



# 1. Armed conflicts

- 31 armed conflicts were recorded in 2008 and 30 of them remained active at the end of the year.
- By far the majority of armed conflicts happened in Asia (14) and Africa (nine), while the remainder took place in Europe (four), the Middle East (three), and America (one).
- The most serious armed conflicts took place in Afghanistan, Chad, Colombia, Iraq, Israel–Palestine, DR Congo (east), Pakistan (north-west), Somalia, Sri Lanka (north-west) and Sudan (Darfur).
- Approximately two out of every three conflicts concerned identity-related aspirations or demands for greater self-government.
- The situations in India (Nagaland), Pakistan (Baluchistan) and Russia (Ingushetia), which crossed the threshold to become armed conflicts, should be highlighted, together with the outbreak and end of the war between Russia and Georgia.

This chapter analyses the armed conflicts existing throughout 2008 (indicator no. 1). The chapter has two main parts, plus the definition given below and the map attached at the beginning of the chapter with the conflicts active in 2008. The first part analyses global trends in armed conflicts in 2008 and the second describes their development and the most important events in each conflict during the year.

## 1.1. Armed conflicts: definition

An **armed conflict** is understood to be any confrontation involving regular or irregular armed forces with objectives perceived as incompatible in which the continuous and organised use of violence: a) causes at least 100 deaths in a year and/or a serious impact on the area (destruction of infrastructures or nature) and human safety (e.g. people wounded or displaced, sexual violence, insecurity of food supplies, impact on mental health and on the social fabric or disruption of basic service); b) is intended to achieve objectives that can be differentiated from ordinary crime and are normally associated with:

- demands for self-determination and self-government or identity-related aspirations;
- opposition to the political, economic, social or ideological system of a State or the internal or international policy of a government, which in both cases provides motives for a struggle to achieve or erode power;
- or the control of resources or the territory.

Figure 1.1. Conflict dynamics

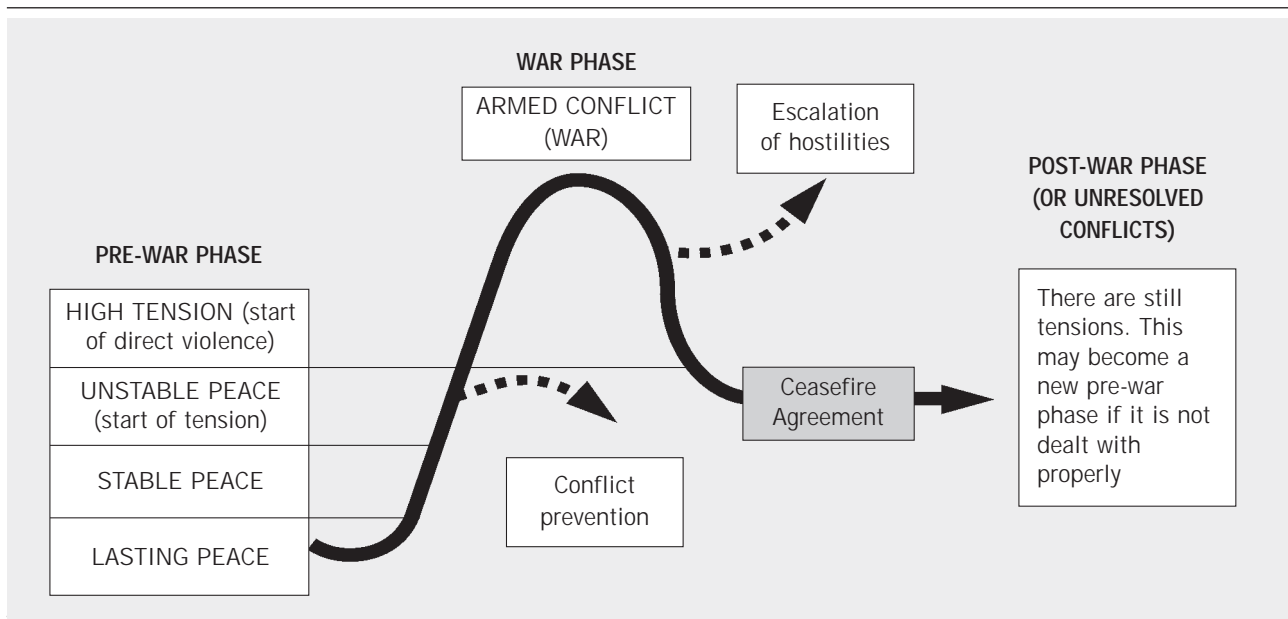


Table 1.1. Summary of the armed conflicts in 2008

Conflict <sup>1</sup> -start-	Type <sup>2</sup>	Main parties <sup>3</sup>	Intensity <sup>4</sup> Trend <sup>5</sup>
<b>Africa</b>			
Algeria -1992-	Internationalised internal	Government, Salafist Preaching and Combat Group (GSPC) / Al-Qaeda Organisation in the Islamic Maghreb (OQMI)	2
	System		↑
Chad -2006-	Internationalised internal	Government, FUC, UFDD, fundamentalist UFDD, RFC, CNT, CAR and SCUD, <i>Janjaweed</i> militias, Sudan, France. New UFR coalition (Alliance Nationale and RFC), Toro Boro militia	3
	Government		=
Ethiopia (Ogaden) -2007-	Internal	Government, ONLF, OLF	2
	Self-government, Identity		=
Nigeria (Niger Delta) -2001-	Internal	Government, MEND, MOSOP, NDPVF and NDV, militias from the Ijaw, Itsekere, Urhobo and Ogoni communities, private security groups	2
	Resources, Identity		=
Central African Republic -2006-	Internationalised internal	Government, APRD, UFDR, UFDR splinter groups (FURCA, MJLC), FDPC, France, MICOPAX, EUFOR RCA/CHAD and highway robbers (Zaraguinas)	1
	Government		↓
DR Congo (east) -1998-	Internationalised internal	Government, Mai-Mai militias, Rwandan Hutu armed group FDLR, Rasta militias, Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple (CNDP, General Laurent Nkunda), armed Ituri groups (FNI, FRPI, MRC), armed Burundian opposition group (FNL), Ugandan armed opposition groups ADF-NALU and LRA, MONUC	3
	Identity, Government, Resources		↑
Somalia -1988-	Internationalised internal	Transitional Federal Government (TFG), Ethiopia, the USA, two factions of the Alliance for the Reliberation of Somalia (IARS), made up of the Union of Islamic Courts [UIC], political and armed opposition, including the armed group al-Shabab and Muqawama [Resistance]), Eritrea, warlords, AMISOM	3
	Government		↑
Sudan (Darfur) -2003-	Internationalised internal	Government, pro-government <i>Janjaweed</i> militias, JEM, NRMD, NRF, and various factions of the SLA	3
	Self-government, Resources, Identity		=
Uganda (north) -1986-	Internationalised internal	Government, LRA	2
	Self-government, Identity		↑
<b>America</b>			
Colombia -1964-	Internationalised internal	Government, FARC, ELN, new paramilitary groups	3
	System		=
<b>Asia</b>			
Afghanistan -2001-	Internationalised internal	Government, international coalition (led by the USA), ISAF (NATO), Taliban militias, warlords	3
	System		↑
Philippines (NPA) -1969-	Internal	Government, NPA	1
	System		=
Philippines (Mindanao -MILF) -1978-	Internal	Government, MILF	2
	Self-government, Identity		↑
Philippines (Mindanao- Abu Sayyaf) -1991-	Internationalised internal	Government, Abu Sayyaf	1
	Self-government, Identity, System		=
India (Assam)-1983-	Internationalised internal	Government, ULFA, DHD, Black Widow, NDFB	2
	Self-government, Identity		↓
India (Jammu and Kashmir) -1989-	Internationalised internal	Government, JKLF, Lashkar-e-Tayyeba, Hizb-ul-Mujahideen	2
	Self-government, Identity		↑

Conflict -start-	Type	Main parties	Intensity Trend
<b>Asia</b>			
India (Manipur) -1982-	Internal	Government, PLA, UNLF, PREPAK, KNF, KNA, KYNL	2
	Self-government, Identity		=
India (Nagaland) -1955-	Internal	Government, NSCN-K, NSCN-IM	1
	Self-government, Identity		↑
India (CPI-M) -1967-	Internal	Government, CPI-M (Naxalites)	2
	System		↓
Myanmar -1948-	Internal	Government, armed groups (KNU, SSA-S, KNPP, UWSA, CNF, ALP, DKBA, KNU/KNLA, KNPLAC, SSNPLO)	1
	Self-government, Identity		↓
Pakistan (Baluchistan) -2005-	Internal	Government, BLA, BRA and BLF	2
	Self-government, Resources		↑
Pakistan (north-west) -2001-	Internationalised internal	Government, Taliban militias, tribal militias	3
	System		↑
Sri Lanka (north-east) -1983-	Internal	Government, LTTE, TMVP (splinter group of the LTTE led by Colonel Karuna)	3
	Self-government, Identity		↑
Thailand (south) -2004-	Internal	Government, opposition secessionist armed groups	2
	Self-government, Identity		↓
<b>Europe</b>			
Georgia – Russia -2008-	International	Georgia, Russia, government of the self-proclaimed government of Republic of Abkhazia, government of the self-proclaimed Republic of South Ossetia	2
	Self-government, Government		End
Russia (Chechnya) -1999-	Internal	Russian federal government, Government of the Republic of Chechnya, groups opposition groups	1
	Self-government, Identity, System		=
Russia (Ingushetia) -2008-	Internal	Russian federal government, government of the Republic of Ingushetia, armed opposition groups (Jamaat Ingush)	1
	System		↑
Turkey (south-east) -1984-	Internationalised internal	Government, PKK, TAK	2
	Self-government, Identity		↑
<b>Middle East</b>			
Iraq -2003-	Internationalised internal	Government, international coalition led by the USA/United Kingdom, internal and foreign armed opposition groups	3
	System, Government, Resources		↓
Israel-Palestine -2000-	International	Israeli government, colonists' militias, ANP, Fatah (Brigades of the Martyrs of Al Aqsa), Hamas (Ezzedin al Qassam Brigades), Islamic Jihad, FPLP, FDLP, Popular Resistance Committees	3
	Self-government, Identity, Territory		↑
Yemen -2004-	Internal	Government, followers of the cleric Al-Houthi (Al-Shabab Al-Mumen)	1
	System		↓

1: low intensity; 2: medium intensity; 3: high intensity; ↑: escalation of violence; ↓: reduction of violence;  
 = : no change; End: ceases to be considered armed conflict

1. This column indicates the States in which armed conflicts are taking place, specifying in brackets the region of the state affected by the conflict or the name of the armed group involved in the conflict. This last option is used in cases where there is more than one armed conflict in the same State or in the same territory within a State, in order to differentiate them.
2. This report classifies and analyses armed conflicts on the basis of a double classification, which, on one hand, takes account of the causes or incompatibility of interests and, on the other, looks at the confluence between the place where the conflict is taking place and the parties involved. In terms of causes, the following basic categories can be identified: demands for self-determination and self-government (Self-government) or identity-related aspirations (Identity); opposition to the political, economic, social or ideological system of a state (System) or to the internal or international policy of a Government (Government), which, in both cases, provides motives for a struggle to achieve or erode power, or a struggle for the control of resources (Resources) or territory (Territory). As regards the second method of classification, armed conflicts may be internal, internationalised internal or international. An internal armed conflict is considered to be a confrontation involving armed

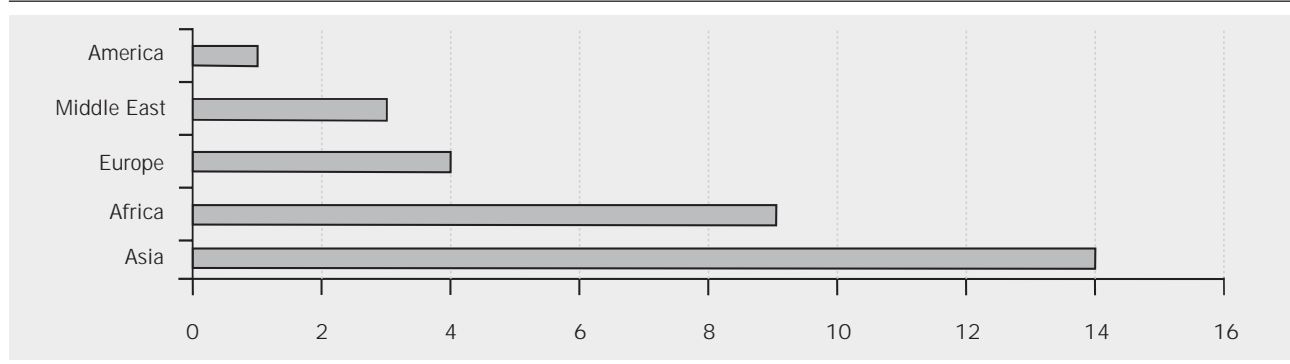
## 1.2. Armed conflicts: global trends in 2008

31 armed conflicts were recorded in 2008 and 30 of them remained active at the end of the year (the war between Russia and Georgia started and finished during 2008). Although the total number of armed conflicts is practically the same as the previous year (30), it must be pointed out that the 2008 list includes **three new cases —India (Nagaland), Pakistan (Baluchistan) and Russia (Ingushetia)—** and does not include three conflicts that ended in 2007: Côte d'Ivoire, Palestine (confrontations between Fatah and Hamas) and Lebanon (Naher al-Bared). By far the majority of armed conflicts in 2008 happened in **Asia (14) and Africa (nine), while the remainder took place in Europe (four), the Middle East (three), and America (one).** In all cases, without exception, the State was one of the con-

tending parties in the dispute. Apart from the international conflicts between Georgia and Russia, and Israel and Palestine,<sup>6</sup> **half the conflicts were internationalised internal (15) and practically the other half (14) were internal.**

Although armed conflicts have many causes, it is notable that almost two out of every three conflicts (19 out of 31) largely concern identity-related aspirations or demands for greater self-government. There are another **16 cases in which the main incompatibility is linked to opposition to a particular Government or to the political, economic, social or ideological system of a State.** In five of these cases —Iraq, Chad, Central African Rep, DR Congo (east) and Somalia— several armed groups are fighting to take over or erode central Government. Meanwhile, in seven of the 11 cases in which opposition to the system was one of the main causes of the conflict, several armed groups were seek-

Graph 1.1. Regional distribution of the number of armed conflicts



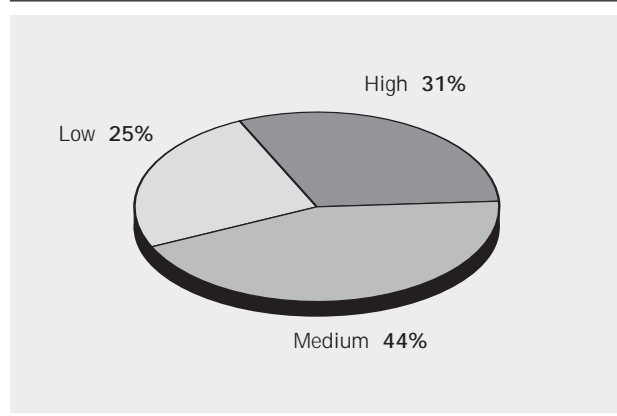
parties from the same State operating exclusively inside it and from it. Secondly, an internationalised internal armed conflict is considered to be one in which at least one of the contending parties is foreign and/or when the confrontation extends into the territory of neighbouring countries. For an armed conflict to be considered as internationalised internal, the question of whether the armed groups have their military bases in neighbouring countries, with the connivance of these States, and launch their attacks from there, is also taken into account. Finally, an international conflict is considered to be one in which State or non-State parties from two or more countries confront one another. In addition, it must be borne in mind that the majority of current armed conflicts have an important regional or international dimension due, among other factors, to the flow of refugees, arms trade, the economic or political interests that neighbouring countries may have in the conflict (such as the legal or illegal exploitation of resources), the participation of foreign combatants and the logistical and military support provided by other States.

