destruction, and killing operations were not limited to the Gaza Strip alone. The Israeli occupation forces infiltrated cities in the West Bank, carrying out operations in Jenin, Far'a, and Tulkarm, resulting in the death of 301 individuals since October 7.¹⁴ The number of detainees from Nablus, Jerusalem, Hebron, Tubas, and Qalqilya rose to 4,420.¹⁵

The continuous shootings in Gaza and the heinous crimes committed by Israeli aggression throughout Palestine have had a detrimental impact on the pursuit of peace and justice. Consequently, Palestine's ranking in the Global Peace Index for 2023 deteriorated, placing it at 134th out of 163 countries.¹⁶

Axis 2: Monitoring SDG 16 in the Arab Region in 2023

While Sudan and Palestine are the two Arab countries most affected by security challenges in the region, the rest of the Arab countries also face tense political and security realities. Some nations are striving to overcome long-standing political crises, while others are trying to catch up with the development process. The focus remains on fostering peace, strengthening justice, and building robust institutions within the Arab region. The following section monitors the progress of SDG 16 in the Arab region throughout the past year.

¹¹ أشياء يجب أن تعرفها عن الوضع الإنساني في غزة، المجلس النرويجي للاجئين، <https://bitly.ws/36FKg>

¹² More than 100 Gaza heritage sites have been damaged or destroyed by Israeli attacks, NPR, <https://bitly.ws/36F17>

¹³ بعد 80 يوماً على الحرب... الدمار الهائل في غزة لم يشهد له العالم مثيلاً خلال القرن الواحد والعشرين، فرنس 24، <https://bitly.ws/38TK4>

¹⁴ مقتل 301 فلسطينيًا على يد القوات الإسرائيلية في الضفة الغربية المحتلة منذ 7 تشرين الأول/أكتوبر، العربي الجديد، <https://bitly.ws/36FCf>

¹⁵ نادي الأسير الفلسطيني: 4420 حالة اعتقال في الضفة الغربية منذ الـ 7 من أكتوبر، RT، <https://bitly.ws/38TNI>

¹⁶ Gaza, 19,667 killed, 52,586 wounded since Oct. 7, Jordan news, <https://bitly.ws/36Fw4>

First: Countries of North Africa

a. Egypt

The Egyptian government has made extensive efforts to promote peace and justice within the country. Egypt has achieved a rank of 121 out of 163 countries on the Global Peace Index, marking an improvement of approximately 5 places compared to its previous rank in 2022. The government's measures to combat violence and terrorism have resulted in a comparatively low economic cost for the country, ranking 143rd with an expenditure of less than 4% of the gross domestic product. This reflects the positive impact of Egypt's counterterrorism efforts and its commitment to combating violence within its borders.¹⁷

b. Libya

Libya's ongoing efforts to achieve peace and justice within society are yielding positive results. The country has attained a rank of 137 out of 163 countries on the Global Peace Index, with a score of 2,605 points. This represents a rise of 14 places compared to its previous ranking in 2022, despite the significant conflicts experienced in Libya over the past 11 years. The Peace Index highlights Libya's remarkable improvement in overall peace levels in the Arab region and globally, with a 7.2% increase.¹⁸

c. Morocco

The current state of affairs in Morocco reveals challenges in the pursuit of peace and justice within the country. Morocco is ranked 84th out of 163 countries on the Global Peace Index, with a score of 2.2 points, resulting in a slight decline from its previous ranking in 2022. Notably, gender-based violence remains a significant concern, with 59% of Moroccan women experiencing physical violence in 2023. Domestic violence accounts for 52% of all incidents affecting women during the same period. Between June 2020 and June 2023, there were 10,940 recorded cases of social and economic violence, 6,572 cases of physical violence, and 3,528 cases of physical and sexual violence.¹⁹

¹⁷ Op. cite. Global peace index 2023, Institute for Economics & Peace Measuring peace in a complex world.

