



## CHAPTER 1

# A Surge and Expansion of Violent Conflict

The threats facing the world today are different from those of decades ago. Violent conflict is now occurring in middle-income countries as well as in both low-income countries and fragile contexts, opening space for violent extremist groups and spilling over borders.

This chapter surveys the state of violent conflict across several indicators, showing that, in recent years, more countries are affected by violent conflict, more armed groups are fighting, and more outside actors are intervening. The chapter also examines trends beyond the numbers both to understand factors contributing to the new conflict dynamics and to adapt prevention policy on national, regional, and international levels.

The cost of *not* preventing violent conflict is extremely high. Beyond its incalculable human cost, violent conflict reverses hard-won development gains, stunts the opportunities of children and young people, and robs economies of opportunities for growth. Preventable diseases become more difficult to treat in and around violent conflict, and there is a higher risk of famine. Forced displacement has reached a level not seen since the immediate aftermath of World War II. Violent conflict and the humanitarian crises it spawns cost the world billions of dollars a year, outpacing the capacity of states to respond.

From roughly 1950 to 1990, parts of Africa and Asia experienced anti- and postcolonial violent conflicts and superpower proxy wars over influence and control of the state. The end of the Cold War brought a pause in the interstate tensions that characterized the

bipolar international order. A window of opportunity opened to focus on intrastate conflicts. Despite the escalation of some ethnic conflicts and prompted by the atrocities that took place in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, a surge in peacekeeping and prevention, among other factors, reduced violent conflict to unprecedented levels by the mid-2000s (Human Security Report Project 2005; Pinker 2011). That more peaceful lull was broken in 2007, when violent conflict began to increase in scope and number of fatalities, particularly beginning in 2010.

What makes people fight and what they fight over are not new, but the fighting is happening in a new context. Violent conflict has spread to middle-income countries that have, or had, functioning institutions (such as Iraq, Syria, and Ukraine), upending assumptions that violent conflict is an exclusive problem of low-income countries. In a world where communications, finance, crime, and ideas flow across borders, many conflicts have evolved into complex systems with international, regional, national, and communal links. Such conflicts are resistant to resolution through negotiated settlement, tending to play out in regions where other countries are already at risk of violent conflict (Walter 2017b). The proliferation of nonstate armed groups has also resulted in conflicts with less state involvement, making them impervious to the settlement mechanisms deployed in the past. More external countries are intervening in violent conflicts, which could present opportunities for mediation, yet which also complicates conflict dynamics.

## Violent Conflict in the Twenty-First Century

Until recently, the world was becoming more peaceful (Pinker 2011). Following the end of the Cold War, the number and intensity<sup>1</sup> of most types of violent conflict steadily declined. That trend stalled in 2007 and has reversed since 2010. The incidence of violent conflict between states is still low (see box 1.1), but conflict within states—among a ballooning number of armed groups, between nonstate armed groups and the state, and increasingly involving some form of external intervention—is spreading. More countries were experiencing some form of violent conflict in 2016 than at any time in the previous 30 years (Allansson, Melander, and Themnér 2017; Gleditsch et al. 2002; Sundberg, Eck, and Kreutz 2012).

While much of today's violence is entrenched in low-income countries, neither wealth nor income renders countries immune. Some of the deadliest and seemingly most intractable conflicts are occurring in middle-income countries, reversing hard-won human development gains. In addition, violence in various forms has reached epidemic proportions in countries not considered fragile (Geneva Declaration Secretariat 2015; OECD 2016). The highest rates of homicide and violent crime in the world are found in Latin America and the Caribbean, where urban gang violence and drug-related crime are features of everyday life.

A few of these violent conflicts—whether in low- or middle-income countries—produce the preponderance of fatalities, and most conflicts are broadly concentrated in a few regions (Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia).

### BOX 1.1 The Decline of Violent Conflict between States

Interstate violent conflict has been at historically low levels since the end of the Cold War. The Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) reported just two active interstate violent conflicts in 2016, one between India and Pakistan and the other between Ethiopia and Eritrea. In 1987, five interstate wars were recorded, but since 1992, no more than two interstate wars were recorded in any given year, and several years experienced no such wars.

The reasons for these low levels are varied. The end of the Cold War marked a shifting disposition of the great powers from conducting proxy warfare to preventing conflicts around the world. Enhanced cooperation translated into a greater role for the United Nations (UN) Security Council as a mechanism for resolving disputes. In parallel, “International norms, legal regulations, and treaties [have created] a situation today where invasion and conquest are not only outlawed, but also actively proscribed through deterrence” (Thompson 2014). Casualty avoidance has become a factor, with national leaders acutely sensitive to

the perceptions of their domestic constituents and less willing to risk their soldiers' lives or engage in warfare when it can be avoided. Today, outright military victory has become less feasible. Increasing economic interdependence may also contribute to the declining trend in interstate conflict because it creates mutual vulnerabilities that act as disincentives to going to war. In this calculus, “The opportunity costs of conflict greatly outweigh any potential economic gains” (Thompson 2014), which is one of the reasons why trade linkages between countries help to promote peace (Hegre, Oneal, and Russett 2010).

The decline in interstate conflict does not mean that disagreements between states have disappeared. Real interstate tensions also persist, leaving open the possibility for a potentially devastating violent conflict to come. The number of unresolved boundary issues across the world is a further cause of persistent interstate tensions. The South China Sea is but one of these. The African Union alone is involved in mediating 19 separate contested border claims.

*Sources:* Haass 2017; Hegre, Oneal, and Russett 2010; Human Security Report Project 2005; Pinker and Mack 2014; Thompson 2014; Allansson, Melander, and Themnér 2017; Gleditsch et al. 2002.

Violent extremist groups also contribute to the increase in conflicts, feeding off local grievances and exploiting transnational financial and crime networks.

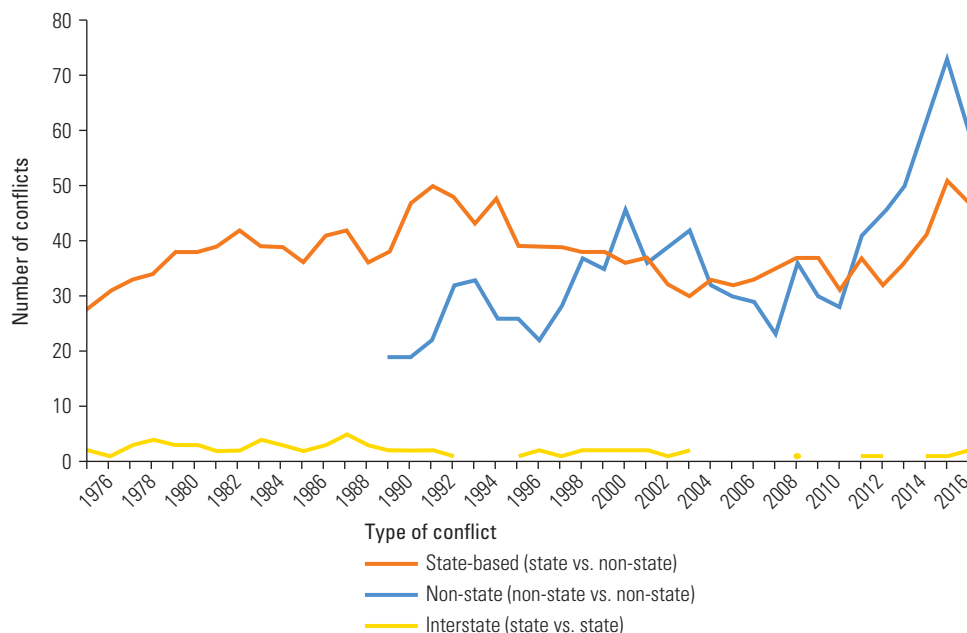
Today's violent conflicts are not confined to national borders. Energized by regional and international links among groups, violent conflicts often spill across borders or reflect the transnational aims and organization of such groups (OECD 2016, ch. 1). At the same time, countries are increasingly intervening in another country's conflict in support of a party or parties, giving these conflicts an additional regional or international dimension. These new dynamics have significant implications for preventing violent conflict and building sustainable peace.

### Number of Violent Conflicts within States

The number of internal state-based conflicts—involving state and nonstate

forces within the boundaries of a state—has risen sharply.<sup>2</sup> After peaking at 50 in 1991, the number of these conflicts declined for some years but then shot up again. In 2016, 47 internal state-based violent conflicts were recorded—the second-highest number in the post-Cold War era after 2015, when UCDP recorded 51 violent state-based conflicts (Allansson, Melander, and Themnér 2017; Gleditsch et al. 2002; see figure 1.1).<sup>3</sup> The number of conflicts that reach the threshold of war, resulting in at least 1,000 battle deaths a year, has more than tripled since just 2007 (Allansson, Melander, and Themnér 2017; Gleditsch et al. 2002; Sundberg, Eck, and Kreutz 2012).<sup>4</sup> The number of lower-intensity conflicts (both state-based and nonstate), meaning those resulting in between 25 and 999 battle deaths a year, has risen by more than 60 percent since 2007 (Allansson, Melander, and Themnér 2017; Gleditsch et al. 2002; Sundberg, Eck, and Kreutz 2012).<sup>5</sup>

**FIGURE 1.1** Violent Conflict Worldwide, by Type of Conflict, 1975–2016



Sources: For interstate and state-based conflicts, data from Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) and Peace Research Institute Oslo (Allansson, Melander, and Themnér 2017; Gleditsch et al. 2002); for nonstate conflicts, data from UCDP (Sundberg, Eck, and Kreutz 2012; Allansson, Melander, and Themnér 2017).

## Number of Fatalities Associated with Violent Conflict

Violent conflict is resulting in more fatalities. The number of reported battle-related deaths has risen sharply since 2010 to the highest numbers recorded in 20 years (see figure 1.2).<sup>6</sup> From the post–Cold War low in 2005, reported battle-related deaths have increased tenfold (Allansson, Melander, and Themnér 2017; Sundberg, Eck, and Kreutz 2012). A few conflicts are largely responsible for the overall increase and result in the greatest proportion of battle-related deaths; the three deadliest countries in 2016 (Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria) incurred more than 76 percent of all fatalities recorded that year (Sundberg and Melander 2013; Croicu and Sundberg 2017; also see figure 1.3). However, the true cost of a violent conflict should be measured not by its

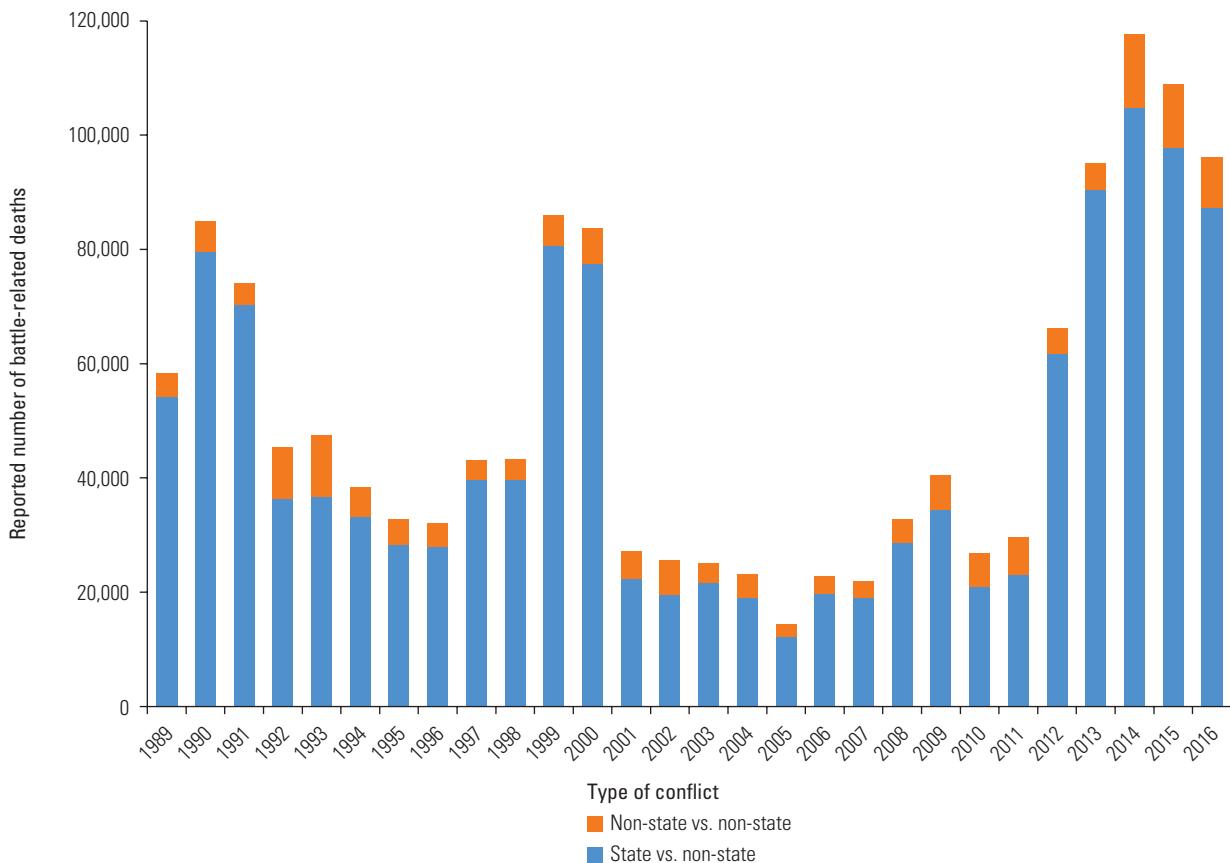
intensity (number of conflict-related fatalities) or duration alone, but also by its human, social, and economic impact.

