

## Wars and Political Violence

(See Parts I, II & V)

### There are fewer and fewer wars

*The Human Security Report 2005 divides armed conflicts into several categories. State-based conflicts are those involving at least one government, and non-state conflicts are those where two or more non-state armed groups fight each other. State-based conflicts may take place within states (civil wars) or between them (interstate wars).*

- The number of interstate wars per year has remained relatively constant since 1990 (Fig 1.1).
- The numbers of civil wars, which now make up more than 95% of all armed conflicts, rose sharply after World War II, but have declined greatly since 1992 (Fig 5.2).
- Sub-Saharan Africa now suffers more armed conflicts than any other region (Fig 1.2G).

### There are fewer wars involving states

- The number of state-based armed conflicts trebled between the 1950s and the early 1990s, and then declined sharply (Fig 1.1).
- The decline continues. In 1992 there were 51 state-based armed conflicts. The number fell to 32 in 2002, and to 29 in 2003 (Fig 2.2).
- Between 1989 and 2002, about 100 state-based conflicts came to an end. More wars are now ending than beginning.
- Asia had the most state-based armed conflicts in 2003, with 14, followed by Africa, with 10.

### There are fewer wars between states

- Of the 29 state-based armed conflicts in 2003, only 2 were interstate (India against Pakistan and the US-led war against Iraq). The remaining 27 were civil wars (government against rebels).
- The risk of interstate war has declined significantly. The number of states has trebled since the end of World War II, increasing the number of potential warring parties.
- International crises, which often precede interstate war, increased steadily until the 1980s. Then, as the Cold War wound down, they declined steeply. By 2001 there were only one quarter as many international crises as in 1981 (Fig 1.6).

### Which states fight the most wars?

- The UK and France, the two states that once had the largest colonial empires, have fought the most international wars since 1946 (Fig 1.3).
- The US ranks third, and Russia/USSR fourth. Most of their wars were fought over Cold War issues (Fig 1.3).



### **Non-state conflicts**

- There were 30 non-state conflicts in 2003, a small decline from 34 in 2002 (Fig 2.1). (No figures before 2002).
- Most non-state armed conflicts in 2003 were in Africa, which had 25.

### **One-sided violence**

*One-sided violence, which includes genocide, is the killing of unarmed civilians by a government or armed group. It is a form of political violence, but since it is one-sided is not armed conflict.*

- In 2003 there were 30 cases of one-sided violence, a small decline from 33 cases in 2002 (Fig 2.1). (No figures before 2002.)
- Asia was home to most cases of one-sided violence in 2003, with 13, followed by Africa, with 11.

### **Genocides and politicides are declining**

*Genocides seek to destroy a group because of the religion, nationality or ethnicity of its members. Politicides seek to destroy a group because of the political beliefs of its members.*

- There was a dramatic rise in the number of genocides and politicides through the 1960s and 1970s, and an equally dramatic decline through the 1990s (Fig 1.11). There were 10 genocides and politicides in 1989 and only 2 in 2001.
- The drop in genocides and politicides in the 1990s was twice as steep as the fall in armed conflicts over the same period.

### **How many people are killed in battles?**

*Reported battle deaths are nearly always lower than the total killed, as many bodies are never found or counted. The data below all relate to reported deaths.*

- State-based wars worldwide have become much less deadly since the 1950s. The war death rate of troops and civilians killed in battles in the 1990s was only one-third that of the 1970s (Fig 1.8).
- In 1972 there were over 340,000 battle-deaths from state-based armed conflicts. In 1982, there were over 250,000, and in 1992 over 100,000. By 2002 there were less than 20,000 — the lowest total since 1927 (Fig 1.7).
- In 1950 there were more than 38,000 deaths per state-based conflict; in 2002 there were just 600—an extraordinary decline.
- In 2003, there were about 20,000 battle-deaths in state-based armed conflicts and 4,000 in non-state conflicts. Around 3,000 were killed in one-sided violence (Fig 2.4).

### **Where do most people die in battle?**

- In 2003 Africa had almost 11,000 battle-deaths. The Middle East had over 9,000, and Asia had nearly 6,000. There were less than 1000 battle deaths in Europe and the Americas (Fig 2.4).
- The total death toll from political violence fell substantially from 2002 to 2003 almost everywhere except the Middle East. There, the Iraq insurgency was responsible for the vast majority of the region's deaths (Fig 2.4).