



Please notice: This announcement is under a strict retention period until Friday, February 24, 2017, 12 a.m. CET

Heidelberg, February 22, 2017. The Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIK) presents with the new *Conflict Barometer* its current data and analyses on global conflict events of 2016. According to its methodology, the HIK counted **402** conflicts overall, with **226** of them conducted on a violent level. Compared to the previous year, the number of wars (**18**) decreased by one while the number of limited wars (**20**) decreased by four.

In 2016, the HIK registered two new wars which both took place in the region Middle East and Maghreb (MENA).

In Syria, violent clashes occurred between opposition and Islamist groups like Jabhat al-Nusra despite their joint fight against the government of President Assad and the so-called Islamic State (IS). In Yemen, the increased control of territories and mutual attacks between the Islamist organization al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and government troops led to an escalation of the conflict which had already existed since 1992.

Further 16 conflicts continued on war level while, inter alia, the war in the Philippines de-escalated.

The most highly-violent conflicts in 2016 took place in the region Sub-Saharan Africa. Overall, in 8 of the 48 sub-saharan states violent and military clashes as well as attacks were observed which resulted in high numbers of fatalities and refugees.

Besides the continuing state of war concerning the terrorist group Boko Haram in Nigeria and neighboring states, the HIK also merged the activities of the Islamist group al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, and countries of the Maghreb, into another transstate conflict. The civil wars in Sudanese Darfur and Somalia continued unabated after more than ten years. The Islamist group al-Shabaab regained control of considerable parts of Somalia despite the military support of the USA, the EU, and the African Union, for the Somali government.

In the Middle East and Maghreb (MENA), most of the worldwide wars were observed with Syria being most affected with three conflicts at war level.

The war against the Taliban and other Islamist groups in Afghanistan led to at least 11,400 civilian casualties in 2016. The majority of the casualties was killed in ground operations, suicide attacks, and by IEDs. In Yemen, air strikes by the Saudi-led military coalition resulted in further high numbers of casualties. According to official figures, at least 10,000 people were killed since the beginning of the war and about 19 million are dependent on humanitarian aid.

With 123 observed conflicts, Asia and Oceania was the region with the highest number of conflicts while most of them were carried out on a low-violent or non-violent level. In Pakistan, the war between various Islamist groups and the government continued for the 10th consecutive year. Moreover, diplomatic relations between Pakistan and India deteriorated and violent clashes in the Kashmir border region, in which 83 people died, were again registered.

Further diplomatic tensions between Asian states were also observed between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China (Taiwan) as well as between North Korea, on the one hand, and South Korea and the USA, on the other. After North Korea had fired further missiles, the South Korean and US governments decided to install the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system in South Korea.

In the Americas, the War on Drugs between Mexican cartels and the government of the country continued to be the only war in the region.

Further highly-violent conflicts in 2016 took place in Brazil, El Salvador, and Colombia. While the conflict between the guerilla movement FARC and the Colombian government declined to a low-violent level after the commencement of peace negotiations, the conflict between the Army of National Liberation (ELN) and the government increased to a limited war as the latter targeted ELN camps in air strikes and ground operations. Further conflict escalations were observed in Brazil, where turf wars between security forces and members of drug trafficking organizations led to over 400 fatalities.

In Europe, the ongoing state of war in the Donbas region of Ukraine remained the only highly-violent conflict. Throughout 2016, the conflict parties accused each other of repeatedly breaking the ceasefires and of committing war crimes.

Violence in Europe was also observed in opposition conflicts in Russia and Moldova, in conflicts with xenophobic background in Germany and Sweden, as well as in conflicts between left-wing militants and right-wing extremists in Greece.

Since 1990, the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIK) is dedicated to the research, documentation, and evaluation of inter-, intra-, trans-, and substate 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/en/ (as of February 24, 2017, 12 a.m. CET).

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