Minor conflicts within countries may be less visible to outside observers and may result in relatively fewer battle-related deaths; their costs also may be harder to measure. But they are just as destructive and can have devastating consequences for people and economies, not least contributing to instability and fragility within countries and fueling other intrastate or regional conflicts.

## Number of Armed Groups and Violent Conflict

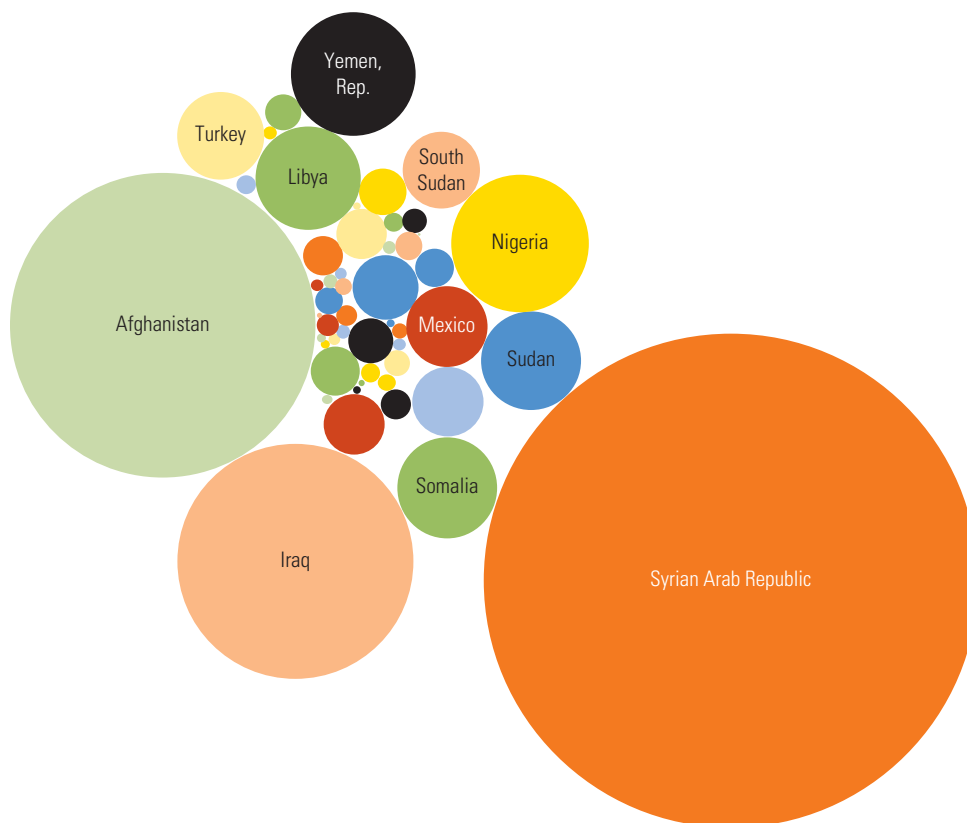
Violent conflict between nonstate armed groups has been rising, as has the number of armed groups. The number of violent conflicts between nonstate armed groups<sup>7</sup>

**FIGURE 1.2** Number of Battle-Related Deaths Worldwide, by Type of Conflict, 1989–2016



Source: Uppsala Conflict Data Program (Allansson, Melander, and Themnér 2017; Sundberg, Eck, and Kreutz 2012).

**FIGURE 1.3** Number of Conflict-Related Deaths Worldwide, by Country, 2016



Source: Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) (Sundberg and Melander 2013; Croicu and Sundberg 2017).

Note: This figure is based on the UCDP definition of conflict (Sundberg and Melander 2013; Croicu and Sundberg 2017).

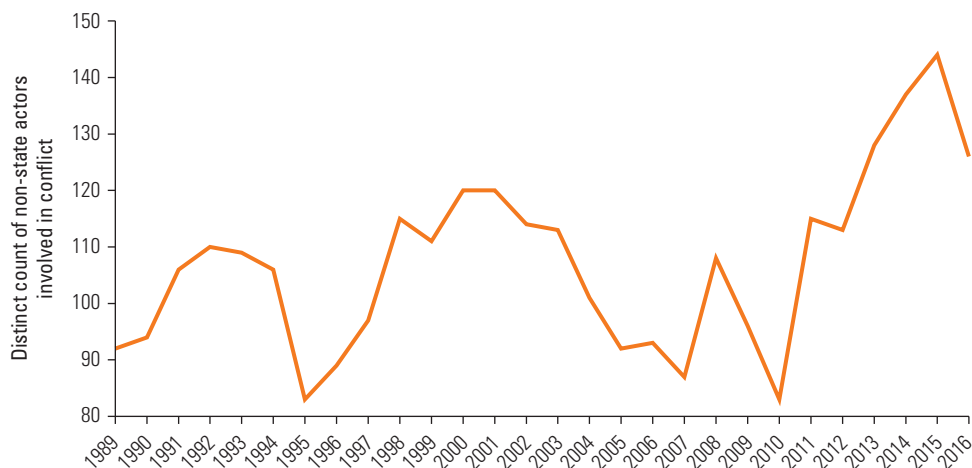
has more than doubled since 2010, as shown in figure 1.1 (Sundberg, Eck, and Kreutz 2012; Allansson, Melander, and Themnér 2017). In 2016, 60 violent conflicts were reported between nonstate armed groups, and 73 were reported in 2015, compared with only 28 in 2010 (Sundberg, Eck, and Kreutz 2012; Allansson, Melander, and Themnér 2017). In 1950, there were an average of eight armed groups in a civil war; by 2010 the average had jumped to 14 (Walter 2017b).

The proliferation of nonstate actors—armed groups that are not formally state actors—has been rising steadily especially since 2010 (see figure 1.4). These groups include rebels, militias, armed trafficking groups, and violent extremist groups, among others, that may coalesce around a grievance, an identity, an ideology, or a claim to economic or political resources.

Box 1.2 outlines the limitations of current data sets, including the fact that categorizations of “nonstate” and other actors have not yet become as nuanced as current realities. The composition and alliances of these armed groups are fluid and may evolve over time, depending on resources or leadership. Some nonstate armed groups have been able to seize and hold terrain from state militaries, despite a lack of sophisticated weaponry.

The proliferation of such groups, which may fight each other and the state in different configurations at different times, complicates violent conflicts and efforts to end them. One example is the conflict in Syria, which was responsible for the greatest number of fatalities of any single war or country in 2016 (UCDP 2017). It has involved the government of Syria, Syrian opposition groups, violent extremist groups including

**FIGURE 1.4** Number of Nonstate Groups Active in Violent Conflict Worldwide, 1989–2016



Source: Uppsala Conflict Data Program (Sundberg, Eck, and Kreutz 2012; Allansson, Melander, and Themnér 2017).

### BOX 1.2 Adapting Conflict Data to Today's Violent Conflicts

The shift in trends of violent conflict is difficult to quantify with the measures used or available now. The structure of many of the quantitative data sets relied on to understand conflict dynamics are better suited for understanding the conflicts of decades ago, when conflicts predominantly involved fighting between the state militaries of two countries or when conflicts occurring within a state (as opposed to between states) consisted largely of rebel groups seeking to overthrow a government. Today's conflicts are increasingly complex and multidimensional, and available measurements may not be capturing their true extent and costs.

Both the number of nonstate conflicts that do not involve a country's formal forces and the number of nonstate armed groups have been rising. Yet data sets—for example, the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP)—often lump all nonstate groups into a single category. Such armed groups are increasingly diverse and have varied goals. Putting all of them into one overarching category—one that includes rebel groups seeking to overthrow a state, armed trafficking groups, violent extremist groups with goals beyond the overthrow of a single

state, and militias doing the bidding of elites yet not seeking formal state power, among others—conflates these groups. These groups exhibit different patterns of conflict as a result of their diverse goals, capacities, incentives, and other factors. The Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) project makes some distinctions among nonstate armed groups.

Data sets are organized according to the perpetrator of violence, and the perpetrator is not always evident. When a perpetrator is not or cannot be identified, the violence often goes unrecorded, and the data may depict a region as nonviolent when in fact it is very violent. UCDP data dramatically undercount fatalities related to nonstate conflict, as it is often difficult, if not impossible, to identify the victims and the perpetrators. Armed groups may exploit anonymity to carry out violence on behalf of others (Kishi 2015a).

Conflicts are coded as dyadic events, pitting two sides against each other, despite the fact that conflicts are becoming increasingly complex and multidimensional. The goals, capacities, and incentives of actors may shift as conflicts become reframed or

*(Box continued next page)*

### **BOX 1.2** Adapting Conflict Data to Today's Violent Conflicts *(continued)*

internationalized. Alliances can form and disband or shift among various actors within a single conflict. Especially in cases where conflicts are coded as full campaigns of violence that can last years, it can be difficult to capture these shifts and nuances accurately—resulting in a much simpler view of a very complex context.

As conflicts adapt, data sets should adapt and anticipate their complexity. The structure of data sets today corresponds to the dynamics of conflicts

in previous eras. While many of these data sets have been refined over the years to respond to new needs and contexts, they should continue to adapt.

Not all data sets code conflicts as full campaigns of violence. ACLED, for example, relies on an atomic format, coding only a single day of conflict at a time, which can later be aggregated into a larger context. However, ACLED also relies on a dyadic format where two sides are coded as being in combat with one another.

foreign fighters, and the so-called Islamic State,<sup>8</sup> with the state fighting these groups and these groups fighting each other. Their interplay contributes to the intractability of the Syrian conflict and overall instability in the region.

Violent conflict between nonstate armed groups does not indicate the strength or weakness of such groups, nor does it preclude indirect state involvement. Progovernment militias, for example, fall under the umbrella of nonstate actors, as governments recruit militias to carry out violence on their behalf.<sup>9</sup> Communities or powerful actors (for example, gangs and drug cartels) may also create militias or armed groups when state security forces are absent or to protect their trade routes or control territory. These groups can be used to carry out violence on behalf of a regime seeking to distance itself from particularly shameful acts; militia violence may even be used to exercise influence in competitive democratic contexts, aggravating grievances and exacerbating local and subnational conflicts (Alvarez 2006; Raleigh 2016; Ron 2002).

This proliferation of nonstate armed groups challenges state-based models of conflict prevention, mediation, and peacekeeping. Many of today's armed actors operate in areas where state presence is too limited and fragmented or diffuse for traditional, leader-based approaches to negotiated political solutions to be effective

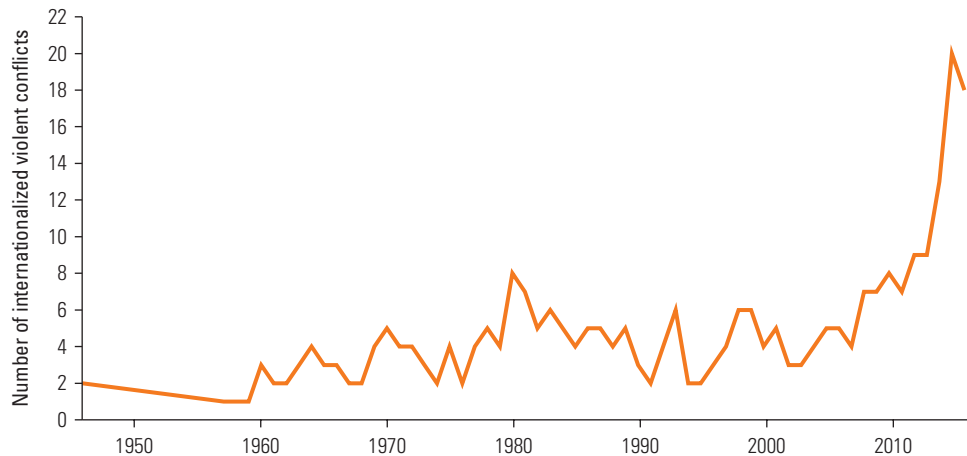
(Raleigh and Dowd 2013). Some groups may explicitly reject international humanitarian law as well as the international institutions established to uphold it, placing themselves outside the ambit of traditional peacemaking processes (Walter 2017b). Many groups thrive in environments of weak rule of law or profit from illicit economies; they have little incentive to end violence.

More external actors are intervening more often. Proxy wars with internationalized involvement from the Soviet Union or the United States were commonplace during the Cold War. Today, emerging powers are also intervening in violent conflicts in pursuit of regional or strategic interests. In 2016, 18 violent conflicts were internationalized,<sup>10</sup> more than reported in any year since the end of World War II and second only to 2015, when 20 conflicts were internationalized (Allansson, Melander, and Themnér 2017; Gleditsch et al. 2002; see figure 1.5).