¹⁸ Op, cite, Global peace index 2023, Institute for Economics & Peace Measuring peace in a complex world

¹⁹ اليوم العالمي للقضاء على العنف ضد المرأة: 59% من النساء المغربيات ضحايا للعنف الجسدي، هيس بريس، <https://bitly.ws/36Cpa>

However, Morocco is actively addressing the issue of school violence directed at children. Disturbingly, it has been documented that one-third of primary school children and 56% of secondary school students in Morocco face verbal abuse and ridicule.²⁰ In response, Moroccan authorities have prioritized efforts to combat and eradicate violence and bullying against children.

d. Tunisia

Tunisia has achieved a ranking of 81st out of 163 countries on the Global Peace Index, with a score of 2.01 points. This represents an improvement of one place compared to its ranking in the previous year, 2022, and it is the sixth-ranked country in the Arab region. While Tunisia's placement on the list reflects an average ranking in terms of social peace and security, with a score of 2,417 points, it is affected by the prevalence of social violence against women in Tunisian society. The percentage of violence against women has increased by 4.3% during the first half of 2023, as reported by the Ministry of Women and Family. The reported incidents included 158 cases of verbal violence, 84 cases of psychological and emotional violence, 156 cases of physical violence, and 19 cases of sexual violence.²¹

e. Algeria

The Algerian government is actively working to strengthen SDG 16, which focuses on achieving peace and justice. As a result, Algeria has been ranked 96th out of 163 countries on the Global Peace Index, earning a score of 2,094 points. It is classified as a "high" peace country, showing progress of 8 places compared to its ranking in 2022. Algeria is one of the countries in the world that allocates a significant portion of its gross national product to military spending, with an annual expenditure of 5.3%. This places it among the countries with a high level of militarization, scoring 1,925 points on the list.²²

However, Algeria ranks low on the list of countries that test security and social peace, with a score of 2,423 points. The prevalence of violence in all its forms remains a significant crisis affecting the social fabric of the country. Health Promotion Foundation

²⁰ تقرير جديد يكشف عن العنف المدرسي المثير للقلق في المغرب، Morocco world news، <https://bitly.ws/36Cy4>

²¹ 46 في المئة من النساء ضحايا العنف في تونس عاطلات عن العمل، العرب، <https://bitly.ws/36Av5>

²² Op, cite, Global peace index 2023, Institute for Economics & Peace Measuring peace in a complex world

records 2,000 cases of violence against women each year, in the age group 4 to 22.²³ Incidents of violence against migrants are also increasing, with recent months witnessing the expulsion of 7,000 migrants from Algeria to Niger. These operations involve torture, ill-treatment, and arbitrary detention until the migrants are transported to the border and left without water or food in harsh conditions.²⁴

f. Mauritania

Thanks to government efforts and plans to promote peace and justice within Mauritanian society, Mauritania has experienced a 30% improvement in the Peace Index compared to the global average improvement. The country's contribution to financing United Nations peacekeeping operations has contributed to its enhanced presence on the Global Peace Index in 2023. Mauritania is ranked 114th out of 163 countries, earning a score of 2,228 points. This places it among the countries with a "high" peace rating, marking an increase of 4 places compared to its ranking in 2022.²⁵

Second: Countries of East Africa

a. Djibouti

Djibouti is ranked 112th out of 163 countries on the Global Peace Index, reflecting the government's commitment to promoting peace and justice within Djiboutian society. This places Djibouti in the "high" classification for its state of peace, with a score of 2,196 points. The country has risen one place in comparison to its ranking in the previous year, 2022.

However, Djibouti ranks low on the list of countries with the lowest levels of community safety and security, scoring 2,531 points. It is ranked 101st due to the violence experienced within the country. Djibouti contributes approximately 6% of its gross national product annually towards addressing the impact of violence. While this is a low economic contribution compared to other African and Arab countries, it should be noted that many of these countries are facing intense conflicts.²⁶

²³ الجزائر: الاعتداء الجنسي على النساء والأطفال «مرعب» والتوعية ضرورية، الشرق الأوسط، <https://bitly.ws/36wZD>

²⁴ الجزائر: يتعرض المهاجرون من جنوب الصحراء الكبرى للعنف والطرده، Relief web، <https://bitly.ws/36CHn>

²⁵ Global peace index 2023, Institute for Economics & Peace Measuring peace in a complex world

²⁶ Op, cite, Global peace index 2023, Institute for Economics & Peace Measuring peace in a complex world

b. Somalia

Somalia is ranked 156th out of 163 countries on the Peace Index, indicating a "very low" level of peace within the country. The Somali government's efforts to control the security crisis and establish peace within society have been weak. The country suffers from deep-rooted violence and a lack of peace, leading to the internal displacement of 20% of its total population over the years. Somalia is among the countries most affected by local and regional conflicts, scoring 3,131 points.²⁷

c. Comoros

Despite the peace policy pursued by the Comoros government in 2023, challenges to security and political stability arose with the outbreak of demonstrations against the country's acceptance of groups of illegal migrants formerly residing in the French municipality of Mayotte. Additionally, mayors in Comoros protested against the French judiciary's approach in Operation "Wambocho," which focuses on combating crime and illegal migration in Mayotte by expelling illegal migrants, including Comoros migrants. This further contributed to the security crisis in the Comoros municipalities.²⁸