- The main parties involved in conflicts consist of an amalgam of regular or irregular armed forces. Conflicts usually involve the government or its Armed Forces against one or more armed opposition groups, but they can also involve other irregular groups, such as clans, guerrilla forces, warlords, armed groups who oppose one another, or militias from ethnic or religious communities. Although those involved mostly use conventional weaponry, particularly small arms (which cause the majority of deaths in conflicts) other forms of attack are frequently used, such as suicide bombs, bomb attacks and sexual violence. Even hunger is used as an instrument of war.
- The intensity of an armed conflict (high, medium or low) and its trend (escalation of violence, reduction of violence, no change) are mainly assessed on the basis of the number of people killed and the impact on the local population and the territory. However, other factors need to be taken into account, such as the systematisation and frequency of the violence or the complexity of the dispute (complexity is normally associated with the number and fragmentation of the parties involved, the level of institutionalisation and capacity of the State and the level of internationalisation of the conflict, along with the flexibility of the stated objectives and the political willingness of the parties involved to reach an agreement). Thus, the intensity of an armed conflict is classified as high when more than 1,000 people die every year, large areas of territory and a high proportion of the population are affected and a significant number of parties are involved (establishing interactions in the form of alliances, confrontations or tactical coexistence between one another). Medium- and low-intensity conflicts are considered to be those recording more than 100 deaths a year and showing the features mentioned above but with less presence and scope. An armed conflict is considered to be ended when there is a significant and sustained reduction in armed hostilities, either because of military victory, agreement between the opposing parties, demobilisation of one party or because one of the contending parties renounces or considerably limits the armed struggle as a strategy for the achievement of certain aims. Any of these options does not necessarily imply the resolution of the root causes of an armed conflict and neither does it exclude the possibility of a new outbreak of violence. The temporary cessation of hostility, whether formal or tacit, does not necessarily imply the end of the armed conflict.
- In this column, the trend of events this year (2008) is compared with the previous year (2007), with the escalation of violence symbol (↑) appearing if the general conflict situation during 2008 is more serious than the previous year, the reduction of violence symbol (↓) appearing if things are better and the no change symbol (=) if there have been no important changes.
- Although "Palestine" (whose Palestinian National Authority is a political entity linked to a particular population and a territory) is not an internationally recognised state, the conflict between Israel and Palestine is considered as "international" and not "internal" because it is an illegally occupied territory whose supposed ownership by Israel is not recognised by International Law or by any United Nations resolution.

ing the creation of an Islamic State or were accused of maintaining links with the Al-Qaeda network —Algeria, Afghanistan, Philippines (Mindanao-Abu Sayyaf), Iraq, Pakistan (north-west), Russia (Chechnya), Russia (Ingushetia) and Yemen. Meanwhile in the three remaining cases —Colombia, Philippines (NPA) and India (CPI-M)— the insurgent groups were pursuing the establishment of a social political and economic system. Finally, in **another four cases —Iraq, Nigeria (Niger delta), DR Congo (east) and Sudan (Darfur)— control of resources was one of the important causes of the dispute.** However, many other conflicts were also fuelled or heightened by the control of resources or territory. The average duration of active conflicts in 2008 was about 17 years, although this figure must be put into perspective by the difficulty of setting an exact start date for a conflict and by the large number of current armed conflicts in cases where there have been previous cycles of violence.

Concerning intensity, **in 10 cases —Afghanistan, Chad, Colombia, Iraq, Israel-Palestine, DR Congo (east), Pakistan (north-west), Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan (Darfur)— very high levels of violence were recorded,** generating a figure of many more than 1,000 deaths, although in some cases like Iraq, Sri Lanka or Somalia this figure is much higher. Compared to the previous year, Pakistan (north-west) and Israel-Palestine, because of the end-of-year offensive in Gaza, are added to the list of countries with the most intense conflicts. Medium intensity was recorded for almost half the conflicts (13), while the remaining eight —India (Nagaland), Philippines (Mindanao-Abu Sayyaf), Philippines (NPA), Myanmar, Central African Rep., Russia (Chechnya), Russia (Ingushetia) and Yemen— showed low intensity. The average intensity of the 31 conflicts in 2008 was 2.1.<sup>7</sup> As for development, **in 14 out of the 30 conflicts active at the end of the year there was an increase in hostility** compared to the previous year. In nine cases the conflict situation did not show significant changes and a reduction in violence was recorded in seven cases: India (Assam), India (CPI-M), Iraq, Myanmar, Central African Rep., Thailand (south) and Yemen. In aggregate terms, then, the conflict situation worsened notably compared to 2007.

Graph 1.2. Intensity of armed conflicts



7. See the key to Table 1.1.

By regions, it must be pointed out that in **Africa seven of the nine armed conflicts were internationalised internal ones, which demonstrates their regional nature and the role of neighbouring countries in these conflicts.** The links between the armed conflicts in the triangle made up of Central African Rep, Chad and Sudan (Darfur); Ethiopia's involvement in Somalia; the role played by Rwanda in the conflict taking place in eastern DR Congo, and operations by the Ugandan LRA in southern Sudan and in DR Congo should be highlighted. In many of the conflicts occurring in Africa, there is a struggle to achieve or erode power due to opposition to the internal or international policies of the respective governments, while the number of conflicts in which the self-determination of a territory or group is the key to the conflict is well below the world average. In fact, although in the cases of DR Congo (east), Nigeria (Niger delta) and Uganda (north) identity grievances have been used to justify the emergence or continuation of violence in certain areas, the case of Ethiopia (Ogaden) is the only one in which secessionist demands have been clearly put forward.

Meanwhile, in seven out of the nine contexts there are at least four armed agents actively involved in hostilities, and in the cases of DR Congo (east), Somalia, Sudan (Darfur) and Nigeria (Niger delta) this figure increases to more than 10. Finally, it must be pointed out that only three of the nine conflicts —Algeria, Somalia and Uganda (north)— have lasted more than 15 years, while six of them started after 2000. Of these, those in Central African Rep, Chad and Sudan (Darfur) are particularly outstanding in terms of their imitative nature and strong interaction. So, the average duration of active conflicts in Africa is less than 10 years, far below the world average (17). Given the large number and complexity of the armed conflicts in Africa, it is probable that their short duration is linked, among other issues, with the many peace initiatives in the last few years carried out by organisations from civil society and some organisations from the international community. The average intensity of conflicts in Africa (2.3) is slightly greater than the world average, which is probably connected with the fact that **Africa is the scene of almost half of the most intense armed conflicts in the world: Chad, DR Congo (east), Somalia and Sudan (Darfur).** As for the development of wars in Africa during 2008, the escalation of violence in eastern DR Congo and Somalia (where more than 10,000 people have died in the last two years), the offensives by insurgent groups on the capitals of Sudan and Chad, and the frequent violations of the ceasefire agreement between the Ugandan government and the LRA are worth highlighting.

In Asia, more than 70% of the armed conflicts are linked to demands for self-government or identity-related aspirations and the majority (57%) are clearly internal, in that their international dimension is neither as obvious nor as decisive as in Africa. The average duration of the conflicts in Asia (25.4 years) is clearly the longest in the world. The armed struggles by the two main Communist insurgencies on the

continent (the NPA in the Philippines and the CPI-M in India) go back to 1969, and more than half the active conflicts —Philippines (NPA), Philippines (Mindanao-MILF), India (Assam), India (Manipur), India (CPI-M), India (Nagaland), Myanmar and Sri Lanka (north-east)— have lasted 25 years or more. This phenomenon could be explained by the lesser presence of international agents in facilitation and mediation tasks (particularly the United Nations), by the large number of conflicts linked to the formation of the State or by the difficulty in resolving disputes associated with issues of identity and self-determination, which are very numerous in Asia. As for intensity, the average for the continent (1.9) is below that for the world or for Africa, despite the fact that conflicts in Afghanistan or Sri Lanka currently have among the highest death rates anywhere on the planet.

As for agents, on the Asian continent there are conflicts involving armed groups with great capacity for war or even territorial control —the LTTE in Sri Lanka, the CPI-M in India, or the NPA and the MILF at Philippines— alongside other contexts characterised by the tremendous fragmentation and diffuseness of insurgent groups —Afghanistan, Pakistan (north-west), India (Assam), India (Nagaland), Myanmar or Thailand (south). Beyond the classification “terrorists”, which almost all governments use to label their respective armed opposition groups, it must be highlighted that in some cases, such as Afghanistan, Pakistan (north-west), India (Jammu and Kashmir) or the Philippines (Mindanao-Abu Sayyaf), the government links its counter-insurgency strategies closely to the so-called global fight against terrorism. By doing this it obtains political legitimacy and, in some cases, logistical support. In all these latter cases, the armed groups are making religious demands linked to Islam. **Another feature of conflicts in Asia is that there are some States, such as India, the Philippines or Pakistan, which have several armed conflicts with different causes, dynamics of war and locations.** In terms of the development of conflicts in 2008, the most significant events were the following: the escalation of violence in Sri Lanka, which, with 10,000 fatalities, has probably become the most deadly active war; the outbreak of violence on Mindanao after the failure of the signing of a peace agreement with the MILF; the massive protests in Jammu and Kashmir, the strongest for the last 20 years; the growing impact of the conflict in Afghanistan on the civil population, and the deterioration of the situation in Pakistan (Baluchistan) and India (Nagaland) which, during 2008, crossed mortality and impact-of-violence thresholds to become armed conflicts.

Finally, some issues on other continents currently suffering from armed conflicts should be highlighted. In **America, Colombia continues to be the only armed conflict**, although it is one of those which has lasted longest and has had the greatest impact on a civil population anywhere on the planet. During 2008, evidence was provided of the internationalised nature of the dispute and the process of fragmentation of the former Colombian United Self-Defence Forces (AUC)

into several paramilitary groupings. In **Europe, the epicentre of conflict was once again the area between the Black and Caspian Seas, particularly in the Caucasus region.** In this region, Russia played a leading role in the struggle against armed Chechen and Ingush armed groups, as well as in the brief armed conflict when it confronted the Georgian government. This was one of the few inter-State armed conflicts occurring during the last few years anywhere in the world. Of the four armed conflicts recorded in 2008 in Europe, the importance of demands for self-determination and the cross-border dimension of the warring parties should be highlighted, together with the close links of current conflicts with previous phases of violence.

In the **Middle East**, one of the regions most visible in the media and which has two of the conflicts with the longest history of violence and potential for regional destabilisation —Iraq and Israel-Palestine— **the most important features were the reduction in violence in Iraq and Yemen, attributable to a large degree to ceasefire agreements signed or renewed during 2008.** In Iraq, although the armed conflict continues to be one of those that has claimed most lives in recent years, a reduction in the number of attacks by the many armed groups operating in the country was recorded, particularly those by the militias of the cleric Moqtada al-Sadr. In Yemen, the signing of a ceasefire agreement in the middle of the year between the government and the followers of Al-Houthi led to a considerable reduction in levels of violence, although confrontations between the parties led to the displacement of tens of thousands of people. In the conflict between Israel and Palestine, the peace talks between Israel and the PNA led by Mahmoud Abbas and a ceasefire agreement was signed between Israel and Hamas. However, at the end of the year the truce was broken and Israel began one of the biggest military offensives of the last few decades in Gaza.

Another dimension that must be highlighted in relation to global conflicts in 2008 concerns multilateral peace missions. In December 2008 there were 16 UN peacekeeping missions, two police missions run and supported by the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (BINUB and UNAMA) and another 10 UN political and peacebuilding missions supported by the UN Department of Political Affairs throughout the world. Concerning the regional perspective, of the 28 UN missions in the world, approximately half (13) were on the African continent, six in the Middle East, five in Asia, three in Europe and one in America. Meanwhile, in addition to the United Nations, the growing participation of other regional organisations in political and peacebuilding tasks should be highlighted. They include: the OSCE (with 19 missions in Europe and Central Asia), the EU (15 missions in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East) and NATO (four missions in Europe, Asia and the Middle East), the CIS (three missions, in Europe), the AU (two missions in Africa), the OAS (two missions in America), the ECCAS (one mission in Africa) and seven multilateral operations under the umbrella of groups of countries.