The involvement of outside countries can also provide additional avenues to influence combatants, whether a state or an armed group, in favor of a settlement. Current studies, which have largely focused on the impact of direct intervention, find that it extended the duration of violent conflicts and can complicate peace negotiations (Regan 2002; Walter 2017a). Less focus has been placed on indirect intervention, such as nonmilitary involvement by outside actors.



**FIGURE 1.5** Number of Internationalized Violent Conflicts, Global, 1946–2016



Source: Uppsala Conflict Data Program and Peace Research Institution Oslo (Allansson, Melander, and Themnér 2017; Gleditsch et al. 2002).

The rise of private external funding may play a role in conflict dynamics. In the context of Syria, for example, private funding complicates the dynamics of the conflict and any potential settlement.

Engagement by outsiders, however, does not necessarily have a negative impact. According to Walter (2017a, 3), “Outside intervention that occurs after a peace treaty has been signed has a strong positive effect on the successful resolution of these [violent conflicts]... External intervention also tends to have a positive effect on reducing the risks of an additional [violent conflict] once the first [violent conflict] has ended” (see also Doyle and Sambanis 2000; Fortna 2002). In cases where an outside state or international organization has been willing to enforce or verify the terms of a peace treaty, “negotiations almost always lead to peace”; when external actors do not do so, “negotiations almost always result in renewed [conflict]” (Walter 2017a, 1).<sup>11</sup>

Violent conflicts have become more protracted and more difficult to resolve, with many violent conflicts relapsing. Even violent conflicts that may seem to stop (that is, where few or no battle-related fatalities are reported in the following year) often involve neither peace agreements nor ceasefires nor victories, meaning that fighting could begin again. The Peace Research Institute Oslo reports that, since the mid-1990s,

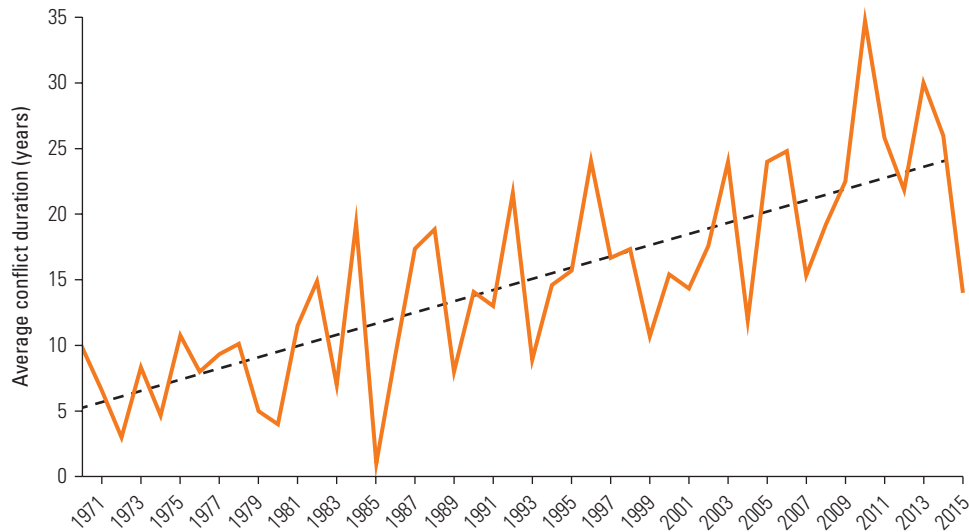
most conflicts have been recurrences of old conflicts rather than new conflicts (Gates, Nygård, and Trappeniers 2016). On average, peace lasts only seven years after a conflict ends. In the post–World War II era, 135 countries experienced the recurrence of conflict, with 60 percent of all conflicts recurring (Gates, Nygård, and Trappeniers 2016). In many violent conflicts, gray zones appear, where a conflict becomes less intense, yet is not fully resolved (National Intelligence Council 2017).

The average duration of violent conflicts involving state forces has been trending upward since 1971. Violent conflicts involving state forces that ended in 2014 lasted, on average, 26.7 years, and those that ended in 2015 lasted, on average, 14.5 years.<sup>12</sup> By comparison, conflicts that ended in 1970 lasted, on average, 9.6 years (Allansson, Melander, and Themnér 2017; Gleditsch et al. 2002; see figure 1.6).

The longer a conflict lasts, the more difficult it becomes to resolve (Fearon 2004), given that the involved parties tend to fragment and mutate with time (ICRC 2016). Prolonged violent conflict may become more complex and multidimensional. Also, as a conflict continues, the original drivers are more likely to transform and require different solutions (Wolff, Ross, and Wee 2017).<sup>13</sup> Protracted conflicts also tend to vary over the course of their life cycle,



**FIGURE 1.6** Average Duration of Conflict Worldwide, 1970–2015



Source: Uppsala Conflict Data Program and Peace Research Institute Oslo (Allansson, Melander, and Themnér 2017; Gleditsch et al. 2002).

both spatially (that is, where conflict occurs within countries) and in intensity (for example, number of battle-related fatalities). The implications for prevention are significant. Once a country or society is on a violent path, changing the trajectory becomes more difficult and gets more difficult with time.

## Understanding Trends in Violent Conflict

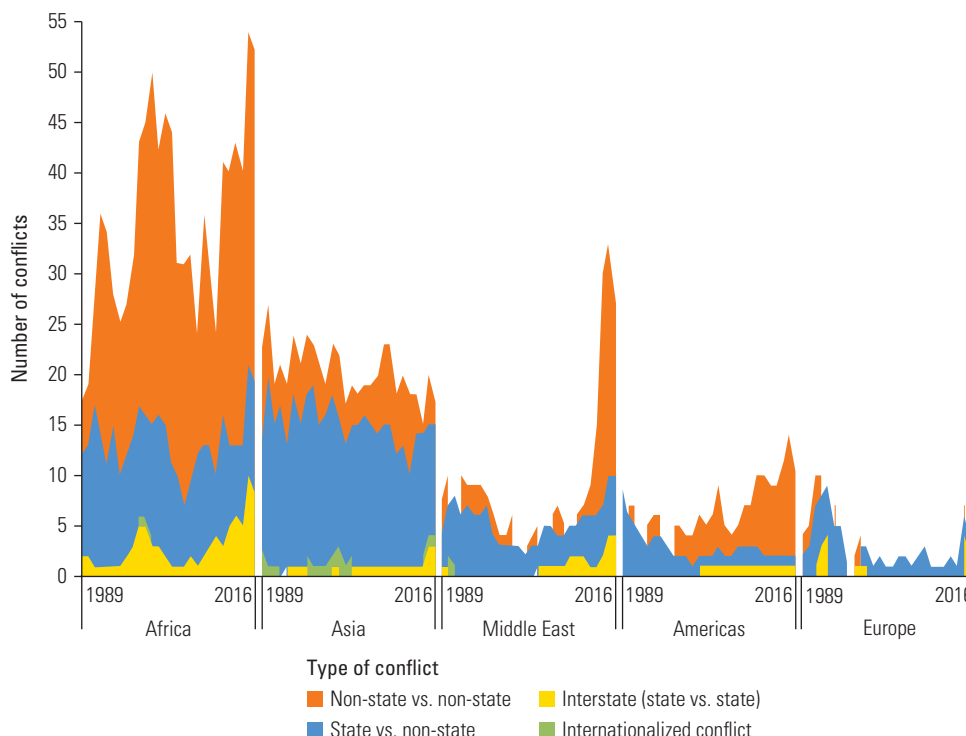
The regional concentration of violent conflict is shifting. Most violent conflicts today are occurring in Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia (see figure 1.7); the number of violent conflicts in other parts of Asia and Europe, previously epicenters of conflict, has been decreasing (Allansson, Melander, and Themnér 2017; Gleditsch et al. 2002; Sundberg, Eck, and Kreutz 2012). In 2016, more than 24 percent of all violent conflicts occurred in the Middle East, an increase from 2010, when the region experienced less than 11 percent of the total. These trends are predicted to continue (National Intelligence Council 2017).

There are variations, however, in the kind of violent conflict that is most prevalent in a region. Conflicts between nonstate actors represented more than 63 percent of the

violent conflicts in Africa in 2016 (33 violent conflicts). The largest proportion, or more than 24 percent of these, occurred in Somalia, followed by the Democratic Republic of Congo (more than 12 percent) and Nigeria (more than 11 percent) (ACLED 2016; Raleigh et al. 2010). Conflict between nonstate actors is also the primary form of violent conflict occurring in the Middle East and in the Americas,<sup>14</sup> where it makes up more than 63 percent (17 violent conflicts) and 80 percent (8 violent conflicts) of all violent conflicts in the region, respectively (Sundberg, Eck, and Kreutz 2012; Allansson, Melander, and Themnér 2017).

Subnational conflict, or “violent contestation aimed at securing greater political autonomy [often] for an ethnic minority group” (Colletta and Oppenheim 2017, 1), affects nearly every part of the world, but some regions more than others. It is the most common form of violent conflict in Asia, yet it has also been on the rise in Europe, the Middle East, and in recent years in Sub-Saharan Africa. Between 2000 and 2015, subnational conflict affected 24 countries, resulting in more than 100,000 battle-related deaths in the period. Several countries faced multiple clusters of separatist conflicts (Colletta and Oppenheim 2017).

**FIGURE 1.7 Conflict Events Worldwide, by Type of Conflict and Region, 1989–2016**



*Sources:* For interstate and state-based conflicts (including internationalized conflicts), data from Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) and Peace Research Institute Oslo (Allansson, Melander, and Themnér 2017; Gleditsch et al. 2002); for nonstate conflicts, data from UCDP (Sundberg, Eck, and Kreutz 2012; Allansson, Melander, and Themnér 2017).

Each of the many varieties of conflict in the world today has different implications for prevention approaches. Some of the deadliest conflicts are over control of the central state or over internal power arrangements, as in Iraq, South Sudan, and Syria.<sup>15</sup> Protracted subregional conflicts might not disrupt the functionality of the central state in most of its territory—as in Myanmar, the Philippines, and Thailand, among others—yet these conflicts still have an impact on the operation of the state (Parks, Colletta, and Oppenheim 2013). Moreover, a large number of intercommunal conflicts over extractive or natural resources or land can flare up before declining in intensity. Other events of political violence may occur around electoral periods, such as in Jamaica and Kenya (Malik 2017). Chapter 5 discusses in greater detail these arenas of contestation, where societies negotiate access to resources and political power and where the risk of violence is intensified.

## Factors Contributing to the Increase in Violent Conflict

Three broad, interrelated factors have contributed to the increased number, resulting fatalities, and reach of violent conflict:

- The eruption of violent conflict in the Middle East and North Africa in the wake of the Arab Spring
- The spread of violent extremism
- The increase in power contestation in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Each, separately and in combination with the other underlying factors, can have different implications for prevention. This is especially evident in the case of violent extremism, which has expanded rapidly by exploiting preexisting violent conflicts related to sectarian grievances and power struggles that may have nothing to do with extremism, yet provide a space for these movements to grow.

## **Violent Conflict in the Wake of the Arab Spring**

Increased levels of violent conflict have most affected the Middle East and North Africa (Gleditsch and Rudolfson 2016). Arab countries are home to only 5 percent of the world's population, but in 2014 they accounted for 45 percent of the world's terrorist incidents, 68 percent of its battle-related deaths,<sup>16</sup> 47 percent of its internally displaced population, and 58 percent of its refugees (UNDP 2016a). The United Nations Development Programme's *Arab Human Development Report 2016* predicts that by 2020, "Almost three out of four Arabs could be living in countries vulnerable to violent conflict" (UNDP 2016a).

The violent conflicts emerging after the Arab Spring—in Libya, Syria, and the Republic of Yemen, in particular—originated in domestic unrest influenced by the regional upheavals of 2011. These conflicts quickly drew in regional and global powers, which may "influence or support—but rarely fully control—those fighting on the ground" (Guéhenno 2016). Coupled with their internal nature, some of these conflicts have become proxy wars in which both regional and international players pursue their geopolitical rivalries, and in some cases nonstate armed groups linked with transnational criminal networks embrace ideologies of violent extremism that cannot be accommodated in peace agreements (International Peace Institute 2016).

One of the factors contributing to the Arab Spring of 2011 and to the destabilization of long-standing Arab autocracies was the broken social contract between governments and citizens (Toska 2017). Challenges to state legitimacy across the region also played an important role and emanated from shortcomings in economic opportunity, social mobility, democracy, rule of law, human rights, and gender equality. The social contract between several Arab governments and citizens that had persisted since independence consisted of the state providing public sector jobs, free education and health care, and subsidized food and fuel. In return, citizens were expected to keep their voices low and to tolerate some level of elite capture in the private sector

(Devarajan and Ianchovichina 2017). This mechanism became less and less sustainable starting in the 2000s, as persistent fiscal imbalances undermined the ability of governments to keep their part of the social bargain. Once mass protests sparked the political transition in Tunisia, contagion to the rest of the region was quick, enabled by technology and a common language and rooted in economic problems and popular grievances that were common throughout the Middle East and North Africa (Ianchovichina 2017).<sup>17</sup>

Worsening polarization between groups recurred across different contexts, whether between Islamists and their opponents in the Arab Republic of Egypt and Tunisia; politicization of cross-sectarian divides involving Sunnis and Shi'ites in Iraq<sup>18</sup> and some of the Gulf states; or tribal and local forces in Libya and the Republic of Yemen (Lynch 2016, 37). The lack of institutional confidence and the failure to secure a predictable transition toward new stable institutions further exacerbated social and political polarization. External interventions stoking sectarian or ethnic hatred inflamed intergroup polarization.

