



CONFLICT BAROMETER | 2020

Heidelberg Institute for
International Conflict Research



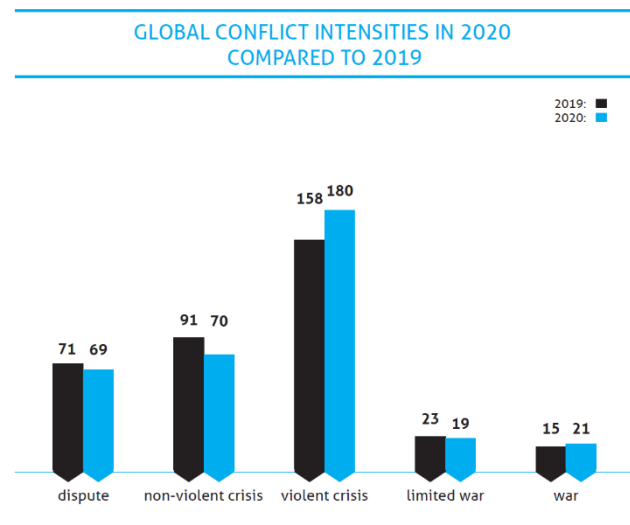
Heidelberg, 22.03.2021



Number of wars increases from 15 to 21 – Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research publishes the Conflict Barometer 2020

The Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIK) presents the 29th edition of its annual world report Conflict Barometer 2020. The Conflict Barometer contains in-depth analysis of political conflict dynamics worldwide, including violent as well as non-violent conflicts. The violent conflicts are differentiated between violent crises, limited wars and wars. Indicators of conflict means and consequences are used in order to assign an intensity to a particular conflict. The report is completed by conflict maps and graphs as well as accounts of conflict resolution. Moreover, spotlight articles analyze specific conflict dimensions and their influence on political realities.

In 2020, HIIK documented 359 conflicts worldwide, of which 220 remained non-violent and 139 were fought violently. In comparison to 2019, the number of recorded wars increased from 15 to 21, which is the highest level since 2014. Among others, the secessionist conflict over South Yemen, the confrontations over the Nagorno-Karabakh region as well as conflicts between Islamist groups and governments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Mozambique escalated. Besides intra-state wars in South Sudan and Ethiopia, the conflict over the Tigray region added up. Three wars de-escalated to limited wars or violent crises, 13 wars continued. Seven conflicts escalated to wars and a new conflict broke out directly on war-level



In contrast to 2019, **Sub-Sahara Africa (SSA)** was the region with the highest number of reported wars. In total, eleven wars were observed in the Sahel region, the DRC, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Somalia, South Sudan, and Nigeria, of which five wars are new ones. None of last year's wars de-escalated. In **West Asia, North Africa, and Afghanistan (WANA)**, this number decreased from eight to seven whereas the number of limited wars reduced to one. Here, the conflict over the Sinai Peninsula was downgraded to a limited war. In the **Americas**, the drug cartel conflict in Brazil remains on the intensity level of a war, while the cartel conflict in Mexico was set to a limited war. While the limited war between the Colombian government and the respective cartels de-escalated to a violent crisis, the conflict over subnational predominance between the ELN and the government is now observed as a limited war. In **Asia and Oceania**, HIIK did not observe any wars, however, the number of limited wars slightly decreased



from five to four. While the conflict between India and Pakistan, the independence conflict over Papua in Indonesia, and the secessionist conflict over the autonomous Bangsamoro region in the Philippines de-escalated, the conflict over autonomy in Myanmar's federal states Kayah and Karen as well as the conflict between Islamist groups and the Philippine government escalated. Other than last year, the conflicts between Azerbaijan and Armenia led to the observance of two wars in **Europe**, while the Donbass conflict in Eastern Ukraine was listed as a limited war.

First published in 1992, HIIK celebrates the 29th anniversary of the Conflict Barometer this year. Since then, the institute has been dedicated to researching, documenting, and evaluating intra-, inter-, trans- and sub-state conflicts worldwide. More than 200 young scientists work at the HIIK on a voluntary basis. The HIIK presents its research results in the annual Conflict Barometer. On March 25, 2021, at 11 a.m., the Conflict Barometer will be presented at an online launch event, after which the publication can be downloaded for free from 12pm at www.hiik.de.

