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Civil War Trends and the Changing Nature of Armed Conflict

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This paper is based in significant parts on a 2014 UNU-CPR occasional paper on conflict trends, but with some updated data and analysis. For the 2014 paper, see: Sebastian von Einsiedel with Louise Bosetti, Rahul Chandran, James Cockayne, John de Boer and Wilfred Wan, "Major Recent Trends in Violent Conflict," UNU-CPR, November 2014.

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Executive Summary

This paper provides insights into major recent trends in violent conflict, and analyses the implications of these trends for international actors engaged in conflict prevention and management. It finds that:

- After declining for much of the 1990s, the number of major civil wars has almost tripled in the past decade. The number of minor civil wars have also risen in recent years, largely due to the expansion of the Islamic State and its affiliates.
- From 2011 to today, there has been a six-fold increase in battle deaths, with 2014 and 2015 being the deadliest years on the battlefield since the end of the Cold War.
- With a decline in civil wars ending in military victory, the conflict relapse rate has increased. 60% of conflicts in the early 2000s relapsed within five years.
- Conflicts are becoming more intractable and less conducive to traditional political settlements mainly due to three developments:
 - Organised crime has emerged as a major stress factor that exacerbates state fragility, undermines state legitimacy, and often lowers the incentives of armed groups to enter political settlements;
 - The internationalisation of civil wars tends to make them deadlier and longer;
 - The growing presence of jihadist groups in conflict settings complicates peacemaking and fosters a “hunker down and bunker up” mentality among international actors, especially UN peace operations, on the ground.
- Some forms of violence against civilian populations in wartime are increasing, posing challenges to the protection of civilians. Among the key trends we see is that: a larger share of today’s mass atrocities takes place in the context of civil wars; rebel groups have become increasingly responsible for the majority of civilian deaths; and the number of displaced people due to violence is at an all-time high.

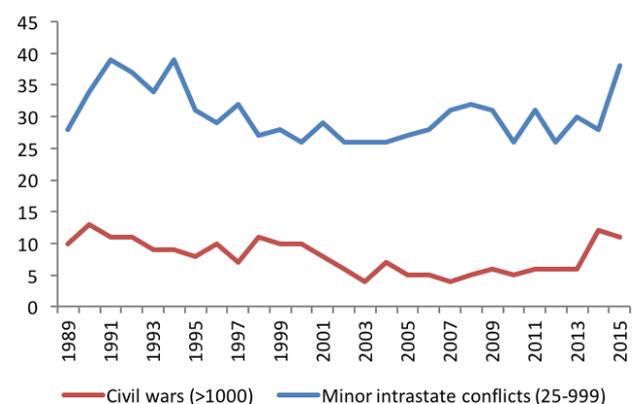
1. The Resurgence of Civil War

Much has been made of the decline in civil wars and battle deaths from the early 1990s to the early 2000s (and the UN’s contribution thereto).¹ Indeed, major civil wars – those with over 1,000 battle deaths per year and involving at least one state actor - declined by about 72% from 1990-2003. However, this trend has over the past decade been dramatically reversed, with the number of major civil wars since then rising from four to eleven in 2015 (Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria (2x), Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan, Syria (x2), Ukraine, Yemen). The last time the number of major civil wars was higher was in 1992 (see Fig. 1).²

Minor civil wars (at least 25 battle deaths per year, and involving at least one state actor) are also on the rise, standing at 38 in 2015, the highest number since 1994 (see Fig. 1). The sharp uptick since 2014 has been largely driven by the expansion of the Islamic State and its affiliates, which were involved in conflicts in three countries in 2014 and 12 in 2015.³ The data suggests that preventing minor conflicts from escalating into major ones will be an important challenge for the UN and other international actors in the coming years.

With the rise of intrastate conflict, the number of battle deaths has also grown dramatically. From 2011 to today, there has been a six-fold increase in battle deaths in major civil wars,

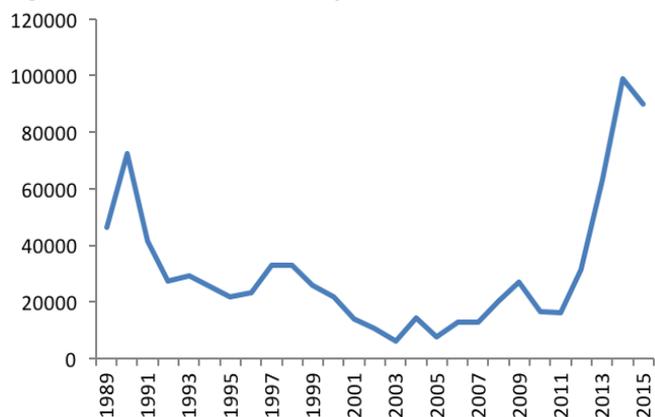
Fig. 1: Global trends in intrastate armed conflicts (civil wars vs. minor intrastate conflicts)