Countries that managed to stay peaceful distinguished themselves from those that were affected by violence in terms of the quality of governance institutions, the ability to use redistribution to address grievances, and the presence or absence of external military interference (Devarajan and Ianchovichina 2017). The difference in how governments responded to demonstrations and memories of past violence (in the case of Algeria) were also contributing factors (Brownlee, Masoud, and Reynolds 2015).

## **The Spread of Violent Extremism**

One of the most significant recent developments is the proliferation and transnational reach of violent extremist groups. While the twentieth century is full of examples of violent extremist groups, violent extremism presently displays some new features.

Contemporary violent extremist groups, often making use of twenty-first-century technology, embed themselves into communities while simultaneously forming

strategic alliances with transnational networks (World Bank 2015). This allows them to spread across borders, hooking into local grievances and connecting them to a global identity. Many also have proven adept at exploiting local violent conflict to expand and recruiting well beyond conflict-affected countries.<sup>19</sup> They tend to thrive in areas with political disorder and at heightened risk of violence. Indeed, the growing reach of violent extremist groups in recent years “is more a product of instability than its primary driver” (ICG 2016a). They differ from their predecessors in at least three ways (World Bank 2015).

First, some of today’s violent extremist groups have greater global appeal than violent extremist groups of earlier times. Some are adept at connecting very local grievances—frustration with a discriminatory or predatory state, for example—with a global identity that posits youth as heroes in ostensibly a movement for global justice. Such groups harness technology to promote their narrative and recruit globally in ways that are often far ahead of state efforts to rein them in (World Bank 2015).

Second, many of today’s violent extremist groups form strategic alliances with different groups in the areas in which they operate. This engagement can take different forms. There have always been some true believers, some who join for material or political gain, and others who condone such groups but do not actively participate. However, today’s violent extremist groups are taking advantage of local divisions among groups and building opportunistic alliances to an unprecedented degree (ICG 2016a).

Third, some violent extremist groups today have been able to use transnational networks to facilitate financing. This includes mobilizing financing from states and private donors to an unprecedented level. For example, oil revenue has contributed a great deal of financing for the Islamic State (Heibner et al. 2017). Drug trafficking has been an important resource for both insurgent and extremist groups in Afghanistan and northern Mali (Comolli 2017). Extracting rents in exchange for providing protection to many other types of

trafficking networks—in particular, human trafficking networks—has also been a source of income. Finally, ransom and hostage taking have been a source of revenue for some groups.

A few violent extremist groups, especially over the last decade, have tried to establish a de facto state presence in large areas of territory. For example, groups like Al Shabaab, Boko Haram, and the Islamic State claim to be recreating a caliphate with some of the elements of state structure. Looking for territorial control, these groups make much stronger efforts to connect with local communities, who at times support them out of fear or economic opportunity (ICG 2016a).<sup>20</sup> This suggests that focusing solely on the recruitment of violent extremist groups is shortsighted.<sup>21</sup> Overall, “preventing crises will do more to contain violent extremists than countering violent extremism will do to prevent crises” (ICG 2016a, v).

### **Violent Conflict in the Midst of Rapid Transformation in Sub-Saharan Africa**

Violent conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa has increased against the backdrop of the continent’s fast-paced economic and political changes (Williams 2017). Poverty, and to some extent inequality, is decreasing, and economic growth has enabled several countries to graduate to middle-income status (Beegle et al. 2016). Democratization has expanded at the same time, although with some reversals in 2015 (Mogaka 2017). Against this positive background, rapid changes are also creating tensions. Three dynamics play out in this context: violent competition for political power and associated electoral-related violence; the spread of violent extremism that in most cases derives from conflicting identity; and the persistence of violent intercommunal conflict in many parts of East and Central Africa that often does not involve states.

Conflict around weak political settlements in the region and power contestation is clearly exemplified by the dramatic developments in South Sudan. Since 2013, the violent conflict that resulted from a leadership division within the Sudan People’s

Liberation Movement, antagonized by deep ethnic structural divisions, has taken a disastrous turn. By March 2016, at least 50,000 people had reportedly been killed (Reuters 2016), and millions of people had been forcibly displaced both as refugees and as internally displaced persons (IDPs).<sup>22</sup> Since South Sudan proclaimed its independence on July 9, 2011, enormous challenges have constrained the effort of building institutions. The absence of legitimate political institutions beyond liberation politics, which was masked during the years of the common struggle against the Sudanese central government—combined with the lack of a security apparatus apart from the rebel movements that had led the fight for independence—was at the origin of the outbreak of the conflict (ICG 2016b).

Mali and Nigeria are two examples of identity-based conflicts that have turned into violent extremist insurrections, as seen in other parts of the world. These conflicts grew out of tensions that had little to do with ideology and were built up over time. For example, the Boko Haram insurrection in northern Nigeria, which started in the 1990s, developed slowly, building on a sentiment of marginalization fueled by large inequalities between regions that left the population of the poorest state (Borno) feeling excluded from the country's overall relative prosperity (Comolli 2015). Similarly, the spread of violent extremism in northern Mali in 2012 started as a nationalist Tuareg rebellion, a recurrent phenomenon since colonial times, that turned into a violent extremist insurrection involving Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa, Harakat Ansar Al-Dine, and others (ICG 2015).

The high level of violence in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo is a clear illustration of intercommunal conflict connected to the absence of a positive state presence. In this region, many forms of conflict overlap. External influence has played a role in sustaining violent conflict in the region. Yet eastern Democratic Republic of Congo has experienced a relentlessly high number of both battle and other deaths and a particularly high number of

civilian casualties, coupled with the use of conflict-related sexual violence as a weapon of war since the 1990s (Stearn 2011; UN 2017). To a lesser degree, the Central African Republic presents a similar situation involving the multiplication of intercommunal conflict and the incapacity of the state to project a positive presence (Lombard 2016). This is the case as well in many subregions of African states, such as in Sudan's Darfur region and parts of South Sudan, among others (De Waal 2007).

*The tactics of violence are evolving.* The number of weapons in circulation around the world has dramatically increased since the beginning of the twenty-first century (Pavesi 2016). The Small Arms Survey reports that an estimated 875 million small arms are in circulation worldwide. This is certainly a conservative estimate, given that accurate assessments are difficult. From 2001 to 2011, the value of the trade in small arms and light weapons nearly doubled globally, from \$2.38 billion to \$4.634 billion (Small Arms Survey 2014). From 2012 to 2013 the global small arms trade rose to US\$6 billion—an increase of US\$1 billion, or 17 percent, in a single year (Dutt 2016).

Remote violence tactics—sophisticated and unsophisticated—are also becoming increasingly common and deadlier in conflict zones around the world. This type of violence refers to instances in which a spatially removed group determines the time, place, and victims of an attack using an explosive device such as a bomb, an improvised explosive device (IED), or missiles, among others (ACLED 2016; Raleigh et al. 2010). For non-state-armed actors that may control a limited amount of territory compared to government forces, “remote violence is an ideal tactic to either damage state forces with minimal risk or to coerce the state without controlling it. This tactic also fits into a strategy of groups resorting to so-called ‘weapons of the weak’ after losing territory and influence,” or being in an objective disadvantageous position compared to state forces (Kishi et al. 2016, 30; see also McCormick and Giordano 2007; Merari 1993; and Denselow 2010).

Drone strikes also have become increasingly prevalent and deadly and are likely to

become even more so (Action on Armed Violence 2017). Cyberattacks may begin to have kinetic effects in the contexts of violent conflicts, and weaponizable biotechnologies too may become a reality. At the same time, many conflicts are waged with few sophisticated weapons, and many events featuring terrorist tactics rely on artisanal bombs, trucks, or knives. The genocide in Rwanda was carried out using machetes.

*The tactic of terror.* Terrorist incidents have risen sharply over the last 10 years, as have the number of resulting fatalities (see figure 1.8).<sup>23</sup>

*Interpersonal and gang violence and violent conflict.* Interpersonal, gang, and drug-related violence may reflect or exacerbate grievances that ultimately lead to violent conflict. Conflicts may degenerate into violence more rapidly in societies with high levels of interpersonal violence or with a culture of resolving interpersonal issues violently, especially along the lines of gender (see boxes 1.3 and 1.8). Political figures or groups can finance or co-opt gangs to foment targeted violence against opponents, particularly in periods of intense

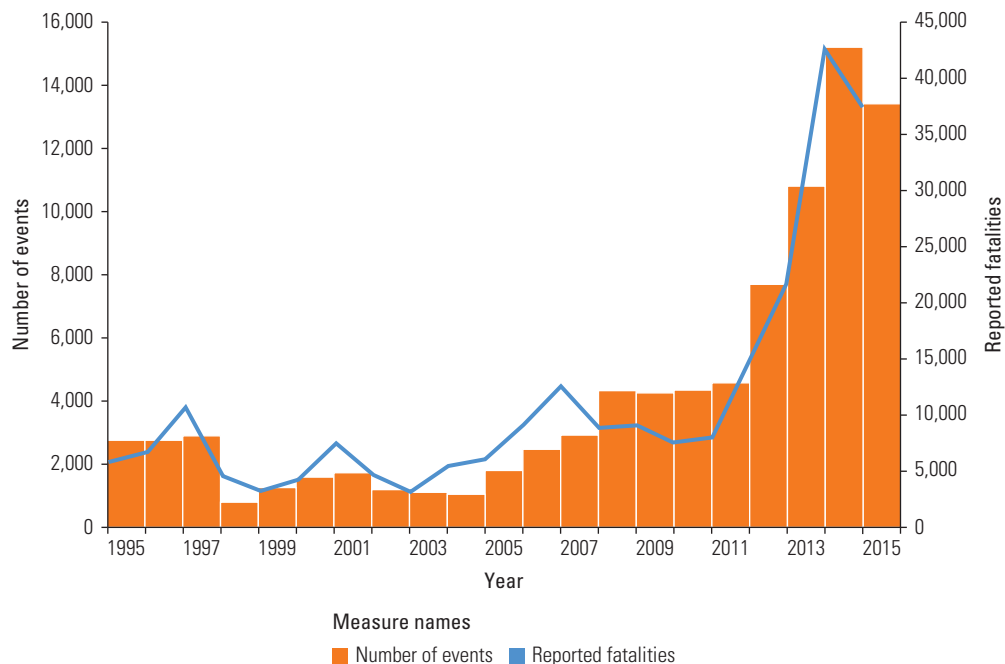
political competition (for example, election periods) or when there are external shocks.

In some conflicts, the sale of drugs can provide a ready stream of revenue for non-state actors in their battles against more powerful and resource-rich state forces.<sup>24</sup> Examples include the links between Colombia's illegal armed groups and different stages of the illegal drug industry (including taxation, production, and trafficking), and the sale of illegal amphetamines in the Middle East by groups involved in conflict (Otis 2014; NPR 2013). Violence that may stem from these exchanges is therefore at least indirectly linked to larger ongoing conflicts, can result in the destabilization of the state, and can contribute to cycles of persistent violence.

## The Unacceptable Costs of Violent Conflict

"A full accounting of any war's burdens cannot be placed in columns on a ledger" (Crawford 2016, 1). It is clear, however, that violent conflict exacts an incalculably high cost in direct and indirect damage to

**FIGURE 1.8 Terrorism Prevalence and Reported Fatalities, Global, 1995–2015**



Source: Global Terrorism Database (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism 2016).



### BOX 1.3 Crime and Violence in Latin America and the Caribbean

While the rate of homicides seems to be declining (Pinker and Mack 2014), it remains very high in some regions, specifically in Latin America and the Caribbean. A 2017 World Bank study calls the problem “staggering and persistent” in “the world’s most violent region” (Chioda 2017), which houses 42 of the 50 most violent cities in the world. Homicide rates in Latin America are driven largely by increasing rates in Brazil (UNODC 2016). The number of deaths from homicide in particular countries can rival or exceed the fatalities in war zones. The Human Security Report Project notes, “The almost 13,000 deaths from organized crime in Mexico in 2011 were greater than the 2011 battle-death tolls in any of the three countries worst-affected by armed conflict and violence against civilians between 2006 and 2011—Afghanistan, Iraq, and Sudan” (Human Security Report Project 2013, 52). According to a 2015

media report, “Brazil reached a new peak of violence [in 2014] with more than 58,000 violent deaths” (Reuters 2015).

