Estimated Number of War Deaths in 1993

Wars and Armed Conflicts in 1993

Estimated Cumulative Number of War Deaths

Central & South America
1. Colombia
2. Ecuador
3. El Salvador
4. Guatemala
5. Mexico (Chiapas)
6. Nicaragua
7. Venezuela

West, Central & East Europe
8. Chechenya
9. Croatia
10. Georgia (South Ossetia)
11. Georgia (Abkhazia)
12. Moldova
13. Russia
14. Tajikistan
15. Moldova
16. Mozambique (Tsamboi)
17. Rwanda
18. Angola (Kabila)
19. Zaire
20. Sri Lanka
21. Turkey
22. Uganda

North Africa & Middle East
23. Anguilla
24. Algeria
25. Chad
26. Central African Republic
27. Congo
28. Democratic Republic of Congo
29. Eritrea
30. Ethiopia
31. Gabon
32. Gambia
33. Kenya (Mombasa)
34. Kenya (Nairobi)
35. Kenya (Kisumu)
36. Lesotho
37. Malawi
38. Mozambique (Nhamatanda)
39. Mozambique (Renamo)
40. Mozambique (EPLF)
41. Namibia (Namibia)
42. Namibia (South Africa)
43. Namibia (South Africa)
44. Namibia (South Africa)
45. Mauritius

Lower Intensity Conflicts

Afghanistan
100,000 - 200,000
200,000 - 500,000
500,000 - 1,000,000
1,000,000 - 2,000,000
2,000,000 - 5,000,000
5,000,000 - 10,000,000
10,000,000 or more

Burundi
100,000 or more

Libya
50,000 or more

Tajikistan
100,000 or more

Georgia
100,000 or more

Albania / Armenia
70,000 or more

Somalia
60,000 or more

South Africa
60,000 or more

Turkmenistan
50,000 or more

Algeria
50,000 or more

Somalia
50,000 or more

Uzbekistan
50,000 or more

Angola
50,000 or more

Burundi
350,000 or more

Liberia
150,000 or more

Guatemala
150,000 or more

Burma
150,000 or more

Chad
90,000 or more

Sri Lanka
78,000 - 100,000

Bosnia-Herzegovina
60,000 or more

Eritrea
60,000 or more

Uzbekistan
60,000 or more

Liberia
60,000 or more

Ethiopia
60,000 or more

Sri Lanka
60,000 or more

Somalia
60,000 or more

Bosnia-Herzegovina
60,000 or more

Liberia
60,000 or more

Guatemala
60,000 or more

Burma
60,000 or more

Chad
60,000 or more

Sri Lanka
60,000 or more

Bosnia-Herzegovina
60,000 or more

Liberia
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Guatemala
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Burma
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60,000 or more

Ongoing United Nations Peacekeeping Operations

Central & South Asia
61. Afghanistan / Pakistan (Pathhunistan)
62. Bangladesh (Chinagong Hi!?: Tracts; Pak-India)
63. Bangladesh (Pathunistan)
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THE PROBLEM: TRENDS IN WORLD CONFLICTS

The end of the Cold War, symbolised in the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, offered hopes for a 'new world order' based on cooperation rather than fear. These hopes have not been met, despite negotiated settlements to several proxy wars (Namibia, Mozambique, Ethiopia, South Africa, Cambodia). Instead, the Gulf War, the wars in Croatia and Bosnia and the Republics of the former Soviet Union (Armenia-Azerbaijan, Tadzhikistan, Georgia), the continuation of long-running wars in Asia (Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Kashmir, Burma and East Timor) and in Africa (Angola, Sudan), and the outbreak of new wars (Liberia, Somalia, Burundi, Rwanda), have ushered in a new period of regional instability, global fragmentation, and deepening poverty. The policies and activities of development agencies need to be re-appraised in the light of continuing and probably increasing levels of political violence.

