



Sven Torfinn / Magnum Photos

# WAR AND PEACE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

## Introduction

**The first *Human Security Report* presents a comprehensive and evidence-based portrait of global security. It identifies and examines major trends in global political violence, asks what factors drive these trends and examines some of the consequences. It poses major challenges to conventional wisdom.**

Over the past dozen years, the global security climate has changed in dramatic, positive, but largely unheralded ways. Civil wars, genocides and international crises have all declined sharply. International wars, now only a small minority of all conflicts, have been in steady decline for a much longer period, as have military coups and the average number of people killed per conflict per year.<sup>1</sup>

The number of genocides and politicides plummeted by 80% between 1988 and 2001.

The wars that dominated the headlines of the 1990s were real—and brutal—enough. But the global media have

largely ignored the 100-odd conflicts that have quietly ended since 1988. During this period, more wars stopped than started.

The extent of the change in global security following the end of the Cold War has been remarkable:

- The number of armed conflicts around the world has declined by more than 40% since the early 1990s (see Figure 1.1 in Part I).<sup>2</sup>
- Between 1991 (the high point for the post–World War II period) and 2004, 28 armed struggles for self-determination started or restarted, while 43 were contained or ended. There were just 25 armed secessionist conflicts under way in 2004, the lowest number since 1976.<sup>3</sup>
- Notwithstanding the horrors of Rwanda, Srebrenica and elsewhere, the number of genocides and politicides plummeted by 80% between the 1988 high point and 2001 (Figure 1.11).
- International crises, often harbingers of war, declined by more than 70% between 1981 and 2001 (Figure 1.5).
- The dollar value of major international arms transfers fell by 33% between 1990 and 2003 (Figure 1.10). Global military expenditure and troop numbers declined sharply in the 1990s as well.
- The number of refugees dropped by some 45% between 1992 and 2003, as more and more wars came to an end (Figure 3.1).<sup>4</sup>

- Five out of six regions in the developing world saw a net decrease in core human rights abuses between 1994 and 2003 (Figures 2.6 and 2.7).

The positive changes noted above date from the end of the Cold War. Other changes can be traced back to the 1950s:

- The average number of battle-deaths per conflict per year—the best measure of the deadliness of warfare—has been falling dramatically but unevenly since the 1950s. In 1950, for example, the average armed conflict killed 38,000 people; in 2002 the figure was 600, a 98% decline.
- The period since the end of World War II is the longest interval of uninterrupted peace between the major powers in hundreds of years.<sup>5</sup>
- The number of actual and attempted military coups has been declining for more than 40 years. In 1963 there were 25 coups and attempted coups around the world, the highest number in the post-World War II period. In 2004 there were only 10 coup attempts—a 60% decline. All of them failed.<sup>6</sup>

International terrorism is the only form of political violence that appears to be getting worse, but the data are contested. Although some datasets have shown an overall decline in international terrorist incidents since the early 1980s (Figure 1.12), the most recent data suggest a dramatic increase in the number of high-casualty attacks since the September 11 attacks on the US in 2001.

### Myths and misunderstandings

Public understanding of global security is hampered by many myths and misunderstandings about its nature. Some of these originated in the media; others were propagated, or reiterated by, international organisations and NGOs. Such myths include claims that:

- The number of armed conflicts is increasing.
- Wars are getting deadlier.
- The number of genocides is increasing.

- The gravest threat to human security is international terrorism.
- 90% of those killed in today's wars are civilians.<sup>7</sup>
- 5 million people were killed in wars in the 1990s.
- 2 million children were killed in wars during the last decade.
- 80% of refugees are women and children.
- Women are the primary victims of war.
- There are 300,000 child soldiers serving around the world today.

Not one of these claims is based on reliable data. All are suspect; some are demonstrably false. Yet they are widely believed because they reinforce popular assumptions. They flourish in the absence of official figures to contradict them and conjure a picture of global security trends that is grossly distorted. And they often drive political agendas.

A consistent theme in the *Human Security Report 2005* is the inadequacy of available data, especially comparable year-on-year data that can be used to document and measure national, regional and global trends. In some cases, data are simply non-existent.

International terrorism is the only form of political violence that appears to be getting worse, but the data are contested.

To address these challenges when preparing this report, the Human Security Centre has drawn on a variety of data compiled by research institutions around the world and commissioned a major public opinion poll on popular attitudes to security in 11 countries. The Human Security Centre also commissioned a new dataset from Uppsala University's Conflict Data Program. The Uppsala/Human Security Centre dataset is the most comprehensive yet created on political violence around the world. Its findings, the first of which are published in this report, will provide key trend data for future editions of the *Human Security Report*.