Homicides in Brazil can be attributed to the prevalence of the drug trade and the activity of violent gangs in certain neighborhoods, exacerbated by “corruption and poor training among police forces and ineffectiveness in the court system” (Bevins 2015). Violence in the República Bolivariana de Venezuela is also on the rise, with the capital Caracas ranked the most murderous city in the world (Citizens Council for Public Security and Criminal Justice 2016; Tegel 2016; UNODC 2016). In Mexico, despite efforts in the security sector, violence driven largely by drug cartels remains very high. On the other hand, homicide rates in Colombia have declined significantly in the last decade as a result of targeted violence prevention strategies (UNODC 2016).

societies, economies, and people (see box 1.4 on the impacts of the Syrian conflict). It kills and injures combatants and civilians alike and inflicts insidious damage to bodies, minds, and communities that can halt human and economic development for many years. Violent conflict has a major impact on the ability of the world to improve the well-being of populations and to reduce poverty, disease, and other catastrophic risks. Its long-term effects on the countries involved, and on their neighbors, include monetary costs such as reduced economic growth, minimized trade and investment opportunities, and the added cost of reconstruction.<sup>25</sup>

### The Direct Human Cost of Violent Conflict

Today’s violent conflicts do not necessarily play out within the confines of a distinct battleground. Nor are their impacts confined to the combatants. Civilians overwhelmingly bear the brunt of today’s violent conflicts (see box 1.5). The number of

atrocities committed worldwide—defined as “the deliberate killing of noncombatant civilians in the context of a wider political conflict” (Schrodt and Ulfelder 2016)<sup>26</sup>—has increased rapidly since 2010, as has the number of civilians reportedly killed in such contexts (Eck and Hultman 2007; Allansson, Melander, and Themnér 2017; see also Action on Armed Violence 2017).

About twice as many civilians were reportedly killed by one-sided violence during conflict in 2016 than in 2010. These numbers were even higher in 2014, driven largely by attacks carried out by Boko Haram and the Islamic State (Eck and Hultman 2007; Allansson, Melander, and Themnér 2017). In some instances, nonstate actors may have an incentive to target civilians—for example, “as a cheaper strategy of imposing costs on the adversary”—especially at times when a settlement may be imminent (Hultman 2010).<sup>27</sup> States are also responsible for high rates of civilian deaths, although they may often “contract” this violence out to militias (Raleigh 2012).



### **BOX 1.4 The Impact of the Syrian Conflict**

The Syrian conflict is one of the defining crises of the contemporary era. At least 400,000 persons have been killed, about 5 million have fled the country, and, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 6.3 million have been internally displaced. Many of the individuals remaining in the country cannot access the help they need, as more than 50 percent of hospitals have been partially or completely destroyed, and the supply of doctors, nurses, and medical supplies is woefully inadequate (UNICEF 2015; UNOCHA 2017; World Bank 2017a).

Children have been intensely affected: the United Nations Children's Fund reports more than 1,500 grave human rights violations against children in 2015 alone, of which more than one-third occurred while children were in or on their way to school (UNICEF 2015). The proportion of children under 15 being recruited by armed groups increased from 20 percent in 2014 to more than 50 percent in 2015, and there has been an alarming increase in child marriage: a 2017 United Nations Population Fund survey estimates that the number of child brides (under 18 years of age) in Syria has quadrupled since the war began (UNFPA 2017). Women have taken on a large burden not only of dealing with the

impacts of conflict—caring for injured or orphaned family members—but also of providing humanitarian assistance and participating in processes to resist and transform the conflict.

The economic impacts of the conflict are enormous. In real terms, Syria's gross domestic product (GDP) contracted an estimated 63 percent between 2011 and 2016. In cumulative terms, the loss in GDP amounted to an estimated US\$226 billion between 2011 and 2016—approximately four times the country's 2010 GDP. According to the World Bank, even if the conflict ends this year, the cumulative losses in GDP will reach 7.6 times the preconflict GDP by the twentieth year after the beginning of the conflict. If the conflict continues, this loss will stand at 13.2 times the country's preconflict GDP (World Bank 2017a).

The impacts of the conflict have spread to neighboring countries, which feel the brunt of the crisis acutely. Jordan, for example, has registered 654,903 Syrian refugees, while Lebanon has registered 997,905 (as of December 2017; UNHCR 2017). Neighboring Turkey has registered 3,400,195 Syrian refugees (as of December 2017; UNHCR 2017). The quality of care for basic public services in health care and education has also declined, for both refugee and host communities.

### **BOX 1.5 Conflict Measures Do Not Capture All of the Costs of Violent Conflict**

Not all conflict-related deaths occur in direct battles between combatants on a battlefield. Conflict-related deaths occur because of raids, massacres, skirmishes, and other types of hostilities, as well as through disease and food insecurity, among others. Conflict can affect food security by decreasing production and diminishing access to land (Seddon and Adhikari 2003). Food insecurity can result in deaths from starvation and malnourishment. Conflict can damage

health infrastructure within a country, leaving a population vulnerable to future health pandemics, as was the case in Liberia. Deaths can also result at or before birth. Ahuka, Chabikuli and Ogunbanjo (2004) note how “war exacerbates social factors contributing to maternal stress and adverse pregnancy outcomes” in their study of the effects of war on pregnancy outcomes in the Democratic Republic of Congo between 1993 and 2001.

*(Box continued next page)*

### **BOX 1.5 Conflict Measures Do Not Capture All of the Costs of Violent Conflict** *(continued)*

Data for low-income countries are often poor or inadequate, and most conflict models use the country-year as the standard unit of analysis. This is problematic: it assumes that observations in successive country-years are independent of each other, when often they are not. Particularly regarding countries where violent conflict is occurring, country-year measure assumes “that increases or decreases in the risk of war can be explained solely in terms of socioeconomic and other changes within countries. This assumption is often unrealistic because the conflict dynamics of civil war do not stop at national boundaries—the interconnections between political violence in Afghanistan and Pakistan

being an obvious case in point” (Human Security Report Project 2011).

Using battlefield deaths to quantify conflict can reinforce a gender bias in measuring violent conflicts. “From a gender perspective, quantifying armed conflict on the basis of battle-related deaths is biased towards men’s experiences of armed conflict to the detriment of those of women and girls. While more men tend to get killed on the battlefield, women and children are often disproportionately targeted with other forms of potentially lethal violence during conflict” (Bastick, Grimm, and Kunz 2007). Also, women and children tend to die more often after the violent phase of the conflict ends (Ormhaug 2009).

Much of the violence occurs in urban areas and often targets civilian spaces, including those considered sanctuaries under international humanitarian law, such as schools, hospitals, and places of worship (ICRC 2017).<sup>28</sup> This impact is facilitated by the increasing use of “remote violence”<sup>29</sup> both in civil wars and in acts of terrorism in countries far from conflict. In addition to the doubling of the number of civilian deaths in violent conflicts between 2010 and 2016, many more civilian deaths result from the indirect effects of conflict, such as unmet medical needs, food insecurity, inadequate shelter, or contamination of water (Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development 2011; UNESCWA 2017).

Vulnerable populations, such as children, are at particularly high risk (Economist 2015; Guha-Sapir and van Panhuis 2004). Nearly one-third of the 11,418 noncombatants killed or wounded in Afghanistan in 2016 were children (UNAMA 2017).<sup>30</sup> This is due to the nature of the indiscriminate tactics used, such as suicide bombings, IEDs, and urban terrorist attacks by the Taliban and other groups, as well as the increased use of air support by Afghan and

international military forces. It is important to note that “when children are targeted or killed, it is often in an attempt to instill terror in populations or to reaffirm brutality and gain (global) notoriety, given that the targeting of children is meant to send a message to (adult) adversaries and/or the international community at-large. In addition to attacks, there are also numerous instances in which children are abducted and forced to fight in violent conflict” (Kishi 2015b; see also Economist 2015; SOS Children’s Village 2015). The deliberate targeting of civilians overall may be creating a perverse corollary. It is becoming more accepted that civilians in conflict zones are an inevitable part of violent conflict casualties. Although a majority of people still say that it is wrong to violate the international norms regarding the rules of war, support for these norms has dropped from 68 to 59 percent since 1999 (ICRC 2016).

### **Regional Trends in Civilian Fatalities and Atrocities**

Between 1980 and 2016, Africa had by far the highest proportion of civilian fatalities, with nearly 87 percent (676,625 fatalities in

the region) of all reported civilian fatalities (Eck and Hultman 2007; Allansson, Melander, and Themnér 2017). Some 500,000 of these fatalities were a direct result of the Rwandan genocide of 1994, although the estimates vary among sources (Eck and Hultman 2007; Allansson, Melander, and Themnér 2017).<sup>31</sup>

Map 1.1 shows reported civilian fatalities in Africa between 2002 and 2016 (ACLED 2016; Raleigh et al. 2010). Countries experiencing the most civilian fatalities during this time period include the Democratic Republic of Congo (especially the eastern region), Nigeria (where Boko Haram was responsible for almost half of all reported civilian fatalities in the country), Sudan (especially in the Darfur region), and South Sudan (especially in recent years during its civil war). While nonstate armed groups were responsible for the majority (more than 86 percent) of civilian fatalities in Africa during this time period (ACLED 2016; Raleigh et al. 2010; Kishi, Raleigh, and Linke 2016), state forces were involved as well, even if indirectly in some cases. Raleigh and Kishi (2017) estimate that, in Africa, progovernment militias commit more violence against civilians, with at least 10 percent more of their activities targeting civilians than other militias.

In recent years, civilians also have been at heightened risk in the Middle East,

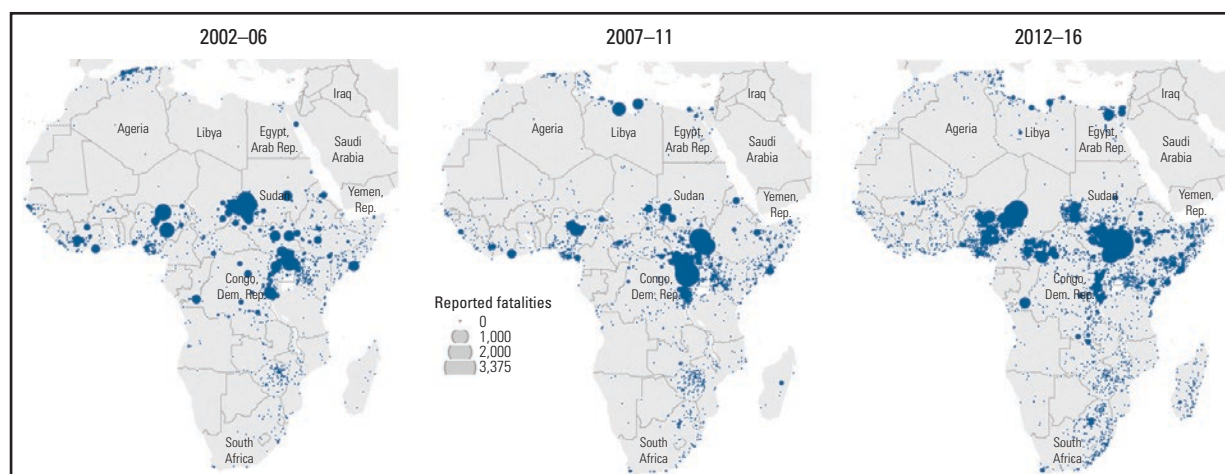
accounting for around two-thirds of all civilian fatalities reported in 2016 (Eck and Hultman 2007; Allansson, Melander, and Themnér 2017). This increase has been driven by an increase in the rate of conflict involving nonstate armed groups, which spiked in 2012 in conflicts following the Arab Spring.

### Conflict, Famine, and Displacement

Violent conflict scatters populations and disrupts livelihoods. Conflict, famine, and displacement are deeply interrelated (see box 1.6). Famine and food crises further contribute to the involuntary mass movement of people, especially in cases where violent conflict, mismanagement, and insufficient responses to previous disasters have exacerbated the negative impact of a food crisis (Raleigh 2017). Violent conflict disrupts trade routes and markets for food and other necessities, causing further direct and indirect costs. IDPs are particularly vulnerable to the effects of famine and disproportionately affected by food insecurity, often due to barriers to accessing labor markets and reliance on humanitarian assistance for survival.

An estimated 65.6 million people are currently forcibly displaced from their homes, driven primarily by violence (UNHCR 2017). Between 2005 and 2016, the number of IDPs increased more than fivefold

**MAP 1.1** Reported Civilian Fatalities in Africa, 2002–16



Source: Raleigh et al. 2010.

### BOX 1.6 Famine and Fragility, Conflict, and Violence

The four-decade declining trend of famine and famine-related deaths has reversed since 2011. Throughout history, famines have been associated with violent conflicts, particularly in recent decades as our knowledge of how to prevent famine and instruments for doing so in peaceful contexts have improved dramatically. Yet famines and severe food insecurity have resulted in hundreds of thousands of deaths in Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, and Yemen, with millions more people left food insecure, partly because of violent conflicts.

In fragile situations, shocks such as drought, conflict, and economic insecurity can lead to increased food insecurity and famine. Drought destroys agricultural output, and violent conflict disrupts agriculture and trade of food crops between areas of surplus and deficit. The *Global Report on Food Crises 2017* reports that in 2016, violent conflict and civil insecurity left more than 63 million people acutely food insecure and in need of urgent humanitarian assistance in 13 countries (Food Security Information Network 2017).

