



Independent • International • Interdisciplinary

PRIO PAPER 2025

Conflict Trends: A Global Overview, 1946–2024

Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)
PO Box 9229 Grønland, NO-0134 Oslo, Norway
Visiting Address: Hausmanns gate 3

www.prio.org
Facebook: PRIO.org
X: PRIOforsker

ISBN: 978-82-343-0670-9 (print)
978-82-343-0671-6 (online)



Siri Aas Rustad
Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)

Cover: Sudanese civilians fleeing conflict
struggle with harsh conditions in Goz al-Hajj
Camp, 25 December 2024. Photo: Osman
Bakir / Anadolu via Getty Images

Conflict Trends: A Global Overview, 1946–2024

Siri Aas Rustad

Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)

Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)
Hausmanns gate 3
PO Box 9229 Oslo
NO-0134 Oslo, Norway
Tel. +47 22 54 77 00
www.prio.org

PRIO encourages its researchers and research affiliates to publish their work in peer-reviewed journals and book series, as well as in PRIO's own Paper and Policy Brief series. In editing these series, we undertake a basic quality control, but PRIO does not as such have any view on political issues. We encourage our researchers actively to take part in public debates and give them full freedom of opinion. The responsibility and credit for the hypotheses, theories, findings and views expressed in our publications thus rest with the authors themselves.



This work is licensed under CC BY 4.0. The contents can be shared and processed for free, provided that the author is credited correctly, indicating whether changes have been made, and without suggesting that the licensor endorses the use of the work.

ISBN: 978-82-343-0670-9 (print)
ISBN: 978-82-343-0671-6 (online)

Cover design: www.medicineheads.com

Cover photo: Sudanese civilians fleeing conflict struggle with harsh conditions in Goz al-Haj Camp, 25 December 2024. Photo: Osman Bakir / Anadolu via Getty Images

Contents

List of Figures	6
I. Introduction	7
<i>1.1. Definitions</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>1.2. Executive Summary</i>	<i>7</i>
2. State-Based Conflict	9
<i>2.1. Global Trends in State-Based Conflict</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>2.2. Trends in Conflict Intensity</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>2.3. Regional Variation in State-Based Conflict</i>	<i>14</i>
3. Non-State Conflicts	16
<i>3.1. Global Trends in Non-State Violence</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>3.2. Regional Variation</i>	<i>17</i>
4. One-Sided Violence	18
<i>4.1. Global Trends in One-Sided Violence</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>4.2. Regional Variation</i>	<i>19</i>
Conclusion	20
Notes	22
References	23

List of Figures

1. Number of state-based armed conflicts by conflict type, 1946–2024.
2. Civil conflicts with and without international involvement, including battle-related deaths, 1989–2024.
3. Number of conflicts and conflict-affected countries, 1989–2024.
4. Number of conflict countries, number of conflicts with countries and share of countries with more than one conflict, 1989–2024.
5. Number of conflicts, wars, and battle-related deaths resulting from each, 1989–2024.
6. Share of battle-related deaths in 2023 and 2024.
7. Number of countries with state-based armed conflict by region, 1946–2024.
8. State-based conflict events and conflict-affected countries, 2024.
9. Non-state conflicts by conflict type and battle-related deaths in non-state conflict by organization type, 1989–2024.
10. Total number of non-state conflicts by region, 1989–2024.
11. Incidents of one-sided violence including number of perpetrators and fatalities, 1989–2024.
12. Number of actors who used one-sided violence by region, 1989–2024.

1. Introduction

In 2024, battle-related deaths from state-based conflicts stayed very similar to 2023, making 2024 the fourth most violent year since 1989, surpassed only by the three preceding years. The recent dramatic increase in battle deaths stems mainly from three conflicts: The civil war in the Tigray region in Ethiopia (2021–2022), the Russian invasion of Ukraine (2022–2024), and the bombings of Gaza in Israel (2023–2024). This surge in large-scale wars calls for a re-examination of the trends and contexts in which conflict occurs. In this PRIO Paper, we provide an empirically grounded overview of global trends in conflict, which aims to support policymakers, practitioners, and regional and country experts to better understand the contexts in which they work.

The analyses in this paper are based on the rich conflict data that is annually collected and published by the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP). We provide an overview of various aspects of conflict trends at the global level, particularly since 1989. We examine three types of violence that the UCDP collects data on: state-based conflicts, non-state conflicts, and one-sided violence. More specific definitions of these terms are laid out in Section 1.1.¹

1.1. Definitions

State-based conflict: A contested incompatibility over government and/or territory, where at least one party is a state and the use of armed force results in at least 25 battle-related deaths within a calendar year.

Non-state conflict: The use of armed force between organized groups, none of which is the government of a state, resulting in at least 25 battle-related deaths within a year.

One-sided violence: The use of armed force against civilians by the government of a state or by a formally organized group, which results in at least 25 battle-related deaths. Extrajudicial killings in custody are excluded.

Battle-related deaths: Fatalities caused by the warring parties that can be directly related to combat, including civilian losses.

War: A conflict or dyad which reaches at least 1,000 battle-related deaths in a calendar year.²

1.2. Executive Summary

State-based conflict

In 2024, the UCDP recorded the highest number of state-based conflicts since 1946. While the level of battle-related deaths remained at the same level as 2023, the scale of violence remains alarmingly high. In fact, 2024 ranks as the fourth most violent year since 1989, with approximately 129,000 battle deaths—surpassed only by 2021, 2022, and 2023. As in the previous year, two conflicts were primarily responsible for this toll: Russia’s ongoing invasion of Ukraine,

which accounted for approximately 76,000 battle deaths, and the devastating war in Gaza, responsible for approximately 26,000 battle deaths in 2023.

In 2024, 61 conflicts were recorded in 36 conflict-affected countries—an increase from 2023 in both the number of conflicts and the number of countries experiencing them. Notably, the gap between the number of conflicts and the number of conflict countries has increased over the past decade, indicating a rise in countries hosting multiple simultaneous conflicts. In 2023, nine countries had two conflicts, and eight countries experienced more than three. This trend points to a growing complexity in conflict dynamics with more actors involved, which has important implications for how we analyze and respond to conflict. Furthermore, interstate wars—conflicts between states—appear to be increasing. In 2024, we saw four interstate wars, the highest number since 1987. This concerning trend has continued in 2025, illustrated by the escalation in violence between India and Pakistan in the Kashmir region in April 2025.

Non-state conflict

There were 74 non-state conflicts in 2024, which represents a decrease from the 80 non-state conflicts in 2023. Many of the non-state conflicts are low intensity, thus, the number of conflicts is quite volatile from year to year, since many of these conflicts only flare up occasionally. The number of battle-related deaths from such conflicts was approximately 17,500, representing a downward trend since 2020. Despite this, the number of non-state conflict battle-related deaths has stabilized at a substantially higher level compared to the period before 2013.

