



# THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

## Press Release

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### Conflict study investigates if Covid-19 could give peace a chance

The Covid-19 pandemic's effect on peace agreements and ceasefires around the world is to be captured in a series of surveys.

Researchers at the University of Edinburgh are examining the consequences of the outbreak on peace processes and armed conflict in more than 20 countries across four continents.

The study also plans to assess the reaction to the United Nations' call for a global ceasefire in support of the fight against coronavirus.

Researchers will interview experts involved in the peace processes – including diplomats, public servants and those working in human rights and humanitarian aid – to see whether states of emergency or restrictions in countries have changed the dynamics of conflict and peace.

They will also look at whether the pandemic has changed the behavior of armed non-state groups, the composition of countries' governments and security forces, and the funding and international support for peace processes.

The researchers are gathering data on peace processes involving Afghanistan; Bougainville/Papua New Guinea; Central African Republic; Colombia; Democratic Republic of Congo; Ethiopia/Ogaden; Iraq; Israel/Palestine; Kenya; Kosovo; Kurdistan; Lebanon; Libya; Mali; Myanmar; Nepal; Northern Ireland; Philippines; Somalia; South Sudan; Sri Lanka; Sudan; Syria; Ukraine and Yemen.

Researchers say the data will help inform policy makers and other stakeholders of possible shifts in the peace process landscape due to the current crisis and influence future peacebuilding decisions in the countries involved.

Christine Bell, Director of the University of Edinburgh's Global Justice Academy, said: "The UN Secretary General's call for COVID-19 was a potential game changer in conflicts such as Yemen and Syria. Covid-19 ceasefires open up a possibility for the virus to be dealt with in a way that is just not possible when conflict is raging. However, it also opened the possibility of building confidence between armed groups, that might outlast the COVID-19 epidemic and bring more lasting solutions. It is vital that we understand the dynamics between Covid-19, conflict and peace. We are delighted to play a role in gathering data along with a range of collaborators and partners globally, which might help to support the UN Secretary General's ceasefire call."

The study is being carried out as part of the Political Settlements Research Programme at the University of Edinburgh in partnership with the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution.

For further information on the project go to: [www.politicalsettlements.org/covid-19](http://www.politicalsettlements.org/covid-19)

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