



Positive Peace Report Briefing 2026

Results
& Trends

The Positive
Peace Dividend

Leading Global
Powers

Pathways
to Peace



Positive Peace is a Transformational Concept

Positive Peace is transformational because it places peace at the centre of human development. Positive Peace not only yields highly peaceful societies; it also yields many of the other qualities that societies aspire to, including higher per capita income growth, superior resilience, better performance on measures of wellbeing and happiness, stronger environmental performance, and enhanced development outcomes. Therefore, Positive Peace describes an optimal environment under which human potential can flourish.

Positive Peace is measured through the Positive Peace Index (PPI), which was empirically developed from analysis of over 20,000 datasets. Covering 99.7 per cent of the world's population, the Index was derived through statistical analysis that led to the identification of the eight Pillars of Positive Peace. The Index creates the basis for analysis of the relationship between Positive Peace and other social phenomena. For example, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, societies with higher Positive Peace were less impacted and recovered more quickly on a wide range of socioeconomic indicators.

The 2026 Positive Peace Report finds a world of diverging trends, where structural aspects such as life expectancy, gender equality, and health outcomes are improving, while institutions have weakened, including in relation to the *rule of law, corruption, press freedoms, and government openness*

and transparency. Of the 24 indicators in the Positive Peace Index, half declined while half improved.

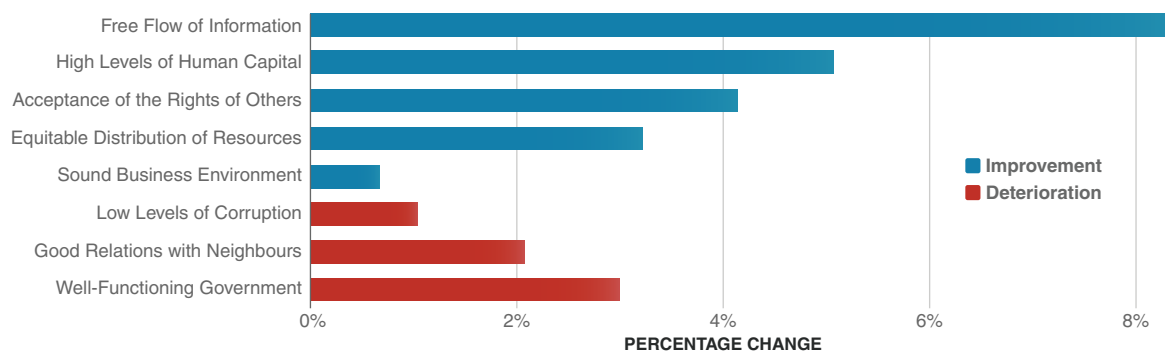


Positive Peace acts systemically, and different Pillars may be more important in different countries. However, the Pillars have a reinforcing effect on each other; therefore, stimulating all Pillars simultaneously has the largest positive effect.

2026 Key Findings

- Global Positive Peace improved by 1.7 per cent between 2015 and 2024, with 112 of 163 countries improving. However, the improvement was driven by one indicator, *telecom infrastructure index*, which improved by 36.8 per cent. Without this indicator, the global average score would have deteriorated by 0.1 per cent.
- Five of the eight Pillars improved. *Well-Functioning Government* recorded the largest deterioration, at three per cent, with all three of its underlying indicators worsening.
- The largest decline for any indicator was recorded in *freedom of the press*, which fell by 22.1 per cent. The second largest fall was for *government openness and transparency*, which fell by 6.2 per cent.
- Positive Peace is an excellent measure of societal resilience. Countries in the top third of the Positive Peace Index recovered from the societal impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic at three times the rate of those in the bottom third.
- In the past decade, real GDP in countries where Positive Peace improved grew at twice the rate of countries where it deteriorated, and inflation was nearly three times less volatile.
- Positive Peace co-evolves with actual peace. The 59 countries with the largest improvements in internal peace improved their Positive Peace four times faster than the rest of the world.
- Positive Peace is a good predictor of future falls in peace. The 16 countries with largest Positive Peace deficits in 2008 had all fallen in internal peace by 2024. A deficit is where a country's Positive Peace rank is much worse than its internal peace rank.
- Since 2015, the United States has recorded the second largest percentage deterioration of any country in the Index, at 8.8 per cent. Venezuela was the only country with a larger deterioration. *Freedom of the press* and *quality of information* fell for every leading global power, whatever its overall trajectory.