Africa was the region with the highest number of non-state conflicts. After being the region with the highest number of non-state conflicts in 2023, the Americas saw a decrease from 41 to 29 non-state conflicts in 2024, due primarily to decreases in Brazil and Honduras. Nonetheless, the Americas is still the region with the highest number of battle deaths in non-state conflicts, with close to 13,000—four times as many as in Africa.

One-sided violence

Almost 14,000 fatalities from one-sided violence were recorded in 2023, a substantial increase from the 10,700 such fatalities in 2023. Non-state actors were responsible for the majority of fatalities from one-sided violence in 2024; 10,300 fatalities resulted from non-state actors perpetrating one-sided violence compared to 3,400 fatalities caused by government actors. While this continues the already existing trend, the gap between the number of fatalities from one-sided violence perpetrated by non-state actors and that by state-based actors has increased. Despite this, fourteen governments were still responsible for violence against civilians in 2024.

2. State-Based Conflict

The UCDP categorizes four different types of state-based conflicts: colonial conflict; interstate conflict; civil conflict; and internationalized civil conflict. Of these, civil conflicts are the most common. Alongside state-based conflicts, conflicts waged between non-state actors have become increasingly common in the past decades. (We discuss non-state conflicts in Section 3.)

To be classified as a state-based conflict in the dataset, there must be a contested incompatibility over government control (e.g., between the Government of Mali and Jama’at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM)) and/or territory (e.g., between the Government of Israel and Hamas over Palestine), where the use of armed force between two parties results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in a calendar year. Battle-related deaths refers to fatalities directly caused by the warring parties.³ This measurement is crucial, as it indicates the severity of a conflict and helps distinguish between conflicts and wars.

2.1. Global Trends in State-Based Conflict

The level of state-based conflicts has fluctuated over time. Figure 1 depicts the number and type of state-based conflicts between 1946 and 2024. The black line shows the number of battle-related deaths per year.

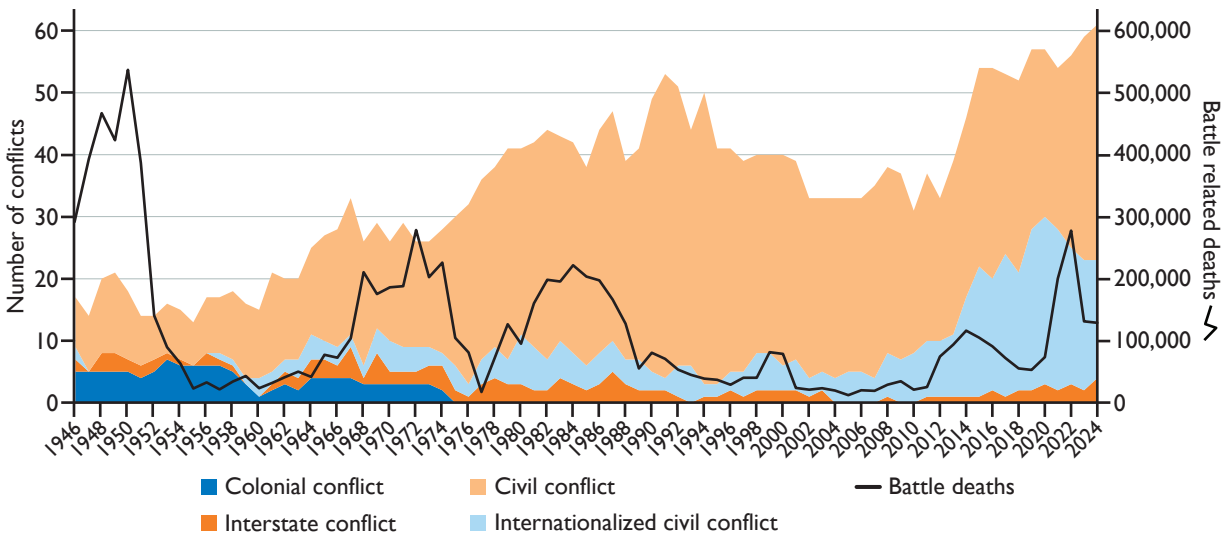


Figure 1: Number of state-based armed conflicts by conflict type, 1946–2024. Source: *Lacina and Gleditsch Battle Death Datasets (2005)*, *UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset*, and *UCDP Battle-Related Deaths Dataset (Pettersson et al, 2025)*.

Based on an analysis of state-based armed conflicts over time, we can identify three main trends.

First, despite a sharp decrease in battle-related deaths from 2022 to 2023, the past four years have been the most violent period since the end of the Cold War. Between 2021–2024, nearly 740,000

people in total were killed in conflict. Three wars drive this increase. The war between the Government of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) accounted for over 288,000 deaths in 2021 and 2022. Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine has resulted in approximately 250,000 battle-related deaths over the past three years (2022–2024). Meanwhile, the civil war in Gaza caused an estimated 50,000 deaths in 2023 and 2024. Both the Ukraine and Gaza conflicts remain active, suggesting continued high levels of violence in 2025. In addition, the brutal conflict in Sudan between rival factions of the military government persisted in 2024, with over 5,000 reported killed—precipitating the largest current humanitarian crisis in Africa.

Second, after a decline in state-based conflicts in the 1990s, **the past decade has seen a troubling resurgence. For each of the last eight years, more than 50 state-based conflicts have been recorded annually, peaking in 2024 with 61 conflicts.** The only other period since 1946 with a comparable level of conflict was the early 1990s. That earlier spike can be attributed to two main factors. First, during the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union often supported different sides in civil wars. Thus, the warring parties had easier access to funding, and we see an accumulation of civil conflicts during the 1980s and early 1990s (Mumford, 2013). Second, the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia triggered a series of new conflicts. However, with the end of the Cold War, the funding for civil wars diminished, and many of the conflicts related to the former Soviet Union were relatively short-lived, leading to a substantial decrease in conflict in the late 1990s and 2000s.

The rise in state-based conflicts since 2015 can partly be attributed to the expansion of the Islamic State (IS) across Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. In many cases, IS has become involved in pre-existing conflicts, such as in the Boko Haram conflict in Nigeria, or the Mindanao conflict in the Philippines. However, because the UCDP dataset records each IS-related engagement as a separate conflict, this has contributed to a marked increase in the overall number of state-based conflicts. Notably, IS was active in 12 countries in both 2023 and 2024—the lowest level since 2015—suggesting that IS is no longer the main driver of the rising number of conflicts. This points to the growing influence of other non-state actors. For example, the Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM)—a jihadist coalition formed in 2017 through the merger of several Islamist groups—has significantly expanded its operations across West Africa and was active in five countries in the region in 2024.