Table 1.2. Main multilateral missions in 2008

UN peace missions		Other missions with military/police personnel	
Name	Start-End	Name	Start-End
Burundi (BINUB)	2007	<b>NATO</b>	
DR Congo (MONUC)	1999	Afghanistan (ISAF)	2001
Côte d'Ivoire (ONUCI)	2004	Iraq (NTIM-I)	2004
Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE)	2000-2008	Kosovo (KFOR)	1999
Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS)	2000	<b>EU</b>	
Liberia (UNMIL)	2003	DR Congo (EUSEC DR Congo)	2005
Western Sahara (MINURSO)	1991	Central African Rep. and Chad (EUFOR CHAD/RCA)	2007
Central African Republic (BONUCA)	2000	Palestinian Territories (EU BAM Rafah)	2005
Central African Republic/ Chad (MINURCAT)	2007	Palestinian Territories (EUPOL COPPS)	2006
Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL)	2006-2008	<b>CIS</b>	
Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL)	2008	Georgia (South Ossetia)	1992
Sudan (UNMIS)	2005	Georgia (Abkhazia)	1994
Sudan (Darfur) (UNAMID)	2007	Moldova (Transdniestar)	1992
Afghanistan (UNAMA)	2002	<b>ECCAS</b>	
India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP)	1949	Central African Republic (MICOPAX)	2008
Nepal (UNMIN)	2007	<b>AU</b>	
Timor-Leste (UNMIT)	2006	Somalia (AMISOM)	2007
Cyprus (UNFICYP)	1964	Comoros (MAES)	2007
Georgia (UNOMIG)	1993	<b>Other missions</b>	
Kosovo (UNMIK)	1999	DPR Korea and the Rep. of Korea (NSC)	1953
Iraq (UNAMI)	2003	Solomon Islands (RAMSI)	2003
Golan Heights (UNDOF)	1974	Hebron, Palestine (TPIH 2)	1997
Lebanon (UNIFIL)	1978/2006	Egypt and Israel	1982
Middle East (UNTSO)	1948	Iraq (USA-United Kingdom)	2003
		Côte d'Ivoire (Operation Licorne, France)	2003
		Timor-Leste (ISF, Australia)	2006

The UN peacekeeping operations consisted of 110,273 people<sup>8</sup> (112,180 if all Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) staff and the two police missions under the umbrella of the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations are counted) and another 3,435 on political and peacebuilding missions. This means that in 2008 the highest figure was reached for the number of people on peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions, demonstrating the continuing increase in missions and people involved in them over the past decade. Since June 1999, when the lowest figure since the end of the Cold War was reached (13,000 blue helmets), the increase has been constant down to the present day. To this figure should be added the contingents from NATO

(76,800 deployed in three contexts), the EU (more than 6,000 police and soldiers in five contexts), the CIS (more than 4,200 in three contexts), ECCAS and the AU (three contexts, almost 4,000 people), and another six operations (around 6,000 soldiers and police). In total, in general terms, there are well over 210,000 soldiers and police deployed around the world.<sup>9</sup> Finally, if the contingents established in the design of missions or extensions to them (more than 15,000 outstanding in UNAMID in Darfur; 3,000 in MONUC, 5,000 in AMISOM, 12,000 in ISAF<sup>10</sup> in Afghanistan) the total would increase by a further 35,000 blue helmets.

8. Of these, 89,513 were military or police personnel. Figures at 30 November 2008.

9. This overall figure would be increased still further if the Multinational Forces in Iraq were added. These statistics do not take into account the 146,000 USA soldiers and 6,350 soldiers from other countries deployed in Iraq and their fatal casualties, amounting to more than 4,000.

10. General Petraeus, head of USA Central Command, announced in December that, during 2009, some 20,000 United States soldiers would join ISAF, which already has 50,000 soldiers.

Finally, the growing use of Chapter VII of the United Nations' Charter in designing the mandate for United Nations' missions brings with it greater participation in scenarios of violence. Because of this, these multidimensional missions are set up in increasingly violent contexts and with ever more complex mandates, as demonstrated by the fact that the figure for deaths of participants in missions has tripled since the end of the Cold War, rising from 800 in 1991 to 2,545 at 30 November 2008.

### 1.3. Armed conflicts: annual trend by region

#### Africa

##### a) West Africa

Nigeria (Niger delta)	
<b>Start of conflict:</b>	2001
<b>Type:</b>	Resources, Identity Internal
<b>Main parties:</b>	Government, MEND, MOSOP, NDPVF and NDV, militias from the Ijaw, Itsereki, Urhobo and Ogoni communities, private security groups
<b>Intensity:</b>	2
<b>Trend:</b>	=
<b>Summary:</b>	
The conflict in the Niger delta is the result of unsatisfied demands for control of profits from the oil resources produced in this area. Various armed groups, particularly MEND (Ijaw) are demanding compensation for the impact the extraction industries have on their territory, as well as a fairer share of the profits obtained from operations and greater decentralisation of the Nigerian State. Attacks against oil installations and military posts, as well as the kidnapping of workers, are the methods commonly used by the insurgents. Meanwhile, this situation has led to confrontation between the different communities living in the region for the control of land and resources.	

During the year, an increase in confrontations between rival gangs for the control of illegal oil trade routes occurred and there was also a rise in MEND's violent activities during the second half of the year. This led to an increase in kidnappings and the displacement of thousands of people, the continual interruption of gas and oil supplies and attacks on oil platforms and police stations. The most affected states were Rivers and Delta. However, the level of the conflict in the delta as a whole remained similar to the previous year, a period of a high degree of violence due to the holding of legislative and presidential elections in April 2007. The increase in actions by MEND was linked to the trial of one of its leaders, Henry Okah, accused of treason and arms trafficking. However, MEND established several fruitless unilateral ceasefires, specifically at the end of

June and the end of September. In November, the panel of experts set up by the government in order to find a solution to the violence in the region concluded that the federal and state governments' lack of political will was the main reason for the worsening of the crisis in the region and that a ceasefire needed to be achieved to make it possible to disarm the militias.

##### b) Horn of Africa

Ethiopia (Ogaden)	
<b>Start of conflict:</b>	2007
<b>Type:</b>	Self-government, Identity Internal
<b>Main parties:</b>	Government, ONLF, OLF
<b>Intensity:</b>	2
<b>Trend:</b>	=
<b>Summary:</b>	
Ethiopia has been subject to secessionist movements or groups resisting the central authority since the 1970s. The ONLF emerged in 1984 and operates in the Ethiopian region of Ogaden, in the south-east of the country, demanding a greater degree of autonomy for the Somali community living in this region. On various occasions, the ONLF has carried out insurgent activities beyond the Ogaden region in collaboration with the OLF, which has been demanding greater autonomy for the Oromiya region from the government since 1973. The Somali government has supported the ONLF against Ethiopia, which it confronted for control of the region between 1977 and 1978, a war in which Ethiopia defeated Somalia. The end of the war between Eritrea and Ethiopia in 2000 led to an increase in government operations to put an end to the insurgency in Ogaden and, after the elections held in 2005, the confrontations between the armed forces and the ONLF have increased.	

The Ethiopian armed forces continued to carry out military operations in the Ogaden region, while the ONLF claimed responsibility for various actions against the security forces. Together with the access difficulties of humanitarian organisations imposed by the government and the serious drought affecting the region, this aggravated the humanitarian crisis.<sup>11</sup> In addition, the new bill that will regulate the activities of NGOs will contribute to making this situation even more difficult, according to the USA, the EU and human rights protection organisations, such as HRW. NGOs and the communications media were subjected to tough restrictions by the government, which threatened them with expulsion if they broke silence concerning actions committed by the army. One of the most important issues of the year was the publication in June of two HRW reports in which the government was accused of committing war crimes in the region (extra-judicial executions, torture and sexual violence) in the course of the military campaign begun in June 2007. Based on this, at the end of November, the government published an investigation rebutting these claims, a document that was criticised by both HRW and the ONLF. Along these lines, during the year various sources documented the

11. See chapter 5 (Humanitarian crises).

increase in arrests of civilians accused by the Ethiopian security forces of collaborating with the ONLF.

Somalia	
<b>Start of conflict:</b>	1988
<b>Type:</b>	Government Internationalised internal
<b>Main parties:</b>	Transitional Federal Government (TFG), Ethiopia, the USA, two factions of the Alliance for the Reliberation of Somalia ([ARS], made up of the la Union of Islamic Courts [UIC], armed political opposition, including the armed group Al-Shabab and Muqawama [Resistance]), Eritrea, warlords, AMISOM.
<b>Intensity:</b>	3
<b>Trend:</b>	↑

**Summary:**

The armed conflict and the absence of effective central authority experienced by the country began in 1988, when a coalition of opposition groups rebelled against the dictatorial power of Siad Barre and, three years later, managed to overthrow him. This situation led to a new struggle within this coalition to occupy the power vacuum, and this has led to the destruction of the country and the death of more than 300,000 people since 1991, despite the failed international intervention at the beginning of the nineties. The various peace processes to attempt to establish a central authority have run into many difficulties, including the grievances between the different clans and sub-clans making up the Somali social structure, the interference of Ethiopia and Eritrea and the power of the various warlords. The last peace initiative established the TFG in 2004. This government has relied on Ethiopian support in an attempt to recover control of the country, partially in the hands of the UIC.

The violence **extended throughout the central and southern region, linked to the intensification of Al-Shabab's activities and the military operations of the TFG's militias and Ethiopian armed forces in an unsuccessful attempt to contain the insurgents' advances.** Negotiations in Djibouti were not reflected in the situation on the ground.<sup>12</sup> The TFG, involved in a deep internal crisis, recognised that it was on the verge of collapse, and to this were added desertions from the security forces to the insurgents and their involvement in illicit arms sales. The president of the TFG also resigned at the end of the year. **Ethiopia announced the withdrawal of its troops for the beginning of 2009,** urging the international community to assume responsibility, and this generated great concern within the TFG. AMISOM, which is militarily under-staffed (3,400 of the established 8,000 soldiers), became a target for the insur-

***Violence in Somalia intensified as a result of the activities of Al-Shabab and the military operations of the TFG militias and the Ethiopian armed forces***

gents and could hardly guarantee security at the capital's port and airport. The United Nations also noted **the continuing violations of the arms embargo in an atmosphere of general anarchy, together with an increase in acts of piracy and armed robbery, kidnapping and the payment of ransoms,<sup>13</sup> combined with the constant increase in indiscriminate violence and attacks against the civil population,** particularly against women and children, through the use of heavy weapons in densely populated areas. The Somali group the Elman Peace and Human Rights Organization announced that, since the start of the Ethiopian offensive in December 2006, more than 16,210 civilians had been killed and another 29,000 had been wounded. According to the organisation, 7,574 civilians died during 2008, a lower figure than the previous year, when the death toll was 8,636 people.

Sudan (Darfur)	
<b>Start of conflict:</b>	2003
<b>Type:</b>	Self-government, Resources, Identity Internationalised internal
<b>Main parties:</b>	Government, pro-government <i>Janjaweed</i> militias, JEM, NRMD, NRF and various factions of the SLA
<b>Intensity:</b>	3
<b>Trend:</b>	=

**Summary:**

The Darfur conflict broke out in 2003 over demands for greater decentralisation and development in the region from various insurgent groups, largely the SLA and JEM. The Government responded to the rebellion using the armed forces and the *Janjaweed* Arab militias. The magnitude of the violence committed by all the warring parties against the civilian population has led to the consideration of whether there has been genocide in the region, where more than 300,000 people have already been killed, according to the United Nations. Despite the signing of a peace agreement (DPA) between the government and a faction of the SLA in May 2006, violence has broken out again, generating the fragmentation of the opposition groups. A serious regional impact has been caused by the displacement of population as well as the Sudanese involvement in the Chadian conflict and Chadian involvement in the Sudanese conflict. In 2007, the AU observation mission AMIS, set up in 2004, was integrated into a joint AU/UN mission, UNAMID. This mission has been subjected to multiple attacks and in 2008 its numbers did not reach even half the established strength of 26,000 soldiers, so it has been incapable of fulfilling its mandate to protect the civilian population and humanitarian workers.

During the year, confrontations continued between the armed forces, the *Janjaweed* militias and the insurgents in **Darfur**, as did attacks on UNAMID. The armed agents persisted in their attempt to achieve a military solution to the conflict, as the UN Secretary General,

12. See chapter 3 (Peace processes).

13. In 2008, more than one hundred boats were attacked in Somali waters, of which 40 were hijacked. It is estimated that more than 30 million dollars were paid in order to liberate them. At the end of November, Kenyan government sources highlighted that the figure resulting from the payment of ransoms could reach 150 million dollars.

Ban Ki-moon, has highlighted. There were many attacks against camps of displaced persons and HRW also highlighted the fact that systematic acts of sexual violence and attacks were committed against women in and around these camps.<sup>14</sup> In May, the JEM carried out an offensive against the capital, Khartoum, for the first time, with the intention of overthrowing the government. The attack was repulsed, but it caused more than 220 fatalities. However, the most important event of the year was **the issue in September of an order by the ICC prosecutor for the arrest of President Omar al-Bashir, accusing him of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.** The AU, the Arab League and China criticised the decision and asked for the trial to be adjourned, fearing a possible impact on UNAMID, the peace process and the humanitarian situation. From then on, al-Bashir attempted to give an image of commitment to the search for peace, and in mid-November he declared a unilateral ceasefire with a view to the holding of a summit in Qatar,<sup>15</sup> although it was repeatedly violated, according to a report by Ban Ki-moon. A demonstration of this was a report from various organisations indicating that the government was continuing to promote attacks against the civilian population despite the truce and was intimidating humanitarian organisations with total impunity.<sup>16</sup>

*A group of United Nations experts certified that DR Congo and Rwanda were reciprocally supporting the respective insurgencies*

### c) Great Lakes and Central Africa

DR Congo (east)	
<b>Start of conflict:</b>	1998
<b>Type:</b>	Government, Identity, Resources Internationalised internal
<b>Main parties:</b>	Government, Mai-Mai militias, Rwandan Hutu armed group, FDLR, Rasta militias, Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple (CNDP, General Laurent Nkunda), armed Ituri groups (FNI, FRPI, MRC), Burundian armed opposition group (FNL), Ugandan armed opposition groups ADF-NALU and LRA, MONUC
<b>Intensity:</b>	3
<b>Trend:</b>	↑
<b>Summary:</b>	The current conflict has its origins in the coup d'état launched by Laurent Desiré Kabila in 1996 against Mobutu Sese Seko, which culminated in the latter giving up power in 1997. Later, in 1998, Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda, together with various armed groups, tried to overthrow Kabila, who received the support of Angola, Chad, Namibia, Sudan and Zimbabwe in a war that has caused around five million fatalities. The control and plundering of natural resources have contributed to the perpetuation of the conflict and the presence of foreign armed

forces. The signing of a ceasefire in 1999, and of various peace agreements between 2002 and 2003, led to the withdrawal of foreign troops and the establishment of a transitional government and, subsequently, an elected government, in 2006. However, this has not led to an end to the violence in the east of the country because of the presence of undemobilised factions of various groups and of the FDLR, responsible for the genocide in Rwanda in 1994.

