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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement submitted by Peace and Conflict Science (PACS) Institute, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status*

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[11 August 2025]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



From Exploitation to Equitable Peace: Advancing Economic Justice Through Irenomics

Introduction

The Peace and Conflict Science (PACS) Institute respectfully addresses the Human Rights Council (HRC) during its 60th Session concerning Agenda Item 3 on the imperative of ensuring the right to development and freedom from slavery to all peoples worldwide regardless of economic class. It is our posture that the modern day transnational economic system is actively contributing to the escalation and entrenchment of global violence. We believe this happens because of institutional failure to establish and reinforce mechanisms preventing the concentration of capital and, thereby also political power, to a small percentage of the world's nations and an even smaller percentage of the world's population. The lack of these mechanisms exacerbates the structural oppression and exploitation of low income nations by high income nations, resulting in global conditions that actively prevent peace. The entrenched conviction that economic growth is of paramount importance, even over individual welfare, serves to justify the Global North's exploitation of the Global South through the extraction of resources and cheap labour. While these economic relationships remain untreated, patterns of oppression and exploitation will cause contemporary forms of slavery. Economic justice must be enacted now to transform economic systems of violence into systems of peace.

Background

In the unsustainable pursuit of ever more effective and comprehensive exploitation, the world's richest institutions continue to profit through violence from unregulated transnational supply chains. Since 1987, the share of GDP held by the wealthiest 0.0001% of households has grown over four times to 13% of the global GDP while the rest of the world remains in poverty with over three billion people living under the global poverty line [1]. In 2021, the Global North appropriated the equivalent to €16.9 trillion in Northern wages. This is equivalent to over 826 billion hours of labour from the Global South. Despite contributing over 90% of global labour, Southern workers receive only 21% of global income [2]. In 2023, the richest 1% of the world owned 47.5% of all the world's wealth – equivalent to roughly \$214 trillion [3]. In that same year, the Global Slavery Index found that approximately 50 million people around the world are trapped in modern slavery, where many G20 countries have positioned themselves as disavowed slave profitters, importing goods linked to slavery, valued at USD\$468 billion [4]. While Western countries have surged far above the global average, regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa and South and Southeast Asia have consistently been forced to pay the price [5]. Examples range widely from the inhumane working conditions of mines in the Democratic Republic of the Congo where children are being abducted from all over the country to extract minerals under slavlike conditions [6], to fast fashion workers in Bangladesh that fear starvation as they fight for higher wages [7], to palm oil workers in Malaysia where retention of passports is a common practice for immigrant workers [8].

Economic Transformation

Without global social welfare interventions, this trend of economic violence will continue to advance exploitation of humans as well as of natural resources, thereby undermining peace. Research published by the Institute in the Peace and Conflict Science Journal in 2023 defined peace as the social conditions that enable the equitable and mutual flourishing of sentient organisms. Sentience here refers to the capacity for a being to have experiences that matter to them [9]. By this definition, the contemporary global economic system is violent because the social interactions between nations and peoples exchanging capital for labour and goods is not either wholly mutual or broadly equitable. It appears designed to facilitate structural exploitation and inequitable power structures that produce disenfranchisement and

subjugation of labourers as its ends. The prevailing structural exploitation of the world's labourers cannot be reconciled with peace.

To address this issue, the Peace and Conflict Science (PACS) Institute strongly recommends a comprehensive transformation of the global economic system into a model characterised by irenomics. Irenomics is a compound term coined by the Peace and Conflict Science (PACS) Institute, combining Irene—the Greek goddess of peace—with economics, meaning “the management of the household”. It is a conceptual economic model that describes any system intentionally designed to sustain peace, minimize structural violence, and uphold the conditions necessary for long-term human flourishing and social equity. Where conventional economics often centres efficiency, growth, or scarcity, irenomics centres the architecture of relational stability, sentient well-being, and just distribution—not as outcomes, but as founding design principles.

The Peace and Conflict Science (PACS) Institute posits that a sustainable peaceful economy can be achieved only through a calibrated balance between capitalism and socialism, each acting as a structural counterweight to the other's most violent extremes.

Capitalism, at its best, can promote individual agency. However, as economist Thomas Piketty argues, it can also concentrate wealth and political influence in the hands of a few, leading to social fragmentation and democratic instability. Without mechanisms to redistribute wealth, the conditions that support peace and justice are eroded, producing conditions indistinguishable from fascism—a system which, in every known instantiation, has resulted in widespread suffering, subjugation, and epistemic collapse [10].

Socialism, by contrast, encodes mutuality and distributive fairness into the economic substrate. It preserves peace by ensuring that social welfare is not incidental, but structurally embedded through equitable exchange. A peaceful system is not one where prosperity is concentrated and rationed by gatekeepers, but one in which the conditions for flourishing are made universally accessible.

Yet history shows that when socialism is implemented without democratic accountability or checks on centralized authority, it can lead to rigid economic control and suppression of individual freedoms, as seen in certain 20th-century regimes [11].

Irenomics holds the line between these poles. It affirms the necessity of capitalism for safeguarding economic agency and the necessity of socialism for constraining the hoarding of power. In tandem, these forces regulate one another: capitalism prevents stagnation and empowers agency; socialism prevents accumulation and abuse. In such a system, economic agency and collective equity are not in conflict, but mutually reinforcing foundations for sustainable peace.

Through irenomics, peace can flourish as all people would have the means to exercise economic influence. Simultaneously, no one would have too much capital to exercise disproportionate power, at the expense of negating the flourishing of others.

Recommendations

In order to eradicate contemporary forms of slavery, The Peace and Conflict Science (PACS) Institute urges the Council to contribute to the transformation of a violent economic system into a peaceful one by means of economic justice, by:

1. Establishing a permanent UN research body dedicated to the study of irenomics and the development of comprehensive recommendations to the instantiation of economic justice to UN member states collectively. The research body could for example aim to strengthen labour unions where products deemed at risk for modern slavery are produced, commission international regulation that ensures that companies are held responsible for (1) the fair working conditions of people along their whole supply chains, through international regulation on minimum wages proportional to the prices within the country, paid leave, parental leave and paid absence in case of sickness, as well as (2) the local and global environmental consequences of

production. Other examples might include evaluating such interventions as (3) aggressive taxation policies on the wealthiest global citizens.

2. Establish a UN special rapporteur on the topic of irenomics.
3. Supporting research on peaceful economics to further develop irenomics.

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