## Structure and contents

The *Human Security Report 2005* has a five-part structure:

- **Part I: The changing face of global violence** looks mainly at long-term global and regional trends in political violence.
- **Part II: The human security audit** presents the findings of the new dataset on political violence around the world. It also examines other threats to human security.
- **Part III: Assault on the vulnerable** explores the impact of political violence on refugees, women and children.
- **Part IV: Counting the indirect costs of war** examines some of the long-term, indirect effects of war.
- **Part V: Why the dramatic decline in armed conflict?** examines the major drivers of the radical improvement in global security since the end of the Cold War.

The period following the end of World War II was the longest interval in many centuries without a war between the major powers.

The following discussion briefly outlines the main themes of the report and reviews some key findings from the various sections.

### War trends

In the early 1990s, at precisely the point that media commentators in the West began to fret about a worldwide explosion in ethnic violence, the number of armed conflicts began to drop (Figure 1.1). This little-noticed decline, which has been carefully tracked by the research community, has continued ever since.

The five-decade period following the end of World War II was the longest interval in many centuries without a war between the major powers, and scholars sometimes refer to it as the ‘Long Peace’. This description is deeply misleading. Although no wars between the major powers in

this period, every decade saw sharp increases in political violence in the rest of the world.

Between 1946 and 1991 the number of state-based armed conflicts being fought worldwide trebled (Figure 1.2), with most of the killing taking place in poor countries (Figure 1.9).

Moreover, although it is true that the major powers did not fight each other during this period, their post-World War II history has been anything but peaceful. Indeed, the UK, France, the US and the Soviet Union/Russia top the list of countries involved in international wars in the last 60 years (Figure 1.3).

The end of the Cold War brought remarkable changes to the global security climate.

‘Realist’ scholars attributed the Long Peace between the major powers to the security-enhancing effect of a bipolar security system underpinned by mutual nuclear deterrence. Many worried that the end of the Cold War would usher in a new era of severe crises, even wars, between the major powers.<sup>8</sup> But today, 15 years after the end of the Cold War, the number of international crises is just a small fraction of the 1981 high-point (Figure 1.5) and the prospect of war between the major powers has never seemed more remote.

The end of the Cold War brought remarkable changes to the global security climate. Security pessimists saw the upsurge of secessionist violence in the former Soviet Union, the dissolution of the Yugoslav federation, genocide in Rwanda and other ethnic confrontations as portents of an increasingly violent future.

This pessimism was quite unfounded. Between 1992 and 2003, the last year for which complete data are currently available, the number of armed conflicts (Figure 1.2) dropped by 40%. The number of wars—the most deadly category of armed conflict—declined even more sharply.

In most parts of the world the drop in conflict numbers started after the end of the Cold War (Figure 1.2). But in two important regions the decline started earlier. In the

Middle East and North Africa, political violence began to decrease at the beginning of the 1980s. In part this was because the front-line Arab states recognised that fighting wars with a conventionally superior and nuclear-armed Israel was a fruitless endeavour, and in part because ruthless state repression was succeeding in crushing domestic insurgencies.

In East Asia, Southeast Asia and Oceania the decline in both the number and deadliness of armed conflicts started in the mid-1970s (Figures 1.2 and 1.9). This was a period in which massive external involvement in the region's conflicts was rapidly winding down, and in which countries in the region were experiencing the highest rates of economic growth in the world. As Part V of this report shows, the probability of war decreases as national income, and hence state capacity, increases (Figure 5.4).

### The challenge of Africa

Most of the world's armed conflicts now take place in sub-Saharan Africa (Figure 1.2). At the turn of the 21st century more people were being killed in wars in this region than in the rest of the world combined (Figure 1.9).

Violent conflict exacerbates the conditions that gave rise to it in the first place, creating a 'conflict trap' from which escape is extraordinarily difficult.

Almost every country across the broad middle belt of the continent—from Somalia in the east to Sierra Leone in the west, from Sudan in the north to Angola in the south—remains trapped in a volatile mix of poverty, crime, unstable and inequitable political institutions, ethnic discrimination, low state capacity and the 'bad neighbourhoods' of other crisis-ridden states—all factors associated with increased risk of armed conflict.<sup>9</sup>

The combination of pervasive poverty, declining GDP per capita, poor infrastructure, weak administration, exter-

nal intervention and an abundance of cheap weapons, plus the effects of a major decline in per capita foreign assistance for much of the 1990s, mean that armed conflicts in these countries are difficult to avoid, contain or end.

Moreover, violent conflict exacerbates the very conditions that gave rise to it in the first place, creating a classic 'conflict trap' from which escape is extraordinarily difficult. Unsurprisingly, sustaining peace settlements is a major challenge in many of the continent's post-conflict countries.

