



# PRESS RELEASE

# | 2014

Heidelberg Institute for  
International Conflict Research

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*Heidelberg, March 12th, 2015.* The Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIC) presents with the *Conflict Barometer 2014* its current data and analyses on global conflict events of the year 2014. HIIC analysts counted **424** conflicts in 2014, **46** of which were classified as highly violent due to the heavy use of organized violence and its grave consequences. **21** of these highly violent conflicts were at the level of wars. Compared to the 20 wars recorded in the previous year, the wars in 2014 were observed in a considerably larger number of states.

For the first time since 2008, a war was fought in Europe. Following the Maidan protests in Kiev, the increasingly tense situation in the Ukraine escalated into a highly violent conflict between the new government and the militias in the eastern part of the country. Researchers further observed **one** war in each the Americas as well as Asia and Oceania. The vast majority of wars, however, was again recorded in the Middle East and Maghreb region (**9**) as well as in sub-Saharan Africa (**9**). The number of wars increased by **three** in the former region, whereas the number decreased by **two** in the latter region. Aside from Europe, transnational actors dominated the highly violent conflicts across state borders. This development is most evident in the conflicts involving militant groups such as IS/ISIS in the Middle East as well as Boko Haram in West Africa.

In 2014, Boko Haram's attacks were no longer limited to the northeastern part of Nigeria but also included targets in Cameroon and Niger. With more than 10,000 casualties and one million displaced persons, 2014 marks the most violent year yet since the conflict erupted in 2009. Conflicts between farmers and pastoralists in the Nigerian Middle Belt resulted in the death of more than 2,500 people and roughly 300,000 people were displaced. In the eastern part of the Congo, the conflict between the militant Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and the governments of Congo and Uganda took on a warlike scale due to the death of approximately 1,000 people. The war fought between the former Séléka-Alliance and the Anti-Balaka Groups in the Central African Republic continued even though an interim government was established. The presence of international military forces in the country increased by 12,000 troops provided by the UN as well as 1,000 soldiers deployed by the European Union to secure the capital Bangui. With the help of AMISOM and local militias, the central government in Somalia was able to regain control over multiple cities previously conquered by the Islamist militia Al-Shabaab. In 2014, the war between the troops led by the South Sudanese President Salva Kiir and the former Vice President Riek Machar once again led to more than 10,000 casualties. As in the previous years, Sudan alone was again the site of three wars.

In the Middle East and Maghreb, the Syrian civil war reached a new level due to ISIS and their proclaiming of the caliphate in June 2014. ISIS did not only fight against the Syrian government but also against parts of the opposition as well as against Kurdish areas in the North. In Iraq, ISIS took control over large areas in the Western and Northwestern parts of the country. ISIS had to face an international coalition lead by the US combating the group in both Iraq and Syria. The violence between the government and its opposition in Libya escalated and caused the country's de-facto division. The violent conflict in Gaza was characterized as a war again as well following the involved parties' combat actions during operation "Protective Edge". The conflict in Yemen intensified increasingly as a consequence of the al-Houthi militias' advances as far as into the capital Sana'a. Despite the ongoing war against the Taliban, the ISAF mission in Afghanistan was terminated after 13 years. In Pakistan, the Tehrik-i-Taliban continued their war against the Pakistani government, culminating in the attacks of Karachi and Peshawar. The tensions between Pakistan and India reached a highly violent scale as more than 20,000 people were forced to leave the borderland in Jammu following grave mortar attacks.

The opposition conflict in Western Ukraine, which resulted in a coup d'état in February 2014, led to several subsequent conflicts. In their course, especially the situation in the Southern and Eastern parts of the country destabilized. The war between the government and the different militias alone, which revolved around status and resources in the Donbass, caused the deaths of more than 4,800 people and 1,2 million people were displaced.

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Just as last year, the war in Mexico between the government and the Mexican drug cartels remained the only war not fought for ideological reasons or political power but rather to maximize profit. Violent protests against the government erupted in the fall of 2014 after the police abducted protesting students and left them in the hands of a drug cartel. In Mexico and South as well as Central America, nine violent conflicts were observed in which criminal organizations were involved. As in the previous year, the conflicts between those criminal organizations in Mexico and Columbia reached highly violent levels.

Aside from the sole highly violent interstate conflict between India and Pakistan, the HIIK observed interstate crises, among them eleven violent crises, in all five regions in 2014. Striking were the exacerbating tensions among Russia, on the one hand, and the United States, NATO, EU, on the other as a result of the crises in the Ukraine and the annexation of the Crimea. Interstate conflicts about territory were also monitored between the People's Republic of China and the neighboring states Japan, India, Vietnam, and the Philippines. The most frequent conflict items of interstate conflicts were territory (**50**), followed by international power (**35**) as well as natural resources, fishing grounds, and water.

Furthermore, the HIIK observed **166** intrastate conflicts of medium intensity. **38** of these contested resources, **40** secession or autonomy, and **119** national power and/or change of the political system. Social protest movements played a dominant role in the latter, especially in Bangladesh, Brazil, Hong Kong, Pakistan, and Venezuela. The military intervened in Egypt, Burkina Faso, and Thailand.

*Since 1990, the HIIK is dedicated to the research, documentation, and evaluation of intra- and interstate political conflicts worldwide. The annually published „Conflict Barometer“ contains an overview of the current developments of violent and non-violent conflicts. The latest edition can be downloaded free of charge at [www.hiik.de](http://www.hiik.de) (as of **March 18<sup>th</sup> 2015** at 12 p.m.).*

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