The violations of the ceasefire signed at Goma at the beginning of 2008 increased during the year, along with rearmament and the recruitment of children, according to MONUC. This went on until, **at the end of August, Laurent Nkunda's CNDP finally broke the fragile ceasefire, leading to a serious escalation in violence from then onwards.** The CNDP launched a large-scale offensive from the north of the province of North Kivu which stopped at the gates of Goma after inflicting successive defeats on the Congolese armed forces. During their retreat, the military were guilty of plundering and committing systematic human rights violations. The United Nations pointed out the unprecedented increase in sexual violence and other serious human rights violations by all parties involved in the conflict, which was classified as a humanitarian disaster due to the difficulties in gaining access to the civilian population trapped in the middle of the

violence. **In November, faced with the seriousness of the situation, the incapability of MONUC to cope with the tragedy and local and international pressures, the UN Security Council approved the temporary expansion of the mission with 3,000 blue helmets and police.** Meanwhile **General Nkunda unilaterally declared a ceasefire** and his militias withdrew and allowed humanitarian access. However, although the fighting between the armed forces and the CNDP was interrupted, the group continued to fight the government's allies, the Mai Mai militia and the Rwandan Hutu group the FDLR. In December, the mediation of the United Nations and the AU formalised negotiations between the government and the CNDP in Nairobi, at the same time as **a group of experts certified that DR Congo and Rwanda were reciprocally supporting the respective insurgencies.**<sup>17</sup>

Central African Republic	
<b>Start of conflict:</b>	2006
<b>Type:</b>	Government Internationalised internal
<b>Main parties:</b>	Government, APRD, UFDR, UFDR splinter groups (FURCA, MJLC), FDPC, France, MICOPAX, EUFOR RCA/CHAD and highway robbers (Zaraguina)
<b>Intensity:</b>	1

14. Human Rights Watch, *Five Years on, No Justice for Sexual Violence in Darfur*, 7 April 2008, in <<http://hrw.org/reports/2008/darfur0408/darfur0408web.pdf>>.  
 15. See chapter 3 (Peace processes).  
 16. Human Rights Watch, *Rhetoric vs. Reality. The situation in Darfur*, 2 December 2008, in <[http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related\\_material/darfur1208.pdf](http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/darfur1208.pdf)>.  
 17. See chapter 2 (Tensions).

Trend: ↓

**Summary:**

During 2006, the situation in the country was aggravated by the increase in the activities of various insurgent groups condemning the lack of legitimacy of François Bozizé's government, the result of a coup d'état against President Ange Félix Patassé between 2002 and 2003. Bozizé's government has been accused of mismanaging public funds and dividing the nation. There are two fronts of insurgency: firstly, in the populous central area and north-west of the country, the APRD, led by Jean-Jacques Demafotuh, has confronted Bozizé's government, demanding a new division of political power. Secondly, the escalation of insurgency operations in the north-east of the country by the UFDR coalition of groups should be highlighted. To this instability was added the emergence in the north-east of numerous bands of roadside robbers, the Zaraguinas.

**The government forces, the rebels and the Zaraguinas** were responsible for serious human rights violations in the north, including extra-judicial executions, torture and arbitrary arrest, largely committed by the security forces, according to the BONUSCA. Alongside this, the signing of the Overall Peace Agreement by the government, the APRD and the UFDR in June facilitated the advance with the beginning of the Inclusive Political Dialogue (IPD) which was postponed several times and finally took place between 8 and 20 December, with a positive result.<sup>18</sup> Before this, the specially designed amnesty bills presented by the government in September forced the suspension of participation of the political and armed opposition in the IPD. However, on 15 September a new agreement was reached to relaunch the IPD, and the government pledged to review the controversial laws. Despite these advances, sporadic violations of the ceasefire persisted, resulting into several battles and ambushes involving the armed forces and the UFDR, the APRD and splinter groups of the UFDR, which led to fears of a breach of the above agreements. The regional factor aggravated the instability, as **the armed Ugandan group the LRA, which was operating in the south-east of the country, kidnapped hundreds of children, and various sources estimated that the UFDR, which receives support from Sudan, was supporting the LRA.**

Chad	
<b>Start of conflict:</b>	2006
<b>Type:</b>	Government Internationalised internal
<b>Main parties:</b>	Government, FUC, UFDD, UFDD-Fundamental, RFC, CNT, FSR and UFCD, Alliance Nationale (UFDD, UFDD-Fundamental, UFCD, FSR), <i>Janjaweed</i> militias, Sudan, France. New UFR coalition (Alliance Nationale and RFC), Toro Boro militia
<b>Intensity:</b>	3
<b>Trend:</b>	=

**Summary:**

The frustrated coup d'état of 2004 and the reform of the Constitution in 2005, boycotted by the opposition, were the seed resulting in an insurgency that intensified its activity during 2006, with the aim of overthrowing the authoritarian government of Idriss Déby. This opposition is made up of various groups and soldiers discontented with the regime. To this is added the antagonism between Arab tribes and black populations in the border area between Sudan and Chad. This is linked to local grievances, competition for resources and the extension of the war suffered by the neighbouring Sudanese region of Darfur as a result of cross-border operations by Sudanese armed groups and pro-Sudanese government Arab *Janjaweed* militias. These groups have attacked towns, villages and Darfur refugee camps in eastern Chad, which has contributed to an escalation of tension between Sudan and Chad, which support one another's respective insurgencies.

**The offensive against the capital by various groups in February, which was on the point of overthrowing Idriss Déby's regime, must be highlighted, although French military intervention forced it to withdraw.** The confrontations caused more than a hundred deaths (160 people according to the MSF and Red Cross, 700 rebels according to the Government), and left more than 1,000 people wounded and another 400 missing. Based on the offensive on N'Djamena, the fragile Alliance Nationale (AN) coalition was established, and it launched several attacks against the Chadian army during the year. In November, **the main rebel movements in the country decided to set up the Union of Resistance Forces (UFR), which includes the AN and the RFC.** According to various sources, based on the relative improvement in relations between Chad and Sudan, the Chadian insurgency moved its bases from Sudan inside Chad before the border mission was deployed.<sup>19</sup> In March 2009, the EUFOR mission is due to be replaced by a UN peace-keeping mission. Despite the presence of this mission, **the eastern region continued to be afflicted with violence, in a similar way to Darfur,** as while the army focused on fighting off rebel incursions against the big cities, other areas went without protection, leaving the local population and the camps of displaced persons and refugees at the mercy of the armed groups. These camps were used as a rearguard and base for Chadian and Sudanese rebels, who recruited children there. The *Janjaweed* militias, connected to local Arab militias, also committed various attacks against non-Arab civilians in the eastern part of Chad.

Uganda (north)	
<b>Start of conflict:</b>	1986
<b>Type:</b>	Self-government, Identity Internationalised internal
<b>Main parties:</b>	Government, LRA
<b>Intensity:</b>	2
<b>Trend:</b>	↑

**Summary:**

Since 1986, the northern Uganda has been suffering from a conflict in which the LRA armed opposition group, moved by

18. See chapter 3 (Peace processes).

19. See chapter 2 (Tensions).

the religious messianism of its leader, Joseph Kony, has been trying to overthrow the government of Yoweri Museveni, establish a regime based on the Ten Commandments of the Bible and bring the northern region of the country out of its marginalisation. The violence and insecurity caused by the LRA's attacks against the civilian population, the kidnapping of children to swell their ranks (around 25,000 since the beginning of the conflict) and the confrontations between the armed group and the Armed Forces (together with the pro-governmental militias) have led to the death of around 200,000 people and the forcible displacement of two million people at the peak of the conflict. The LRA was expanding its activities in the south of Sudan, a country which was providing it with support, until, in 2002, that country allowed the Ugandan armed forces into its territory in order to pursue the group. Since 2006, a peace process has been under way and this has managed to establish a cessation of hostilities, although, during 2008, the process was on the verge of failure.

The attempts to revive the peace process, frozen after April 2008, and the gradual increase in military activities by the LRA (sporadic attacks and child kidnapping) marked the tone of the year. The efforts of the special envoy of the UN Secretary General, Joaquim Chissano; the Vice-President of Southern Sudan, Riek Machar; local leaders of the Acholi community, and even the Ugandan government, failed to convince Joseph Kony to commit himself to the April initiative or to subsequent ones in May, August and November.<sup>20</sup> The government established 30 November as a deadline, although this also failed to put sufficient pressure on Kony. **The group had continued recruiting children in southern Sudan, north-eastern DR Congo and southern Central African Rep. (about 1,000 new child soldiers). It also had new bases and could be exploiting diamond mines in the Central African Rep.** According to various sources, the LRA had taken advantage of the peace process in order to strengthen itself. So, the group violated the cessation of hostilities in southern Sudan, north-eastern DR Congo and southern Central African Rep. several times. After the failure of the last initiative at the end of November, **DR Congo, Uganda and Southern Sudan launched a military operation against the LRA in the Garamba National Park** in north-eastern DR Congo. The military operation destroyed its bases and forced Joseph Kony to flee, pursued by Ugandan troops towards the Central African Rep. It was followed by an LRA offensive in the border area, causing the deaths of between 400 and 500 civilians to the end of December.

#### d) The Maghreb and North Africa

Algeria	
<b>Start of conflict:</b>	1992
<b>Type:</b>	System Internationalised internal
<b>Main parties:</b>	Government, Salafist Preaching and Combat Group (GSPC) / Al-Qaeda Organisation in the Islamic Maghreb (OQMI)

20. See chapter 3 (Peace processes).

<b>Intensity:</b>	2
<b>Trend:</b>	↑

#### Summary:

The conflict began with the banning of the Islamic Salvation Front (ISF) in 1992 after it won the municipal (1990) and legislative (1991) elections against the party which had historically led the independence of the country, the National Liberation Front. The triumph of the ISF occurred in the context of the growth of an Islamist movement in the 1970s responding to the discontent of the population, exacerbated in the eighties by the economic crisis and the lack of opportunities for political participation. After the banning of the ISF by the military high command and the dismissal of the government, a period of armed struggle began between various groups (EIS, GIA and GSPC), splitting from the GIA and becoming the OQMI in 2007) and the army, supported by self-defence militias. The conflict led to 150,000 deaths during the nineties, most of them civilians, amid accusations that the army was involved in the massacres. Despite the reconciliation processes promoted by the government, the conflict remains active, and has claimed thousands of victims since 2000.

The country continued to be afflicted by violence throughout the year. **The attacks in August, which claimed almost 80 victims, constituted a turning point, as they saw the most deaths during the year.** On 19 August, a suicide attack targeted the Issers police academy, to the east of Algiers, while the following day a double explosion near a hotel and military barracks in Bouira, in the south-east of the capital, caused the death of a dozen employees of a Canadian company. A communiqué from the OQMI claimed responsibility for the actions and declared that it was responding to operations by the security forces against members of its organisation. In addition, at the beginning of June a double explosion caused the deaths of 12 people, including a French citizen—the first fatality from that country since 1994. During 2008 the government also announced the deaths of the leader Emir Hamza, one of those allegedly responsible for the fatal attack of 11 December 2007 in Algiers, and, in March, of another member of the organisation who was supposedly planning to assassinate the president, Abdelaziz Bouteflika. Meanwhile, the authorities announced that 115 people were kidnapped in the context of terrorist activity in 2007. Concerning the conflict between Berber groups and the government, the violence intensified during the year, with several confrontations between Berber and Arab gangs in the province of Ghardaia. The response was tough police action.

#### America

Colombia	
<b>Start of conflict:</b>	1964
<b>Type:</b>	System Internationalised internal
<b>Main parties:</b>	Government, FARC, ELN, new paramilitary groups

Intensity: 3  
Trend: =

Summary:

In 1964, two armed opposition movements were born in the context of an agreement between the liberal and conservative (Frente Nacional) parties to alternate power, which excluded all alternative politics. In this context two armed opposition movements emerged. These were the ELN (a Guevara-inspired movement with worker and university support) and the FARC (with Communist influence and based in the countryside). During the seventies, various other groups (M-19, EPL, etc.) appeared. These ended up negotiating with the government and promoting a new Constitution (1991), which established the basis of a social state based on the rule of law. At the end of the eighties, various paramilitary self-defence groups appeared, instigated by sectors of the armed forces, business people and traditional politicians, backing the status quo and the maintenance of illegal businesses, promoting a strategy of terror. Drug profits are now the main fuel keeping the war alive.

2008 was characterised as the most critical in the history of the FARC, as, to the death of its historic leader Manuel Marulanda was added the death in Ecuadorian territory of its international spokesman Raúl Reyes in bombardment by the Colombian armed forces, together with the freeing of 15 hostages, including the ex-presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt, in a controversial operation by elite armed forces commandos. The movement of the conflict across the border led to sensitive diplomatic friction between the governments of the region. **The so-called re-paramilitarisation of the country as a result of the failure of official policies to rehabilitate thousands of ex-AUC combatants saw a rising number of murders and threats against opponents of the Government.** The institutional crisis was heightened as a result of the arrest of almost fifty pro-government members of congress, accused of criminal links with extreme right-wing paramilitaries. This was accompanied by the sacking and trial of senior armed forces officers linked to a string of murders of hundreds of young people living in poor areas who were subsequently claimed to have been guerrillas killed in combat. Despite the fact that the number of armed clashes between the army and the FARC and ELN fell in the main economic centres of the country, others broke out in peripheral rural areas.

## Asia and the Pacific

### a) South Asia

Afghanistan	
Start of conflict:	2001
Type:	System Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, international coalition (led by the USA), ISAF (NATO), Taliban militias, warlords

Intensity: 3  
Trend: ↑

Summary:

The country has lived with almost uninterrupted armed conflict since the invasion by Soviet troops in 1979, beginning a civil war between the armed forces (with Soviet support) and anti-Communist, Islamist guerrillas (Mujahideen). The withdrawal of Soviet troops in 1989 and the rise of the Mujahideen to power in 1992 in a context of chaos and internal confrontations between the different anti-Communist factions led to the emergence of the Taliban movement, which, at the end of the nineties, controlled almost all Afghan territory. In November 2001, after the Al-Qaeda attacks of 11 September, the USA invaded the country and defeated the Taliban regime. After the signing of the Bonn agreements, an interim government was established, led by Hamid Karzai and subsequently ratified at the polls. Since 2006, there has been an escalation of violence in the country caused by the reformation of the Taliban militias.