For interview requests, feel free to contact vorstand@hiik.de.

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HIGHLY VIOLENT CONFLICTS IN 2020

LIMITED WARS (19)

WARS (21)

WEST ASIA, NORTH AFRICA, AND AFGHANISTAN

Egypt (militant groups / Sinai Peninsula)

Afghanistan (Taliban et al.)
 Libya (opposition)
 Syria (opposition)
 Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)
 Turkey (PKK / TAK)
 Yemen (al-Hirak / Southern Yemen)
 Yemen, Saudi Arabia (al-Houthi forces)

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Burkina Faso (inter-communal rivalry)
 Cameroon (English-speaking minority)
 Central African Republic (Anti-Balaka, ex-Séléka)
 Ethiopia (OLF / Oromia)
 Ethiopia (opposition)
 Mali (inter-communal rivalry / central Mali)
 Nigeria (farmers – pastoralists)
 South Sudan (opposition)
 Sudan (Darfur)

DR Congo (ADF)
 DR Congo (Ituri militias)
 DR Congo (Mayi-Mayi et al.)
 Ethiopia (inter-communal rivalry)
 Ethiopia, Eritrea (TPLF / Tigray)
 Mali, Burkina Faso et al. (JNIM, AQIM et al.)
 Mali, Nigeria et al. (ISWAP / ISWAP-GS)
 Mozambique (ASWJ)
 Nigeria, Chad et al. (JAS-Boko Haram)
 Somalia, Kenya (al-Shabaab)
 South Sudan (inter-communal rivalry)

THE AMERICAS

Colombia (ELN)
 Colombia (inter-cartel violence, neo-paramilitary groups, left-wing militants)
 Mexico (drug cartels)
 Mexico (inter-cartel rivalry, paramilitary groups)

Brazil (drug trafficking organizations)

ASIA AND OCEANIA

Myanmar (AA / Rakhine State)
 Myanmar (KNU, KNLA, DKBA et al. / Karen State, Kayah State)
 Philippines (CPP, NPA)
 Philippines (Islamist militant groups)

