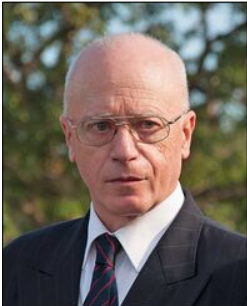


Patriotism and Common Good of Humanity

Challenges to Global Peace and Development

by Professor Dr Hans Köchler*, President of the International Progress Organization (I.P.O.)



Prof. Dr. Hans Köchler
(Picture [www](#).)

(CH-S) With scholarly precision, Professor Dr Hans Köchler sets out the connection between peoples' right to development and their right to peace. Against the backdrop of the West's current power politics, he argues that the self-interests of states must be defined in the context of their recipro-

city, so that all people worldwide may be granted their most fundamental rights. In doing so, he draws upon the prevailing norms of international law.

Below we reproduce the author's impressive keynote speech, which he delivered at the Forum of the "Palais des Nations" in Geneva on 1 April 2026.

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The reality of conflict

Since last year's Forum of the *International Patriotic Pact Organization*, major threats have arisen to global development and peace. These are events that those who believe in a *just world order* cannot simply ignore – and which must not be downplayed in favour of the "opportunism of the moment". The major Western power has once more, and at this time openly and without any hesitation or moralistic embellishment, put its national interest above anything else.

International lawlessness – indeed the "law of the jungle" typical of the power politics of earlier centuries – is glaringly evident in the invasion of Venezuela and the abduction of its President at the beginning of this year, a move that has reduced the country to the state of a 19th century colonial protectorate.

More recently, the assassination of Iran's Supreme Leader, his wife, family members, close

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Forum of the International Patriotic Pact Organization, United Nations, Palais des Nations, Geneva, 1 April 2026.
(Picture [ma](#))

associates and members of the country's leadership, and the ensuing war of total destruction, including the systematic targeting of civilian infrastructure, have demonstrated beyond a reasonable doubt that the *international rule of law* effectively does not exist when a global power, together with its regional ally, decides to take the law into its own hand.

For the second time within a year, a war of aggression was launched *in the midst of negotiations* – diplomacy was abused as a tactic of deception, a mere ruse of war. In both cases, most of the "international community" were watching from the sidelines and *effectively did nothing*, notwithstanding the right of collective self-defence according to Article 51 of the United Nations Charter in situations where the Security Council is paralyzed due to a great power veto.

Considering these developments, we are compelled to state what should be self-evident in the 21st century: Except in legitimate self-defence, the use of force between states is prohibited under the Charter of the United Nations. Since the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928, the renunciation of war as a tool of politics has been considered a major civilizational achievement. This achievement is now under threat.

War is incompatible with the peoples' right to development; it makes it meaningless. If states take this basic human right seriously, they must work for the prevention of war, exactly as it is called for in the Preamble to the UN Charter. The repercussions from the ongoing military con-

frontation in West Asia, indeed the blatant war of aggression against Iran, for the global economy – in terms of energy supply and availability of fertilizer that is vital for food security, in particular – should be a wake-up call for the international community. As reports from the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Egypt (to mention only these three examples) demonstrate, countries in the Global South are faced with the dramatic consequences of the interruption of oil and natural gas flows from the affected region. While the *geoeconomic spillover* of the conflict will generally be felt in terms of inflation and the risk of a global recession, the economically weakest countries will be affected most seriously.

According to the *World Food Programme of the United Nations* (WFP), the consequences of the conflict in the Middle East “are falling on people who do not have the margin to cope”. In a News Briefing on 17 March, here in Geneva, the Deputy Executive Director of the WFP said that if the conflict “continues through June, and additional 45 million people could be pushed into acute hunger.”¹

Similarly, the interruption of grain and fertilizer exports after the beginning of the war in Ukraine (in 2022) seriously affected countries in Africa, the Middle East and Asia that rely on affordable Black Sea grain to stave off food insecurity.