The deaths of Afghan civilians in the first eight months of the year —1,445— already exceeded the figure for the whole of 2007, according to UNAMA. Meanwhile, by the end of the year **the total death toll —civilians and combatants— was over 5,400.** Suicide attacks by militias and USA bombing raids were mainly responsible for the high level of civilian mortality. Particularly serious were a suicide attack in February in Kandahar (south-east), with more than 100 deaths —the majority of them civilians— making it the most deadly since the beginning of the war; and a USA air attack in August on Herat (west), with 90 civilians killed, 60 of them children, according to UNAMA. Meanwhile, insurgent and counterinsurgent attacks continued throughout the year, increasing in summer and particularly fierce in the south and east. Outstanding among insurgent activities was the attack on a jail in Kandahar, freeing about a thousand prisoners. An increase in violence was also recorded in northern and western areas, normally less subject to conflict, and in the capital. **The international coalition suffered the most casualties since 2001, with 294 deaths.<sup>21</sup> In November, the Taliban militias had a permanent presence in 72% of the country, compared to 54% at the end of 2007.<sup>22</sup>** Alongside this, the Afghan government held talks with ex-Talibans.<sup>23</sup> In turn, the USA undertook a review of its strategy, with plans to increase the number of soldiers. Relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan deteriorated after the attack in July on the Indian embassy in Kabul, with 40 deaths and the Afghan government's accusation that the Pakistani intelligence service was behind the outrage.

India (Assam)	
Start of conflict:	1983
Type:	Self-government, Identity Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, ULFA, DHD, Black Widow, NDFB

21. Icasualties.org: Operation Enduring Freedom, in <<http://icasualties.org/OEF/Default.aspx>>. [consulted on 15.01.09]

22. International Council on Security and Development, *Struggle for Kabul: The Taliban Advance*, ICOS, 2008, in <[http://www.icosgroup.net/modules/reports/struggle\\_for\\_kabul](http://www.icosgroup.net/modules/reports/struggle_for_kabul)>.

23. See chapter 3 (Peace processes).

Intensity: 2  
Trend: ↓

**Summary:**

The armed opposition group the ULFA emerged in 1979 with the aim of liberating the state of Assam from Indian colonisation and establishing a sovereign State. The demographic transformations the state underwent after the partition of the Indian subcontinent, with the arrival of two million people from Bangladesh, are the source of the demand from the population of ethnic Assamese origin for recognition of their cultural and civil rights and the establishment of an independent State. During the 1980s and 1990s there were various escalations of violence and failed attempts at negotiation. A peace process began in 2005, leading to a reduction in violence, but this process was interrupted in 2006, giving rise to a new escalation of the conflict. Meanwhile, during the eighties, armed groups of Bodo origin, such as the NDFB, emerged demanding recognition of their identity against the majority Assamese population.

**There was a certain reduction in levels of violence in Assam, with an annual death toll of 360, compared to 437 the previous year.<sup>24</sup> Several units of the ULFA group declared ceasefires and asked for negotiations to begin, while the Government intensified operations against the rest of the group. Meanwhile, insurgent activities by other groups increased.** From the beginning of the year, the government warned that there were Islamist armed groups active in Assam. In October, **13 almost simultaneous explosions in several towns in the state left 81 dead and about 300 injured.** Responsibility for the action was claimed by the Islamic Security Force of Indian Mujahideen (ISF-IM), which, according to the police was set up in 2000 in the Dhubri district to protect the interests of the Islamic minorities against armed Bodo groups. However, the prime minister of the State declared that the participation of the ULFA and NDFB in the attack had been proved, an accusation they both rejected. Meanwhile, in the North Cachar Hills, the armed Black Widow group, a splinter group of the DHD, carried out a campaign of violence against infrastructure projects. The police attributed to them the deaths of at least 50 people between January and June, the majority of them railway workers. Meanwhile, the state suffered the worst wave of violence between the Bodo and Muslim populations in 25 years, with an official balance of 55 dead and 111 injured in clashes that affected 54 towns and villages in the Udalguri and Darrang districts. The violence forced the displacement of 85,000 people.

India (Jammu and Kashmir)	
Start of conflict:	1989
Type:	Self-government, Identity Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, JKLF, Lashkar-e-Tayyeba, Hizb-ul-Mujahideen
Intensity:	2

Trend: ↑

**Summary:**

The armed conflict in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir has its origin in the dispute over the region of Kashmir, which has brought India and Pakistan into conflict since their independence and partition. On three occasions (1947-1948; 1965; 1971) the two countries have clashed in armed conflict, both claiming sovereignty over this region, which is divided between India, Pakistan and China. The armed conflict between India and Pakistan in 1947 gives rise to the current division and creation of a de facto border between the two countries. Since 1989, the armed conflict has moved to the interior of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, where a multitude of insurgent groups in favour of the full independence of the state or unconditional adherence to Pakistan confront the Indian security forces. Since the beginning of the peace process between India and Pakistan in 2004, the violence has reduced considerably, although the armed groups remain active.

Confrontations between the armed forces and armed Kashmiri groups, particularly near the Control Line, led to the deaths of more than 520 people. Since 2001, when more than 4,500 people died, a sustained reduction has been observed in the number of deaths and armed clashes. However, human rights organisations claimed that, as part of the counterinsurgency policy, the armed forces continue to commit continuous human rights violations and that between 8,000 and 10,000 people might have disappeared as a result of the armed conflict. Most important along these lines were the protests recorded in the city of Srinagar in the middle of the year after 1,000 unmarked graves were found which could, according to some sources, belong to members of armed opposition groups. **At the end of June, shortly after the government of Jammu and Kashmir assigned some land for a Hindu community pilgrimage, the strongest protests of the last 20 years were recorded.** The government imposed a curfew and deployed thousands of additional security force personnel to deal with the community confrontations, roadblocks and massive mobilisations of people, during which dozens of people died and many others were wounded or arrested, including senior independence movement leaders. In November, the state elections were held, achieving a higher turnout than in previous polls, despite the boycott by many political and armed organisations.

India (Manipur)	
Start of conflict:	1982
Type:	Self-government, Identity Internal
Main parties:	Government, PLA, UNLF, PREPAK, KNF, KNA, KYNL
Intensity:	2
Trend:	=

24. Figure provided by the SATP think tank. The mortality figures for the various conflicts in India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka have been drawn from the same source. At <<http://www.satp.org/default.asp>>.

### Summary:

The armed conflict that sees the government confronting various armed groups operating in the state, as well as some of them confronting one another, has its origin in the independence demands of several of these groups, and in the tensions existing between the different ethnic groups coexisting in the state. In the 1960s and 1970s various armed groups emerged, some inspired by Communism and others of ethnic origin. These groups remained active throughout the subsequent decades. Meanwhile, the regional context, in a state bordering Nagaland, Assam and Myanmar, also marked the development of conflict in Manipur, and the tensions between Manipuri ethnic groups and the Naga population were constant. The economic impoverishment of the state and its isolation from the rest of the country have decisively contributed to the consolidation of a feeling of grievance among the population of Manipur.

Concerning insurgent violence, **the confrontations between armed groups and security forces continued, resulting in more than 440 deaths** by the end of the year. As well as a succession of attacks with few fatalities, there were attacks near the residence of the prime minister of Manipur, against the Parliamentary complex and against the residence of the health minister. The explosion of a car bomb in October in the state capital, Imphal, causing 14 deaths and injuring about thirty people, should also be highlighted. The authorities accused the PREPAK group, based in Myanmar, while the Military Council faction of the Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP) claimed responsibility for the explosion. Meanwhile, the security forces also announced in October that they had put an end to the ten-year presence of insurgents in the Dingpi area (on the Indian border with Myanmar). A second focus of violence, with armed groups confronting one another, remained active during the year, with periodic clashes between rival ethnic groups. Thirdly, **the harassment of the civilian population in the form of kidnapping, execution and extortion** by the armed groups continued. So, between April and June a total of 230 civil servants resigned from their jobs as a rejection of these forced payments. In addition, there were new incidents against Hindi-speaking immigrant workers, with two successive days of violence causing 12 deaths, for which no group claimed responsibility, while the police accused the KYKL. Finally, the coalition of 11 groups known as the Kuki National Organisation signed a peace agreement with the state government and the central executive.

India (Nagaland)	
<b>Start of conflict:</b>	1955
<b>Type:</b>	Self-government, Identity Internal
<b>Main parties:</b>	Government, NSCN-K, NSCN-IM
<b>Intensity:</b>	1

**Trend:** ↑

### Summary:

The conflict affecting the state of Nagaland has its origins in the process of British decolonisation of India (1947), when a Naga movement emerged demanding the recognition of collective rights of this majoritarily Christian population against the Indian Hindu majority. The establishment of the NCC Naga organisation in 1946 marked the beginning of political demands for independence for the Naga people, which, throughout subsequent decades developed both in terms of content (independence for Nagaland or the creation of Greater Nagaland incorporating territories from neighbouring states inhabited by Nagas) and in forms of opposition, with the armed struggle beginning in 1955. In 1980, the armed opposition group the NSCN was set up as a result of disagreements with more moderate political sectors, and, eight years later it, in turn, split into two factions: Isaac-Muivah and Khaplang. Since 1997, the NSCN-IM has maintained a ceasefire agreement and negotiations with the Indian government, but, over the last few years, confrontations between the two factions have multiplied.

Throughout the year, armed confrontations were repeated **between the different Naga insurgent factions**, particularly between the NSCN-IM and the NSCN-K groups. Nagaland was one the three states in the north-eastern region of India most affected by armed violence, together with Assam and Manipur.<sup>25</sup> The **weak supervision of the ceasefire agreement in force in the state** was one of the factors contributing to the increase in violence. The figure for deaths during the year as a result of insurgent violence exceeded a hundred people. However, during the last few months of the year a slight reduction in violence was recorded. This reduction could be the result of different initiatives carried out by organisations from Naga civil society in an attempt to unify the different factions and groups confronting the State. On the other hand, government sources attributed this reduction in violence to the increase in military operations against the insurgency. However, **some organisations warned that the government's lack of sincerity in the peace process could lead to a new increase in violence.**<sup>26</sup>

India (CPI-M)	
<b>Start of conflict:</b>	1967
<b>Type:</b>	System Internal
<b>Main parties:</b>	Government, CPI-M (Naxalites)
<b>Intensity:</b>	2
<b>Trend:</b>	↓
<b>Summary:</b>	The armed conflict in which the Indian government confronts the armed Maoist group the CPI-M (known as the Naxalites, in honour of the town where the movement was created) affects many states in India. The CPI-M emerged in West Bengal at the end of the sixties with demands relating to the erad-

25. See India (Assam) and India (Manipur) in this chapter.

26. See chapter 3 (Peace processes).

ication of the land ownership system, as well as strong criticism of the system of parliamentary democracy, which is considered as a colonial legacy. Since then, armed activity has been constant and it has been accompanied by the establishment of parallel systems of government in the areas under its control, which are basically rural ones. Military operations against this group, considered by the Indian government as terrorists, have been constant. In 2004, a negotiation process began which ended in failure.

**Levels of violence reduced slightly throughout the year (585 deaths compared to 650 in 2007), although the conflict continued to cover a large part of India.** An Interior Ministry report estimated that in 2008 only six Indian states were free of CPI-M actions: Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Nagaland, Sikkim and Mizoram, while the number of clandestine members was estimated at 20,000, with 50,000 regular members and a support base of 100,000. The Naxalite insurgency was particularly active in the states of Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh, while it reduced in other areas. In Orissa, several hundred fighters attacked various police posts in February, killing 14 members of the security forces and civilians. Meanwhile, another 24 police officers died in an explosion in July and another 40 soldiers were killed in a CPI-M attack on a patrol boat with 60 soldiers. In Jharkhand, the Interior Ministry attributed the increase in violence to clashes between rebel factions rather than with the security forces. During the year, several extra-judicial executions of civilians accused by the insurgents of being informers for the security forces, were recorded, along with kidnappings and looting. The police arrested dozens of fighters, including local leaders, including one of the longest-serving commanders, Himadri Sen Roy. Meanwhile, the police accused the CPI-M of being behind the murder of a Hindu religious leader in Orissa, a killing which unleashed acts of violence between the Hindu and Christian populations, with at least 10 deaths and thousands of displaced persons.

Pakistan (Baluchistan)	
<b>Start of conflict:</b>	2005
<b>Type:</b>	Self-government, Resources Internal
<b>Main parties:</b>	Government, BLA, BRA and BLF
<b>Intensity:</b>	2
<b>Trend:</b>	↑

**Summary:**

Since the creation of the state of Pakistan in 1947, Baluchistan, the richest province in natural resources but with some of the highest rates of poverty in the country, has experienced four periods of armed violence (1948, 1958, 1963-69 and 1973-77) in which the insurgents have spelled out their objective of obtaining greater autonomy or even independence. In 2005, armed insurgency reappeared on the scene, basically attacking infrastructures linked to gas extraction. The armed opposition group BLA became the main force

opposing the presence of the central Government, which it accused of taking advantage of the wealth of the province without any of this coming back to the local population. As a consequence of the resurgence of the armed opposition, a military operation was begun in the province in 2005, causing displacement of the civilian population and armed confrontations.

Constant levels of violence were maintained throughout the year, at a higher level than the previous year. The death toll as a result of bomb attacks exceeded one hundred people, to which were added the casualties from the confrontations between the Baluchi insurgents and the security forces. The most serious took place in July, with a balance of 43 deaths, 33 of them insurgents, in the Dera Bugti district. According to some sources, the total number of people killed in the months of August, September and October was around 130, the majority of them civilians. The pattern since the reactivation of violence in 2005 of **numerous attacks against infrastructures, basically linked to gas extraction**, continued. After the February general election, the new central government announced a change of strategy to deal with the armed conflict, prioritising the political route over the military one, **although counterinsurgency operations continued**. However, in October the government announced a route map for resolving the conflict.<sup>27</sup> However, the announcement in September of the indefinite suspension of armed activities by the main armed opposition organisations BLA, BRA and BLF did not materialise, and the insurgents continued to carry out attacks during the last few months of the year.

