



ISOCARP
Knowledge for Better Cities

**PLANNERS
for PEACE**
Planning for Peace & Justice

Planners for Peace

Planning for Peace & Justice through Strong Institutions

We, members of the **International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP)** — an international, independent, non-partisan and non-profit association of professional planners founded in 1965 — issue this statement in response to the growing number of wars and violent conflicts across the globe, affecting communities and the cities, towns and villages they inhabit, the cultural heritage they cherish, the economic livelihoods they have built, the natural eco-systems that they steward - see annex Facts & Figures.

Through this statement, we reiterate that:

- **Civilian objects in cities and other human settlements cannot be targeted**, as they are indispensable to the survival of the population and function as the essential life-support system (Geneva convention (IV) and additional protocol I, in particular art. 52);
- **States are obligated to refrain from targeting heritage and to avoid using its surroundings for military purposes** (The Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict);
- **Any war affecting cities and communities is the antithesis of the United Nations New Urban Agenda**, that calls for cities to be safe, resilient, and sustainable.

Recognising that safe, stable and accountable urban governance systems are essential for climate resilience, housing security, food systems, infrastructure continuity and equitable growth, we commit to:

1. **Advocate Peace as a Precondition for Sustainable Development**

Co-promoting the implementation of SDG16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) alongside SDG11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities)) to significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere , to shield children and vulnerable communities from the ravages of war and armed conflict, and to protect cultural heritage as an obligation to humanity and future generations.

2. **Plan for Peace and promote Spatial Justice and Social Cohesion**
Supporting planning approaches that reduce exclusion, mitigate segregation, and address inequalities that can fuel instability and conflict, addressing marginalisation and vulnerable groups.
3. **Support Inclusive Reconstruction and Recovery**
Advocating for post-conflict recovery processes that prioritise community participation, environmental responsibility, cultural heritage, and long-term resilience over short-term expediency - maintaining local communities in their land, reducing displacement and fostering reintegration.
4. **Advance Climate Responsibility Despite Conflict Pressures**
Calling for reconstruction and development pathways aligned with climate science and global sustainability commitments.
5. **Stand in Solidarity with Affected Communities and Professionals**
Offering professional exchange, knowledge-sharing, and moral support to planners working under conditions of conflict and fragility.

We recognise that planning alone cannot prevent war. Yet we also recognise that inclusive institutions, equitable and just spatial development, inclusive places, and accountable governance — core concerns of our profession — contribute to placemaking as peacemaking.

Therefore, this member-led initiative, ***Planners for Peace***, is established as a voluntary and open platform for dialogue, collaboration and advocacy among planners and allied professionals who believe that sustainable urban and regional futures depend upon peaceful and cooperative societies.

We call upon fellow planners, policymakers, educators, and civic leaders to reaffirm the central role of peaceful cooperation in shaping the future of cities and regions.

We commit to follow up on this statement with a peace-positive action plan by and for city and regional planning professionals around the globe - see Annex 'Plan of Action'.

[Statement launched at 13th World Urban Forum in Baku, Azerbaijan, on 19 May 2026](#)

[Planners For Peace Statement signed by](#)

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[Planners for Peace](#) initiative and first statement endorsed by the Board of Directors of the International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP), on 10 April 2026.

ANNEX: FACTS & FIGURES

- According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), as of mid-2023, there were approximately 36 million internally displaced people (IDPs) due to conflicts in the Global South. A significant majority of IDPs flee to cities, putting immense strain on urban services and housing markets, and increasing tension between hosting communities and IDPs.¹
- According to the SDG Report 2025, the loss of lives amid armed conflicts surged in 2024 40 per cent from 2023, marking the third consecutive annual rise. About four times more children and women were killed in 2023-2024 than in the previous two years 2021-2022.²
- In recent major conflicts (e.g. Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan, Iran and Lebanon), damage to residential housing and critical energy infrastructure often exceeds 50–70% of the total urban footprint in frontline cities.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) reported that conflicts lead to increased disease outbreaks. Exposure to violence and conflict can lead to increased rates of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other mental health disorders. A study in the U.S. found that veterans of recent conflicts have a PTSD rate of around 20%, impacting urban communities with a high veteran population.
- Armed conflicts cause extensive environmental destruction, such as deforestation and pollution of water and soil. Also, according to a study by Scientists for Global Responsibility and the Conflict and Environment Observatory, militaries account for an estimated 5.5 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions.³

ANNEX PLAN OF ACTION

- ISOCARP seeks alliance to issue further statements and actions together with other organisations that represent global built environment specialists.
- Planners for Peace will prepare outreach events and actions on key upcoming Forums, in particular at the World Urban Forum 13 in Baku.

¹ Source iDMC, <https://www.internal-displacement.org/news/conflicts-drive-new-record-of-759-million-people-living-in-internal-displacement/>.

² Source UN, SDG Report 25, Goal 16, <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2025/goal-16/>.

³ Source United Nations, <https://www.un.org/en/peace-and-security/how-conflict-impacts-our-environment#:~:text=According%20to%20a%20study%20by,grounds%20of%20national%20security%20concerns.>