Yet even in Africa there are signs of hope. The new Uppsala/Human Security Centre dataset shows that the number of conflicts in Africa in which a government was one of the warring parties declined from 15 to 10 between 2002 and 2003 (Figure 2.1). The number of cases of 'one-sided' violence—defined as the slaughter of at least 25 civilians in the course of a year and called one-sided because the victims can't fight back—declined from 17 to 11 (Figure 2.1), a drop of 35%. Meanwhile, reported fatalities from all forms of political violence were down by more than 24% (Figure 2.4).

These changes reflect the increased involvement of the international community and African regional organisations in conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction, rather than major changes in the underlying risk factors. Africa remains the world's most conflict-prone continent.

### Wars have fewer victims today

The decline in the numbers killed in wars has been even more dramatic than the drop in the number of conflicts, although it has taken place over a much longer period and for quite different reasons.

The *Human Security Report 2005* draws on a new dataset on battle-deaths that occurred between 1946 and 2002 in conflicts where a government was one of the warring parties. As Figure 1.6 shows, nearly 700,000 people were killed in the wars of 1950, while in 2002 the figure was just 20,000.

This substantial long-term decline in battle-deaths is due primarily to a radical shift in modes of warfare.

The wars of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, and to a lesser degree the 1980s, were characterised by major battles fought by large armies armed with heavy conventional weapons and supported by one or other superpower.

Today most wars are fought in poor countries with armies that lack heavy conventional weapons—or superpower patrons. In a typical low-intensity conflict weak government forces confront small, ill-trained rebel forces equipped with small arms and light weapons. Skirmishes and attacks on civilians are preferred to major engagements. Although these conflicts often involve gross human rights abuses, they kill relatively few people compared with the major wars of 20 or more years ago.

In addition to low-intensity conflicts, a small number of high-tech wars have been fought by the US and its allies since the end of the Cold War. In the Gulf War, Kosovo and Afghanistan, the huge military advantage enjoyed by coalition forces, plus increased use of precision-guided munitions, meant that victory on the battlefield was gained quickly and with relatively few battle-deaths.

The current conflict in Iraq is the exception: while the conventional war that began in 2003 was over quickly and with relatively few casualties, tens of thousands have been killed in the subsequent—and ongoing—urban insurgency.

The battle-death data also demonstrate how the world's deadliest killing zones have shifted locale over time (Figure 1.9):

- From the end of World War II to the mid-1970s, by far the greatest numbers of battle-deaths were in East Asia, Southeast Asia and Oceania.
- In the 1980s, most of the killing took place in the Middle East and North Africa, Central and South Asia, and in sub-Saharan Africa.
- By the turn of the 21st century, sub-Saharan Africa had become the world's most violent region, experiencing more battle-deaths than all other regions combined.

## Refugees and displaced persons

While the major wars of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s were associated with very high death tolls, the available data suggest that these wars did not generate commensurately large flows of displaced people.<sup>10</sup> In fact, the figures indicate that the really big increases in people fleeing their homes in fear of their lives did not start until the 1980s.

Between 1980 and 1992 the total number of people estimated to have been displaced increased from 16 million to more than 40 million. While the data, especially on internally displaced persons, are questionable, there is little doubt about the remarkable upward trend during this period.

Increased targeting of civilians appears to be a major reason for the huge increase. As one UN report put it, 'Refugee movements are no longer side effects of conflict, but in many cases are central to the objectives and tactics of war.'<sup>11</sup>

The battle-death data demonstrate how the world's deadliest killing zones have shifted locale over time.

While displacement is a humanitarian tragedy and puts people at greater risk of succumbing to disease and malnutrition, it also prevents many violent deaths. Indeed, had the millions of people displaced in the 1980s and early 1990s *not* fled their homes, hundreds of thousands, possibly more, would likely have been killed. So the massive displacement in this period is likely part of the reason for the declining number of battle-deaths.

## Genocide

Genocides and other deliberate slaughters of civilians are usually counted separately from armed conflicts, on the grounds that the killing of unarmed innocents does not constitute warfare.

Such killings usually—but not always—take place within the context of a war. So if wars decline, we would

expect that cases involving the slaughter of civilians would decline as well. This is precisely what has happened, but the 80% decline in the number of genocides (Figure 1.11) since the end of the Cold War has been twice as great as the drop in the number of conflicts

Until now there has been no systematic annual reporting of the death tolls from such one-sided violence. This omission is addressed by the new Uppsala/Human Security Centre dataset discussed in Part II of this report. The data for 2002 and 2003 suggest that cases of one-sided violence are as common as cases of state-based armed conflict, but that one-sided violence kills far fewer people.<sup>12</sup>

## Terrorism

Like genocide, terrorism is directed primarily against civilians. But although the focus of enormous attention, international terrorism has killed fewer than 1000 people a year, on average, over the past 30 years.