The third main trend emerging from our analysis is the growing internationalization of civil conflicts⁴. While state-based conflicts are still the dominant form of civil conflict, an increasing number over the past decade have involved external actors. Although UN or regional Peacekeeping Operations (PKOs) could count as such, depending on their mandates, their involvement does not automatically make a conflict internationalized. In 2024, out of 61 state-based conflicts, 19 were internationalized civil conflicts (see Figure 2). While this figure remains high compared to pre-2010, it reflects a gradual decrease over the past three years. Notably, since 2015,

internationalized civil conflicts have killed more people per year than civil conflicts without international involvement. However, in the past two years, there has been a resurgence in battle-related deaths in civil conflicts without third-party involvement.

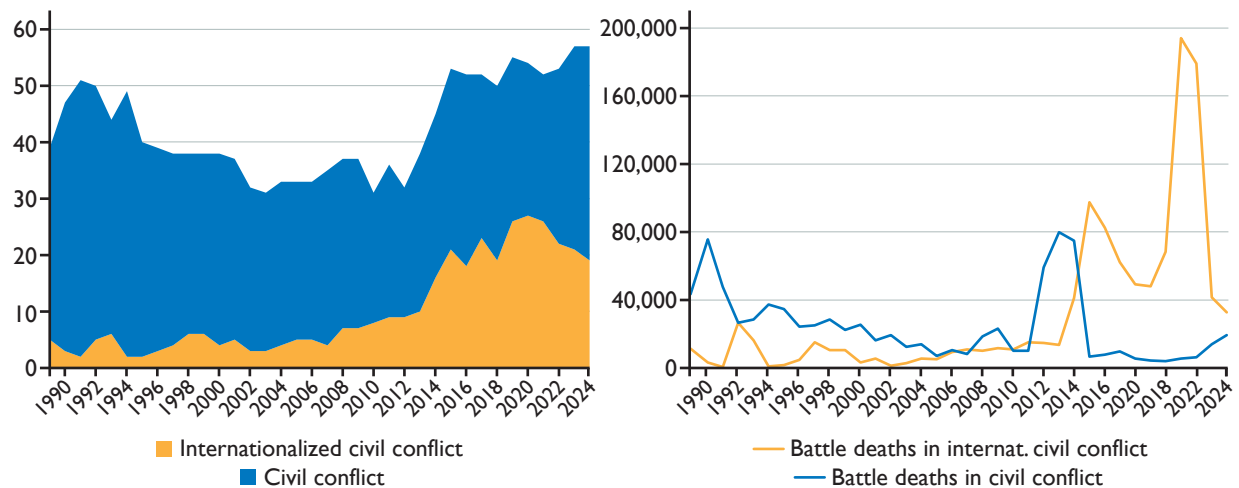


Figure 2: Civil conflicts with and without international involvement, including battle-related deaths, 1989–2024. Source: UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset and UCDP Battle-Related Deaths Dataset (Pettersson et al, 2025).

Civil war is the most common conflict type since the 1960s. However, in 2024, the number of interstate conflicts (i.e., conflicts between countries) increased, with four cases recorded—the highest number since 1983. These include Russia–Ukraine, Iran–Israel, UK/USA–Yemen, and Pakistan–Afghanistan. While the numbers remain small, making it difficult to determine whether this reflects an emerging trend or a coincidence, this development warrants close monitoring. The current escalation of conflict in Kashmir between India and Pakistan (as of May 2025) adds to this concerning pattern.

Another emerging trend is the growing complexity of conflict. The data show that a single country can host several conflicts. Figure 3 illustrates this trend by comparing the total number of conflicts (blue line) with the number of countries affected by conflict per year (blue bar). Between 1997 and 2012, the ratio of countries and conflicts was relatively stable: the number of conflicts slightly exceeded the number of countries, indicating that some countries faced more than one conflict in a given year. However, after 2012, the gap widened—conflicts became more numerous, while the number of affected countries declined. In 2024, 61 conflicts affected 36 countries. This suggests that global conflict levels have not necessarily risen, but that some countries experience more conflict. This trend is clear in Figure 4, which indicates the number and share of countries with more than one conflict: in 2024, over half of the conflict-affected countries experienced more than one conflict on their territory, and nine countries faced three or more conflicts within their borders.

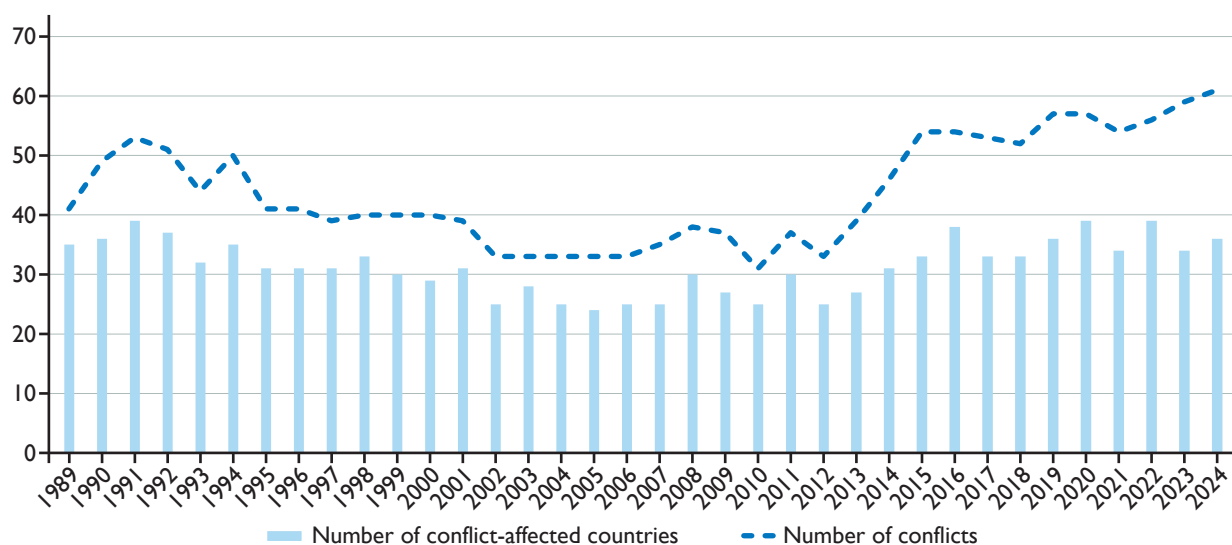


Figure 3: Number of conflicts and conflict-affected countries, 1989–2024. Source: UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset and UCDP Battle-Related Deaths Dataset (Pettersson et al, 2025).