Third: Countries of Levant Region

a. Syria

After 12 years since the outbreak of the civil war in Syria, the Syrian government has implemented a comprehensive plan to address peace and justice within the country. The war has had severe negative effects, resulting in the forcible arrest of an estimated 100,000 to 130,000 Syrian citizens. Tragically, the conflict has claimed the lives of 500,000 Syrians, while 12 million others have been internally displaced or forced to seek refuge in other countries.²⁹ As of June 2023, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has recorded 5.3 million Syrian asylum seekers worldwide.³⁰ Syria's readmission to the Arab League in May 2023 marks the end of the war and signifies a

²⁷ Op, cite, Global peace index 2023, Institute for Economics & Peace Measuring peace in a complex world

²⁸ مظاهرات في جزر القمر رفضاً لترحيل مهاجرين إليها من مايوت الفرنسية، فرانس 24، <https://bitly.ws/36LJw>

²⁹ Worsening Conditions in Syria Need Urgent Concerted Efforts from All Parties, UN, <https://bitly.ws/36Ehs>

³⁰ The Syrian civil war: Timeline and statistics, UK parliament, <https://bitly.ws/36Emn>

new era of peace, paving the way for renewed Arab cooperation and support after years of suspension.³¹

b. Lebanon

Lebanon's situation regarding peace and justice is characterized by fluctuation. On the political front, Syrian refugees residing in Lebanon face persecution, with 1.5 million Syrians living in the country. Unfortunately, 90% of these refugees live below the poverty line due to restrictions imposed by the Lebanese authorities, which limit their employment opportunities to sectors such as construction, agriculture, and sanitation. The refugee camps, numbering 3,100, are exposed to various challenges, including fires, harassment, expulsion, persecution, and arrests.³² In addition, there has been a resurgence of security chaos along the southern Lebanese border, with artillery and missile attacks occurring on the Lebanese-Israeli border amidst regional unrest.³³ These incidents have raised concerns about the potential escalation into a broader military conflict, given Israel's continued targeting of areas in southern Lebanon.³⁴

c. Jordan

The government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has made notable efforts towards achieving SDG 16, focusing on peace and justice within the country. According to the Global Peace Index, Jordan is ranked 62nd out of 163 countries, placing it in the category of countries with a "high" rating on the peace index. This represents a significant improvement of 6 places compared to the previous year, 2022.³⁵ The government's efforts aim to eliminate all forms and causes of violence within the country.³⁶

However, regional tensions pose a challenge to the overall peace and security stability within Jordan. Relations between Jordan and Israel have rapidly deteriorated, leading Jordan to recall its ambassador from Israel. Jordan has also demanded that Israel

³¹ سوريا تعود لجامعة الدول العربية بعد أكثر من 11 عاما على تعليق عضويتها وقطر لن تطيع علاقاتها مع دمشق، فرانس 24، <https://bitly.ws/36Ekf>

³² أزمة اللاجئين السوريين في لبنان: التحريض السياسي ومسؤوليات الدولة اللبنانية، سوريا، <https://bitly.ws/36Eup>

³³ وضع أمني متآزم على الحدود بين لبنان وإسرائيل... ودول عديدة تدعو رعاياها لمغادرة لبنان فوراً، مونت كارلو الدولية، <https://bitly.ws/36EDH>

³⁴ مع دخول المواجهات شهرها الثالث... مخاوف من انزلاق الوضع الأمني جنوبي لبنان، سبوتنيك، <https://bitly.ws/36EFU>

³⁵ Global peace index 2023, Institute for Economics & Peace Measuring peace in a complex world, <https://bitly.ws/UsDH>

³⁶ وزير الداخلية يتحدث عن الاوضاع الامنية في المملكة، وزارة الداخلية، المملكة الأردنية الهاشمية، <https://bitly.ws/36F98>

not return its ambassador to Amman, the Jordanian capital, until the war in Gaza concludes and a ceasefire is achieved.³⁷

d. Iraq

According to the latest Global Peace Index, Iraq is ranked 154th out of 163 countries, indicating a **"very low"** level of peace within the country. Despite a slight improvement in its ranking, rising three places from the previous year, Iraq still faces significant challenges in achieving peace. It currently holds the 17th position among Arab countries on the Peace Index and is categorized as one of the least peaceful nations globally, with a score of 2,926 points.³⁸