Pakistan (north-west)	
<b>Start of conflict:</b>	2001
<b>Type:</b>	System Internationalised internal
<b>Main parties:</b>	Government, Taliban militias, tribal militias
<b>Intensity:</b>	3
<b>Trend:</b>	↑

**Summary:**

The armed conflict in the north-western area of the country emerged linked to the armed conflict in Afghanistan after the USA' bombings in 2001. The area includes the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), which had remained inaccessible to the Pakistani government until 2002, when the first military operations began in the area —and the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP). After the fall of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan at the end of 2001, members of the Taliban militias with alleged connections to Al-Qaeda, took refuge in this area, giving rise to large-scale military operations by the Pakistani armed forces (about 50,000 soldiers have been deployed) with USA support. The local population, largely from the Pashtun ethnic group, have been accused of providing support to the fighters from Afghanistan. Since the first operations in 2002, the violence has been increasing.

27. See chapter 3 (Peace processes).

Following intensive confrontations in January, particularly in Waziristan, and after several months of a certain reduction in violence linked to various ceasefires<sup>28</sup> and the orientation of the new Pakistani government,<sup>29</sup> the conflict deteriorated from the middle of the year onwards. New insurgent and counterinsurgency offensives in the FATA and the NWFP caused well over a thousand deaths. **The situation in the Bajaur agency (FATA), where an air and land counterinsurgency campaign begun in August by the army left an official death toll of 1,500 rebels,** more than 90 civilians and about 70 soldiers by October and forced the displacement of 300,000 people, was particularly serious. The Khyber and Kurram agencies (FATA) and the Swat district (NWFP) were also greatly affected by violence. In Swat, more than 15,000 people were displaced and at least 200 died in the last few months of the year. Also there, since 2007 about 200 schools, the majority for girls, have been burned by Taliban militias. The civilian population of the whole north-west was also the victim of suicide attacks. In North and South Waziristan there were 750 casualties, including both Talibans and soldiers, during the year. Another factor causing instability were the air attacks by the USA from Afghanistan against Taliban positions, with dozens of deaths. Meanwhile, **the violence between the Turi and Bangash tribes in Kurram caused the deaths of more than 400 people.** The violence in the north-west of the country was added to the instability in the rest of Pakistan, with more than 6,400 deaths of civilians, rebels and soldiers throughout the State in 2008.<sup>30</sup>

*The increase in violence in Sri Lanka following the end of the ceasefire caused the deaths of 10,500 people, more than double the figure for 2007*

After the government formally abandoned the ceasefire agreement at the beginning of January, **the number of confrontations between the armed forces and the LTTE**—including many air and sea combats—increased dramatically. **According to some sources, this caused the displacement of at least 160,000 people and the deaths of another 10,500, a figure that doubles the death toll for 2007** and includes the deaths of more than 400 civilians. In addition, an unprecedented increase in the number of bomb attacks in public places was recorded, particularly in Colombo and other areas with a Sinhalese majority. The armed forces notably intensified their military operations, occupying many bastions of the LTTE and bombarding the group's strategic installations in the northern and eastern regions of the country, as well as stating that they were on the point of taking the LTTE's headquarters in Kilinochchi. The United Nations and other humanitarian organisations were obliged to close their headquarters after the government banned their presence in the northern regions of the country.<sup>31</sup> The President, Mahinda Rajapaksa, rejected the LTTE's offers of a truce and declared on various occasions his determination to militarily defeat the LTTE in the near future, a statement strongly rebutted by the armed group. Meanwhile, the TMVP organisation, a splinter group of the LTTE under the leadership of Colonel Karuna and currently controlling the eastern province, announced its intention to disarm and for all or some of its 6,000 members to join the armed forces.

Sri Lanka (north-east)	
<b>Start of conflict:</b>	1983
<b>Type:</b>	Self-government, Identity Internal
<b>Main parties:</b>	Government, LTTE, TMVP (splinter faction of the LTTE led by Colonel Karuna)
<b>Intensity:</b>	3
<b>Trend:</b>	↑
<b>Summary:</b>	
In 1983, the armed Tamil independentist opposition group the LTTE began the armed conflict that has afflicted Sri Lanka for the past three decades. Following the decolonisation of the island in 1948, the growing marginalisation of the Tamil population by the government, largely consisting of Sinhalese elites, led the group to fight for the establishment of an independent Tamil state. Since 1983, each of the three phases in which the conflict has developed has ended with a failed peace process. In 2002, peace negotiations began once again with Norwegian mediation, following the signing of a ceasefire agreement. The failure of these talks led to a ferocious conflict escalation in 2006.	

## b) South-east Asia and Oceania

Philippines (NPA)	
<b>Start of conflict:</b>	1969
<b>Type:</b>	System Internal
<b>Main parties:</b>	Government, NPA
<b>Intensity:</b>	1
<b>Trend:</b>	=
<b>Summary:</b>	
The NPA, the armed section of the Filipino Communist Party, began the armed struggle in 1969 and reached its peak in the 1980s under the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos. Although internal purges, the democratisation of the country and an amnesty to the NPA weakened its support and legitimacy at the beginning of the nineties, it is currently estimated that it is operational in most of the provinces of the country. After the attacks of 11 September 2001, its inclusion in the list of terrorist organisations by the USA and EU enormously eroded trust between the parties and was the main cause of the interruption of peace talks with Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's government. The NPA, whose main aim is access to power and the transformation of the political system and socio-economic model, has as political references the Philippines' Communist Party and the National Democratic Front (NDF), which brings together several Communist-inspired organisations.	

28. See chapter 3 (Peace processes).

29. See chapter 2 (Tensions).

30. SATP, at <<http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/database/casualties.htm>>.

31. See chapter 5 (Humanitarian crises).

On several occasions the government reaffirmed its commitment to defeat the NPA militarily by 2010, but it also recognised that counterinsurgency operations had not produced the expected results and that the number of NPA camps and fronts dismantled was less than expected. It also admitted that, during the year, the NPA reinforced its presence in urban areas to recruit new members, as it had done before, in the eighties, and that it substantially increased its attacks against telecommunications installations, mining companies and farms. Along these lines, the Government announced its intention to form militias and private security units to protect the mining sector, which has become one of the main pillars of the economy since they were opened up to foreign investment. Despite this, **the armed forces declared that the NPA currently has 5,500 members, the lowest figure in its history.** The armed group denied this figure, claiming that not only was it operating in 80% of the territory but that it was also defeating the armed forces in several parts of the Philippines, such as Southern Mindanao, Eastern and Western Visayas and Ilocos-Cordillera. Trust between the parties was eroded by the constant confrontations throughout the country, by the blockage of the peace negotiations, by the failure of the informal meeting in Oslo at the end of November, and by the NPA's rejection of all government offers of amnesty and ceasefire<sup>32</sup> and by accusations from Manila that the NPA was massively recruiting children and attacking the civilian population (according to the government, 94 of the 104 people killed in different NPA attacks during the year were civilians).

*The suspension of a peace agreement led to the most important spiral of violence of the last few years and generated fears of a new high-intensity war in the southern Philippines*

The conflict brought the most important spiral of violence in the last few years and generated fears over a new, high-intensity war on Mindanao. The blockage of the peace negotiations at the end of 2007 led to the whole first half of the year being marked by sporadic confrontations between the parties and mutual accusations of ceasefire violations and illegal troop movements. However, **the most important outbreak of violence occurred shortly after the Supreme Court suspended the signing of the agreement concerning the ancestral territories of the Moro people at the beginning of August**, a few hours before it was to be ratified. In the previous few days there had been many protests instigated by local politicians from communities that feared being included in the Bangsamoro Legal Entity. In the three months following the failed peace agreement, the confrontations between the MILF and the armed forces and the attacks by the former on some communities led to the deaths of 300 people and the displacement of another 530,000. In addition, at least another hundred people died because of the precarious conditions in the evacuation centres where tens of thousands of people lived. At the end of the year, the climate of trust between the parties deteriorated once again

because of the withdrawal of Malaysia from the International Monitoring Team —an international team that has supervised the ceasefire since 2003. Other factors included the continuing confrontations in various parts of Mindanao and the government's accusations against certain factions of MILF (lead by Umbra Kato and Kumander Bravo) of attacks against civilian population and collaboration with Abu Sayyaf.

Philippines (Mindanao-MILF)	
<b>Start of conflict:</b>	1978
<b>Type:</b>	Self-government, Identity Internal
<b>Main parties:</b>	Government, MILF
<b>Intensity:</b>	2
<b>Trend:</b>	↑
<b>Summary:</b>	
The armed conflict on Mindanao goes back to the end of the 1960s, when Nur Misuari founded the MNLF to demand self-determination for the Moro people, a set of Islamised ethnolinguistic groups politically organised into independent sultanates since the 15th century. For strategic, ideological and leadership reasons, the MILF split from the MNLF at the end of the seventies and has carried on the armed struggle down to the present day. Meanwhile, the MNLF signed a peace agreement in 1996 establishing a degree of autonomy for the areas of Mindanao with Muslim majorities (Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao). It is currently estimated that the MILF has about 12,000 members, despite the fact that in 2003 it signed a ceasefire (supervised by an international mission) and that in recent years several rounds of negotiations have been held with the government, facilitated by Malaysia and focused on the ancestral territories of the Moro people.	

Philippines (Mindanao-Abu Sayyaf)	
<b>Start of conflict:</b>	1991
<b>Type:</b>	Self-government, Identity, System Internationalised internal
<b>Main parties:</b>	Government, Abu Sayyaf
<b>Intensity:</b>	1
<b>Trend:</b>	=
<b>Summary:</b>	
The Abu Sayyaf group has been fighting to establish an independent Islamic state in the Sulu archipelago and the western regions of Mindanao (south) since the 1990s. Although it initially recruited disaffected members from other armed groups, like the MILF or the MNLF, it subsequently moved away ideologically from both these organisations and became increasingly involved in systematic kidnappings, extortion, decapitation and bomb attacks, which earned it a place on the USA and EU lists of terrorist organisations. The Filipino government also accuses it of maintaining links with organisations considered as terrorists, such as Al-Qaeda or Jemaah Islamiyah. According to the government, its counter-insurgency strategy, which enjoys the military support of the USA, has resulted in the deaths, in 1998 and 2006, of the leaders of Abu Sayyaf (the Janjalani brothers) and a notable reduction in the group's military capacity.	

32. See chapter 3 (Peace processes).

The armed forces declared that both the offensive begun in 2006 (called Oplan Ultimatum) and this year's military actions against the group considerably damaged its military capacity, neutralised a good part of its leadership and reduced its international sources of logistics and economic support. Most important were an attack in April against one of the group's camps, in which around 200 people may have died or been wounded, and the stepping up of the army's offensive at the end of the year on the islands of Basilan and Jolo, in which several dozen people died. According to Manila, Abu Sayyaf currently has about 360 members (a few years ago it was estimated to have more than 1,000) with very fragmented units and without clear leadership (during the year, some of the main leaders of the group, such as Ahmad Edris and Abu Salomo, died or were arrested). In addition, its growing use of extortion and kidnapping—more than 30 people were kidnapped in 2008—to compensate for the loss of foreign finance increased its ideological isolation and gradual rejection by the population. Despite this, the government recognised that the group continues to maintain its capacity to weave alliances with other armed organisations, such as Jemaah Islamiyah or the MNLF, in order to carry out joint attacks. Meanwhile, at the end of the year, the USA's ambassador in the Philippines stated that the new USA administration will not withdraw its troops from the south of the country, where they have been helping the Filipino army to fight terrorism for several years.

#### Myanmar

<b>Start of conflict:</b>	1948
<b>Type:</b>	Self-government, Identity Internal
<b>Main parties:</b>	Government, armed groups (KNU/KNLA, SSA-S, KNPP, UWSA, CNF, ALP, DKBA, KNPLAC, SSNPLO)
<b>Intensity:</b>	1
<b>Trend:</b>	↓

#### Summary:

Since 1948, dozens of armed insurgent groups of ethnic origin have confronted the government of Myanmar, demanding recognition of their particular ethnic and cultural features and calling for reforms in the territorial structure of the State or simply for independence. Since the start of the military dictatorship in 1962, the armed forces have been fighting armed groups in the ethnic states. These groups combined demands for self-determination for minorities with calls for democratisation shared with the political opposition. In 1988, the government began a process of ceasefire agreements with some of the insurgent groups, allowing them to pursue their economic activities (basically trafficking in drugs and precious stones). However, the military operations have been constant during these decades, particularly directed against the civil population in order to do away with the armed groups' bases, leading to the displacement of thousands of people.

Despite the fact that the lack of humanitarian organisations and independent journalistic sources on the ground restricts information about the conflict, it is estimated that the number of fatalities was lower than last year. This was particularly true in the two states—Karen and Shan—which have had the highest rates

of violence over the last few years. However, Amnesty International reported that the armed forces were committing crimes against humanity during the military offensive begun in 2006 in the Karen state and in the east of Pegu Division (centre), forcibly displacing 150,000 people. For example, the confrontations in these regions between the KNU and the armed forces and its ally the DKBA (a KNU splinter group) led to massive population displacement. At the beginning of the year, the Military Junta accused the KNU of having orchestrated simultaneous attacks on railway stations at Napydaw, Rangoon, Pyibonegy and Mandalay. In September it once again accused the KNU of exploding two devices in the Pegu Division. The KNU denied all the charges and, at the same time, accused the army of having assassinated its leader, Mahn Sha, who had been living in Thailand, in February. The death in May from natural causes of the founder and chairman of the KNU, Saw Bha Thin Sein, led to the appointment of a new board which showed itself to be prepared to negotiate if the government withdrew its troops from the Karen state and freed political prisoners. In the Shan state, sporadic confrontations were recorded between the armed opposition group SSA-S and the armed forces and pro-government militias. Finally, it should be pointed out that the Military Junta pushed the different groups with which it had signed ceasefire agreements in recent years (such as the NMSP, DKBA, KPF, UWSA and PNO) to hand over their weapons and constitute themselves into political parties to stand in the elections planned for 2010.

#### Thailand (south)

<b>Start of conflict:</b>	2004
<b>Type:</b>	Self-government, Identity Internal
<b>Main parties:</b>	Government, opposition secessionist armed groups
<b>Intensity:</b>	2
<b>Trend:</b>	↓

#### Summary:

The conflict in southern Thailand goes back to the beginning of the 20th century, when the then Kingdom of Siam and the British colonial power on the Malay peninsula decided to partition the Sultanate of Patani, with some territories coming under the sovereignty of modern Malaysia and others (the northern provinces of Songkhla, Yala, Patani and Narathiwat) falling under Thai sovereignty. Throughout the 20th century there were groups that fought to resist the political, cultural and religious homogenisation policies promoted by Bangkok or to demand the independence of these provinces, which have a Malay-Muslim majority. The conflict reached its peak in the 1960s and 1970s and eased in the following decades thanks to the democratisation of the country. However, the arrival in power of Thaksin Shinawatra in 2001 led to a drastic shift in counterinsurgency policy and resulted in the outbreak of the violence the region has suffered from since 2004.