Source: UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset version 4-2016

which in 2015 stood at 90,000, making 2014 and 2015 the deadliest years on the battlefield since the end of the Cold War (see Fig. 2). The rise in battle deaths since 2011 is due to two major factors: the lethality of conflicts in the Middle East, in particular in Syria; and the expansion of jihadist groups, as in 2015 a significant share of deaths resulting from organised violence took place in episodes featuring ISIS, al-Qaeda and their affiliates.⁴ This data, however, fails to capture “indirect

Fig. 2: Battle deaths due to major civil wars



Source: UCDP Battle related deaths dataset

deaths," which are caused by the consequences of conflict, such as forced displacement and the loss of access to basic needs, and not limited to violent acts causing immediate harm by identifiable perpetrators.⁵ Such indirect deaths dramatically outstrip battle deaths.⁶

2. Civil War Relapse

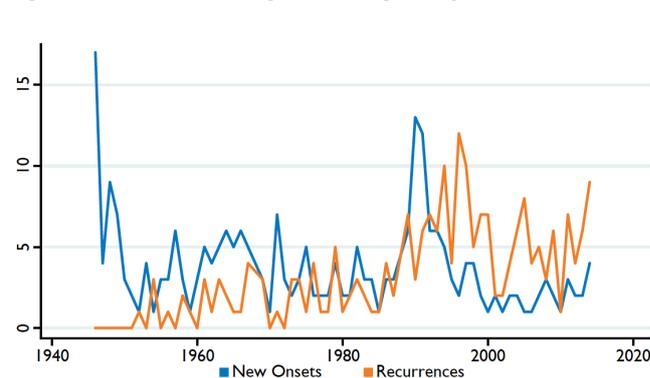
The causes of civil war tend to be multiple and complex and the specific dynamics of each case are unique. Nonetheless, the 2011 World Development Report (WDR), which reflected extensive research on causes of civil war, highlighted the central importance of weak institutions as the key structural cause that – particularly in combination with political and economic exclusion – create the conditions for conflict and violence.⁷ Quantitative studies also indicate that countries that have experienced regime change, sudden changes in the degree of democracy, or recent independence are particularly conflict prone (factors that featured variously in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, South Sudan, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, CAR, DRC, and Ukraine).

Unsurprisingly, civil wars tend to exacerbate the conditions that helped cause them in the first place: state capacity declines; poverty increases; and inter-group dynamics become more hostile. This may explain the finding of the 2011 World Development Report (WDR) that 90 percent of the civil wars since 2000 occurred in countries that had experienced a civil war in the previous 30 years.

Available data shows that since the mid-1990s, a greater share of conflicts breaking out have been recurrent, rather than new onsets (see Fig. 3).⁸ This indicates that the challenge of conflict prevention has, to a large degree, become a sustaining peace challenge. The relapse rate has also progressively increased since the 1960s, with 60% of conflicts in the early 2000s (the last period for which the numbers have been crunched) relapsing within five years (see Fig. 4).⁹

A key reason for this rising relapse rate may be that today fewer civil wars end in outright victory: while in the 1980s seven times more conflicts ended in military victories than in peace settlements, today around five times as many conflicts end in peace settlements as in victories.¹⁰ This is of course a positive development, but the decline in victories also

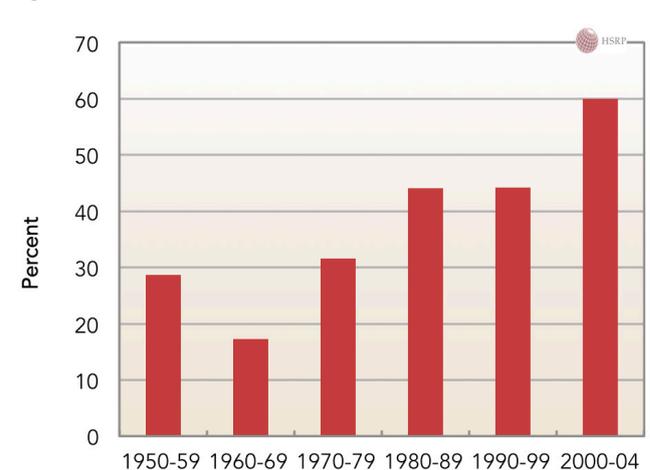
Fig. 3: New and recurring conflicts globally, 1946-2014



Source: Reprinted from Scott Gates, Håvard Mokleiv Nygård, and Esther Trappeniers, "Conflict Recurrence", PRIO February 2016

means that war outcomes fail to decisively settle the rules of the new order. Does this mean the international community should leave parties to fight it out? No, because even "failed peace agreements save lives as the death toll after conflict relapse is on average 80% less than it was before the peace agreement."¹¹

