



Socialism kills more infants than war

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Recent reports show that the infant mortality rate is now higher in Venezuela and Syria, yet in war, are unfortunately not surprising. The results of the socialist economic policies are predictable. The infant mortality rate in Venezuela is even higher than in Syria since 2008.

The overview is fortunately more favorable. The infant mortality rate in the world plunges, including Syria and Venezuela, despite the war and bad policies. In both countries, the improvements are visible as recently as last year. From 1960 to 2015, the infant mortality rate in Syria and Venezuela were down 91% and 78% respectively. This year (absent the two graphs in this article), the rate in Syria has increased from 11.1 ‰ to 15.4 ‰, while it blazed in Venezuela of 12.9 ‰ 18.6 ‰. At the same time, the infant mortality rate continued to decline almost everywhere, and have even declined faster in countries that benefit from more freedom and stability. Consider Chile for example.

The infant mortality rate in Chile in 1960 was higher than those of Venezuela and Syria. Chile has managed to do better than Syria in the mid-1960s, but was still sadly behind his rich cousin from the north, Venezuela. In the early 1970s, progress slowed when Chile's elite flirted with socialist policies. When the government abandoned socialism and began to reform the country economically in the mid 1970s, the pace of progress quickened again, and soon, Chilean infants were more secure than those of Venezuela . Today, the infant mortality rate in Chile is similar to the United States.

Economic policies are important

There is a lesson of these elements: economic policies are important. While socialism in Venezuela managed to kill more children than a total war in Syria, the incredible success of Chile shows that implementing the right policies, humanity can make rapid progress and better protect young most vulnerable members of society. Today it is hard to believe that Chilean babies under one year have historically been more at risk than their Venezuelan and Syrian contemporaries.

What about your country? Per thousand births, how many die and how many live enough to see their first birthday? Explore the data by yourself, and use the new tool HumanProgress.org , Your Life in Numbers , to measure the progress of your country in terms of infant mortality (and other areas) since birth.

Chelsea Follett is the Managing Editor of [HumanProgress.org](https://humanprogress.org), a project of the Cato Institute which seeks to educate the public on the global improvements in well-being by providing free empirical data on long-term developments