The police stated that the number of attacks reduced by half compared to 2007, although also admitted that the actions by armed groups, especially the remote detonation of explosive devices, killed more people than in previous years. During 2008, according to official

sources, more than 600 people were murdered, bringing the death toll since the beginning of 2004 to 3,500 people dead and another 8,000 injured, mainly civilians. The armed forces indicated that the reduction in rates of violence was largely due to greater cooperation from the civilian population and to the greater effectiveness of its counterinsurgency strategy: more than 9,200 people are awaiting trial for alleged insurgent activities. However, some analysts attribute the reduction to the talks between some armed organisations and the government.<sup>33</sup> Despite the fact that responsibility is rarely claimed for violent episodes, the secessionist armed groups continue to have notable military capability, as demonstrated by the simultaneous attacks in Songkhla (August) and Narathiwat (October) or the attacks against schools and teachers (since the beginning of 2004, more than 300 schools have been set on fire and about 130 teachers murdered). In this sense, the armed forces indicated that the insurgency is well organised and structured into five main groups with different tasks (training, recruitment, infiltration into administrative structures, instigation of protests, etc.). BRN-Coordinate is the umbrella organisation and Runda Kumpulan Kecil (RKK), with between 3,000 and 3,500 active members, is the main military branch. Meanwhile, **human rights organisations criticised human rights violations by the armed forces under cover of the state of emergency that has been operating in the region for many years** and the growing use of self-defence militias in counterinsurgency tasks.

## Europe

Georgia-Russia	
<b>Start of conflict:</b>	2008
<b>Type:</b>	Self-government, Identity International
<b>Main parties:</b>	Georgia, Russia, government of the self-proclaimed government of Republic of Abkhazia, government of the self-proclaimed Republic of South Ossetia
<b>Intensity:</b>	2
<b>Trend:</b>	End
<b>Summary:</b>	Since the break-up of the USSR and the independence of Georgia (1991), relations between Russia and Georgia have been tense. This is largely because Georgia has moved closer to Western military and political institutions (NATO and the EU) and due to its position as an ally of the USA against Russia's interest in preserving its sphere of influence. In addition, the wars in South Ossetia (1991-1992) and Abkhazia (1992-1994), in which Moscow played an ambiguous role, have marked subsequent bilateral relations. Georgia always considered Russia as a direct agent in the conflict, while Russia defined itself as a mediating agent and refused to alter its preponderant role in the negotiation framework and the peace-keeping forces. Tension escalated in September 2006 and

was aggravated in the first half of 2008 in the two secessionist regions, until it resulted in armed conflict. Some important issues of the conflict are also the eastward expansion of NATO, the resurgence of Russia as an international power and the struggle for power over energy in Eurasia.

The increase in regional tension in the second half of the year resulted, in early August, in an escalation of violence in South Ossetia.<sup>34</sup> Despite a unilateral ceasefire declaration by Georgia on 7 August, boycotted by Ossetia, **the Georgian army launched a large-scale military offensive against the Ossetian capital. Russia responded with an immediate, massive military intervention, which gave rise to an international war lasting several days.** By the time Georgia announced its withdrawal from South Ossetia on 11 August, the Russian army had already entered Georgia. Alongside this, Russia supported Abkhazian forces in taking the Kodori Gorge and it deployed from Abkhazia into other areas of Georgia. In its offensive, **the Russian army occupied military bases and systematically destroyed military and civil infrastructures, blocking the country's main east-west road.** A ceasefire agreement on 12 August, mediated by France,<sup>35</sup> marked the end of large-scale hostilities and began the Russian withdrawal, although it extended its presence in the areas adjacent to Abkhazia and South Ossetia, where there were abuses against civilians by secessionist militias. Georgia counted 326 Georgians dead (155 civilians) and Russia 133 Ossetian fatalities, while the ACNUR estimated the number of displaced persons at 192,000,<sup>36</sup> including the majority of Georgians from South Ossetia. A new agreement in September gave rise in October to an almost total Russian withdrawal to Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Russia maintained 3,800-strong forces in each territory and blocked access by the EU mission.

Russia (Chechnya)	
<b>Start of conflict:</b>	1999
<b>Type:</b>	Self-government, Identity, System Internal
<b>Main parties:</b>	Russian federal government, government of the republic of Chechnya, armed opposition groups
<b>Intensity:</b>	1
<b>Trend:</b>	=
<b>Summary:</b>	After the so-called Chechen War (1994-1996), which brought the Russian Federation into conflict with the Chechen republic, largely over the latter's independence (self-declared in 1991 in the context of the break-up of the USSR) and which ended in a peace treaty that did not resolve the status of Chechnya, the conflict reopened in 1999, in the so-called Second Chechen War, sparked by incursions by Chechen rebels into Dagestan and attacks in Russian cities. In a pre-electoral context and with an anti-terrorist discourse, the Russian army entered Chechnya once again in order to fight the moderate independentist regime that had emerged after

33. See chapter 3 (Peace processes).

34. See chapter 2 (Tensions).

35. See chapter 3 (Peace processes).

36. See chapter 5 (Humanitarian crises).

### Box 1.1. The Russian-Georgian conflict and Russian motives for making war

In just a few days —the time open warfare lasted between Georgia and Russia— South Ossetia moved from being a region forgotten by the international community and marginal for the international conflict resolution machinery to become a world press headline mobilising the top Western diplomatic services. The identity-related aspirations and grievances based on a small territory measuring just 3,900 km<sup>2</sup>, and with 70,000 inhabitants, including Georgian, Ossetian and some mixed villages, was just one driving force in the conflict. Other factors were more important, both for the open war between Georgia and Russia and for the mobilisation of European governments and media machines. The fact is that the southern Caucasus, beyond being a crossroads of cultures, ethnic groups and traditions, is also a key geostrategic area, located on the southern borders of Russia and an area still confined by the process of post-Cold War realignment. Because of this, the motivations and views of the August war go far beyond standard arguments concerning the ethno-nationalist conflict in South Ossetia and Russian claims to protect fellow citizens,<sup>37</sup> particularly concerning Russia's role.

The aspirations of the Georgian government, in the hands of President Mikhail Saakashvili, to recover South Ossetia by force were cut short in the face of the great military offensive launched by Russia, which went beyond the administrative borders of the secessionist region. There were various Russian reasons for what the majority of analysts considered a disproportionate reaction to Georgian military unilateralism, and these can be considered as messages: a) a warning to the ex-Soviet republics, particularly Georgia and Ukraine, to reconsider their distancing from Russia and their move towards the Euro-Atlantic political and defensive structures (NATO, EU), while at the same time demonstrating the lack of direct action by these western organisations in support of those countries; b) alongside this, a warning to NATO about its policy of eastward expansion, that is, expansion towards the Russian sphere of influence; c) an injection of national, political and military national reaffirmation, with an eye on Russian public opinion in the context of absolute State media control; d) a reminder to the international community, especially the western powers, that Russia's new international policy includes playing an outstanding and influential role in international relations, and that it will not accept snubs such as USA' unilateralism over the status of Kosovo; and, among others, e) a warning and demonstration of vulnerability surrounding schemes for transporting hydrocarbons other than those passing through Russia.<sup>38</sup>

Although the conflict has renewed fears over a new Cold War in some political and media offices —joining other focuses of suspicion, such as that created around the anti-missile shield—<sup>39</sup> with the consequent headlines of confrontation between the West and Russia, the economic interdependence between the two is so great as to indicate that Russia will not so much seek to revive the old antagonism as to strengthen itself within the exclusive circle of great powers. Far from resolving the basic conflict in South Ossetia (that of the identity-related aspirations of Georgians and Ossetians), it is probable that a new situation will come to be accepted —an unresolved conflict transformed in accordance with balances of interests and foreign powers. However, Russia's ultimate aims and room for manoeuvre, and the international response to these, have yet to be seen. Because of all this, with this new war, one of the big loses, together with the civilian population on both sides, is once again the sphere of resolution of conflicts, while the powers that still consider war as a valid extension of politics gain ground.

the first war and which was itself afflicted by internal disputes and rising crime. Russia considered the war over in 2001, with no agreement or definitive victory, and produced a statute of autonomy and a pro-Russian Chechen administration. However, confrontations persist, alongside a growing Islamisation of the Chechen rebel ranks and a regionalisation of the armed struggle.

Rebel attacks and low-intensity violence between armed groups and federal and local security forces continued, with a limited **but constant trickle of fatalities**. The insurgent attacks, which covered the entire south-eastern area of the republic, were extended towards the east after the middle of the year, according to some analysts. Among the important insurgent actions was a rebel attack in the Urus-Martanovsky district, with nine

37. The majority of the Ossetian population in South Ossetia have Russian passports and the Russian government increasingly often refers to them as "Russian citizens". Georgia has repeatedly denounced what it considers to be a Russian attempt to annex the territories of South Ossetia and Abkhazia via "passportisation". International Crisis Group, *Georgia's South Ossetia Conflict: Make Haste Slowly*, Europe Report no. 183, ICG, 7 June 2007, in <<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=4887&l=4>>; BBC, *Regions and territories: South Ossetia*, in <[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country\\_profiles/3797729.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country_profiles/3797729.stm)> [consulted 25.09.08]; García Guitián, E., *Georgia, 7 de agosto de 2008: la crisis en su contexto*, Real Instituto Elcano, 27 August 2008. Russia, in turn, based itself on the supposed Russian citizenship of the population of South Ossetia to invoke the international principle of the Responsibility. According to several experts, this use of the principle was incorrect. Evans, G. "Russia and the responsibility to protect", *Los Angeles Times*, 31 August 2008; International Crisis Group, *Russia vs Georgia: The fallout*, Europe Report no. 195, ICG, 22 August 2008, at <<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=5636&l=4>>.

38. International Crisis Group, 2008, Op. Cit.; Boonstra, J., *Georgia y Rusia: Una guerra corta con consecuencias prolongadas*, FRIDE September 2008; De Waal, T., *South Ossetia: An avoidable catastrophe*, Institute for War and Peace Reporting, 11 August 2008; Blank, S., "Russia, Georgia and South Ossetia: Notes on a war", *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Analyst*, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, 20 August 2008; Hancilova, B. and Frichova, M., "Russia's invasion of Georgia: Bleak prospects for the South Caucasus", *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Analyst*, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, 20 August 2008; Pannier, B., *Russia-Georgia conflict raises concerns about Caspian energy exports*, RFE/RL, 13 August 2008; Illarionov, A., *Preliminary conclusions from the war in Georgia*, RFE/RL, 12 August 2008; Kimmage, D., *Russian 'Hard Power' Changes Balance in Caucasus*, RFE/RL, 17 August 2008; Nemtsov, B. and Milov, V., "Putin and Gazprom", *Novaya Gazeta*, 2 September 2008; Lipsky, A., "We want peace. Or maybe we want half the world?", *Novaya Gazeta*, 3 September 2008.

39. See chapter 6 (Disarmament).

fatalities. Federal and local authorities admitted there was still a flow of young Chechens joining the rebel ranks. The Russian NGO Memorial counted 33 insurgents dead and 70 injured in its observation areas in the republic, between June and August, the months with the highest rates of violence. The same organisation detected an **increase in the number of kidnappings in the period following May, altering the falling trend of the last few years in this practice**. It also warned of the burning of the homes of families of alleged rebels by the authorities as a new counterinsurgency method of the Chechen regime. At least 17 houses were burned during the summer months. To insurgent violence was added the power struggle between forces loyal to the Chechen president, Ramzan Kadyrov, and the Vostock battalion, led by Commander Sulim Yamadaev and integrated into the chain of federal command. Confrontations between the two sides caused 18 deaths in April, while Kadyrov finally managed to have the battalion disbanded by the Russian army at the end of the year.

***Selective attacks against high-ranking members of the political, judicial and security structures of the republic of Ingushetia increased***

Russia (Ingushetia)	
<b>Start of conflict:</b>	2008
<b>Type:</b>	System Internal
<b>Main parties:</b>	Russian federal government, government of the republic of Ingushetia, armed opposition groups (Jamaat Ingush)
<b>Intensity:</b>	1
<b>Trend:</b>	↑

**Summary:**

The low-level violence experienced in Ingushetia since the beginning of the 21st century sees the local and federal security forces confronting a network of armed Islamist cells known as the Jamaat Ingush and forming part of the Caucasus Front (movement bringing together the various insurgents in the northern Caucasus). With origins going back to the participation of Ingush fighters in the first Chechen War (1994-1996), since 2002 Ingush insurgency has been restructured on territorial lines, promoting a campaign of local violence. Without the nationalist impulse of Chechnya, it pursues the establishment of an Islamic state in the Caucasus. The beginning of violence in Ingushetia occurred alongside the presidency in the republic of Murat Zyazikov, whose period in power (2002-2008) is said to have been responsible for problems of human rights violations, corruption, poverty, social and political tension and a climate of lack of governance. The Ingush insurgents periodically attack military and civilian personnel belonging to the Russian and local state machinery. 2008 marked an increase in violence and tension.

**Selective attacks against high-ranking members of the political, judicial and security structures of the republic of Ingushetia increased, together with clashes between insurgents and local and federal security services.** Dozens of people were killed and a similar number were injured. The president, prime minister and interior minister suffered several attacks from which they escaped unhurt. Those killed included outstanding figures such

as the vice-president of the Supreme Court and the number two in the federal security forces in Ingushetia. Quite large rebel ambushes were recorded in the middle of the year in Nazran, Muzhichi and Yandare, and, in the locality of Ordzhonikidzevskhaya, at least 10 civilians and a policeman were kidnapped. Civilians were increasingly victims of human rights violations. **A Parliamentary committee warned of the illegal actions committed by security forces as part of the fight against terrorism.** The death in police custody in August of Magomed Yevloyev, owner of a news portal opposing the regime, was seen as a new turning point for civilian activists. Throughout the year, **abuses by the authorities, corruption and power struggles increased social and political tension** between the government of the president, Murat Zyazikov, and opposition sectors, including various clans, which demanded Zyazikov's resignation. At the end of October, the Russian president sacked Zyazikov and, in his place, appointed General Yunus-Bek Yevkurov, who promised to investigate the human rights violations and to combat corruption.