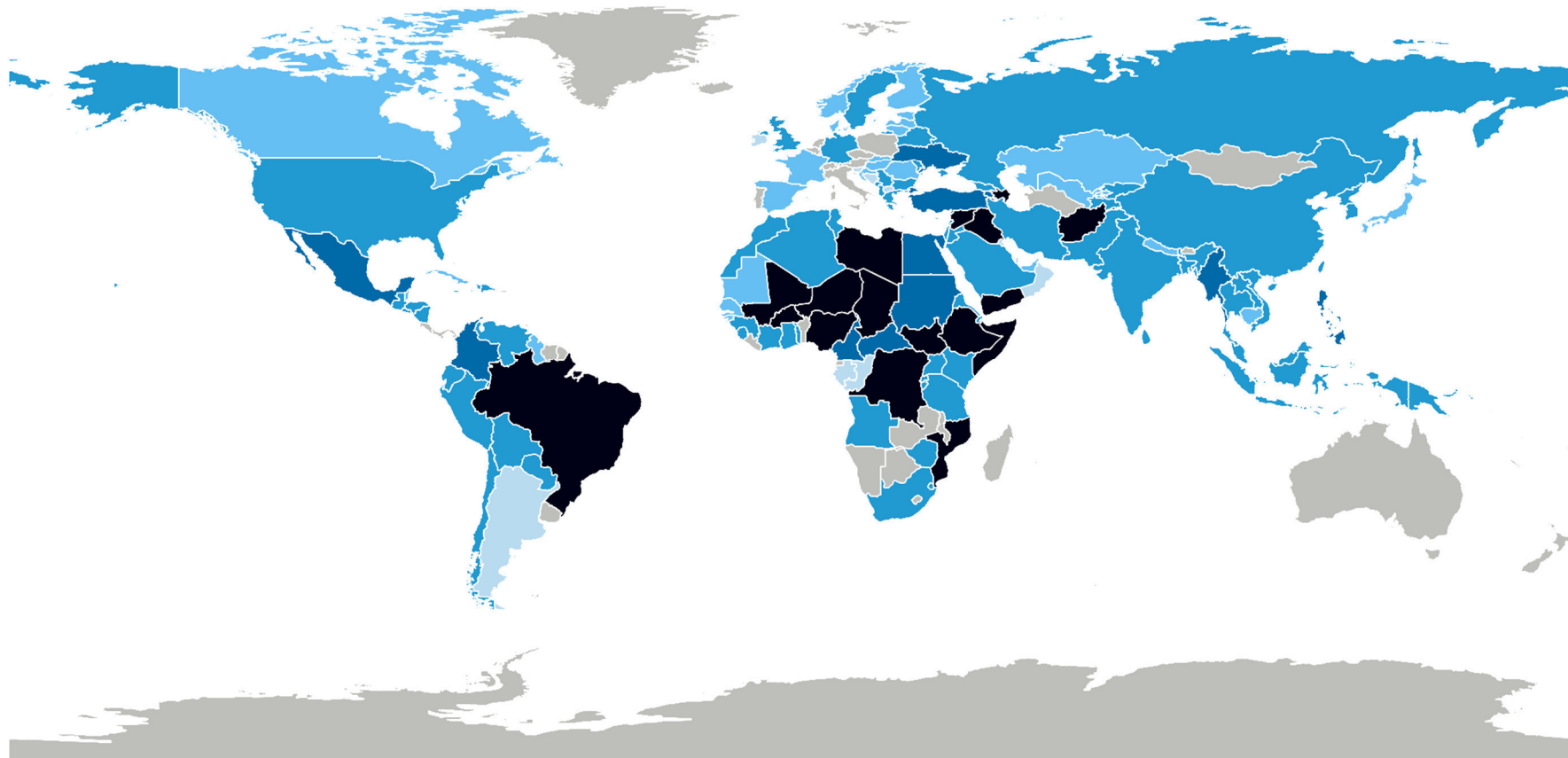
EUROPE

Ukraine (Donbas)

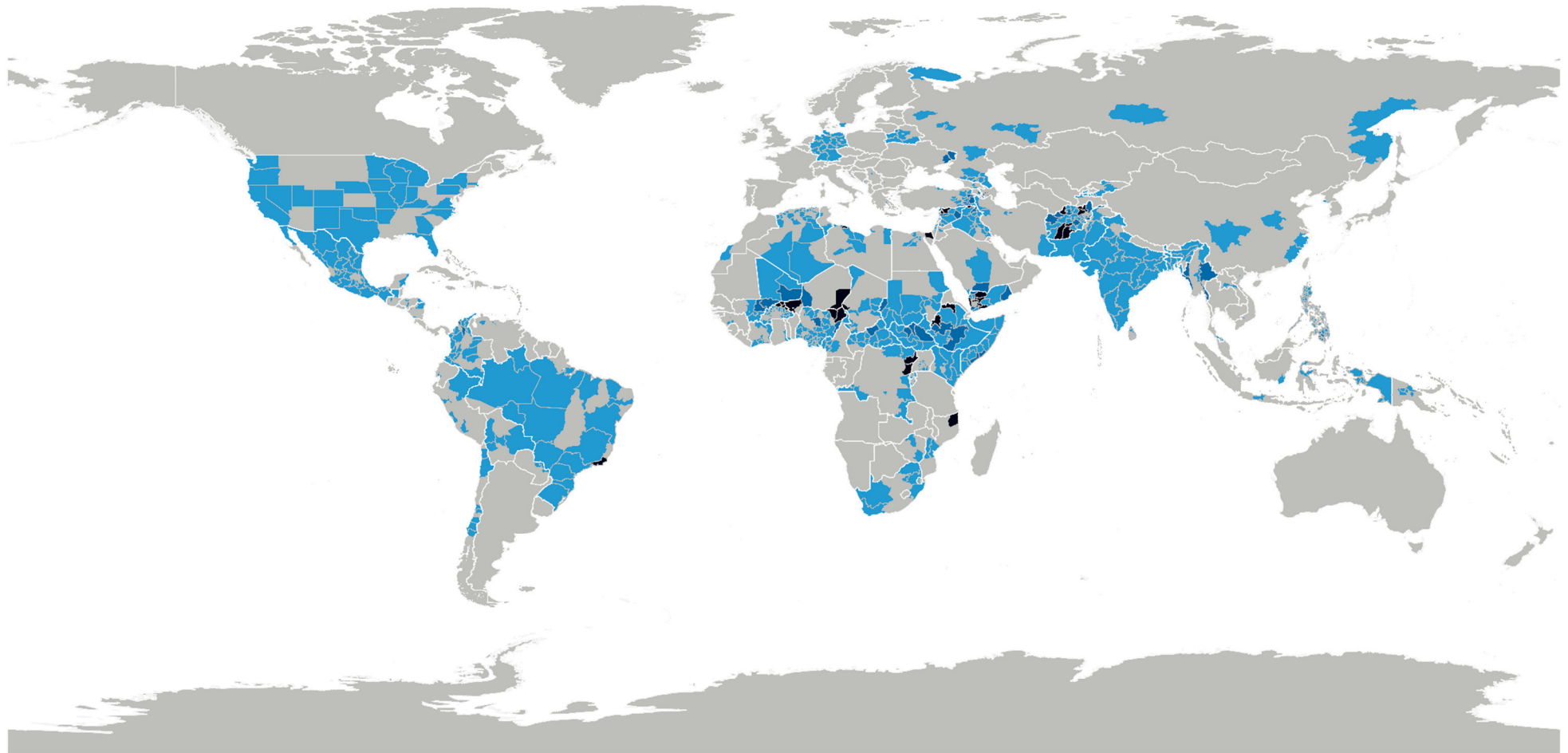
Armenia – Azerbaijan
 Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)