Changes in the Pillars of Peace, 2015–2024



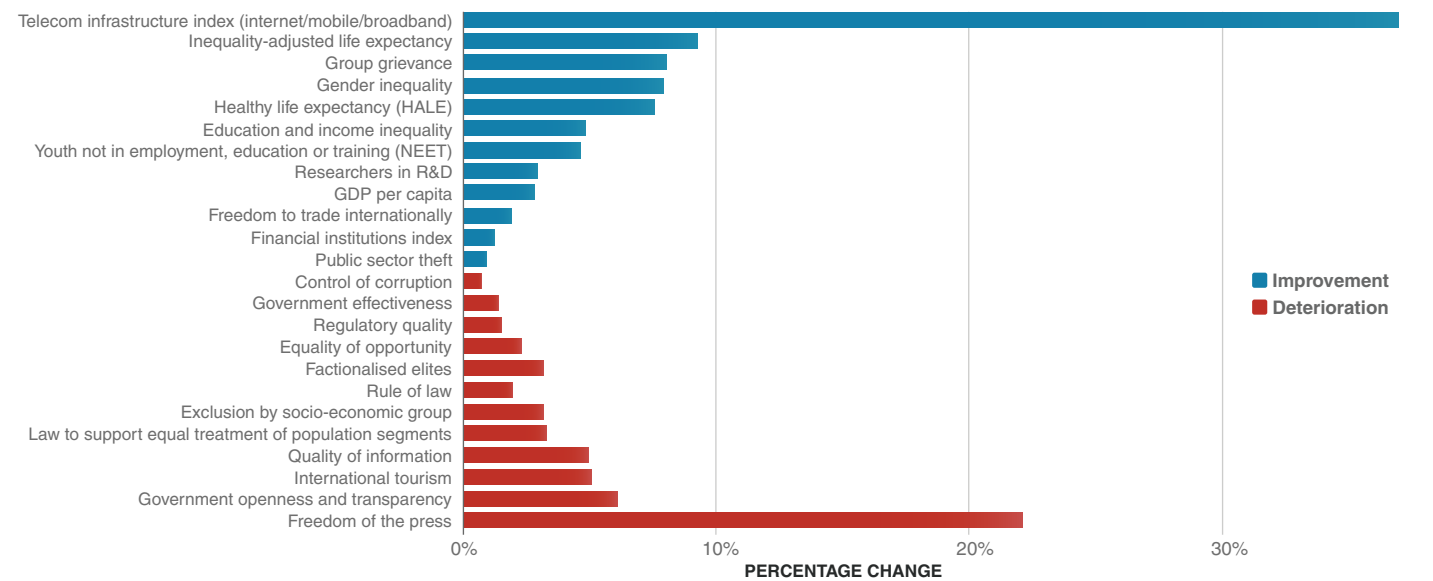
Source: IEP

1 For more information see Section 1: A Decade of Positive Peace

Results and Trends

Positive Peace improved steadily from 2015 to 2019, deteriorated through 2020 and 2021 at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, then recovered to exceed pre-pandemic levels by 2024. Underneath that recovery, structural conditions rose and institutional ones fell. Within *Well-Functioning Government*, the worst-performing Pillar, government openness and transparency deteriorated by 6.2 per cent, *rule of law* by two per cent, and *government effectiveness* by 1.5 per cent.