Food insecurity can increase the risk of conflict, particularly when caused by rising food prices, by displacing populations, by exacerbating grievances, and by increasing competition for scarce food and water resources. Internally

displaced persons and refugees often rely on host communities, placing a strain on already-scarce resources and heightening the risk for tension. The 2008 and 2011 global food crises triggered more than 40 food riots across the world: it arguably contributed to the breakdown of the social contract that led to the Arab Spring, to the fall of the government of Haiti in 2008, and to the fueling of grievances underpinning the 2009 coup in Madagascar. For each added percentage point in undernourishment, the likelihood for violent conflict increases by 0.24 percent per 1,000 population.

Famine and food insecurity particularly affect rural and agriculture-based workers, women, and children, partly because social safety nets might be more prevalent. In addition to short-term suffering, famine victims are more likely to experience serious health problems and have significantly worse financial prospects over the long term.

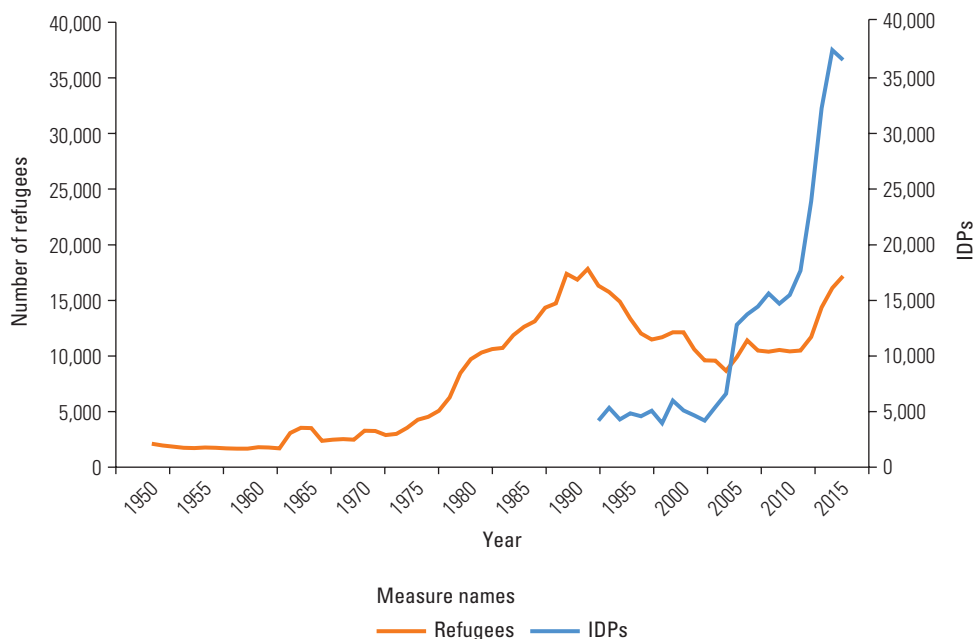
Modern famines are largely man-made and avoidable. In fragile contexts, alleviating poverty, strengthening social safety nets, and preventing violent conflict lower the risk of famine and food insecurity. Long-term stability also increases these states' chances of weathering shocks that potentially cause famines.

*Sources:* World Bank 2017a, 2017b; World Food Programme 2017a, 2017b; von Uexkull et al. 2016; Brinkman and Hendrix, 2011.

(UNDP 2016b; UNHCR 2017; World Bank 2016a; see figure 1.9). Approximately 40.3 million IDPs were recorded in 2016 (UNHCR 2017).<sup>32</sup> These are likely conservative estimates given the difficulty of collecting accurate data (see box 1.7). The number of refugees nearly doubled over the same period, with the majority (55 percent) of refugees coming from just three countries: Afghanistan, South Sudan, and Syria (UNHCR 2017). More than half of the world's refugees are children, many of whom have been separated from family (UNHCR 2017).

Extreme poverty is now increasingly concentrated in vulnerable groups displaced by violent conflict, and the presence of these populations can affect development prospects in the communities hosting them (World Bank 2016a). Often host countries and countries with internally displaced persons may be fragile themselves, and housing additional vulnerable populations can impose an added strain. Indeed, 95 percent of refugees and IDPs live in low- and middle-income countries (World Bank 2016a).

**FIGURE 1.9** Number of Refugees and IDPs Worldwide, 1951–2016



Source: UNHCR 2017.

Note: IDP = internally displaced person.

### BOX 1.7 Limitations of the Data on Forced Displacement

Insecurity can constrain direct access to displaced populations, making it difficult, if not impossible, to verify reported numbers. It can be especially difficult to compile accurate data, as crisis situations resulting in large displaced populations are often dynamic and changing rapidly, making static snapshots quickly out of date.

Various sources are used to collect data on displaced populations. Within protracted crises, large numbers of assessments and surveys often are undertaken for both protection and assistance purposes. Government agencies, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

field offices, and nongovernmental organizations compile and collect data using mainly registers, surveys, registration processes, or censuses. Each method of data collection has both strengths and weaknesses.

The use of different methodologies and inconsistent sharing of information, however, can weaken systematic data collection. Logistically, it is also difficult to know when displacement ends. For example, should internally displaced persons (IDPs) who have lived in an area for several years and who have achieved a durable solution still be considered IDPs?

Sources: IDMC 2016; UNHCR 2013.

### The Gender Impacts of Violent Conflict

The impacts of violent conflict on civilians are gendered. Women and men experience conflict and violence differently, and there are both direct and indirect effects on each group. Mortality rates on the battlefield are

higher in men, especially in young adult males, but women tend to experience violence and its effects in significantly greater proportions. Women often face a continuum of violence before, during, and after conflict. Sexual and gender-based violence tends to be higher in conflict and

### **BOX 1.8 Intimate Partner Violence and Violent Conflict**

Violent conflict may exacerbate all forms of violence against women and girls and rebound particularly on them. In a comparative study looking at cross-sectional variation in self-reported intimate partner violence before and after conflict in three Sub-Saharan African countries (Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, and Liberia), Kelly (2017) finds that, despite differences in the nature of violent conflict in each country, there is a significant relationship between intimate partner violence and previous violent conflict in all three countries. In Kenya and Liberia, women living in a district with reported deaths from violent conflict

were 50 percent more likely to experience intimate partner violence than women in districts without reported fatalities. When levels of conflict are split into low, medium, and high levels, Côte d'Ivoire and Kenya had significantly higher levels of intimate partner violence in high- compared to low-conflict districts. Using Demographic and Health Survey data for periods before and after conflict in Kenya, Kelly (2017) also finds that districts with higher levels of intimate partner violence before the conflict were 30 percent more likely to be associated with fatal violence after the conflict broke out.

postconflict settings, as does recruitment of girls into trafficking, sexual slavery, or forced marriage (Kelly 2017; UN SG 2015; UN Women 2015; UNFPA 2017; UNESCWA 2015). Girls' mobility is often highly restricted, limiting their access to school, employment, and other opportunities, and this can be exacerbated during and after violent conflict (UN Women 2015). Intimate partner violence—whose victims are more often women—can also be linked to violent conflict more largely (see box 1.8).

### **The Lifetime Impacts of Violent Conflict**

Exposure to conflict can generate impacts all along the life cycle. As illustrated in box 1.9, living in a setting where violence is present can have myriad impacts, some of which continue to manifest throughout the life cycle. These impacts can be generated both by the direct exposure to violence or by the witnessing of violence. For children and youth, the long-term effects of exposure to violence, combined with the adversities of daily life in a high-violence context, are associated with a range of challenges (Miller and Rasmussen 2010). These include increased risk of perpetrating or being a victim of violence later in life (Child Trends 2017; Finkelhor et al. 2009; Margolin and Elana 2004) as well as negative effects

on cognitive and social development (Betancourt et al. 2012; Blattman 2006, 2016; Calvete and Orue 2011; Huesmann and Kirwil 2007; Leckman, Panter-Brick, and Salah 2014; Shonkoff and Garner 2012; Weaver, Borkowski, and Whitman 2008).

The experience of traumatic events can lead to serious mental health and behavioral problems that hinder people's ability to function in life. The World Bank has found that 30–70 percent of people who have lived in conflict zones suffer from symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and depression (CDC 2014; Murthy and Lakshminarayana 2006; World Bank 2016b). Children who are orphaned or separated from family often experience pressure to provide for themselves or become heads of households, which can make them vulnerable to exploitation by trafficking networks or armed groups (World Vision International 2017). The impacts on human capital can extend over generations (Mueller and Tobias 2016).

The harmful effects of violent conflict are especially insidious for children's potential development. According to Save the Children (2013), "Almost 50 million children and young people living in conflict areas are out of school, more than half of them primary age, and reports of attacks on education are rising" (reported in Tran 2013).



## BOX 1.9 The Impact of Conflict over the Life Cycle

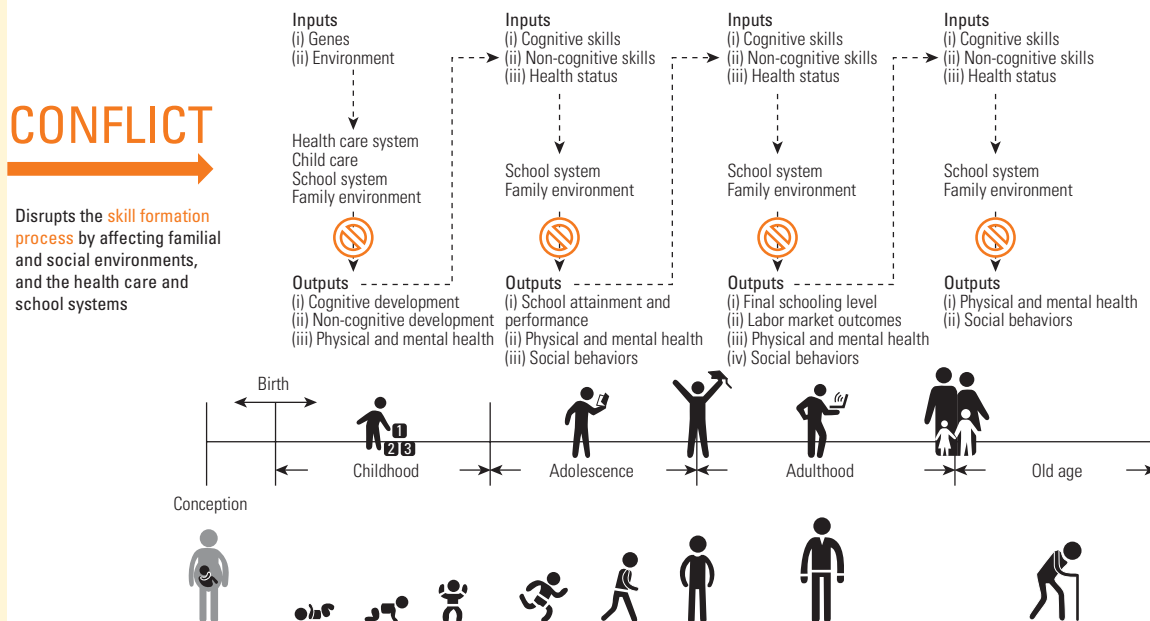
Conflict causes disruption and destruction far beyond the loss of life. Famine and disease, the closure of public services, and the collapse of labor market opportunities create lasting impacts that affect the overall pathway of a society and the development opportunities of its citizens. Figure B1.9.1 shows how conflict can affect the skill formation process.

The rise in violent conflict in the Middle East, for example, has interrupted critical investments in the development of human capital. Children exposed to conflict will carry the effects of conflict throughout their lives, as the destruction of family assets has devastating long-term consequences on future possibilities and the destruction of education halts critical interventions designed to enhance the opportunities of individuals and improve society.

Even if conflict across the region came to an end today, the effects of conflict on human development would likely be felt for generations to come.

The impact of conflict on the nutritional status of children is of particular concern. Stunting, through which nutritional disadvantages translate into weaker physical and cognitive health in childhood and adulthood, is associated with cognitive development, long-term productivity, and overall adult health. These risks produce a lifetime of lower productivity and opportunity. The persistence of economic and educational inequalities, which often manifest in low educational attainment and low employment opportunities for a large fraction of the population, may contribute to grievances that pose a risk of future violence.

**FIGURE B1.9.1 Skill Formation Process over the Life Cycle**



Source: Based on Urzúa 2016.

Source: UNESCWA 2017.

Years of violent conflict in Syria “have reversed more than a decade of progress in children’s education. Today over 2 million of Syria’s 4.8 million school-aged children are not in school” (SOS Children’s Village 2014). Children who have to leave school as a result

of the hardships of violent conflict may never resume their education or acquire needed workforce training after the conflict (World Vision International 2017). These impacts underscore the need for investment in human capital development, which can



help build a country's future workforce and thereby enhance its competitiveness in the global economy.