Aggregate statistics on armed conflicts reveal some disturbing trends in the extent and nature of armed conflicts in the 1990s. While the numbers of wars and exact numbers of casualties are surprisingly still open to interpretation, there is a clear upward trend in both the number of wars and the number of people affected by war. In 1960 there were 10 major wars; by 1992, there were 50, 10 of which had started since 1985 (Gantzel, 1994). Not all wars are on this scale. In 1993, for example, 84 wars causing casualties of less than 1,000, and 60 disputes causing under 100 casualties, were recorded (see map NCO, 1994).

The character of warfare is changing. While primitive weaponry when organised (as in Rwanda) can be devastating, the proliferation of small arms, the use of landmines, and the tactics of modern counter-insurgency operations and low-intensity warfare, such as the clearance of land and manipulation of food supplies, have increased the incidence of civilian casualties. In World War II, 52 per cent of war-related deaths were of civilians; in today's wars, civilian deaths make up 90 per cent of deaths (Summerfield, 1990).

Historically, most wars have been associated with interstate relations and state formation. Today, interstate wars appear to be diminishing while internal, domestic, or intra-state wars are on the increase; with the formation of newly independent states this may change. The increase in 'internal' wars is reflected in a growth in war refugees, from 2.5 million in 1970 to 17.5 million in 1992, with a further 24 million displaced persons (USCR, 1993). Of these, 45 per cent are found in Africa and over 80 per cent are women and children. Unless the conflicts which have produced these refugee flows are contained the number of refugees could rise to 100 million by the year 2000 (Rupesinghe, 1992a).

Most of the current internal wars are taking place in the South. In 1993, of 79 countries experiencing war and political violence recorded by UNDP (1994) in 1993, 65 were in the South.

In Africa, in particular, armed conflict and political instability appear to be on the increase. While the end of the 1980s saw reduction in conflict in South Africa, Namibia, Angola, Mozambique, Morocco, and Ethiopia, and democratic elections in several countries, the 1990s have brought new wars in Liberia, Rwanda, and
Burundi, a return to war in Angola, and the intensification of conflicts in Somalia, Sudan, and Djibouti.

Patterns of refugee flows suggest a changing geography of political instability. Refugee populations have declined in East Asia and Latin America, while political instability in Africa, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia has led to increased refugee flows in those areas (Suhrke, 1993).

Wars are also tending to last longer. The war in Angola, for example, has been running for 19 years; there has been war in Mozambique for 13 years, in Sudan for 10, Somalia 5, Liberia 4, Sri Lanka 14, East Timor 19, Afghanistan 15, and Peru 14 years. For the millions of refugees and displaced persons, and the generations who have grown up in the midst of war, conflict has become the daily reality, and development a process of adaptation to insecurity and a state of permanent crisis (El Bushra and Piza-Lopez, 1994a; Duffield, 1994b).
Armed conflicts are occurring in some of the poorest areas of the globe, and affect the psychological, social, and material conditions of individuals, communities, and whole nations. In many areas social welfare services have been crippled, productive agricultural areas have been laid to waste, and industry has been destroyed or has collapsed. In the 1990s millions of people in Africa consistently face the threat of famine because of war.

The disastrous conditions created by these conflicts have become labelled as 'complex emergencies'. A complex emergency (a term which emerged in the late 1980s in reference to Africa) has been defined by the UN as a major humanitarian crisis of a multi-causal nature that requires a system-wide response. Complex emergencies are distinguished from so-called 'natural' emergencies. They are protracted political crises, which characteristically involve predatory political organisations which survive on war economies sustained through the violent transfer of assets (Duffield, 1994b). Under these conditions famine, food insecurity, nutritional stress, and vulnerability are not the product of 'simple' demographic, climatic, environmental or economic change, but the result of political victimisation. In 1993 there were 26 UN-designated complex emergencies affecting 59 million people (UN, 1994).

