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Is peace possible?

In these times of war and conflict, it is important to remember that peace between states is possible. We have seen peace in most of Europe (the EU and beyond) from 1945 to date after millennia of war. Peace in North America after several wars between the USA, Canada, and Mexico in the 19th century. After numerous wars, there has been long lasting peace between South American countries since the 1930ies except for conflicts between Peru and Ecuador, which has been settled since 1995.

Long lasting peace has been built successfully by various means adjusted to the local context. Here's four examples:

- Through a common overarching democratic organisation and strong trade links the EU has contributed to the so called "Long Peace" and the "New Peace" in the larger part of Europe.
- Through peace negotiations between Peru and Ecuador including transcending ideas like a shared peace nature park making boundaries in the area redundant hostilities was stopped.
- Through zone-wise elections in the border area between Germany and Denmark held in line with the UN charter concerning peoples' right to freely choose their sovereignty and international political status with no interference there has been no boundary related conflicts between the two countries for more than 100 years.
- Through negotiations between Israel and Egypt focusing on both countries interests and needs there has been no war between the two countries for about 50 years.

It might seem difficult or even impossible to create peace in e.g. the Russian-Ukrainian and the Israeli-Palestinian wars. However, in the midst of the conflicts mentioned above it also seemed impossible to create peace. Furthermore, the examples of peace also remind us, that power (military might) is not the only means to create peace. Actually, it is rarely sufficient or the most successful means to create sustainable peace.

Since Christmas is approaching, it is also instructive to remember two examples of peace initiatives from the common man:

- During the first world war, Austrian-Hungarian soldiers on their own initiative build a church in their spare time (in between battles) for Protestants, Orthodox, Catholics, Muslims, and atheist to worship and to think of peace. See this video from the BBC: <https://www.bbc.com/reel/video/p0gwxj7s/the-church-built-for-all-religions>

- During Christmas both in 1914, British, French, and German soldiers let down arms and met to talk, exchange gifts, sing carols, play football, and hold joint burial ceremonies and prisoner swaps in the no man's land between the trenches. Imagine the trust it must have taken! See this video: <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/the-real-story-of-the-christmas-truce>