Change in PPI indicators, 2015–2024



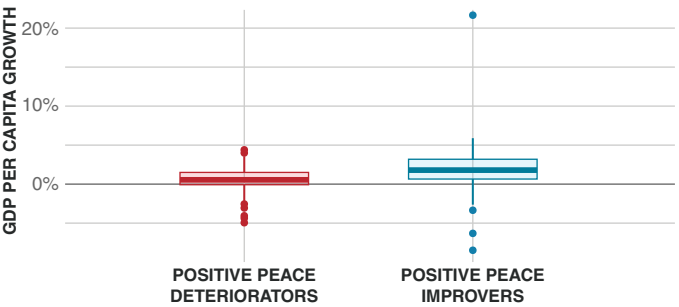
Source: IEP

1 For more information see Section 1: A Decade of Positive Peace

The Positive Peace Dividend

The conditions that sustain peace also generate the outcomes societies most value. The Index correlates at -0.83 with the *Yale Environmental Performance Index* and at -0.81 with the OECD's measure of life satisfaction. Countries high in Positive Peace record childhood stunting rates below three per cent, against 30–40 per cent in some low Positive Peace countries.

GDP per capita growth by Positive Peace trend, 2015–2024



Source: World Bank

2 For more information see Section 2: Positive Peace and Societal Resilience

Leading Global Powers

Leading powers rank substantially better on Positive Peace than on actual or 'negative' peace, a gap IEP calls a Positive Peace surplus. The Global Peace Index captures military expenditure, weapons holdings, and involvement in armed conflict, while the Positive Peace Index measures the longer-run institutional and economic conditions that sustain peace. Large, wealthy states with strong militaries tend to engage in more conflict abroad, even when conditions at home are relatively peaceful.

PPI and GPI rankings, leading global powers, 2024

Country/Region	PPI Ranking	GPI Ranking	Rank Difference
United States of America	28	130	102
China	70	104	34
India	92	126	34
Russia	101	162	61
Western and Central Europe (average)	25	29	4

Source: IEP

4 For more information see Section 4: Positive Peace Trends of Leading Powers

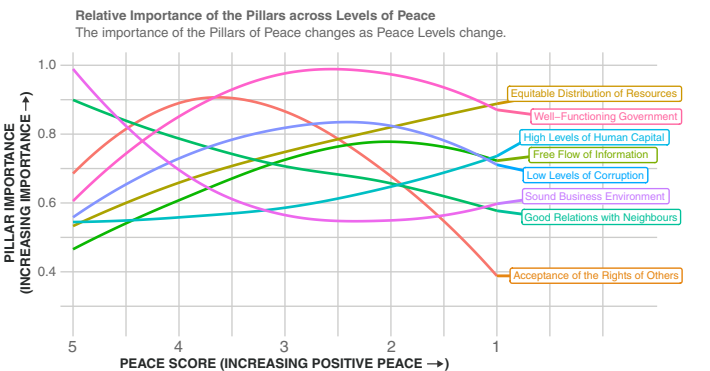
Pathways to Peace

Which Pillar matters most depends on where a country stands. *Sound Business Environment* and *Good Relations with Neighbours* constrain low-peace countries; *Well-Functioning Government* and *Acceptance of the Rights of Others* constrain mid-peace countries; *Equitable Distribution of Resources* and *Well-Functioning Government* matter most at high levels of peace.