In present-day internal conflicts civilians are not just incidental victims, but the main targets, of violence. Guerrilla and counter-insurgency campaigns take civilian populations as their targets. The dehumanising acts of torture, rape, and mutilation carried out against families, communities, and ethnic groups are attempts to destroy the social fabric of society, and thus the first level of 'coping' mechanisms. The trauma, dislocation, and loss of a sense of community (Macrae et. al., 1993; Nordstrom, 1992), and the destruction of community-level organisations, makes survival and recovery more difficult.

The impact of conflict on individuals is mediated through social, political structures, and personal attributes (Bastian, 1993). War disrupts social security networks provided by households and extended kinship systems. In Rwanda and Bosnia, the manipulation and mobilisation of 'ethnic' identities has hardened differences between groups and destroyed long-standing reciprocal relations. In Somalia, where war has hardened segmentation between clans, the practice of exogamy has been relaxed. This has the effect of disrupting economic relations and increasing inter-clan hostility, insecurity, and therefore vulnerability. Wars disrupt the socialisation of children, and, combined with their exposure to and perhaps involvement in armed combat, can cause trauma and exacerbate tensions between age-groups that create long-term problems for social reconstruction.

Wars transform social relations and cause demographic changes which affect people's economic livelihoods. Forced conscription or killings can mean that households no longer have sufficient labour to carry on productive work; landmines can make farming unviable for years; merchants and markets are often the targets of armies, and trading systems collapse. Households are stripped of assets through looting, destruction or displacement. Coping or survival strategies are disrupted by violence, and the sale of assets by the weak enriches the powerful. The incidence of
HIV increases as a result of widespread sexual violence, with consequences for the livelihoods of families and whole communities. Human rights abuses against civilian populations in war have a direct impact on economies and livelihoods. Human rights and livelihood rights are therefore inter-related.

The different capacities and vulnerabilities of men and women determine their ability to cope with and survive conflicts (El Bushra and Piza-Lopez, 1994b). For example, where women's mobility is culturally constrained they may be less able than men to flee from conflict. Wars usually increase the number of female-headed households, and women often have to fulfil their own and men's responsibilities for family provision. Obtaining resources and credit, difficult in normal times, is likely to become harder for women without a male interlocutor. In Somalia, some women have resorted to marrying gunmen for protection. Conflict exacerbates the trends worldwide towards the 'feminisation of poverty'.

Added to the costs of the destruction of infrastructure, production capacity, communications, markets, and environmental resources, are the social costs to countries of maintaining a war. It is estimated that the direct costs of the wars in Angola and Mozambique were $30 and $15 billion respectively between 1980 and 1989. Military expenditure detracts from expenditure on development. A strong correlation has been made between infant mortality rates and the level of GNP devoted to military expenditure (Zwi and Ugalde, 1989). Protracted civil wars frighten away foreign investors, thereby reducing the possibilities of recovery.

Reconstructing countries and communities after war goes far beyond simply rebuilding infrastructure and economies. The effects of trauma and changing social relations, and the need to absorb demobilised fighters into communities, are long-term problems. Because of the protracted nature of many conflict-created emergencies, the usefulness of making a distinction between long-term and short-term needs has diminished. The maintenance and rehabilitation of households, communities, civil organisations, professional associations, and governmental structures need to begin during war. Reconstruction needs to be informed by an understanding of social relations, so as not to reinforce existing disadvantage or further marginalise vulnerable groups.

While the immediate impact of current wars on already impoverished countries is to deepen poverty and vulnerability, armed conflict, fought with ideological motives, may be a positive agent for change. Civil groups, such as women's organisations, NGOs, and community-based institutions, often emerge in response to armed conflicts and can all be positive forces for change. Groups may take up arms to challenge inequality and injustice, as did the ANC under apartheid, and the Zapatista movement in Mexico. In certain situations war may seem preferable to an unjust peace. During the recent fighting in Rwanda, some agencies argued against calling for a cease-fire on the grounds that this would have prolonged the genocide.