CONFLICTS IN 2020

(NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL)



CONFLICTS IN 2020 (SUBNATIONAL LEVEL)

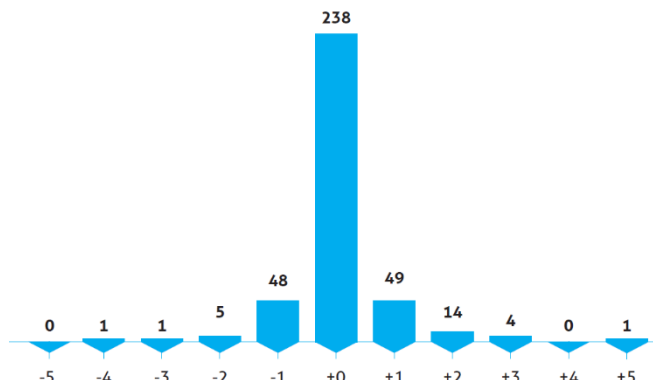


INTENSITY
5 WAR
4 LIMITED WAR
3 VIOLENT CRISIS

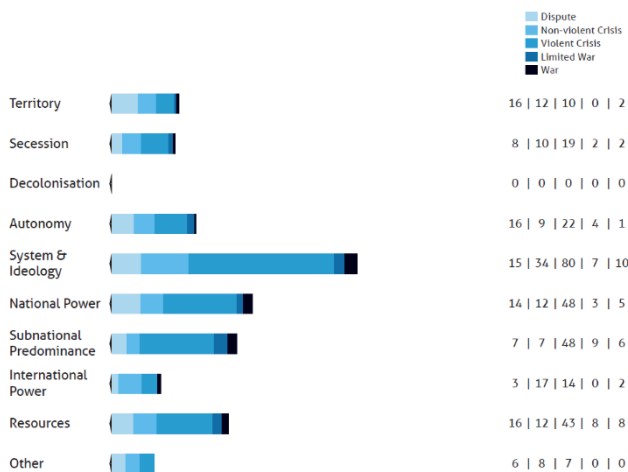
FREQUENCY OF CONFLICT INTENSITIES BY CONFLICT TYPE IN 2019 AND 2020



GLOBAL CONFLICT INTENSITY CHANGES IN 2020



FREQUENCY OF CONFLICT INTENSITIES BY CONFLICT ITEM IN 2020



FREQUENCY OF REGIONAL CONFLICT INTENSITIES IN 2020 AND 2019