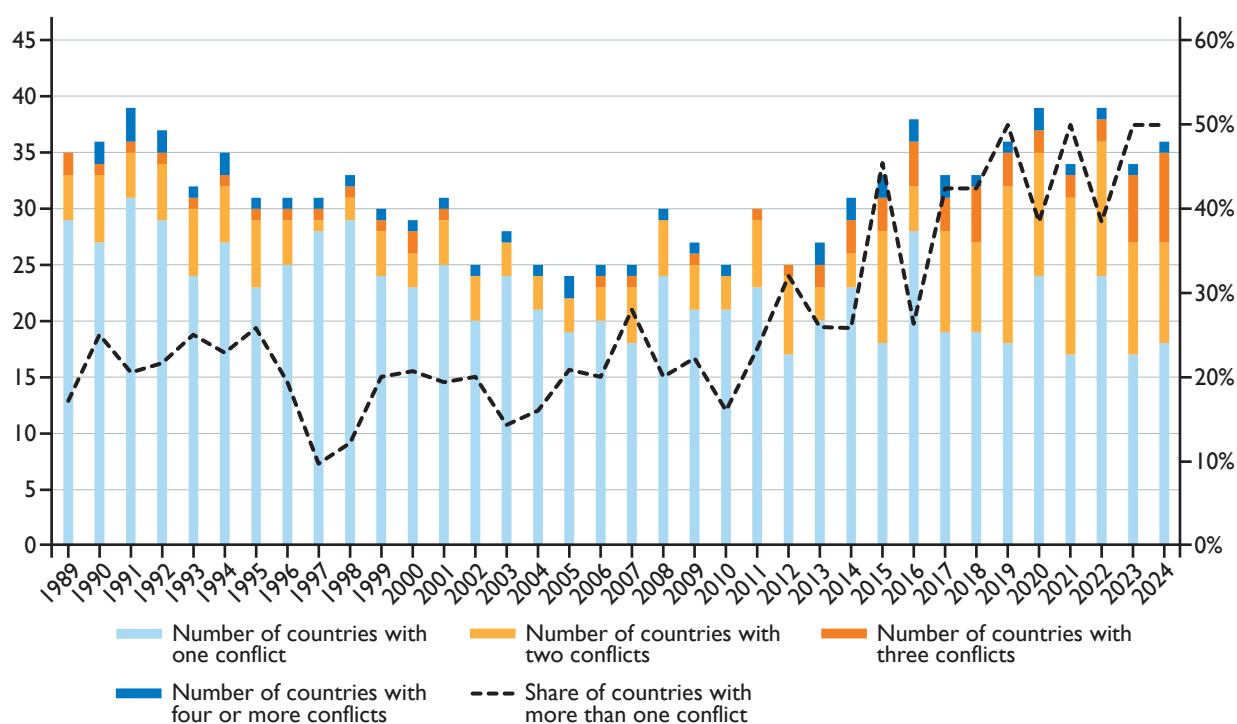


Figure 4: Number of conflict countries, number of conflicts with countries and share of countries with more than one conflict, 1989–2024. Source: UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset and UCDP Battle-Related Deaths Dataset (Pettersson et al, 2025).

2.2. Trends in Conflict Intensity

Typically, a few high-intensity conflicts—referred to as wars—account for the majority of global battle-related deaths. Although wars are fewer in number than conflicts, they cause significantly more fatalities.

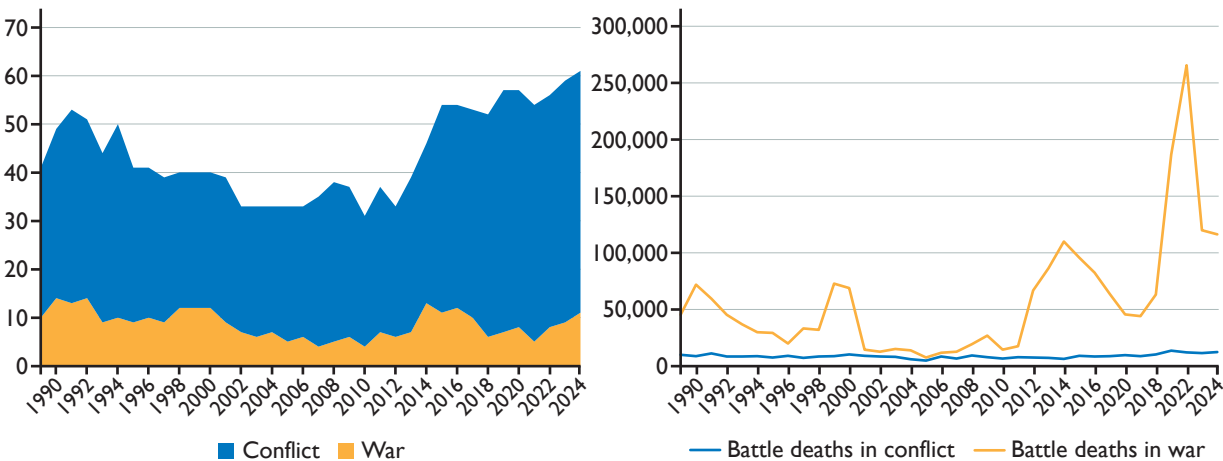


Figure 5: Number of conflicts, wars, and battle-related deaths resulting from each, 1989–2024.
Source: UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset and UCDP Battle-Related Deaths Dataset (Pettersson et al, 2025).

Figure 5 distinguishes between conflicts and wars. The number of wars peaked in 2014, reaching 13—nearly 30% of the total number of violent conflicts. Since 2018, the proportion of wars declined. However, this trend reversed in 2022, with the number of wars rising again. This trend continues in 2024, with eleven wars. These eleven wars included Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Israel (both with Hamas and Hezbollah), Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan, Russia and Ukraine, Somalia, Sudan, and Syria.

Figure 6 compares battle-related deaths by country in 2023 and 2024. The most striking observation is how similar the two years were—not only in the total number of battle-related deaths, but also in the intensity of conflict within each country. For example, in Ukraine (orange) approximately 75,000 were killed in both years. The largest de-escalation occurred in Burkina Faso, where battle-related deaths decreased from 4,600 in 2023 to 2,200 in 2024. In contrast, conflicts in Pakistan and DR Congo escalated.

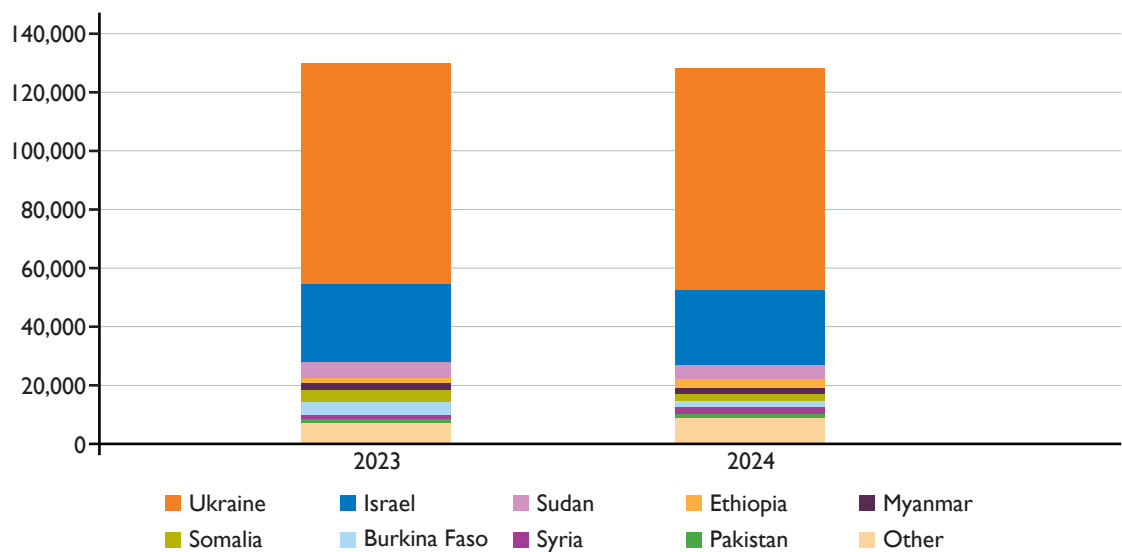


Figure 6: Share of battle-related deaths in 2023 and 2024.
Source: UCDP Battle-Related Deaths Dataset (Pettersson et al, 2025).