Right to Development – Right to Peace

These circumstances, but also the war tactics and strategy applied in the conflict in Gaza since 2023 (with the deliberate dismantling of infrastructure in order to hamper development and future prosperity in Palestine), should make us aware that the *right to development*, in order to be meaningful, must be treated in a *comprehensive* and *integrated* sense. The development of any nation, large or small, is to be seen as *integral part of global development* and, thus, of the international economic order. In the global era, development cannot occur in “splendid isolation”; no country can prosper as an island.

As early as 1979, upon the conclusion of a meeting of experts on the *New International Economic Order* in Vienna, Austria, the International Progress Organization emphasized the need to overcome the colonial legacy of exploitation in the interest of a privileged few, and to establish international relations based on the principles of equality and solidarity among all peoples and nations.²

In terms of the comprehensive nature of development, *peace* is one of the most important enabling conditions. To put it plainly: there can be no “development” without peace. The absence of war is a necessary, though not sufficient, condition of the development of any nation. As *conditio sine qua non* of a nation’s progress in all fields – economic, social, and cultural – peace has been a constant ideal and aspiration throughout human history. Accordingly, the *right to development* and the *right to peace*, both enshrined in Declarations of the United Nations, are corresponding, interconnected rights.

There exists indeed a symbiotic relationship, a *normative link*, between peace and development; one cannot sustainably exist without the other. In human rights doctrine, this connection is obvious in several ways:

(1) In the sense of *mutually reinforcing preconditions*: The 1986 UN Declaration on the Right to Development (which I briefly elaborated on in last year’s Forum) explicitly states that international peace and security are essential elements for the realization of the right to development. Conversely, systemic poverty and underdevelopment are recognized as root causes of conflict, meaning the right to development is a normative prerequisite for sustainable peace.

(2) In terms of a *framework of “solidarity rights”*: Both rights – to peace, to development – share a normative foundation requiring international solidarity, cooperation, and collective action rather than mere state-level compliance.

(3) In regard to *indivisibility and interdependence*: According to the 1993 Vienna Declaration of the World Conference on Human Rights, all human rights are *indivisible*. This implies that the deprivation of peace inherently violates the right to development (due to the destruction of infrastructure and economy in general), while the deprivation of development inherently threatens the right to peace (leading to inequality and unrest).

This normative nexus is also operationalized in the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goal 16 (*Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions*), which legally marries the two concepts, asserting that there is “no peace without development, and no development without peace.”

The doctrinal nexus between the right to peace and the right to development should also be a problemata to be addressed and further ex-

plored by the UN Human Rights Council. At the level of the United Nations, the right to development so far is only enshrined in a *declaration*, not in a legally binding *treaty*. However, the *African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights* (Banjul Charter of 1981) is one step ahead. It was the first – and so far is the only – *binding international treaty* to explicitly include the Right to Development. Its Article 22 states:

1. *All peoples shall have the right to their economic, social and cultural development with due regard to their freedom and identity and in the equal enjoyment of the common heritage of mankind.*
2. *States shall have the duty, individually or collectively, to ensure the exercise of the right to development.*

Furthermore, in the African Charter, the *Right to Peace* is codified in subsequent Article 23:

1. *All peoples shall have the right to national and international peace and security. The principles of solidarity and friendly relations implicitly affirmed by the Charter of the United Nations and reaffirmed by that of the Organization of African Unity shall govern relations between States.*

After intense and comprehensive debates, a special working group of the UN Human Rights Council has finalized the text of a *Draft International Covenant on the Right to Development*, which the Council submitted to the UN General Assembly in 2023, with the request to “conclude the text of an international legally binding instrument on the right to development as soon as possible.” (United Nations / General Assembly, A/HRC/54/50, 18 July 2023, Par. 8)

The debate over this treaty essentially mirrors the geopolitical divide between the “Global South” (developing nations who champion the treaty) and the “Collective West” (developed Western nations who generally oppose it or abstain from it). I have addressed the issue of this divide at a side event, in September 2022, of the 51st session of the United Nations Council on Human Rights in Geneva, organized by the Center for Jurisprudence Research of the University of Jilin (China).³

An important and constructive role in the ongoing debates can be played by the *Group of Friends of the Global Development Initiative* (GDI), a UN-based platform of over 70 states, especially in view of discussing implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).