After three UN 'development decades', many of the social and economic development gains in the South are being undermined by a rising tide of political instability and violence. Armed conflict and insecurity are now major causes of persistent poverty, a fact accepted by a growing number of NGOs, donors (Dutch
Government, 1993), and the UN (UNDP, 1994). The lives of millions of people, and the livelihoods, culture and integrity of whole communities of people, are under threat; and the very notion of development is being questioned.
3 UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT

The causes of current armed conflicts are multiple and interconnected. They range from the volition of individuals and groups of actors, to structural inequalities and institutionalised injustice. They include unresolved historic issues of identity and sovereignty, issues of governance and democracy, issues of poverty, uneven development, and environmental change. The causes are both local, and linked to the transformations in international political, economic, and military structures brought about by the ending of the Cold War. These conflicts are about struggles over power and rights to 'ways of life'. They concern issues of material, physical, social, and psychological well-being, as well as justice, empowerment, and participation: all of which are part of the rhetoric of long-term development. Clearly, not all armed conflicts need be protracted or generate complex emergencies. Conflicts might become complex and protracted when the causes and solutions are difficult to discern.

Types of Internal Conflicts

- **Ideological conflicts**: These occur between the state and insurgent movements. Social inequality between classes is a dominant theme.

- **Governance and authority conflicts**: These concern the distribution of power and authority in society. Demands from opposition movements are for changes to the political structure of the regime and over control of resources.

- **Racial conflicts**: These include racial conflicts in the USA and Europe.

- **Environmental conflicts**: These are resource-based conflicts over the control and use and misuse of environmental resources.

- **Identity conflicts**: Here the dominant element is ethnic, religious, tribal or linguistic differences. These can be subdivided into territorial conflicts, ethnic and minority conflicts, religious assertions, and struggles for self-determination. A prime concern of combatants is security and the devolution of power.

Conflicts are not static. Resource wars may become ethnic wars. Ideological conflicts may become identity conflicts. Wars may be waged with several objectives. When it is difficult to specify, these internal conflicts become protracted.

Source: Rupesinghe, 1992b.

Armed conflicts also take different forms. They include high technology battles, as in the Gulf War; wars of attrition between organised forces, as in Bosnia; armies of occupation, as in Palestine or Tibet; internal suppression, as in East Timor, Burma or Iraq; and complex insurgencies involving multiple parties, often of untrained
fighters, as in Liberia, Somalia or Sudan. Wars affect different social groups, such as pastoralists and sedentary farmers, women and men, adults and children, boys and girls, in different ways. Although each war is different, it is possible to discern commonalities between them.

One commonality is that war is an organised act of (usually) men and therefore it can be modified by political and economic interventions. In order to identify the necessary forms of intervention that can mitigate suffering or bring a resolution to these conflicts we need to move beyond the immediate symptoms of conflicts to understand their causes, and also their impact upon societies. In understanding the causes and impact of current armed conflicts this paper draws on three analytical approaches, considered in the three following sections.

The first provides a political analysis of conflict, which explains armed conflicts as the result of structural factors at local to global level. Current wars are explained as arising from the process of State development and the outcome of development policies. Central to this line of analysis is the relationship between the State and civil society. Current levels of armed conflict and the protracted nature of these conflicts are explained as a result of a systemic crisis, manifest in global political, economic, and social transformations taking place since the 1980s (Duffield, 1994c). This analytical approach is concerned with political and economic processes of change, and the relationship between 'core' and 'peripheral' areas and groups.

The second analytical approach examines the impact of conflict on society, and we use, as an example, the gender analysis of conflict. This takes a more 'actor-oriented' approach, and suggests that conflict needs to be understood in terms of its differential impact on women and men, across social groups, in terms of their socio-economic and political status. The gender analysis of conflict can serve as a basis for the analysis of the impact of conflict on different groups within society. Gender analysis also helps us to understand how conflict can arise from culturally-determined structures of power within families and communities, and illustrates the need to consider conflict at all levels of society, from the micro to the macro, from the personal to the public.

The third approach is concerned with analysing the process of change itself, and in particular with the velocity and turbulent nature of change and development (ACORD, 1991b). This line of analysis is concerned with the implications for operational NGO programmes of a context of instability.