Fig. 4: The rate of recurrence in intrastate conflicts: 1950-2004



Source: Reprinted from Human Security Report 2012, using UCDP/HSRP dataset

3. Institution Building and Political Settlements

The UN and other international actors have long understood the central importance of state weakness in driving conflict. It is well-established that among the key goals of UN operations should be "institution-building and the promotion of good governance and the rule of law by assisting the parties to develop legitimate and broad-based institutions."¹²

The problem with this approach is the long time-line for institutional transformation, with even the countries that have historically managed to reform the fastest requiring between 10-17 years to achieve meaningful and measurable improvements (see Table 1).¹³ The state-building challenge is compounded by the fact that "many of the world's most difficult conflicts occur in countries where any such state

institutions are subordinate to social affinities and patronage networks.”¹⁴ This is particularly true for sub-Saharan Africa, where, compared to most other regions, there are few historical antecedents in terms of modern bureaucratic state institutions.¹⁵

This does not mean that international post-conflict interventions should not help prepare the ground for long-term institution-building. However, long-term institution-building exceeds the time horizon of most international interventions, including UN peace operations, whose focus will need to be on securing and nurturing inclusive political settlements.¹⁶ These settlements should be seen as creating breathing space for conflict-affected countries to embark on the lengthy and arduous path of real institution-building. However, the task of securing these settlements is becoming more difficult, as conflict changes.

Table 1: Fastest historical progress in institutional transformation globally

Indicator	Years to threshold at pace of:	
	Fastest 20	Fastest over the threshold
Bureaucratic quality (0–4)	20	12
Corruption (0–6)	27	14
Military in politics (0–6)	17	10
Government effectiveness	36	13
Control of corruption	27	16
Rule of law	41	17

Source: Pritchett and de Weijer; reprinted from 2011 WDR

4. The Changing Nature of Conflict

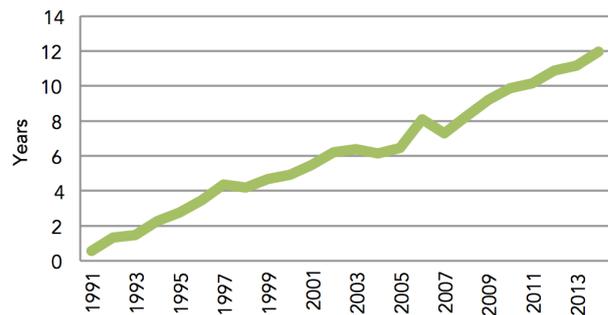
Since the turn of the millennium, the UN (along with other international actors) has struggled to bring lasting stability to a number of conflict situations on its agenda, many of which have experienced repeated crises. This contrasts with the cases of the early and mid-1990s (Namibia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mozambique, Cambodia, and Eastern Slavonia) where conflicts were “ripe for resolution,” both locally and in terms of the larger geopolitical context, and took place in relatively small territories where a few thousand peacekeepers (or a few hundred human rights observers) could tip the balance in a positive direction. One indicator that international actors are finding it ever more difficult to establish stability is that, compared to the 1990s, UN peace operations now tend to be deployed for much longer – with more uncertain outcomes (see Fig. 5).

Part of the explanation for this may be that the nature of conflict is changing, becoming more intractable and less conducive to political settlement. Three developments significantly complicate the endeavours of international actors in peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peace-building:

1. Organised crime has emerged as a major stress factor that exacerbates state fragility, undermines state legitimacy, and makes conflict more intractable and messy;

2. The increasing “internationalisation” of civil war (i.e. increase in military involvement of external actors in civil wars) renders conflicts more difficult to solve; and
3. The growing presence of jihadist groups in modern conflict settings constitutes a significant challenge to peacemaking and peacekeeping as their maximalist goals are difficult to meet through negotiation over democratic power, and they severely constrain international actors’ action on the ground by prompting a “bunker up and hunker down” mentality.

Fig. 5: Average age of UN peace operations: 1990-2014



Source: UNU graph based on DPA and DPKO data. Where a mission was continuously deployed but saw a change in mandate (as in Haiti 1994-2000), it is counted as one mission.

4.1. The Impact of Organised Crime

One key change in the modern conflict environment is the impact of transnational organised crime (the opportunities for which have grown along with globalisation) on conflict dynamics and state legitimacy.¹⁷

During the Cold War, many civil wars were fuelled by superpower support to rebel forces in “third world” proxy conflicts. As external state support began to dry up, armed non-state groups increasingly engaged in the shadow economy, benefiting from a growth of transnational illicit markets, a by-product of the growing ease with which people, goods, and money could cross borders.¹⁸ This trend has continued today, and the growing ability of armed groups and other non-state actors to tap into global illicit markets and their deepening involvement in criminal activities are significantly altering the political economy of violent conflicts and heavily affecting conflict dynamics in a number of settings.