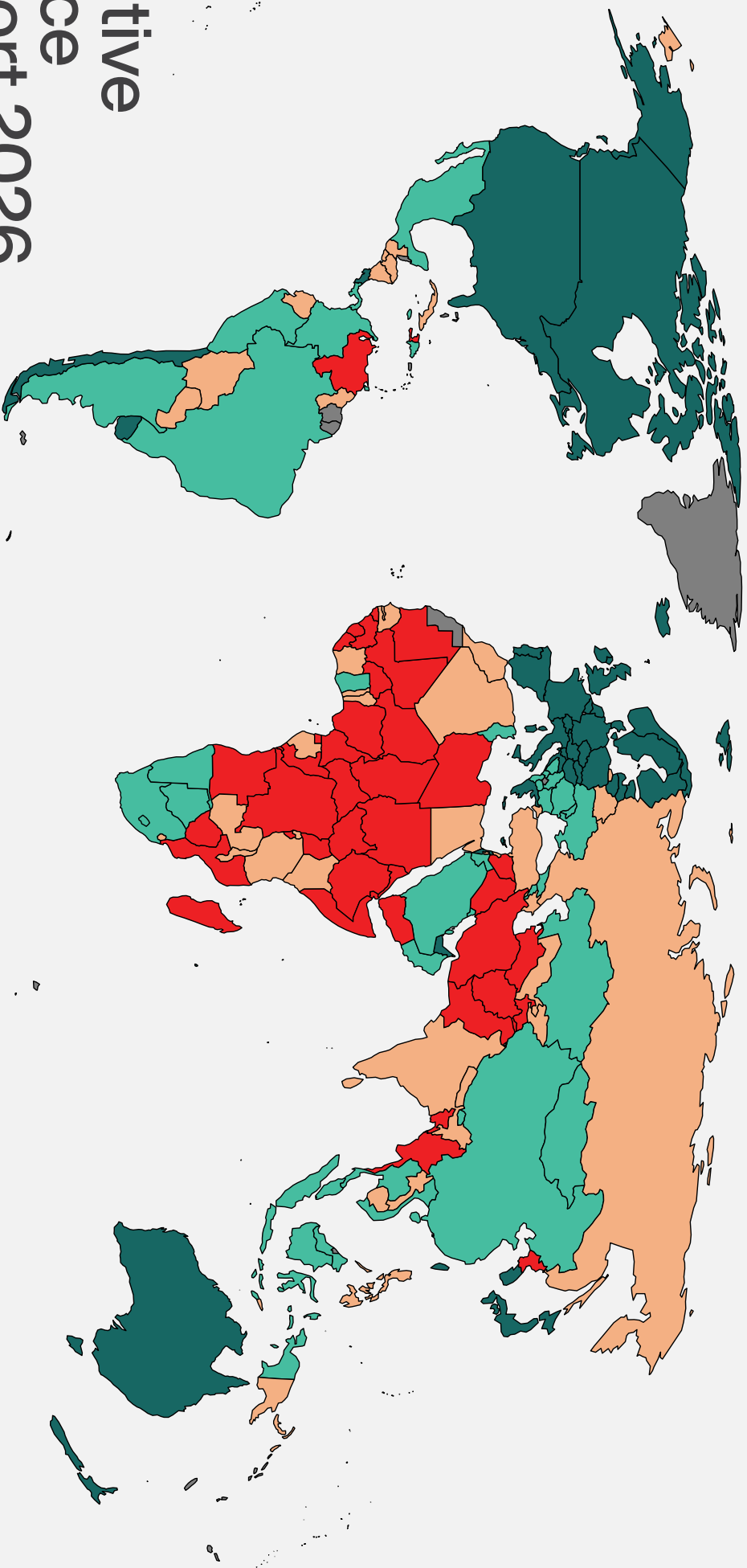
Mid-peace countries warrant the closest attention: they have recorded the largest deteriorations in peace since 2008 and have the greatest capacity to move in either direction.

6 For more information see Section 6: Development Pathways for Mid-Peace Countries

Relative importance of the Pillars as Positive Peace increases



Source: IEP



Positive Peace Report 2026

A Snapshot of the Global State of Positive Peace



About

The Positive Peace Report is developed by the Institute for Economics & Peace, an independent, non-partisan, non-profit think tank dedicated to shifting the world's focus to peace as a positive, achievable and tangible measure of human wellbeing and progress.

IEP is headquartered in Sydney, with offices in New York, The Hague, Abuja, Nairobi and Manila. It works with a wide range of partners internationally and collaborates with intergovernmental organisations on measuring and communicating the economic value of peace.



GlobalPeaceIndex



@GlobalPeaceIndex



@globalpeaceindex



Institute for
Economics
& Peace

economicsandpeace.org
visionofhumanity.org