The decline in Iraq's ranking on the Global Peace Index can be attributed to the ongoing increase in acts of violence, resulting in civilian casualties. In 2023 alone, 467 Iraqi citizens lost their lives due to violence.³⁹ The country allocates 14% of its gross national product towards compensating for the high costs associated with addressing the impact of violence.⁴⁰

Third: Countries of Arabian Gulf Region

a. Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Despite efforts to promote peace, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is ranked 119th globally out of 163 countries on the Global Peace Index, placing it in the category of countries with an **"average"** peace index. However, within the Arab world, it holds the 10th position on the Peace Index. The kingdom's annual military spending exceeds \$131 billion, equivalent to 8.2% of its gross national product.⁴¹

b. United Arab Emirates

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is ranked 75th out of 163 countries on the Global Peace Index, with a score of 1,979 points. It has risen three places since the previous year, 2022,

³⁷ الأردن يستدعي سفيره لدى إسرائيل بسبب حرب غزة، العربي الجديد، <https://bitly.ws/36FrB>

³⁸ Op, cite, Global peace index 2023, Institute for Economics & Peace Measuring peace in a complex world

³⁹ Number of documented civilian deaths in the Iraq war from 2003 to October 2023, Statista, <https://bit.ly/48p14US>

⁴⁰ Op, cite, Global peace index 2023, Institute for Economics & Peace Measuring peace in a complex world

⁴¹ Op, Cite, Global peace index 2023, Institute for Economics & Peace Measuring peace in a complex world.

highlighting the effectiveness of government efforts in pursuing the sixteenth development goal. Within the Arab world, UAE holds the fifth position on the Peace Index. The country performs well in terms of community safety and security, achieving a score of 1,850 points. However, its ranking is lower in the field of militarization, with a score of 2,694 points. Additionally, globally, the UAE ranks 47th in terms of the economic cost of violence, with the country bearing 9% of its gross domestic product as a result of violence experienced or impacted by the state.⁴²

c. Qatar

Qatar has earned the top position among Arab countries in the Peace Index for the year 2023, ranking 21st globally in the "**High**" category on the Peace Scale. It is the only Arab nation to be ranked among the top 25 most peaceful countries worldwide. However, challenges persist on the path to justice. Several months after the conclusion of the World Cup in Qatar, violations against Asian workers have come to light. These workers were employed on short-term contracts, enduring 12-hour workdays without leave for 28 consecutive days. Their salaries did not align with Qatari labor laws, and no remedies were implemented. These issues raise questions about the state of justice within the Arab world's most peaceful country.⁴³

d. Kuwait

Political turmoil casts a shadow over Kuwait. Despite the government's dedicated efforts to achieve SDG 16 within the country, political unrest presents a set of obstacles to achieving peace. Kuwait ranked second among Arab countries in the 2023 Peace Index, placing 35th globally with a "**high**" rating on the peace scale. However, the country's political reality remains unstable, with ongoing clashes between elected legislators and ministers appointed by the ruling family. As of June 2023, Kuwait has witnessed the succession of five different governments, underscoring the prevailing instability.⁴⁴

⁴² Op, cite, Global peace index 2023, Institute for Economics & Peace Measuring peace in a complex world

⁴³ Qatar World Cup workers suffered 'human rights abuses', new Amnesty report finds, Independent, <https://bit.ly/48n9YCC>

⁴⁴ <https://bitly.ws/36H6d> الحكومة الكويتية الخامسة خلال عام تؤولي اليمين، الاهرام اونلاين،

Moreover, the path to justice faces hindrances within Kuwait, particularly concerning the widespread violations experienced by foreign and Asian workers employed in the country. In 2022, the Filipino Migrant Workers Administration reported 24,000 cases of rights violations among Filipino domestic workers, prompting Kuwait to suspend all visas for Filipino workers. Kuwait called on the Philippines to acknowledge its violations of Kuwaiti labor laws and the Bilateral Labor Agreement, urging a legal investigation into the reported abuses.⁴⁵