First, involvement in conflict economies may lower the incentives for rebel groups to enter into ceasefires or peace agreements. Research has shown that civil wars in which a major rebel group has access to funds from contraband tend to last significantly longer than others.¹⁹ The role that the exploitation of “conflict resources” (such as diamonds, minerals, timber, coltan, poppy or coca) has played in fuelling and prolonging civil wars has grown through the 1990s as evidenced in Angola, Sierra Leone, Liberia, the DRC, the CAR, Afghanistan, and Colombia.²⁰ The phenomenon now goes well beyond conflict resources and the opportunities for making money from trafficking and other illicit activities have significantly broadened, as can be seen in Syria, Libya and the Sahel.

Second, lootable resources, particularly those that can be accessed directly by rebel cadres (rather than through their chains of command), can prolong conflict by creating discipline problems that make it difficult for leaders to impose a settlement on followers.²¹ Control by rebel factions of their own sources of income has made contemporary insurgencies less centralised and more prone to internal fragmentation.²² The average number of rebel groups fighting in civil wars has increased from eight in 1950 to 14 in 2010.²³ In Afghanistan, divisions have recently started to appear within the Taliban, with parts of the movement following criminal agendas and new 'fronts' with sufficient control over their own illicit funding sources behaving autonomously from Taliban central command.²⁴ A similar process has recently unfolded in Colombia, where fractures have appeared in the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia's (FARC) unity of command and some fronts deeply involved in illicit and criminal economies have defected from the peace process.²⁵

Third, the growth of illicit markets has lowered entry barriers to the market of organised violence. The means to organise violence have become more readily accessible through transnational arms supply lines, communications technologies (like Facebook and Twitter) and illicit finance streams. It is easier than ever before for violent actors to get their hands on guns, cash, and even recruits.

Fourth, the changed political economy of conflict can increase the risk of indiscriminate violence against civilians. Armed groups with illicit profits from external markets have reduced incentives to appeal to the hearts and minds of putative supporters and tend to attract recruits who are motivated by the prospect of financial gain rather than the cause the rebel group claims to represent.²⁶ In combination, the ability of rebel groups to offer recruits material benefits and income independent of their social base make rebel groups more likely to target civilians.²⁷ The relationship between illicit flows and violence however is not automatic and is often mediated by state actors who have vested interests in the illicit economy. In Libya, for example, the Muammar Qaddafi regime operated as a regulator of the trafficking space, manipulating illicit trafficking and favouring certain groups over others, and as such, influencing the dynamics of violence and conflict in the territory.²⁸

In addition to changing the political economy of conflict, organised crime has a particularly nefarious effect on governance, as it corrupts state and security institutions and empowers non-state actors to emerge as rivals to the state in the provision of protection services. In Afghanistan and Colombia for example, the involvement of armed groups in labour-intensive illicit economies such as coca and opium poppy production has provided them with considerable social and political capital among local communities who rely on these economies for their livelihoods.²⁹ In some cases, the governmental power of criminal groups can expand to the regulation of markets and norms, and even provide access to formal political power and electoral success.³⁰ States in periods of transition from war to peace, or from one regime to another, are particularly vulnerable to organised crime as during such periods powerful informal wartime elites (relying on ill-gotten wealth, wartime networks and coercion) tend to extend their influence over formal state institutions.³¹ The

challenge to state legitimacy is exacerbated when political and economic liberalisation processes that often follow war are seen to further empower organised crime elements and when demobilised combatants gravitate toward gangs.

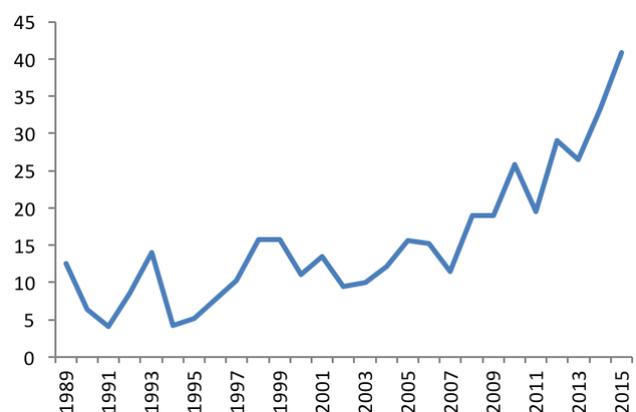
While organised crime has long existed, its corrosive impact on state legitimacy is exacerbated by the growth of transnational criminal markets and the shift in illicit flows. Of particular concern, especially for the UN given its heavy presence in the region,³² is the emergence of West Africa and the Sahel as a major transit region for Andean cocaine en route to Europe and other parts of Africa. This has given rise to fears that narco-states are emerging in the region and has contributed to the resurgence of coups d'état (as rival factions of the state security forces struggle over share of the drug trade). Similar dynamics are at play in Central Asia, Afghanistan, and Guatemala.

