

A Decade of Action for Peace in our Cities

Peace in Our Cities Declaration for the International Day of Peace, UN's 75th anniversary summit, and the Secretary General's SDG Action Platform

Our vision

We are a group of 16 mayors and 22 civil society organizations and partners committed to building peaceful, just and inclusive cities, in line with the commitments made in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and supported by our local, regional, and global partners.

On the International Day of Peace and as the United Nations celebrates its 75th anniversary, we have mobilized to halve and transform urban violence by 2030.

Violence in cities

The residents of our cities are threatened by different levels and types of violence.

Some cities are affected by conflict and instability, or by violent extremism. Others are confronted by organized crime and gang violence that can be more lethal than a warzone. Illicit arms and financial flows threaten many cities, as do new and emerging threats such as the insecurity that results from climate change.

But our cities have much in common.

All cities experience violence and this violence hits the poorest and most vulnerable people hardest, with women, children, young people, and excluded groups facing the highest levels of risk. The 2030 Agenda can only tackle inequality and reach the furthest behind first if levels of violence are rapidly reduced.

Violence in our cities feeds further violence. It spreads from person to person, from one form of violence to another, and from generation to generation.

Tackling the epidemic of violence

As mayors and community leaders, we are determined to act now. Too many people believe that violence is inevitable, but we have compelling evidence that demonstrates that rapid reductions in violence can be achieved and sustained. Cities have halved violence with the right policies, programs, partnerships, and investments.

If mayors and community leaders fail to lead, we are complicit in the continued spread of a preventable epidemic of violence, and in the deaths, injuries, psychological harms, and social and economic damage that this epidemic causes.

We must act urgently to save lives by breaking cycles of violence, while also sustaining prevention over the time needed to transform institutions, regain the trust of people and communities, empower women and tackle harmful gender stereotypes, fight discrimination, and enable all people to benefit from sustainable development.

Effective prevention in cities requires partnerships across sectors, between the public sector and civil society and business, and between city leaders and their counterparts at national and local levels.

Collective action is essential at global and regional levels to confront transnational threats that make all cities less safe.

Priorities for reducing violence

To prevent violence and build peace in our cities, we will work in partnerships to:

- ❖ Develop integrated polices and strategies to halve violence.
- ❖ Work with communities to promote peace in our cities, providing a platform for leadership by survivors of violence, and by communities and groups who face the highest risks of violence.
- ❖ Ground prevention strategies in data that allows us to understand the nature of violence, its distribution, and its impacts.
- ❖ Scale up approaches that are proven to reduce violence, increasing and sharing knowledge of what works in cities with different challenges and capacities.
- ❖ Focus on areas of our cities where levels of violence are highest, working with local people to achieve rapid increases in their safety and security.
- ❖ Sustain peace in our cities, by working in partnership with communities to provide access to justice for all, inclusive services, and jobs and other economic opportunities.
- ❖ Mainstream a gender perspective into everything we do, recognizing the different ways women and men experience violence, tackling gender-based violence, and providing a platform for leadership by women as champions for peace.
- ❖ Break the transmission of violence to the next generation, by confronting violence against children and young people in their homes, schools, and communities, and online.
- ❖ Develop structures to coordinate prevention within our cities, drawing on expertise from all sectors, including those working on criminal justice, in the health, education, and social protection systems, and on community and economic development.
- ❖ Invest in approaches that are most likely to reduce violence, while reducing finance for ineffective or counterproductive approaches.

Our commitments

The United Nations rose from the ashes of conflict to give people the security and stability that would allow them to live to their full potential. In its 75th year, cities will contribute to the renewal of this fundamental mission of the United Nations through a new movement to prevent violence and promote peace.

As we enter a Decade of Action for the SDGs, we are committed to:

- ❖ Implementing a collective roadmap for halving violence, with each city promoting peace and tackling the forms of violence that pose the greatest risks to its citizens.

- ❖ Developing an action plan in each city that is informed by evidence of people’s experience of violence and draws on the best available evidence of what works to prevent violence.
- ❖ Sharing our experiences with other cities so that we can learn from both successes and failures.

As a contribution to the UN Secretary-General first annual Action Platform for the SDGs, we have:

- ❖ Registered our collective commitment to halve violence in the United Nations registry of Acceleration Actions.
- ❖ Submitted an Acceleration Action that sets out each city’s commitment to significantly reducing violence.
- ❖ Agreed to report on progress towards implementing our commitments through Voluntary City Reviews at future High-level Political Forums on Sustainable Development.
- ❖ Decided to review progress towards halving urban violence ahead of the second SDG Summit in 2023.

We call on:

- ❖ National governments to support our efforts to halve urban violence through their own policies, programs, and investments.
- ❖ International partners and organizations to invest in the movement to halve urban violence, while tackling the transnational risks that fuel violence in our cities.
- ❖ Civil society, the private sector, foundations, and other partners to join us as equal partners for more peaceful cities.
- ❖ Mayors from other cities to join us and make their own commitments to reduce violence as part of the movement for Peace in our Cities.

Explanatory Notes

The **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** was agreed by leaders from all countries at a summit in September 2015.

It sets out **17 Sustainable Development Goals**, including goals on peaceful, just and inclusive societies, inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities (SDG11), achieving gender equality and empower all women and girls (SDG5), and reducing inequality within and among countries (SDG10).

The UN hosts a registry for **Acceleration Actions** – initiatives voluntarily undertaken by countries and other stakeholders (including cities) to contribute to a speeded-up implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

At the first SDG Summit in 2019, countries asked the UN Secretary-General to launch a **Decade of Action on Sustainable Development** to accelerate implementation of the SDGs. “With just 10 years to go, an ambitious global effort is underway to deliver the 2030 promise – by mobilizing more governments, civil society, businesses and calling on all people to make the Global Goals their own.”

The Secretary-General will host an **SDG Action Platform** as part of the UN’s 75th anniversary summit on 21 September 2020. This will be a high-level opportunity to announce visionary strategies and transformative initiatives such as the Peace in our Cities commitment to halve violence.

International Peace Day is also on the 21 September 2020 and will include a major concert for peace in New York.