e. Bahrain

In the context of working to achieve SDG 16 within Bahrain, the Kingdom of Bahrain is ranked 108 globally out of 163 countries on the Global Peace Index, while it is ranked ninth in the Arab world on the index of the most peaceful Arab countries in the world⁴⁶, despite the state of peace and the absence of violence in Bahrain for years. However, the military escalation through which the Houthis obstructed the navigational path of ships in the Red Sea is considered one of the forms of tension between the Yemeni and Bahraini sides, after an attack launched by Houthi aircraft caused the death of 3 Bahraini soldiers, as a result of which Bahrain announced its participation with forces in “Operation Guardian of Prosperity,” aiming to protect navigation in the Red Sea.⁴⁷

f. Sultanate of Oman

Omani government efforts are considered among the best in the Arab countries in the field of work to achieve SDG 16. Sultanate of Oman ranked third among the countries of the Arab region in the 2023 Peace Index, and ranked 48th globally within the “**high**” classification. On the peace scale, Oman ranked the third largest improvement in achieving peace in the Arab world, as it rose 18 places on the peace index from its previous ranking.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Dispatch on Migrant and Domestic Workers in Kuwait, ADHRB, <https://bitly.ws/36Hcr>

⁴⁶ Op, Cite, Global peace index 2023, Institute for Economics & Peace Measuring peace in a complex world.

⁴⁷ Bahrain, Crisis group, <https://bit.ly/48bVK7G>

⁴⁸ Op, cite, Global peace index 2023, Institute for Economics & Peace Measuring peace in a complex world.

g. . Yemen

Conflict prevails in dealing with the file of establishing peace and justice in Yemen, which came in penultimate place out of 163 countries on the Global Peace Index for the year 2023, as Yemen is considered, due to the conflict that has been going on for years, the least peaceful country in the Middle East region for the third year in a row. However, it is also the second least peaceful country in the world.

Despite the relative improvement in the security situation, the collapse of the ceasefire between the Saudi and Yemeni sides and the continuation of local skirmishes between the Houthis and the internationally recognized Yemeni government slowed the country's steps on the path to peace.⁴⁹

Mechanisms to Promote SDG 16 in the Arab Region

In light of ongoing conflicts and unrest in some countries of the Arab region, there is a growing need for diverse visions and working mechanisms to strengthen the path to peace and advance the goals and indicators of SDG 16. Efforts should focus on achieving peaceful resolutions, supporting peacebuilding initiatives, and facilitating multi-stage and context-specific reconstruction in these countries. Recommendations that address the most critical paths to resolving crises within conflict-affected Arab countries are essential. The following recommendations highlight key areas for action:

1. **In response to the renewed Israeli aggression against Palestine, particularly in the Gaza Strip**, Maat recommends that the Arab League launch an Arab project aimed at holding the Israeli authority accountable. This can be achieved by submitting reports documenting Israeli crimes in the Gaza Strip to the International Court and advocating for the trial of Israeli war leaders.
2. **Given the occupying authorities' use of starvation as a weapon to pressure residents of the Gaza Strip and force them out of their homes**, Maat recommends that the Arab League file a case charging Israel with committing a war crime against the people of Gaza, based on Rule 53 of International Humanitarian Law, which explicitly prohibits the use of starvation as a means of targeting civilians.

⁴⁹ Op, cite, Global peace index 2023, Institute for Economics & Peace Measuring peace in a complex world.

3. **With the escalation and expansion of the conflict in Sudan**, Maat recommends that the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) facilitate a political dialogue between the conflicting parties. This dialogue should be conducted in two stages, starting with a period of calm and leading to a comprehensive ceasefire. Subsequently, a thorough investigation into transitional justice and redress should take place.
4. **As attacks by RSF continue against Masalit and non-Arab communities in certain Sudanese states**, Maat recommends that the Working Group on Minority Rights at the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights establish channels to receive reports from victims of ethnic attacks. These reports will contribute to the creation of a reliable database that can be used to achieve justice and equity once the situation in Sudan stabilizes.
5. **With Syria's return to the Arab League**, Maat recommends that Arab League countries launch an economic program aimed at mobilizing regional and international funds to accelerate the reconstruction process. This program should prioritize rebuilding the Syrian infrastructure that was destroyed during the war.
6. **Given the prevailing security turmoil in Somalia**, Maat recommends that IGAD direct military reinforcements to support the new Somali authority in its efforts to eliminate terrorism within the country's borders.
7. **To address violations committed against Syrian refugees in Lebanon**, Maat recommends that the Lebanese government adhere to Rule 132 of IHL, which emphasizes the voluntary return of refugees, based on their own desire to return to their home country, rather than through forced repatriation.