Also important is the growing attraction of cities in fragile and conflict-affected states for transnational criminal groups. Cities such as Kinshasa, Mogadishu, Juba, Kabul, and Port au Prince are growing at unprecedented and unmanageable rates for what are already fragile settings. This fragility combined with the connectedness offered by modern communication systems and access to large transportation hubs have enabled illicit markets and groups to thrive in conflict-and-violence-affected cities. These dynamics can severely destabilise post-conflict countries, undermine state-building efforts, and even throw countries back into a spiral of violence as was visible in Haiti and Guatemala.

4.2 The Internationalization of Civil War

Another trend in recent years that makes conflict more intractable is the significant rise of "internationalised civil wars," i.e. internal conflicts in which other states intervene militarily on one or both sides (see Fig. 6). In 1991, 4% of conflicts were internationalised according to this definition; by 2015, that number had multiplied ten-fold to 40%.

Fig. 6: Internationalised intrastate conflicts as a percentage of total intrastate conflicts



Source: UCPD/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset version 4-2016

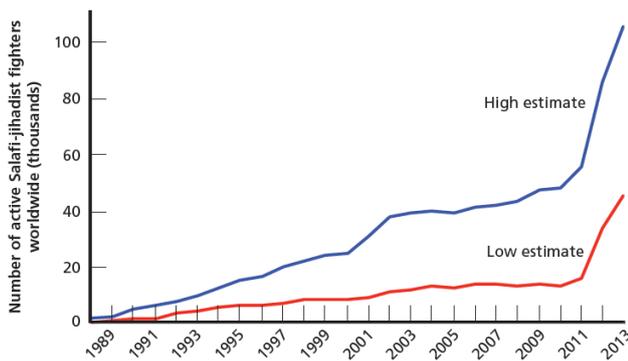
This is a concerning trend because research shows that when external interventions in domestic conflicts do not lead to a rapid military victory, they are likely to make internal conflicts

deadlier and longer.³³ The DRC is a case in point, where the mining and military interests of neighbouring countries like Rwanda and Uganda have contributed to extending the Congolese conflict over many years, with both countries shifting their support to different parties over time in accordance with their own objectives. Intervening countries act almost as additional independent parties to the conflict, which poses extra challenges to peace negotiations.³⁴ Syria is another example, where the military involvement of multiple external actors complicates prospects for a negotiated solution to the conflict. The involvement of states with strong militaries, such as the US or Russia, in internal conflicts is especially likely to cause more fatalities.³⁵

4.3 Peace operations in the face of Jihadist violence

A significant part of the changing nature of conflict is the growing influence of jihadist groups in modern conflict settings. Since 2010, there has been a dramatic rise in the number of Salafi-jihadist fighters (see Fig. 7).³⁶ Accompanying this trend has been a dramatic rise in the number of fatalities in organised violence involving ISIS, Al Qaeda and their affiliates (see Fig. 8).³⁷

Fig. 7: Number of Salafi-jihadist fighters by Year, 1988-2013



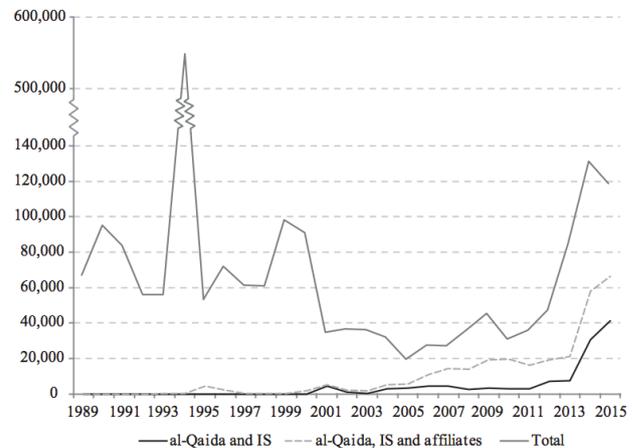
Source: Reprinted from Seth Jones, *A Persistent Threat*, 2014