2.3. Regional Variation in State-Based Conflict

To provide historical context on the global distribution of state-based conflicts, Figure 7 presents regional trends from 1946 to 2024. In 2024, Africa remains the region with the highest number of state-based conflict (28), followed by Asia (17), the Middle East (10), Europe (3), and the Americas (2). Compared a decade ago, the number of conflicts in Africa has nearly doubled, from 15 in 2013 to 28 in 2024. Over the same period, the continent has also experienced increasingly brutal conflicts, particularly in Ethiopia, Sudan and the DR Congo.

The 2024 trends are nearly identical to those of 2023, with one notable change: the number of conflicts in the Americas increased from one to two. The additional conflict occurred in Haiti, between the government and the non-state group Viv Ansanm. This coalition, formed by the main gang factions operating in Port-au-Prince, set their rivalry aside to target the interim Prime Minister, Ariel Henry. In recent years, Haiti has faced escalating violence, primarily in the form of non-state conflict and one-sided violence (see below). However, 2024 marked its first state-based conflict since 2004. Despite its significance, this conflict has received little attention from either the media or politicians.

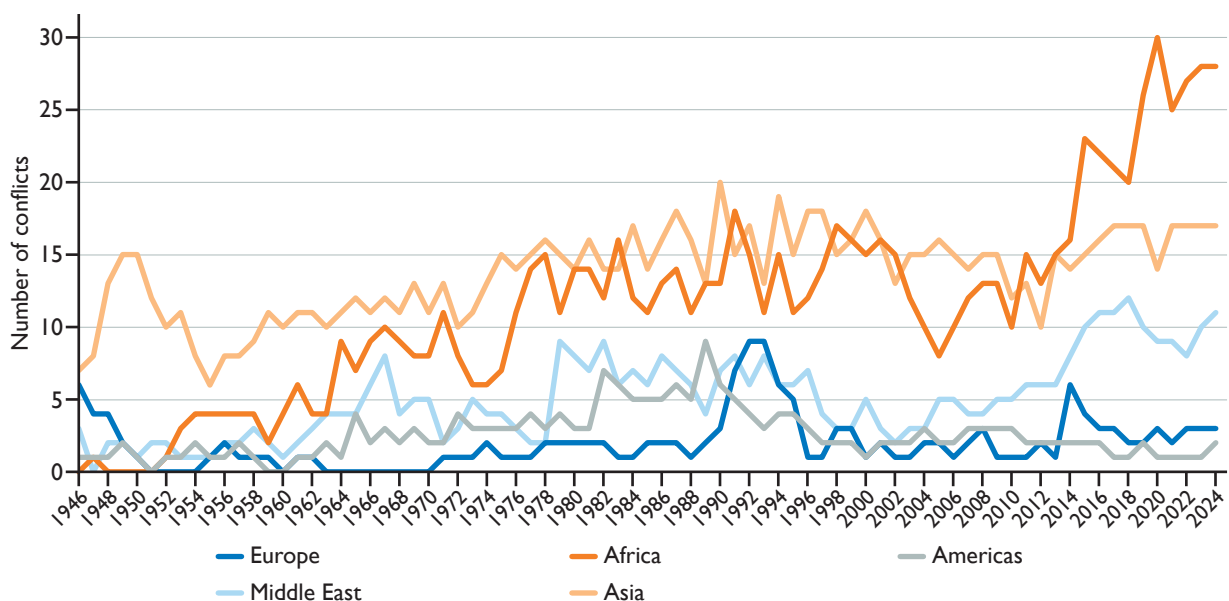


Figure 7: Number of countries with state-based armed conflict by region, 1946–2024.
Source: UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset (Pettersson et al, 2025).

Figure 8 presents a global overview of state-based conflict events in 2024. These events, represented by black dots, are heavily concentrated in Ukraine, Israel and Syria and across parts of Africa—particularly in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger. In addition, several conflict events occurred in Russia, particularly in the Caucasus region.

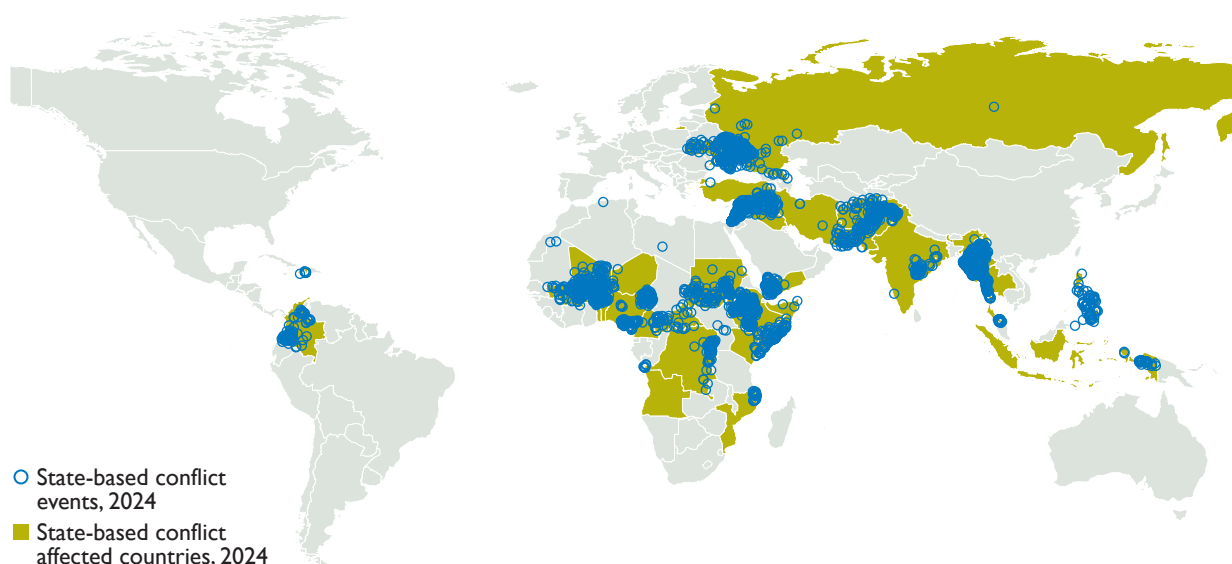


Figure 8: State-based conflict events and conflict-affected countries, 2024.
Source: UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset (GED) (Pettersson et al, 2025).