### **The Health Impacts of Violent Conflict**

Violent conflicts affect health in direct and indirect ways. In Liberia, 354 of 550 medical facilities were destroyed during the Liberian Civil War, affecting how it coped with the Ebola epidemic (Murphy and Ricks 2014). In the Democratic Republic of Congo, violent conflict worsened pregnancy outcomes (Ahuka, Chabikuli, and Ogunbanjo 2004). Conflict can also exacerbate the spread of infectious diseases. For example, the onset of recent conflict has resulted in a resurgence of polio in Syria, a disease that had been nearly eradicated worldwide (Tajaldin et al. 2015). The World Health Organization has called the recent cholera outbreak in the Republic of Yemen “unprecedented” due to its quick appearance in the conflict zone (Al Jazeera 2017). Tuberculosis is also a major health problem, and conflict-affected countries have lower capacity to run tuberculosis control programs (Waldman 2001).

### **The Economic Costs of Violent Conflict**

The economic costs of violent conflict are staggering. However, the overall costs of conflict are unevenly distributed, contributing to global inequality between countries. In the absence of violent conflict, global income inequality would be significantly lower. In fact, violent conflict is an integral part of the world economic structure (De Groot, Bozzoli, and Brück 2012), resulting in certain high-income countries' benefiting from the prevalence of violent conflict, while certain low- and middle-income countries bear a disproportionate amount of the costs.

The Institute for Economics and Peace states in a 2016 report that the cost of containing violence is US\$13.6 trillion a year globally, a figure “equivalent to 13.3 [percent] of world GDP or US\$1,876 PPP [purchasing power parity] per annum, per person.”<sup>33</sup> To further break it down, that figure is US\$5 per person, per day, every day

of the year. When you consider that according to the most recent World Bank estimates 10.7 [percent] of the world's population are living on less than US\$2 per day, it shows an alarming market failure” (IEP 2016; Schippa 2017).

Prolonged violent conflict increases economic costs. Violent conflict can also result in opportunity costs that have long-term ramifications for countries. The resources and money spent fighting wars can result in lost employment opportunities, creating pressures and grievances that pose risks for future violent conflict (Garrett-Peltier 2014). The adverse economic cost of violent conflict increases with the length of exposure to violence; with the duration of conflicts increasing over time, these economic costs will have an increasingly adverse effect on affected countries and their futures (Röther et al. 2016). Beyond the impacts on countries at the macro-level, violent conflict also has economic impacts at the micro-level; loss of livelihoods and assets of households are essential in understanding the dynamics of conflict traps.

Violent conflict is a major cause of the reversals in economic growth that many low- and middle-income countries have experienced in recent decades. Indeed, recessions experienced during periods of violent conflict in fragile countries are a key reason for much lower average growth rates over time (Mueller and Tobias 2016). The consequences are hugely negative for fragile contexts. Afghanistan's per capita income, for example, has barely changed since 1970 as the result of multiple violent conflicts, while Somalia's per capita income dropped by more than 40 percent in the same period (IEP 2015). Recurrent and protracted violent conflict, therefore, decimates the ability of states to rebuild their economies and thus potentially prevent future violent conflict.

The macroeconomic costs of violent conflict are also high. Violent conflict can undermine confidence in an economy by altering investors' expectations about political risks, particularly the risk of violence recurrence (Mueller and Tobias 2016). Investors seek political stability for their investments because it entails lower risk.

Following violent conflict, states can have a difficult time attracting new investors who are willing to incur the higher risks of doing business in a postconflict environment.

The impacts on the overall economy can be substantial. Mavriqi (2016) finds that countries experiencing violent conflict suffer a reduction in annual GDP growth of 2–4 percent and up to 8.4 percent if the conflict is severe. Violent conflict is also associated with an acceleration of inflation; on average, the consumer price index increases by 1.6 percentage points during years of violent conflict (Röther et al. 2016). Economic growth can be severely affected in countries relying on trade or natural resources, if these resources are destroyed during conflict; a country relying on tourism may lose or have limited growth in that potential source of income as a result of violent conflict.

Political, social, and economic risks are rife in postconflict periods. Postconflict economies often exist in power vacuums that allow organized crime to flourish and create black market economies, which can include both drug and human trafficking. Human trafficking explodes during violent conflict, spilling into neighboring states, but the situation persists once the conflict ends. Grievances can fester and grow in this environment.

Many countries affected by violent conflict also have had enormous difficulties rebuilding institutions. A principal reason is that trust and capacity must first be built up before new institutions can succeed in fragile situations (Chen, Ravallion, and Sangraula 2008; World Bank 2011). Mueller and Tobias (2016) find that countries with a history of intrastate conflict collect a smaller share of taxes relative to GDP than countries that have not experienced violent conflict, which can make rebuilding after a conflict that much more difficult.

Societies also pay the costs of conflict in their security structures. Military costs, especially for large armies, can be very high (Nordhaus 2002), hurting opportunity costs in particular. When resources are diverted toward security costs, states may forgo opportunities to invest in other sectors, such as manufacturing, clean energy,

or increasing access to social services like education (Garrett-Peltier 2014).

Violent conflict usually exacts a very high toll on infrastructure and production systems (Mueller and Tobias 2016). For example, electoral violence surrounding the 2007 Kenyan presidential election drove up labor costs by 70 percent (Ksoll, Rocco, and Morjaria 2009); insecurity stemming from the Somali pirates in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean increased shipping costs by about 10 percent (Besley, Fetzer, and Mueller 2012; Mueller and Tobias 2016).

Neighboring countries often shoulder the burden of spillover effects from violent conflict. On average, countries that border a high-intensity conflict zone experience an annual decline of 1.4 percentage points in their GDP and an acceleration in inflation of 1.7 percentage points (Röther et al. 2016). In the Middle East, the conflicts in Iraq and Syria are associated with a drop in economic growth of 1 percentage point in Jordan in 2013. Similar dynamics were at work in Lebanon, where GDP growth slowed from 2.8 percent in 2012 and 2.6 percent in 2013 from an average of 9.2 percent in 2007–10. Prices for basic needs such as food or housing also increased at the beginning of the conflicts (Röther et al. 2016).

## The Costs of Responding to Conflict

In 2017, an estimated 141.1 million people living in 37 countries were in need of international humanitarian assistance (UNOCHA 2017). The costs of this assistance are high and rising. They include the cost of increasing humanitarian assistance during conflict and postconflict aid to assist reconstruction and recovery and to support resilience as well as prevention and intervention strategies (Dancs 2011; Demekas, McHugh, and Kosma 2002; Ndikumana 2015).<sup>34</sup> The estimated economic cost of efforts to contain violence in 2012 was US\$9.46 trillion or 11 percent of world gross product (IEP 2015). To put this into perspective, spending on conflict containment is 2.4 times the total GDP of Africa; the majority of this spending goes to militaries, with just 0.1 percent spent on UN peacekeeping (IEP 2015).

The costs of responding to conflict have climbed significantly in parallel with the rapid growth and changing nature of conflict.

- Total funding requirements for humanitarian action in 2016 reached US\$22.1 billion, an increase of US\$2.2 billion over the previous year and a staggering US\$13.3 billion (nearly 70 percent) over 2012.<sup>35</sup> This upward trend seems bound to continue in the future, with estimated requirements for 2017 reaching new highs at US\$23.5 billion. Funding secured for humanitarian action has gradually adjusted in response to growing demand. The gap between requested and secured funding, however, has widened steadily over time. In 2016, total funding secured fell short of requests by US\$9 billion or more than 40 percent of the total.<sup>36</sup>
- A large majority of resources requested for humanitarian action are directed to areas of violent conflict. A report by the UN Secretary-General calculates that, in 2014, US\$83 billion out of US\$96 billion (or 86 percent) of total requests through UN appeals were for tackling emergencies in conflict environments (United Nations 2014). Since then, mega-crises such as in Iraq and Syria have further reinforced the link between conflict and humanitarian action. In 2015, approximately 97 percent of total humanitarian action targeted complex emergencies—situations in which a total or considerable breakdown of authority results from internal or external conflict (UNOCHA 2016).
- In the last two decades, peacekeeping operations expanded in mandate, size, and length. So-called “traditional” peacekeeping missions involving observational tasks performed by military personnel have evolved into what the United Nations Capstone Doctrine referred to as complex “multidimensional” enterprises (United Nations 2008). As of mid-2017, 16 peacekeeping operations were deployed and operational, while the number of police and military personnel in missions had nearly tripled from

34,000 in 2000 to 94,000 in August 2017.<sup>37</sup> By 2016, the total cost of maintaining peacekeeping missions in the field had climbed to almost US\$8 billion a year, also reflecting the fact that missions today “last on average three times longer than their predecessors”<sup>38</sup> (United Nations 2015, 11). At the same time, the number, size, and responsibilities of smaller civilian political missions have grown; 21 political missions are now in place, with more than 3,000 personnel.<sup>39</sup>

- Costs for humanitarian action not directly linked to conflict have risen as well. In 2015, for instance, roughly 1.5 million refugees sought asylum in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries, nearly twice as many as in the previous year. Funding for the immediate response to this crisis came in large part from official development assistance. Development aid spent on refugees in host countries doubled between 2014 and 2015 and increased sixfold since 2010, reaching a total of US\$12 billion (9.1 percent of total overseas development assistance).<sup>40</sup>

The evolving geography of conflict is driving these cost increases as much as the escalation of violence. Conflict is becoming more concentrated in middle-income countries, presenting a unique set of difficulties from those of lower-income countries.

## How Violent Conflicts End

Violent conflicts tend either to end in victory for one side or another or to fade into a state of chronic but low-intensity armed hostilities. Permanent settlements through mediation, particularly for intrastate conflicts, have been rarer. In the decades after World War II, the bipolar international order focused on interstate wars. The end of the Cold War ushered in a new era of cooperation among global powers and a renewed effort to peacefully resolve violent conflicts that were previously seen only through the prism of the competition between the Soviet Union and the United States.

Between 1946 and 1991, more than 23 percent of conflicts were brought to an end by means of permanent peace settlements or ceasefire agreements; the proportion increased to almost 29 percent between 1991 and 2014 (Kreutz 2010; see figure 1.10).

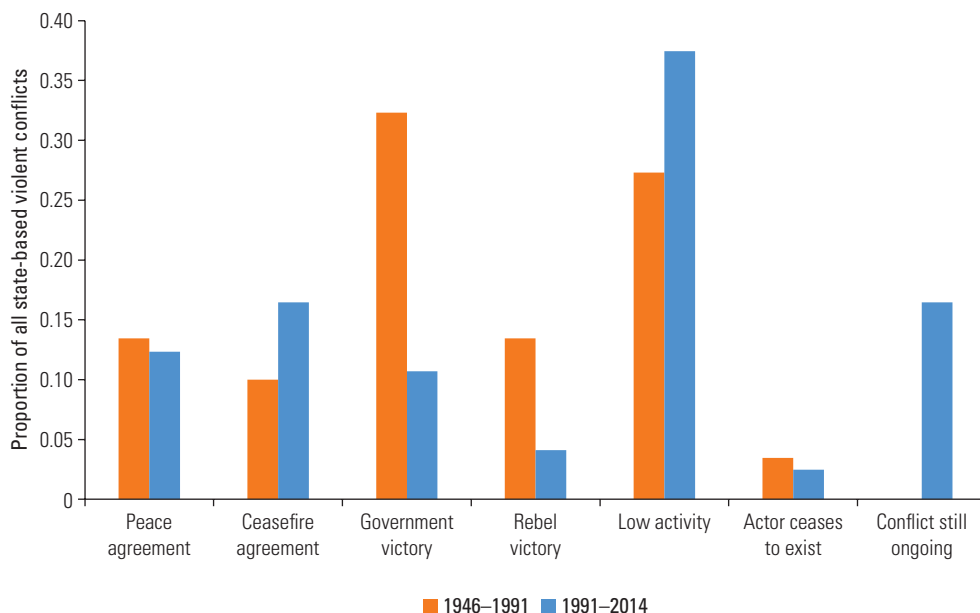
The use of mediation declined in the early 2000s, yet remains well above Cold War levels (Wallenstein and Svensson 2014). While the long-term effectiveness of the mediation of violent intrastate conflict has been challenged (Beardsley 2008, 2011; Fortna 2003), recent research suggests that negotiated settlements are effective at reducing violence in at least the first few years after an agreement is signed (De Rouen and Chowdhury 2016; see figure 1.11).

Indeed, negotiated settlements can have a transformative effect on conflict dynamics even when they fail. For example, violent conflicts that restart after collapse of a negotiated settlement result in significantly fewer

fatalities relative to the presettlement death toll. This was the case in 10 out of 11 cases in which peace agreements collapsed between 1989 and 2004 (Mack 2012). The average annual death toll of intrastate conflicts drops by more than 80 percent if they recur after a peace agreement (Human Security Report Project 2012). Notwithstanding its positive impacts, the use of mediation to negotiate the peaceful resolution of conflicts has not become a stable feature of the international system. A recent analysis suggests that the proliferation of negotiated settlements has ended, with the violent conflicts in today's world challenging existing international mechanisms and hence being increasingly difficult to resolve with agreements (Walter 2017a).