In recent years, ISIS in particular has expanded its reach, with (as discussed above) the number of conflicts involving the group and its affiliates having quadrupled from 2014 to 2015.³⁸ In 2015, most of ISIS's one-sided violence against civilians took place in three conflict-affected countries: Iraq, Syria and Nigeria.³⁹ The fact that the majority of such violence occurs in conflict settings suggests that, as the International Crisis Group has noted, the growing reach of jihadist groups in recent years is "more a product of instability than its primary driver."⁴⁰ This likely means that the most meaningful contributions that the UN and other international actors can make to counter-terrorism efforts may lie in conflict prevention, peacebuilding or peacekeeping work in countries in which terrorist groups capitalise on widespread instability.⁴¹

The fact that many of today's civil war environments feature jihadist insurgencies complicates peacemaking because these groups tend to pursue maximalist demands that are difficult to meet or to incorporate into political settlements based on human rights and democratic governance. Even where such groups may be motivated primarily by local, legitimate, and reversible grievances which could be

addressed through negotiated agreements, key powers tend to discourage negotiations with such groups, which are often proscribed through UN, US, or EU terrorism designation lists.

Fig. 8: Fatalities in Organised Violence, ISIS, Al Qaeda and affiliates



Source: Reprinted from Melander, Pettersson and Themner, *Organised Violence, 1989-2015*, *Journal of Peace Research* 53(5), 2016

The rise in jihadist groups also poses a challenge to the UN and other international peacebuilding actors, as the former often target the latter.⁴² Targeting often prompts international actors to adjust their postures accordingly. In particular, an increasingly widespread "bunker up and hunker down" mentality among UN peace operations constrains the ability of both uniformed personnel and civilian staff to engage with the local population, win hearts and minds, mediate local disputes, and gather information – work critical to help with the implementation of peace agreements. Even missions in countries with comparatively low threat levels often feel compelled to adopt security measures that fuel a public image of inaccessibility.

5. Protection of Civilians

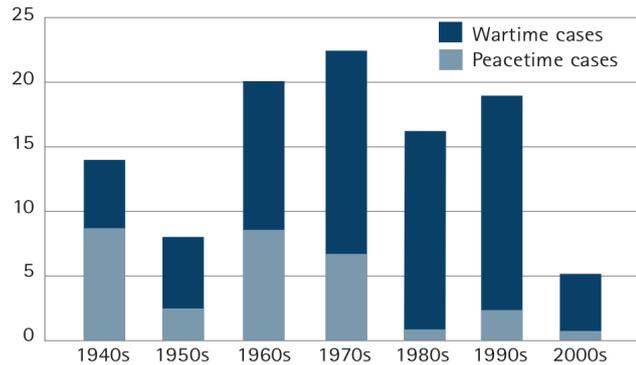
Since the 1990s, the international community has paid increasing attention to protection of civilians and "responsibility to protect" norms. Since a protection of civilians provision was first included in the mandate of a UN peacekeeping operation in 1999 (Sierra Leone), they have become a standard feature of such missions. However, international actors engaged in the protection of civilians operate in a changed threat environment, in which certain forms of violence against civilian populations in wartime appear to be increasing.

5.1 Mass Atrocities

Looking at mass atrocities (i.e. episodes with at least 5,000 civilians killed intentionally), we find that their frequency has declined since the 1970s. However, a larger share of mass atrocities today takes place in the context of civil wars (see Fig. 9).⁴³ Since 1980, there have only been five "peacetime episodes" of mass atrocities, four of which occurred in countries that had recently experienced armed conflict (DRC, Myanmar, and twice in Burundi).⁴⁴

While it is extremely difficult to anticipate which armed conflicts are likely to generate mass atrocities, “groups may be encouraged to commit atrocities during transitional phases in order to ‘earn’ a seat at the negotiating table by signalling resolve. While similar outcomes can be prompted by the deployment of impartial peacekeepers, it is worth remembering that more civilians were killed after peacekeepers were deployed to Bosnia, Rwanda, and the DRC than before.”⁴⁵

Fig. 9: Peacetime and wartime episodes of mass killing by decade of commencement: 1945-2010

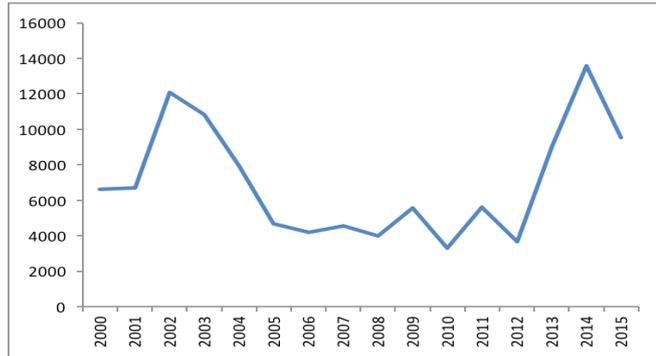


Source: Reprinted from Alex Bellamy, *Mass Atrocities and Armed Conflict*, Stanley Foundation, 2011