3. Non-State Conflicts

Conflicts do not need to involve a state government to inflict considerable human suffering. In fact, much of today's violence occurs between organized groups without governmental links. These groups take many forms, as discussed in Section 3.1.

3.1. Global Trends in Non-State Violence

Non-state conflicts have increased over the past decade. In 2024, there were 74 non-state conflicts, a slight decrease from the 80 in 2023. As Figure 9 indicates, the number of non-state conflicts has stabilized at a considerably higher level than we saw a decade ago. The UCDP identifies three types of non-state groups: (i) *formally organized groups*, which are any non-governmental actors that have publicly named themselves and use armed force against another similarly organized groups; (ii) *informally organized groups*—typically supporters of political parties; and (iii) *informally organized (communal conflicts) groups*—loosely organized actors linked by shared identity markers such as religion, ethnicity, nationality, tribe or clan.

The rise in non-state conflicts is primarily driven by a sharp increase in the number of conflicts between formally organized groups. Communal conflicts have also increased gradually in recent years, while conflicts between informally organized groups have remained low—generally fewer than two per year. Figure 9 also shows the number of battle-related deaths by type of non-state group. In total, non-state conflicts caused over 17,500 battle-related deaths in 2024, marking a slight decrease from 2023.

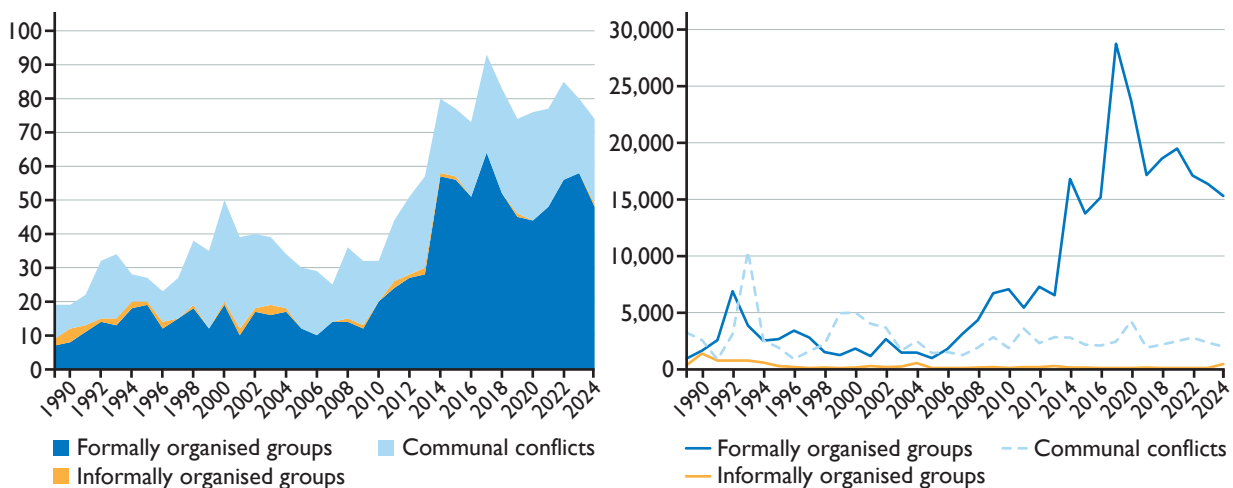


Figure 9: Non-state conflicts by conflict type and battle-related deaths in non-state conflict by organization type, 1989–2024. Source: UCDP Non-State Conflict Dataset (Pettersson et al, 2025).

3.2. Regional Variation

Figure 10 illustrates regional trends in non-state conflicts from 1989 to 2024. Africa recorded the highest number in 2024, rising from 32 to 37. The Americas followed, though the number of conflicts declined from 41 to 29.

Since 2017, the Americas have seen a sharp rise in the number of non-state conflicts, driven primarily by drug- and gang-related violence. However, in 2024, the number of non-state conflicts in the region declined, mainly due to reductions in Brazil and Ecuador. On the other hand, Africa experienced a sharp increase in non-state conflicts in 2024, reversing several years of decline and once again becoming the continent with the highest number of such conflicts. Historically, Africa has been the region most prone to non-state conflicts, though it had seen a downward trend over the past six years.

While both Africa and the Americas host a high number of non-state conflicts, they involve different types of non-state actors. In the Americas, non-state conflicts are more likely to involve highly organized actors, while in Africa, communal conflicts are more common. The Middle East, which saw the largest increase in non-state conflicts during the 2010s, has since experienced a sharp decline. Europe and Asia continue to report relatively low levels of non-state conflicts.

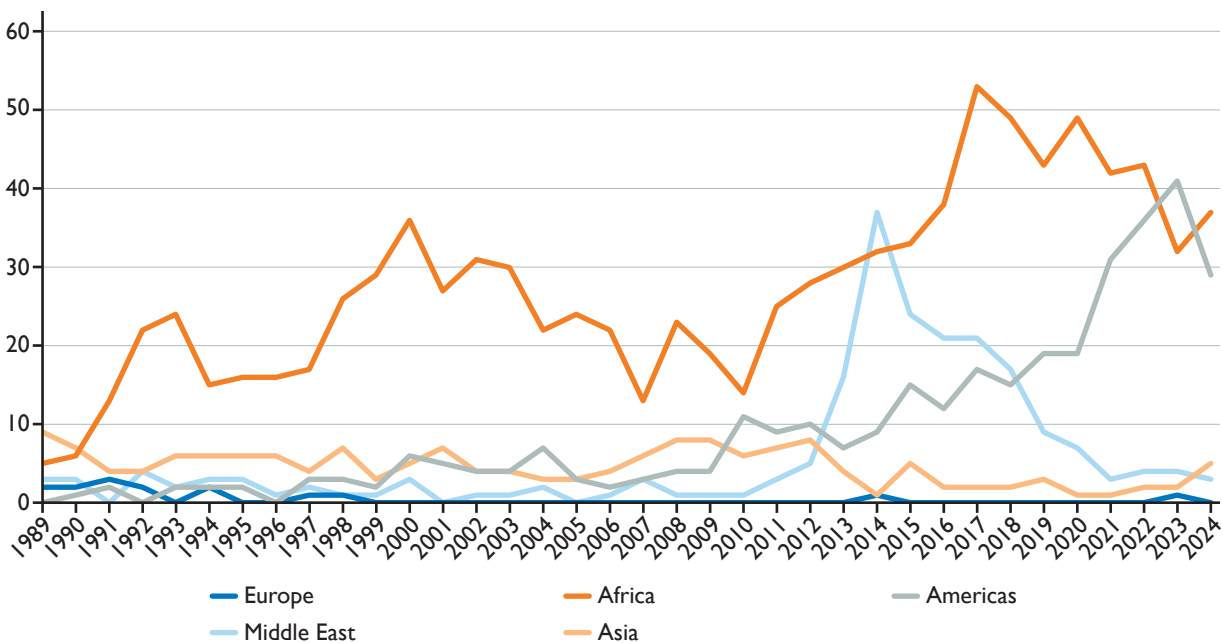


Figure 10: Total number of non-state conflicts by region, 1989–2024.
Source: UCDP Non-State Conflict Dataset (Pettersson et al, 2025).