Indeed, many of the intrastate conflicts and civil wars that have erupted since 2007 share characteristics that make them particularly resistant to negotiated settlements.<sup>41</sup>

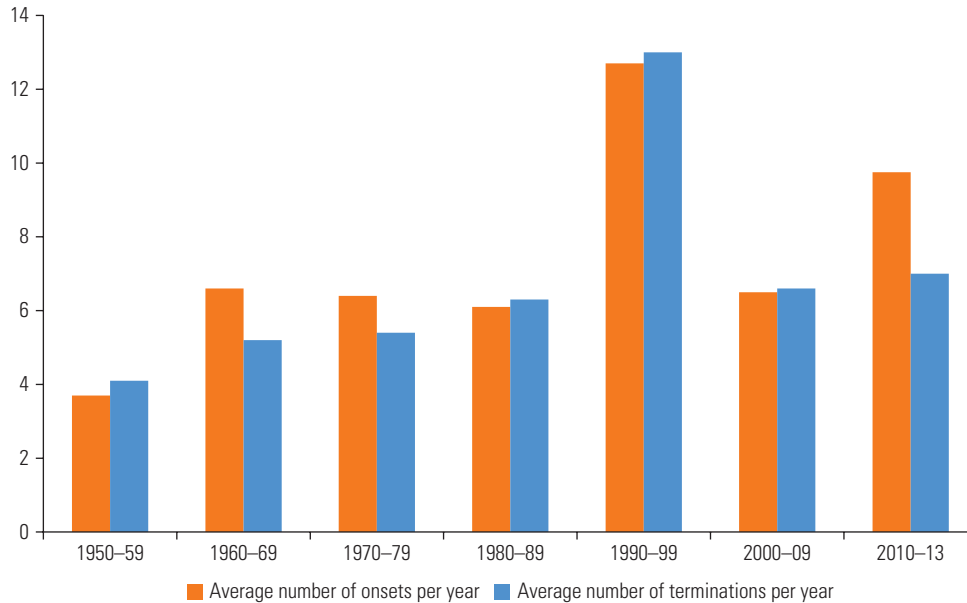
**FIGURE 1.10 Termination of Violent Conflicts Worldwide before and after the Cold War, 1946–2014**



Source: Uppsala Conflict Data Program (Kreutz 2010).

Note: The Cold War period extends from 1945 to 1991; the post–Cold War period extends from 1991 to 2014. Peace agreement = an agreement concerned with resolving or regulating the incompatibility (completely or a central part of it), that is signed or accepted by all or the main parties active in the last year of conflict. Ceasefire agreement = an agreement typically concerned with ending the use of force by the warring sides. It can also offer amnesty for participation in the conflict. It does not include any resolution of the incompatibility. Government victory = the state manages to defeat comprehensively or eliminate the opposition. Rebel victory = the rebel group manages to oust the government. Low activity = conflict activity continues but does not reach the Uppsala Conflict Data Program threshold with regard to fatalities. Actor ceases to exist = conflict activity continues, but at least one of the parties ceases to exist or becomes another conflict actor.

**FIGURE 1.11** The Onset and End of Armed Conflict Worldwide, 1950–2013



Source: Uppsala Conflict Data Program (Kreutz 2010).

For example, international consensus on how they should end is lacking, as demonstrated in the absence of UN Security Council action (UN Security Council 2017). Moreover, the nature of these wars—with multiple fighting factions, significant involvement of outside states, and the deep societal divisions that the conflicts feed and reflect—challenges the existing international and state-based conflict-resolution mechanisms (Walter 2017a).

## Conclusion

Violent conflict remains the exception, not the rule, in today's world. But it remains a significant threat to the stability of countries and regions. Violent conflict has become more complex, more internationalized, and more multidimensional. It affects more middle-income countries, but is also stubbornly entrenched in low-income countries. In both cases, violent conflicts are contagious.

The international system created after World War II is rooted in the collective desire to prevent violent conflict through norms, values, and peace mechanisms. But it is challenged on many fronts in a world

where communication, finance, crime, and ideas flow seamlessly across borders. Responding to violence after it has broken out is more expensive than ever, underscoring the need to move beyond crisis response and recovery to a focus on prevention.

This chapter has reviewed current trends in violent conflict, the nature of the risks, and the opportunities for prevention. The study turns next to an exploration of the context in which violent conflicts are happening, focusing on some of the key systemic risks posed by global trends, and the implications for prevention.

## Notes

1. Intensity is defined as the number of conflict-related deaths and injuries.
2. Most of the numbers referred to in this chapter are based on the UCDP and Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) definitions of state-based armed conflict as “a contested incompatibility which concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths” and nonstate violent conflict as a conflict between

nonstate (that is, not state-based) armed groups, which may have ties to one or more states. The data on state-based conflicts cover the years 1946–2016 (Allansson, Melander, and Themnér 2017; Gleditsch et al. 2002), while the data on nonstate violent conflicts cover the years 1989–2016 (Sundberg, Eck, and Kreutz 2012; Allansson, Melander, and Themnér 2017). UCDP is the source for the majority of trends on the character and intensity of violent conflicts in this chapter. Figure 1.1 includes conflicts that have resulted in at least 25 battle-related deaths in a given year.

3. Pinker and Mack (2014) note, “The end of the Cold War ... saw a steep reduction in the number of armed conflicts of all kinds, including civil wars.” While it is true that the rate of violent conflicts between state forces and a nonstate actor had been decreasing since the end of the Cold War, it has been increasing in recent years, as has the rate of conflicts between nonstate actors—although the latter is not explored in Pinker and Mack (2014), given the low number of battle deaths reported by these conflicts.
4. UCDP reports four conflicts with more than 1,000 fatalities each for 2007 and 13 for 2016 (Allansson, Melander, and Themnér 2017; Gleditsch et al. 2002; Sundberg, Eck, and Kreutz 2012).
5. UCDP reports 63 state-based and nonstate conflicts with between 25 and 999 battle-related deaths for 2007 and 101 for 2016 (Allansson, Melander, and Themnér 2017; Gleditsch et al. 2002; Sundberg, Eck, and Kreutz 2012).
6. Figures 1.2 and 1.3 use the best estimate for battle-related deaths in violent conflicts, including those that involve state forces and those that do not; figure 1.3 also includes fatalities stemming from one-sided violence.
7. Nonstate armed groups include rebel organizations and violent extremist groups; political militias or “armed gangs” operating on behalf of political actors; and communal and ethnic militias, which can act as local security providers or can engage in inter-communal conflict, often not engaging with the state (for example, the Fulani ethnic militia in Nigeria).
8. The Islamic State is known by several other names, including the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, and its Arabic language acronym with a negative connotation, Daesh.
9. The use of progovernment militias does not necessarily signify that a state lacks the capacity to carry out violence using its own forces. In fact, the use of such militias is often a sign of strong state capacity (see Kishi, Aucoin, and Raleigh 2016; Raleigh and Kishi 2017).
10. UCDP/PRIO defines internationalized conflict as those where one side is a state and one side is a nonstate and where an outside state intervenes on behalf of one of these (Allansson, Melander, and Themnér 2017; Gleditsch et al. 2002).
11. “This appears to be because credible guarantees on the terms of an agreement are almost impossible to design by the combatants themselves” (Walter 2017a, 1).
12. UCDP does not report any violent conflicts involving state forces ending in 2016 (Allansson, Melander, and Themnér 2017; Gleditsch et al. 2002). As this study was being prepared, it was too early to say which conflicts that were active in 2016 might or might not be active in 2017. Hence, figure 1.6 extends only to 2015. Several factors account for the stark difference in the duration (number of years, on average) of violent conflicts involving state forces that ended in 2014 versus those that ended in 2015. In 2014, 56 percent of violent conflicts had lasted more than 20 years and 44 percent had lasted less than 10 years. In 2015, in contrast, 31 percent had lasted more than 20 years and 69 percent had lasted less than 10 years.
13. “Conflict duration is [also] likely to change power balances that need to be reflected in the institutional designs of political settlements; [as such] stability can only be achieved if underlying causes are sufficiently addressed as well. Otherwise, conflict is likely to recur” (Wolff, Ross, and Wee 2017).
14. Gang violence, which is prevalent in the Americas, is not systematically included here, as it was addressed previously in the chapter.
15. Political-religious divides and territorial claims are also major drivers, both of which may conflate with issues related to political power.
16. In 2015, approximately 19 percent of battle-field deaths occurred in the Arab world.



17. These states also had highly repressive human rights policies and practiced capital punishment, among other commonalities (see Gleditsch and Rudolfsen 2016).
18. In Iraq, long-standing grievances are increasingly manifesting themselves in the creation of cross-sectarian alliances as an expression of widespread and diverse popular dissatisfaction with the ruling elites. Iraq also has a history of long-standing tensions between Arabs and Kurds.
19. For example, the global recruitment of Western foreign fighters through technology and other means (ICG 2016a).
20. While the international recruitment of young people by groups such as the Islamic State has received much attention, the strength of such groups in Iraq, for example, has come from the local co-optation of the old Ba'athist apparatus as well as from collaboration with tribes that have been frightened by a formal state structure they perceive to be serving as an instrument of retribution for the years of Sunni domination in Iraq. Al Shabaab has also co-opted many people who had been excluded by the domination of clans in Somali politics, especially many youths.
21. Chapter 4 presents the findings of studies of the motivations of individuals who join violent extremist groups (see box 4.3)
22. See the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) data portal, "South Sudan Situation," <http://data.unhcr.org/SouthSudan/regional.php>; Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre database, "South Sudan," <http://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/south-sudan>.
23. Terrorism is understood here as "the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious or social goal through fear, coercion or intimidation" (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism 2016). This definition renders it difficult to distinguish events from warfare during violent conflict (Hoffman 2006).
24. Illicit financing of nonstate actors is not limited to the sale of drugs.
25. "An exact estimate for the economic cost of violent conflict is hard to derive. The very existence of a conflict makes measurement of economic activity problematic . . . [and so numbers] ought to be interpreted with this in mind. . . . [Regardless of the estimate used,] the impact of civil war on output is disastrous" (Mueller 2013).
26. Definitions and data set are available at <http://eventdata.parusanalytics.com/data.dir/atrocities.html>.
27. Hultman (2010) suggests three mechanisms that may result in this behavior: "First, if an intervention makes the warring parties expect a settlement of the conflict, they might target civilians as a last-minute strategy to establish territorial control. Second, if the intervention alters the balance of power between the warring parties or hinders military clashes, the warring parties might turn to violence against civilians as a cheaper strategy of imposing costs on the adversary. Third, if an intervention challenges the warring parties' ability to extract natural resources or to engage in criminal economic activity, it might trigger them to increase violent looting behavior in order to maintain control over resources."
28. Attacks on schools and hospitals are considered one of the six grave violations under the August 1999 UN Security Council Resolution (S/Res/1261) on Children and Armed Conflict (see also ICRC 2017; Sassoli 2004).
29. See ACLED for definitions and discussion, <http://www.crisis.acleddata.com/category/remote-violence/>.
30. This was also the highest number of civilian casualties that the UN has ever recorded over the protracted conflict in the country.
31. Other estimates put the figure in excess of 800,000, suggesting that UCDP underestimates the scale of the genocide. No genocide has been comparable in scale to that of Rwanda's for more than 20 years. However, several massive genocides occurred between 1955 and 1994.
32. The numbers reported here reflect the numbers released in UNHCR's report, *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2016* (UNHCR 2017). The trends depicted in figure 1.9 are based on data downloaded from UNHCR. The numbers reported in the UNHCR report differ because IDP numbers come from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre and refugee numbers



- come from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in addition to UNHCR.
33. This figure is based on the Global Peace Index, which includes 16 separate categories with estimated costs, including the losses from crime and interpersonal violence (\$2.5 trillion) and losses from conflict (\$742 billion), as well as the costs of containing violence through internal security spending (\$4.2 trillion) and military spending (\$6.2 trillion) (IEP 2015).
  34. Does the outcome of prevention and intervention justify its cost? In cases where it is not deemed “successful,” arguing its justification can be more difficult. Valentino (2011), for example, argues, “Intervening militarily to save lives abroad often sounds good on paper, but the record has not been promising. The ethical calculus involved is almost always complicated by messy realities on the ground, and the opportunity costs of such missions are massive. Well-meaning countries could save far more lives by helping refugees and victims of natural disasters and funding public health.”
  35. See <http://interactive.unocha.org/publication/globalhumanitarianoverview/>, section on funding requirements.
  36. See <http://interactive.unocha.org/publication/globalhumanitarianoverview/>, section on funding requirements.
  37. See <https://www.unmissions.org/#block-views-missions-peacekeeping-missions>.
  38. Based on the planned closure of peacekeeping missions in Haiti and Liberia, peacekeeping missions’ budgets have been reduced to approximately US\$6.8 billion in 2017.
  39. See <https://www.unmissions.org/#block-views-missions-political-missions>.
  40. See <http://www.oecd.org/dac/development-aid-rises-again-in-2015-spending-on-refugees-doubles.htm>.
  41. With the notable exception of some new wars in the Middle East, for instance, most conflicts initiated in the twenty-first century represent a relapse of conflict (Walter 2010).
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