5.2 Violence against Civilians

The nature of modern warfare links insurgency movements with civilians, who oftentimes provide “supplies, intelligence, shelter, and recruits.”⁴⁶ Civilian groups can also be targeted for their symbolic value, as acts of extreme violence – such as widespread torture and mutilation – undermine the power of the state.⁴⁷

Fig. 10: Fatalities in episodes of one-sided violence, 1989-2015



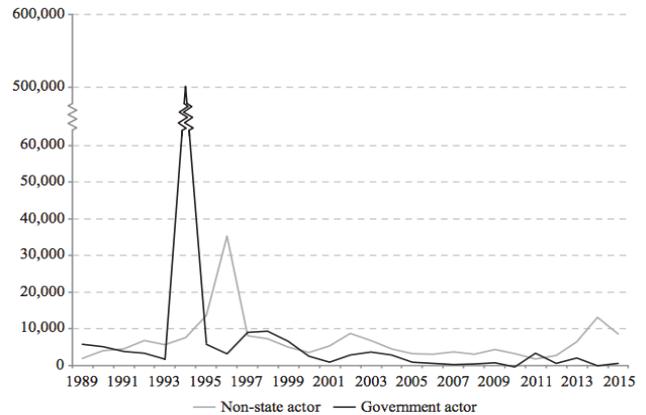
Source: Reprinted from Melander, Pettersson and Themner, *Organised Violence, 1989-2015*, *Journal of Peace Research* 53(5), 2016

Looking at one-sided violence against unarmed civilians more broadly (episodes of at least 25 civilians targeted and killed), no clear trend since the early 2000s is discernible, although 2013 shows an uptick due to violence against civilians in CAR and Syria (see Fig. 10).⁴⁸

However, the data on one-sided violence indicates that over the past 25 years rebel groups have carried out an increasing

share of that violence, accounting for a majority of one-sided fatalities every year since 2000 except for 2011, in which much of the violence against civilians was carried out by governments of Arab Spring countries (see Fig. 11).

Fig. 11: One-sided fatalities by type of actor, 1989-2015

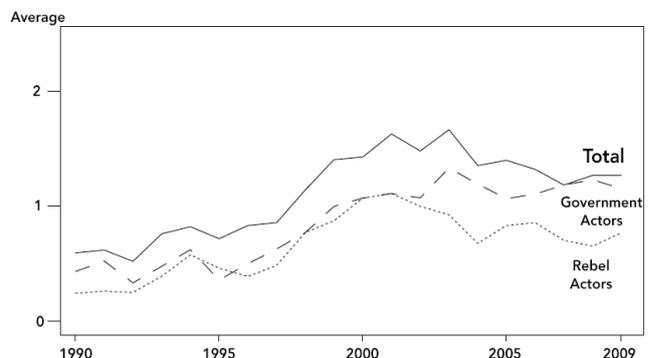


Source: Reprinted from Melander, Pettersson and Themner, *Organised Violence, 1989-2015*, *Journal of Peace Research* 53(5), 2016

5.3 Sexual Violence in Conflict⁴⁹

Similarly, sexual violence has a profound effect on communities, with the nature of these crimes exacerbating feelings of social disorder.⁵⁰ The Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict (SVAC) Dataset, which covers the period of 1989-2009,⁵¹ shows a significant upward trend in wartime rape during the 1990s (most likely a function of increased reporting rather than incidents) and a slight decline since the early 2000s – both in terms of average level reported and its prevalence across conflicts (see Fig. 12).⁵² 53 of the 86 violent conflicts in that period contained at least one year of “massive” reported rapes, or had “numerous” reported rapes. State actors were more likely than militias and rebel groups to be reported as perpetrators from 2000 to 2009.⁵³ One emerging trend includes the use of sexual violence by armed groups – in Colombia, the DRC, Libya, and others – to induce the displacement of populations, oftentimes in resource-rich or strategic locations.⁵⁴

Fig. 12: Average reported wartime rape level, by year



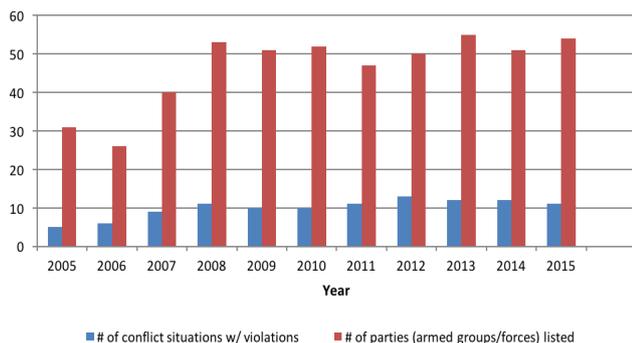
Source: Reprinted from Cohen, Green and Wood, *USIP Special Report: Wartime Sexual Violence*, 2013