4. One-Sided Violence

Civilians often bear the brunt of violence in ongoing conflicts, whether state-based or non-state. The UCDP definition of one-sided violence excludes extrajudicial killings, which means that violence perpetrated by governments is likely under-reported in the data.

4.1. Global Trends in One-Sided Violence

Overall, fatalities from one-sided violence rose from 10,700 in 2023 to 14,000 in 2024. Figure 11 illustrates the number of perpetrators of one-sided violence per year by actor type—government or non-state actor (left)—alongside the number of resulting fatalities (right). In 2024, both government and non-state actors' fatalities increased. However, non-state actors were responsible for the majority of these deaths.

Since the 2000s, the number of actors perpetrating one-sided violence has steadily increased, remaining above 40 since 2019. In 2024, 49 actors were recorded—14 government and 35 non-state actors.

In addition to state-perpetrated violence and state-based conflict, non-state groups carried out one-sided violence in several countries. DR Congo (8 actors) and Haiti (6 actors) had the highest number of groups that resorted to one-sided violence, particularly in their eastern regions. Moreover, several transnational Islamist groups—including IS, JNIM, and JAS (formerly Boko Haram), account for a large share of the fatalities, particularly in West Africa.

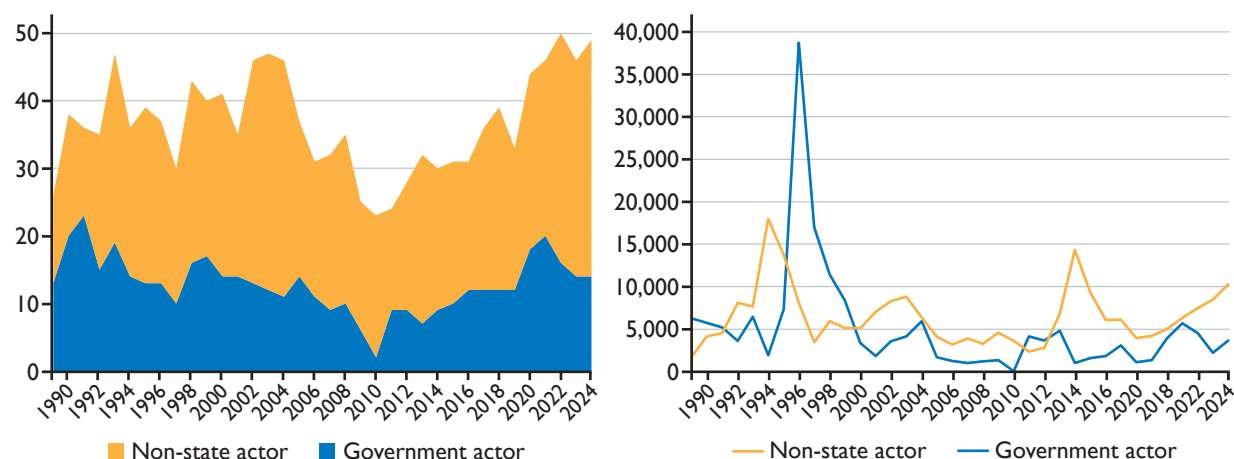


Figure 11: Incidents of one-sided violence including number of perpetrators and fatalities, 1989–2024.⁵ Source: UCDP One-Sided Violence Dataset (Pettersson et al, 2025).

4.2. Regional Variation

The use of one-sided violence varies across regions. Figure 12 displays the number of groups that conducted one-sided violence in each region between 1989 and 2024. As with non-state conflicts, Africa hosts the highest number of such groups, with 27 recorded. Comparatively, the Americas has 13, Asia 6, the Middle East 1, and Europe none. However, these figures reflect only the number of groups—not the scale or intensity of the violence they commit.

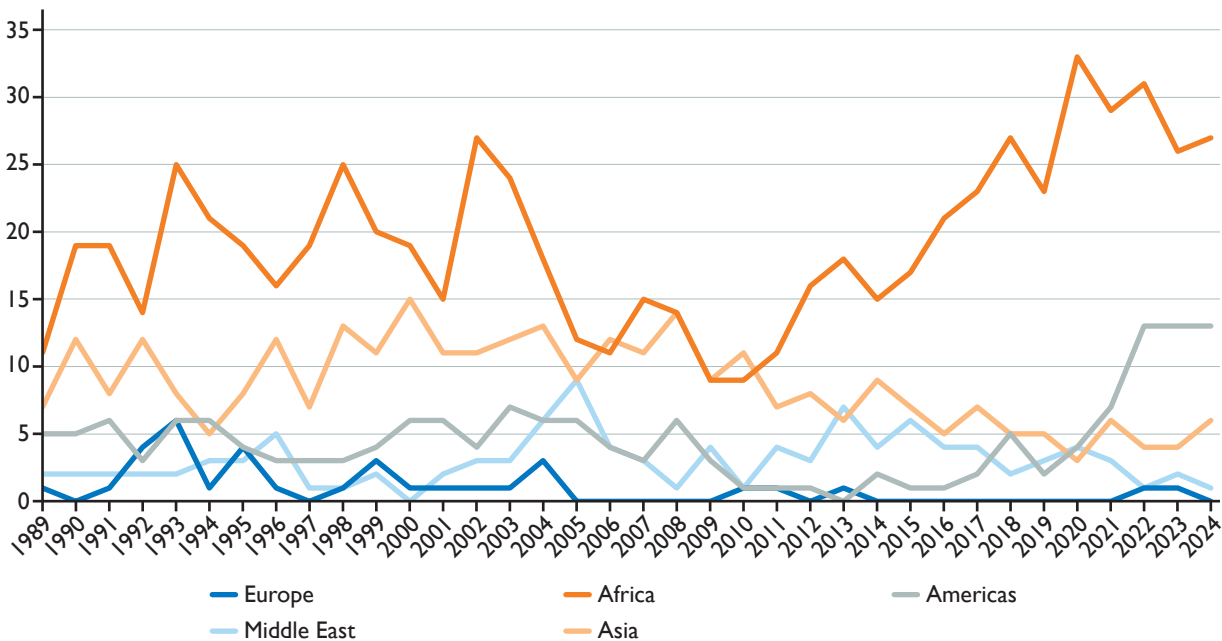


Figure 12: Number of actors who used one-sided violence by region, 1989–2024.
Source: UCDP One-Sided Violence Dataset (Pettersson et al, 2025).