Turkey (south-east)	
<b>Start of conflict:</b>	1984
<b>Type:</b>	Self-government, Identity Internationalised internal
<b>Main parties:</b>	Government, PKK, TAK
<b>Intensity:</b>	2
<b>Trend:</b>	↑

**Summary:**

In 1984, the PKK, set up in 1978 as a Marxist-Leninist political party led by Abdullah Öcalan, announced an armed offensive against the government, starting a campaign of military insurgency to demand independence for Kurdistan. This drew a strong response from the government in defence of its territorial integrity. The resulting war between the PKK and the government particularly affected the Kurdish civilian population in south-eastern Turkey, trapped in the crossfire and victim of persecutions and forcible evacuation campaigns carried out by the government. The conflict took a new turn in 1999, with the arrest of Öcalan and the subsequent announcement that the PKK was giving up the armed struggle and transforming its objectives, abandoning its demand for independence to focus on claiming recognition of the Kurdish identity within Turkey. With Turkey's anti-terrorist discourse and the PKK claiming self-defence, the conflict remained alive in the form of tension in subsequent years and escalated in 2007.

**The wave of aerial offensives by the Turkish army, relaunched at the end of 2007, culminated in February in an eight-day cross-border land operation, with an official balance of 240 PKK casualties and 24 soldiers dead (100 according to the PKK)** and about ten from the armed group. According to the Turkish army, in the first nine months of the year 408 Kurdish rebels died in Iraq. In October, shortly after the PKK's most serious attack of the year against the army on Turkish territory (17 soldiers killed, according to the army, in an ambush against a military post in Hakkari province), the Turkish parliament extended authorisation for

attacking the group in Iraq for another year. This was followed by new aerial offensives. **Within Turkey, the situation also deteriorated, with more than a hundred deaths. 2008 saw the most casualties of recent years for the army**, with 178 in the first six months alone (compared to 114 in 2007). Several attacks **in cities should also be highlighted**: a double attack in Istanbul in July, with 17 dead and 150 injured, initially attributed to the PKK; a PKK attack in Diyarbakir in January, with seven deaths, including five students, and 70 injured, and two explosions in Mersin and Izmir, for which responsibility was claimed by the Kurdish group the TAK, with 29 wounded. Meanwhile, the PKK kidnapped and released eight tourists and claimed responsibility for sabotaging oil pipelines. Moreover, factors involving political and social tension added further instability. This was the result of legal action against the governing AKP party, the pro-Kurdish DTP and the ultra-nationalist network Ergenekon, as well as Kurdish protests in the south-east.

## Middle East

Iraq	
<b>Start of conflict:</b>	2003
<b>Type:</b>	System, Government, Resources Internationalised internal
<b>Main parties:</b>	Government, international coalition led by the USA/United Kingdom, internal and external armed opposition groups
<b>Intensity:</b>	3
<b>Trend:</b>	↓

### Summary:

The invasion of Iraq by the international coalition led by the USA in March 2003, using the supposed presence of weapons of mass destruction as an argument in order to overthrow Saddam Hussein's regime because of his alleged link to the attacks of 11 September 2001 in New York, led to the beginning of a new armed conflict. Many agents gradually became involved in the violence, including international troops, the Iraqi armed forces, militias and insurgent groups and Al-Qaeda, among others. The new division of power between Sunnite, Shiite and Kurdish groups within the institutional framework established following the overthrow of Hussein led to discontent among many sectors. Violence has increased, with the armed opposition against the international presence in the country superimposed on the internal struggle for the control of power. This has shown a marked sectarian component since February 2006, largely involving Shiites and Sunnites.

The country continued to show high levels of violence despite the general reduction compared to previous year, with the continuous trickle of suicide attacks and explosions throughout the region, principally affecting the province of Nineveh (north) and its capital, Mosul. Particularly serious were the attacks against the Chris-

tian community which, in mid-October, led to the displacement of thousands of people amid accusations against the Kurdish security forces for not preventing it and an unusual condemnation from Al-Qaeda, which denied all responsibility. Meanwhile, **at the end of March and weeks after the renewal of the ceasefire by the Al-Mahdi of the Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, the Iraqi army began a large-scale operation, with American and British aid, against Shiite militias in Basora and later in Bagdad**. In three weeks, more than 1,000 people died and more than 2,000 were wounded, most of them civilians. In August, Al-Sadr announced the conversion of his militia into a social movement and the creation of an elite unit that would continue to fight USA' troops. Political tension throughout the year revolved around two issues: voting on the electoral law for the provincial elections, finally postponed until January 2009 and with the Kirkurk area excluded; and the negotiation of an agreement on the status of the USA troops, which includes their withdrawal before the end of 2011.

Israel – Palestine	
<b>Start of conflict:</b>	2000
<b>Type:</b>	Self-government, Identity, Territory International <sup>40</sup>
<b>Main parties:</b>	Israeli government, colonists' militias, ANP, Fatah (Brigades of the Martyrs of Al Aqsa), Hamas (Ezzedin al Qassam Brigades), Islamic Jihad, FPLP, FDLP, Popular Resistance Committees
<b>Intensity:</b>	3
<b>Trend:</b>	↑

### Summary:

The conflict between Israel and the various Palestinian agents began again in 2000, with the outbreak of the 2nd Intifada brought about by the failure of the peace process promoted at the beginning of the 1990s (Oslo Process, 1993-1994). The Israeli-Palestinian conflict emerged in 1947, when the UN Security Council resolution 181 divided the territory of Palestine under British mandate into two States. Shortly afterwards, the State of Israel was proclaimed (1948) but, to date, no Palestinian State has ever materialised. After the 1948-49 war, Israel annexed West Jerusalem, and Egypt and Jordan controlled Gaza and the West Bank respectively. In 1967, Israel occupied East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza, after defeating the Arab countries in the "Six-Day War". It would not be until the Oslo agreements that the autonomy of the Palestinian territories would be formally recognised, although their implementation would be impeded by military occupation and by the control of the territory imposed by Israel.

**The fierce Israeli offensive against the Gaza Strip beginning on 27 December followed the end of the truce between Hamas and Israel and led to the deaths of hundreds of Palestinians. This figure reached a thousand in the first few days of 2009, as well as several**

40. Although "Palestine" (whose Palestinian National Authority is a political entity linked to a particular population and a territory) is not an internationally recognised state, the conflict between Israel and Palestine is considered as "international" and not "internal" because it involves an illegally occupied territory whose supposed ownership by Israel is not recognised by International Law or by any United Nations resolution.

**thousand injured.** United Nations' sources indicated that about a third of the victims were women and children, and various international organisations warned of the seriousness of the humanitarian situation, while they denounced violations of International Humanitarian Law by Israel. After the end of the truce on 19 December, Hamas declared it would not renew the agreement due to Israel's breach of the agreement by attacking its militia men in an incident in November, as well as its maintenance of an iron blockade of the territory during this period. The Israeli authorities indicated

that the aim of the military operation was to stop the launching of rockets from the Strip. In the first few days of the offensive, these caused the deaths of three Israelis. During the first half of 2008, the violence also claimed many victims, above all in Gaza, where, in February, another large-scale attack by the Israeli army caused the deaths of 125 Palestinians in five days. A few days later, there was a suicide attack in Negev whose responsibility was claimed by Hamas. A dozen Israelis died in Jerusalem in other isolated incidents throughout 2008.

### Box 1.2. Israel – Palestine: scenarios for escaping a war economy

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has continued to be fully active for several decades, causing death and violence every day, as the serious events in Gaza at the end of the year and systematic violations of the human rights of the Palestinian population in the context of the Israeli occupation have demonstrated. Meanwhile, a negotiation process continues without advances. In this context it is relevant to look at the "war economy" within Israel and to different analyses of the economic effects of the conflict. On this issue, two broad conclusions can be drawn: firstly, Israel as a whole is losing from the occupation; secondly, there are sectors within Israel which are benefiting from it. The issue raised is: are the benefits sufficiently great or the beneficiaries sufficiently powerful for this to be a disincentive for peace? And the most important question is: would eliminating these benefits and/or a solution based on the achievement of two States (a solution which is on the table in the negotiating process) mean the end of the occupation? Or could other sufficiently attractive benefits be generated to promote a change towards peace?

To begin with, in economic terms, Israel and the Israelis are "losing" with the occupation because of the need to set aside a considerable share of public spending for areas such as the army, weapons or the construction of settlements. This leads the country to divert investment in other sectors that would improve welfare for the population. So, Israel appears among a dozen countries, including Cambodia and Ethiopia, that set aside a higher percentage of their budget for military spending than for health and education.<sup>41</sup> But, who within Israel gains from the occupation? There are three broad groups of beneficiaries. Firstly, a good portion of the settlers (approximately 10% of the population), who receive considerable subsidies, have better education and health services than other Israelis and pay lower taxes. Secondly, the military industry, which, with the conflict, has achieved considerable income and which has also used its specialisation in the "fight against terrorism" to increase its sales abroad, above all since 11 September 2001. Finally, Israeli companies which, in the last few decades, have benefited from the phenomenon known as the "captive market". This has seen Israel exporting some of its products and services to Palestine as part of an active policy of limiting the development of the Palestinian economy. So, Israel is the main supplier for Palestine in crucial sectors such as basic foods (flour, rice and sugar) and essential infrastructures (electricity, oil, gas, cement, a good part of its water and also the telecommunications sector). The paradox even occurs that a good part of the international aid aimed at the Palestinian population is purchased in Israel, leading to the calculation that for every dollar of aid, almost half is received by Israel. It must be pointed out that Palestinian dependence on Israel is translated into the continually-used capacity to block the supplies of essential products. The case of Gaza in 2008 is a paradigmatic example of this.

In order to deal with the issues raised, it is relevant to assess the economic gains and losses from the creation of a future Palestinian State. Firstly, on the side of the positive effects of the possible new scenario for those who until now have gained economically from the occupation or for those who could begin to do so with the new situation, it must be borne in mind that the creation of a Palestinian State would bring with it economic growth, which would ultimately benefit Israel. According to a study carried out,<sup>42</sup> this would make it possible to increase the Palestinian demand for certain Israeli products (for example, electricity) and it need not lead to an interruption in business relationships between the two "entities" for other products, such as cement or fuel.<sup>43</sup> Concerning the above idea, it should be pointed out that the outbreak of the 2nd Intifada in 2000 and the sharp fall in the levels of development in the occupied territories have also had a negative effect on Israeli sectors that have seen the purchasing power of their "partner" notably reduced. From among other sectors broadly favoured by the particular features of the occupation, such as the construction of homes, it must be pointed out that the construction would have gone on anyway in an unoccupied territory. With respect to the building of the wall, it must be added that this has been an isolated element of expenditure.

41. Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alerta 2007! Report on conflicts, human rights and the construction of peace*, Icaria, Barcelona, 2007, in <<http://www.escolapau.org>>.

42. Swirski, S., *Is there an Israeli Business Peace Disincentive?*, Adva Center – Information on Equality and Social Justice in Israel, Israel, 2008 <[http://www.adva.org/UserFiles/File/aa-Is%20there%20an%20Israeli%20Business%20Peace%20Disincentive\\_final\(1\).pdf](http://www.adva.org/UserFiles/File/aa-Is%20there%20an%20Israeli%20Business%20Peace%20Disincentive_final(1).pdf)>.

43. For more information, see Arnon, A. and Bamyá, S. (eds), *Economic Dimensions of a Two State Agreement Between Israel and Palestine*, The Aix Group, 2007.

On the negative side, and likely to generate resistance to the ending of the conflict, experts point out sectors that could, although would not necessarily, lose from the creation of a future Palestinian State: the agricultural sector, due to what is currently an extremely unbalanced situation in which all Israeli products have free access to the Palestinian market while Palestinian exports to the Israeli market are restricted, a situation that would probably be rebalanced in a new scenario; something similar would happen with the food industry (although the lack of agricultural opportunities in Gaza, which is a small, arid territory, may still mean that Israeli supplies are required). The greatest resistance to the end of the occupation could result from the existence of clear benefits for Israeli companies operating within the occupied West Bank: on one hand, employing Palestinian labour in conditions of extreme exploitation; on the other, because they scarcely pay taxes to the Israeli authorities. Faced with a new scenario, Israel would have to weigh up both elements, although the implications of the end of the armed conflict and the end of the deaths, including those of Israelis, should contribute to generate a critical mass in favour of real moves forward towards peace.

## Yemen

<b>Start of conflict:</b>	2004
<b>Type:</b>	System Internal
<b>Main parties:</b>	Government, followers of the cleric Al-Houthi (Al-Shabab al-Mumen)
<b>Intensity:</b>	1
<b>Trend:</b>	↓

### Summary:

The conflict began in 2004, when supporters of the cleric Al-Houthi, belonging to the Shiite minority, began a rebellion in northern Yemen with the intention of re-establishing an entire theocratic Sunnite regime similar to the one that disappeared in 1962. In addition, the rebels have always accused the government of corruption and of neglecting the mountainous northern regions. They have also opposed its alliance with the USA in the fight against terrorism. The conflict has claimed thousands of lives and has led to the displacement of thousands of people. The violence intensified at the beginning of 2007, until, in June that year, a peace agreement was reached. However, fairly sporadic confrontations and accusations of violation of the signed agreements have continued.

The conflict between the army and the followers of Al-Houthi in the northern province of Saada recorded considerable intensity in the first half of the year. **Fierce fighting took place in April and May, due to which 40,000 people were forcibly displaced in the city of Saada, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).** In the second half of the year there were lesser episodes of violence after which, in mid July, the parties achieved a new ceasefire. However, the government and the Al-Houthists mutually accused one another of violating the agreement and rebel leaders denounced the authorities' blocking of humanitarian aid. Meanwhile international organisations warned of the deterioration in the health conditions of the population in the affected areas. In addition, the ICRC put the number of people indirectly affected by the four years of conflict at 120,000. Meanwhile, the country was also the scenario for other elements of tension: firstly, there were various attacks for which responsibility was claimed by groups linked to Al-Qaeda, with the most serious being that aimed at the USA embassy in the capital, which caused the deaths of 16 people on 17 September; secondly, there were protests from the opposition, which, in mid November, launched a call to boycott the electoral registration process. This ended with several people injured in the capital due to clashes with the security forces.