



GOAL 16: PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

'Choose your neighbours before you chose your house.' [Sprichwort aus Palästina]

One day spent with Mustafa from Palestine

Salam! Ana ismi Mustafa. Ahlan wa sahlan – You are very welcome in my country 'Palestine'! I am a 14 year old photographer. I love taking pictures and I think that I am quite good at it. I have already had an exhibition of my photographs in the community centre of our town, so let me show you some of my art pieces. On this picture you can see my parents standing in front of our brick house and this is a picture of my school class. I am so happy that I am able to go to school. More than half of the schools in our country have been destroyed by bombs during the war.

For years there have been fights over Palestine. In 1948 the state of Israel was founded and since then there have been disagreements and wars about who this land belongs to. Life here is really difficult. You can't move about freely and there are many police check-ups. My cousin Anna lives in Jerusalem on the Israeli side but there is a wall that divides us, it is 8 metres high and it cannot be passed easily. If I want to visit my cousin there is no direct transport connection available to get to her. I have to change several times, go across fields and through backyards. Usually it takes me up to three hours to travel just 12 kilometers.

A few days ago I wanted to visit Anna but I had to wait for week to be allowed entry into Israel. If I had paid the authorities money they would have let me in straight away. The more money you pay the quicker you are allowed in. The people working for the authorities are very corrupt. They use their power for personal gain.

At the border between Palestine and Israel I always get checked to make sure that I am not carrying any weapons. Living here is like living in a war zone. The people from Israel are scared of us and we are scared of them. Often there are terrorist attacks, there is violence and bombardment of whole districts. Nobody really trusts anyone anymore. I have often spoken to my cousin about this and we just don't understand it. We both agree that when we get older we will fight for peace between Israel and Palestine. Anyone who can build a wall can also tear it down again.

Here, this is a photograph of my brother Ali. Every time I look at this photo, it makes me very sad. He is in prison at the moment just because he threw a stone at an army tank. It seems so unfair that they have put him in prison for that. He didn't even get a proper trial. The military just decided what his punishment would be. You might wonder how something like that is even possible? But here in Palestine there is no constitutional state, like there is in your country. There are laws but nobody follows them. Not even the people who made them. I want every person to be able to trust in laws and I want everyone to follow the laws. I also wish for a world where people talk to each other and work out solutions rather than fight each other.





Promote justice, peaceful and inclusive societies

You might ask yourself why there are so many wars on earth and why states and people have to fight each other all the time. At the moment there are over five million people living in states where there are armed conflicts. It is not that long ago that that Europe, including Austria, peace could be taken for granted.

Wars have terrible consequences, ordinary people lose their lives - children, women and men. Many families lose their homes and their children can no longer go to school. Some people are starving because they have lost their jobs and they can no longer grow food in their fields. In war regions people are also often scared of attacks by hostile groups. Sometimes they are forced to serve in the army. We wish so much that these wars wouldn't break out in the first place.

Peace has to start in your own home and it is often difficult to deal with conflict. You probably know the kind of situations that lead to heated discussions! But only if we talk to each other in an open and honest manner are we able to develop an understanding for the other person's feelings and give them a chance to understand us so that together a solution or a compromise can be found. Often a third person is able to mediate between people.

Goal 16 says that all forms of violence have to be reduced significantly. Furthermore abuse and exploitation of children and all forms of violence against children should be stopped.

In order to prevent conflicts and violence it is important that government structures are well functioning and act fairly. In order for this to work there needs to be a fair and transparent judicial system. It needs to include court proceedings with judges who are independent and not corruptible. The UN has decided that by 2030 corruption and bribery in all forms should be considerably reduced.

We need to ensure that by 2030 political decisions are not made in an arbitrary manner or by one single person. The general public or groups

representing them must be included in political decision making processes and the creation of new laws. Finally, Goal 16 states that public access to information should be available and the fundamental freedoms that are the rights of each person should be protected. This includes the human rights that have been recognized by all member states of the United Nations.

What can we do to help achieve this goal?

- You too can contribute to a more peaceful environment in your community because if we try and listen to each other, respect other people and solve problems and arguments without using violence, we are also making a contribution towards the peace of humankind. Tolerating other people who think differently, showing respect and trying to understand those who have a different background or religion is part of helping to achieve this goal. You can make peace anywhere. It is important to remember that after a dispute it pays to look for a solution that is good for everyone. It is great to stand up for other people if they have been excluded because of their language or the way they look.

Dennis (12) from Feldkirch, Vorarlberg: 'I think it is really unfair to make fun of other people, if, for example, they have jug ears I stand up for them. If other children would do the same or would stop laughing at them it probably would not happen as often.'

Hanna (13) from Graz, Styria: 'I am doing a course at school to become a mediator. I am really looking forward to it.'

- You can also become a professional mediator at your school. Some schools offer a training course in **Peer-Mediation**. Find out if your school offers something like this: www.bmb.gv.at/schulen/unterricht/ba/peer-mediation.html
- **Amnesty International** works to achieve worldwide justice and peace. You can support them in many different ways. There are special offers for young people from the age of 14 to get involved. More information you can find here: www.amnesty.at/de/youth