5.4 Children and Armed Conflict

The abuse of children in the context of armed conflict appears to be on the rise (see Fig. 13). There were over 4,000

documented cases of children recruited and used in conflicts in 2013, with thousands more estimated to be involved.⁵⁵ 54 parties (armed forces or groups) in conflict situations on the Security Council agenda were listed as engaging in activities targeting children: killing or maiming, recruitment or use, rape and other forms of sexual violence, and attacks on schools and hospitals – with 33 of those parties cited as “persistent perpetrators,” having been listed for five years, representing the highest number since reporting began in 2003.⁵⁶

Fig. 13: Armed groups / forces engaged in violations against children, 2005-2015



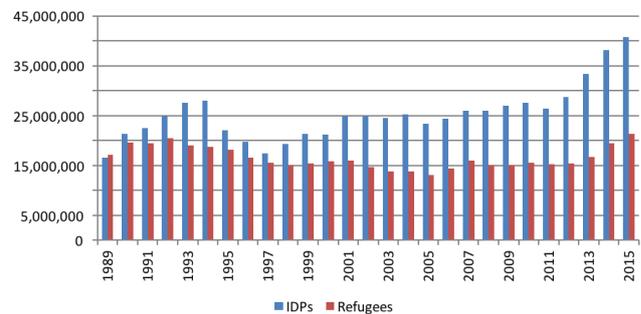
Source: Annex I, Children and Armed Conflict, Reports of the Secretary-General, 2005-2015

5.5 Forced Migration

The number of displaced people is at an all-time high since the end of the Cold War (see Fig. 14).⁵⁷ 65.3 million people worldwide are forcibly displaced as a result of conflict, persecution, violence or human rights violations, with over half of all refugees coming from just three conflict-affected countries: Syria, Afghanistan and Somalia.⁵⁸ With a steady rise in the average number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) per conflict in recent years, the data suggests that forced displacement has become a deliberate and widespread tactic.⁵⁹ Apart from the human suffering, this is concerning as high levels of displacement have been shown to exacerbate inter-group hostility, and thereby reduce the chances of peace operations succeeding.⁶⁰ Over 60% of refugees and 80% of IDPs are located in urban areas,⁶¹ and are thus difficult to identify and reach by humanitarians and often are sources

of significant tensions with host communities.

Fig. 14: Displacement as a result of armed violence, 1989-2015



Source: UNHCR, IDMC, Global Figures, 2016

Key Questions for the UN and other international conflict resolution actors

The key trends in contemporary violent conflict surveyed in this paper indicate that the UN and other international actors will need to adapt their conflict prevention and management tools to the changing nature of conflict. Key questions for further research include:

- How is the changing nature of conflict affecting the mediation and preventive diplomacy?
- What knowledge gaps exist when it comes to understanding the drivers of violent extremism, including with regards to youth who join extremist groups?
- What is the impact of conducting peacekeeping in settings with (a) strong influence of extremist armed groups, and/or (b) deeply entrenched criminal networks?
- How have changing conflict dynamics affected the ability of sanctions to prevent and manage conflict actors?
- How has the changing nature of armed conflict impacted stabilization and institution-building approaches?

ENDNOTES

1. Steven Pinker, *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined* (New York: Penguin Books, 2011); UN, *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility, Report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change* (New York: United Nations, 2004); Human Security Report Project, *Human Security Report 2013: The Decline in Global Violence: Evidence, Explanation, and Contestation*, (Vancouver: Human Security Press, 2013).
2. The picture looks less dire if one looks at all conflicts in the UCDP dataset, i.e. all conflicts with a threshold of 25 battle-deaths/year. That figure in 2013 stood at 32, down from 39 in 2009, roughly the same level as during the period 2002 – 2007 but significantly down from the period 1990-5, when the number stood between 40 and 50 active civil wars.
3. Erik Melander, Therése Pettersson, and Lotta Themnér, "Organised violence, 1989-2015," *Journal of Peace Research* 53, issue 5 (5 September 2016): 727-742.
4. According to the Uppsala dataset, this share was over half. However, this is likely an over-estimation as the UCDP methodology likely under-captures certain kinds of violence, such as deaths resulting from organised criminal violence in non-traditional conflict settings. Ibid. See also: http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/faq/#Mexico_criminal_violence
5. Keith Krause, "From Armed Conflict to Political Violence: Mapping & Explaining Conflict Trends," *MIT Press Journal* Vol. 145, No. 4 (Fall 2016): 113-126.
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