The President of the International Progress Organization, Co-founder of the International Patriotic Pact Organization, Professor Hans Köchler, Chairman of the Forum, center, with delegates. (Picture ma)

Development and Global Peace: Role of the International Patriotic Pact Organization (IPPO)

In the face of a growing trend to conduct international relations by way of unrestricted, exclusively *unilateral assertion of national interests* at the expense of all other states – under the motto “my country first!” – and irrespective of human rights and international law, global citizens’ initiatives such as the *International Patriotic Pact Organization* (IPPO) play an increasingly important role in exposing the abuse of the concept of patriotism for narrow purposes of national chauvinism and imperialism, as displayed by one of today’s major global players. A political commentator has correctly pointed out that this kind of approach means the “pursuit of [national] objectives *without responsibility*.”⁴

As the IPPO repeatedly has pointed out, patriotism – love of one’s own country – only makes sense, and only deserves moral respect, when it is embedded in a framework of *peaceful co-existence among nations* who treat each other as equals. As stated in the concept paper for today’s Forum, the international dimension of patriotism includes (1) a commitment to one’s own right to development, (2) respect of the sovereignty of all other countries, and (3) participation in global cooperation.

To highlight these principles and their importance for world peace will be the noble task of the IPPO in the time ahead – in a constellation where the international community is faced with the threat of destabilization, even global anarchy, that almost unavoidably follows from the unilateral assertion of national interests by major global and regional players who are determined to pursue their aims by any means, including the use of lethal force, in neglect of the

most basic rules of international law and morality.

If states remain passive, or silent, vis-à-vis this attempted “reconfiguration” of global order in favour of imperialist or neo-colonial interests – whether out of fear or mere tactical opportunism – those in civil society that are committed to true patriotism and international solidarity should raise their voice. Global anarchy – the law of the jungle – ultimately will threaten the *right to development of all*.

Thus, *self-interest* must be defined in a context of *mutuality*. It always must be oriented towards the *common good of humanity*. As events of this year have drastically demonstrated, ignoring this imperative carries the risk of mankind falling back to the state of a Hobbesian *bellum omnium contra omnes* (“war of all against all”).⁵

To stress it yet again: In the global era, an exclusivist, imperialist pursuit of national interests, flouting the equal right to development of all nations, is ultimately self-defeating. Contrary to what the 2025 *National Security Doctrine* promulgated by the leading Western power seems to suggest, under the circumstances of today’s

global interconnectedness, Machiavelli has nothing left to teach us on the proper order of the world.

Source: Keynote Speech, International Patriotic Pact Organization – 2026 Forum (“International Patriotic Pact & Nations’ Right to Development: Shaping a New International Order”) United Nations, Palais des Nations, Geneva, 1 April 2026 © by International Progress Organization, 2026. All rights reserved.

- ¹ WFP / UN Briefing, Geneva, 17 March 2026: “Middle East war risks pushing 45 million more people into acute hunger.” Dominika Tomaszewska-Mortimer, *UN News – Global perspective human stories*, 17 March 2026.
- ² COMMUNIQUÉ, International Meeting of Experts on the New International Economic Order – Philosophical and Socio-cultural Implications, Vienna, 3 April 1979, available at <https://i-p-o.org/nieo.htm>.
- ³ Hans Köchler, *Human Rights and Global Power Politics*. Statement delivered at side meeting of the 51st session of the United Nations Council on Human Rights. Geneva, 19 September 2022. Vienna: International Progress Organization, 2022, at <https://i-p-o.org/Koehler-HUMAN-RIGHTS-GLOBAL-POWER-POLITICS-UNCHR-Side-Meeting-19Sept2022.pdf>.
- ⁴ Fyodor Lukyanov, “Iran: The test the US cannot afford to fail – Why Iran has become America’s defining test.” *RT*, 25 March 2026.
- ⁵ Thomas Hobbes, *De cive* (1642), Preface