

Justice and Peace

LEAF Academy



Transitional justice: how far do you agree that it might be necessary to have a little less justice if that can contribute to a greater chance of peace?

- Perfect justice may be difficult to administer immediately for a number of pragmatic reasons such as:
 - It may be hard to differentiate between the victims and the perpetrators. In Czechoslovakia, for example, most citizens helped perpetuate the communist regime through active or passive participation in it. In Colombia and Rwanda, likewise, a large part of civilians was involved in the perpetrators' actions.
 - The society may need to move on before proper justice can be arrived on. It may take too long to determine guilt. In the former communist countries, opening the Secret police files revealed that the records were not reliable in many cases
- However, long-term peace is impossible to achieve without justice
 - Old conflicts might come out (e.g. Slovakia is still paying for the fact that many people connected to the communist regime remained in important positions after the revolution)
 - In some cases, the pursuit of justice is possible, especially when the reconciliation is not, as a result of huge violations of human rights (e.g. Holocaust)

Reconciliation

- Often the reconciliation does not need to come through an explicit apology but important is the recognition of wrongdoings and how the victims were hurt
 - Crucial part of the reconciliation process is the recognition of the wrongdoings by the society (compliance, support of the party, even silence etc.)
 - Recognition of how the victims were hurt and the remembrance of those victims
- Important part is the education of future generations
- Establishment of Memory-preserving institutions
 - In Slovakia, The Institute of National Memory was established to collect and preserve the evidence of atrocities committed during the Communist regime