Conclusion

In this PRIO paper, we provided an overview of global trends in state-based conflicts, non-state conflicts, and one-sided violence from 1946 to 2024. By disaggregating the data to the regional and country levels, we aimed to gain a better understanding of contemporary conflict patterns.

What does the data tell us about state-based conflicts in 2024? Sixty-one state-based conflicts were recorded in 36 conflict-affected countries, resulting in almost 130,000 battle-related deaths. In both number and intensity, the conflict landscape closely resembled that of 2023. The level of violence remains high by historical standards—making 2024 the fourth most violent since the end of the Cold War. Two wars were primarily responsible for the high death toll: the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and the bombardment of Gaza. Both conflicts persisted throughout 2024 with minimal progress toward peace. While 2025 has seen some movement in these conflicts, violence continues.

The number of non-state conflicts declined from 80 in 2023 to 74 in 2024. Battle-related deaths in these conflicts reached 17,500 in 2024. Africa and the Americas remained the regions with the highest number of non-state conflicts, though the nature of these conflicts differs significantly. In the Americas, they are often driven by highly organized groups such as gangs and drug cartels. In contrast, non-state conflicts in Africa are more commonly communal in nature.

In 2024, almost 14,000 fatalities were attributed to one-sided violence—a substantial increase from 2023. While non-state actors were responsible for the majority of these fatalities, fourteen governments also perpetrated one-sided violence. This type of violence often occurs within the context of state-based conflicts, as seen in Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the conflict in the DR Congo. However, similarly to non-state conflicts, there is an increase of one-sided violence outside of active war zones—particularly the Americas. Countries like Haiti, Brazil and Mexico, which are not experiencing state-based conflicts, have nonetheless seen a rise in this type of violence.

Although the overall conflict landscape remained largely unchanged from 2023 to 2024, it is important to acknowledge that 2024 ranks among the most violent years since the Cold War. This suggests that a new, higher baseline of global violence may be emerging—one that exceeds the levels we saw 20 years ago. The apparent lack of change may also reflect the increasing difficulty of resolving conflicts, which have become more complex and entrenched. Many involve overlapping layers of violence, with multiple non-state actors fighting states, other armed groups, or targeting civilians. Over the past decade, we have also seen a rise in transnational non-state actors such as IS and JNIM, further complicating the picture. This growing complexity poses serious challenges for international and humanitarian actors, making it increasingly difficult to navigate and operate within the conflict landscape.

State-Based Conflict-Affected Countries by Region

Africa

- Angola
- Benin
- Burkina Faso
- Burundi
- Cameroon
- Central African Republic
- Democratic Republic of Congo
- Ethiopia
- Kenya
- Mali
- Mozambique
- Niger
- Nigeria
- Rwanda
- Somalia
- Sudan
- Togo

Americas

- Colombia
- Haiti

Asia

- Afghanistan
- India
- Indonesia
- Myanmar
- Pakistan
- Philippines
- Thailand

Europe

- Ukraine
- Russia

Middle East

- Iran
- Iraq
- Israel
- Syria
- Turkey
- Yemen

Notes

1. We should note the limitations of our PRIO Papers in the *Conflict Trends Reporting* series. We rely on UCDP data because it is the best available data when it comes to armed violence, yet some caveats remain. First, while we provide an overview of trends in data, we do not provide causal explanations for particular trends – though we do highlight relevant findings from existing research results. Second, UCDP's data on one-sided violence faces two criticisms: coding source bias and inaccuracy in reported numbers, both of which present limitations to the data. Coding is based on news reports as well as reports from human rights organizations and UN reports. Open-source information can be subject to manipulation by governments. Moreover, it is difficult to obtain quality data on violence in detention centres and on extrajudicial killings, and thus such deaths are by definition excluded from UCDP's data on one-sided violence. Additional information on extrajudicial killings can be found in the Political Terror Scale (PTS), which is the most widely used data source on this topic. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch should be consulted for country-specific reports.
2. Unless otherwise noted, we often use the term 'conflict' to refer to both armed conflicts (with a minimum of 25 battle-related deaths per year) and wars (armed conflicts with more than 1,000 battle-related deaths per year) for simplicity's sake. The exception is when we examine conflict intensity, which is when we distinguish between 'conflict' and 'war'.
3. Battle-related deaths do not account for the significant number of indirect deaths from conflict, such as those resulting from famine, lack of health facilities or collateral damage. Numbers from indirect deaths are difficult to verify due to the lack of reliable data.
4. A civil conflict is regarded as internationalized if one or more third-party governments are involved in the conflict through contributing or deploying combat personnel in support of the objective of either side
5. Figure II excludes one-sided fatalities related to the genocide in Rwanda due to the magnitude of the one-sided violence. The UCDP one-sided violence data has registered 768,619 fatalities in Rwanda in 1994 at the hands of the Rwandan Government.

References

Davies, S., Pettersson, T., & Öberg, M. (forthcoming). Organized violence 1989–2024, and the return of conflict between states. *Journal of Peace Research*.

Lacina, B. A., & Gleditsch, N. P. (2006). Monitoring trends in global combat: A new dataset of battle deaths. In H. Brunborg, E. Tabeau, & H. Urdal (Eds.), *The demography of armed conflict* (pp. 145–165). Springer.

Mumford, A. (2013). Proxy warfare and the future of conflict. *The RUSI Journal*, 158(2), 40–46.

Petterson, T., Shawn D., Sollenberg, M., Öberg, M. (2025) Organized violence 1989-2024, and the challenges of identifying civilian victims. *Journal of Peace Research* (July 2025).

Sundberg, R., & Melander, E. (2013). Introducing the UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset. *Journal of Peace Research*, 50(4), 523–532. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343313484347>.

Conflict Trends: A Global Overview, 1946–2024

This PRIO Paper examines global conflict trends between 1946 and 2024 using data from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP). 2024 marked a historic peak in state-based conflicts, with 61 active conflicts across 36 countries – the highest number recorded since 1946. It was also the fourth most violent year since the end of the Cold War, driven largely by the civil war in Ethiopia's Tigray region, the ongoing Russian

invasion of Ukraine, and the bombings in Gaza. These developments underscore a troubling resurgence of large-scale warfare and call for renewed scrutiny of the global conflict landscape. While state-based violence increased, non-state conflicts decreased slightly compared to previous years. In 2024, 74 non-state conflicts were recorded, resulting in approximately 17,500 battle-related deaths. The year witnessed a shift in regional dynamics:

while the Americas saw a decline in non-state conflicts, Africa experienced a sharp increase. As such, Africa is now the continent with the highest levels of non-state conflicts. One-sided violence against civilians was conducted by 49 actors in 2024. While non-state actors remain the drivers behind fatalities resulting from one-sided violence, fourteen governments were responsible for one-sided violence against civilians in 2024.

Siri Aas Rustad

Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)