The trends in international terrorism have been the subject of considerable recent controversy. The US State Department has published data on international terrorist incidents around the world for more than 20 years—a rare exception to the general rule that governments do not collect statistics on trends in political violence.

International terrorism is a development issue for the global South, as well as being a vital security issue for both the North and South.

The State Department's data for 2003 (Figure 1.12) showed a 60% decline in the number of international terrorist attacks since the early 1980s, and in 2004 the Bush administration cited this finding to support its claim that the US was winning the 'war on terror'. But these data were profoundly misleading—they conflated relatively trivial incidents with 'significant' attacks. The former have indeed decreased, but the latter have shot up more than *eightfold* since the early 1980s (Figure 1.13).

In April 2005 the Bush administration published new data showing a dramatic increase in 'significant' international terrorist attacks in 2004.

Despite the relatively low death toll resulting from international terrorism, it is still a major human security concern for several reasons:

- First, the war on terror has provided a large part of the rationale for major wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.
- Second, as recent opinion survey data show, the US-led counterterror campaign has been associated with extraordinarily high levels of anti-Americanism in the Muslim world.<sup>13</sup> This has almost certainly increased the number of potential terrorist recruits.
- Third—and perhaps most important—terrorists may at some stage acquire and use weapons of mass destruction (WMD). This prospect is of particular concern because terrorists, unlike states, cannot be deterred by threats of nuclear retaliation.

Much of the attention paid to possible WMD attacks has focused on the threat posed to the US and other Western countries. But mass-casualty terror attacks also pose a major threat to poor countries—even when they are not directly targeted.

The likely consequence of a successful high-casualty WMD attack against the US, for example, would be a major downturn in the global economy. According to the World Bank, the September 11 attacks on the US in 2001 pushed millions of people in the developing world into poverty, and likely killed tens of thousands of under-five-year-olds—a far greater toll than the total number of deaths directly caused by the attack.

International terrorism is thus a development issue for the global South, as well being a vital security issue for both the North and the South.

## Human rights abuse

The Political Terror Scale (PTS) database, which is maintained by researchers at the University of North Carolina, Asheville, records global and regional trend data on human rights abuse in the developing world. It uses a

composite indicator that captures such core human rights abuses as torture, extrajudicial executions, the ‘disappearance’ of dissidents and officially backed death squads.<sup>14</sup> Drawing on information compiled by Amnesty International and the US State Department, it ranks each country on a five-point scale every year.

Some 20 years of these data are shown in Figures 2.6 and 2.7. Half the regions of the developing world saw the level of state repression increase somewhat between 1980 and 1994, while five out of the six regions discussed showed a modest decrease from 1994 to 2003. Under-reporting and different coding standards in the 1980s likely mean that the reduction in core human rights violations is greater than the trend data suggest.

There has been a dramatic world-wide decline in authoritarianism over the past quarter century.

The most insidious forms of repression occur where the coercive power of the state is so pervasive that actual physical repression rarely has to be used. What might be called ‘rule by fear’ is most prevalent in highly authoritarian states.

However, there is room for optimism here too, since there has been a substantial worldwide decline in authoritarianism over the past quarter century (Figure 5.3).

### Indirect deaths

Many of the costs of war are obvious—battle-deaths, displaced people, flattened cities, destroyed infrastructure, capital flight and slashed living standards. Less obvious are the high numbers of ‘indirect’ or ‘excess’ deaths—non-violent deaths that would not have occurred had there been no fighting. In most of today’s armed conflicts, war-exacerbated disease and malnutrition kill far more people than missiles, bombs and bullets.

It is no surprise that poor countries suffer most from these indirect deaths. As Part IV of this report demonstrates, these countries experience the most wars, their

citizens are more susceptible to disease and malnutrition to begin with, their health systems are fragile and underfunded, and the humanitarian assistance they receive is often too little and too late.

Indirect deaths receive little attention in the media because it is almost impossible to distinguish them from ‘normal’ deaths caused by malnutrition and disease. Few outsiders notice a statistical increase in already high mortality rates—even though the number of additional deaths is likely to be many times greater than the number of battle-deaths. In some cases the ratio of ‘indirect’ to ‘direct’ deaths exceeds 10:1.

Yet only when the death rate from malnutrition and disease escalates suddenly—as has recently happened in Sudan’s Darfur region—do indirect deaths engage the attention of the media and generate pressure for action.

The indirect costs of warfare will be a central theme of the *Human Security Report 2006*. Ignorance of the scope and impact of these costs hampers effective planning for humanitarian assistance and post-conflict reconstruction programs. Donor governments, international agencies and NGOs often complain about the lack of information, but few do much to address the problem.

Then, there is the issue of accountability. Neither governments nor rebels are normally held legally or morally responsible for the indirect deaths caused by their actions, in part because the linkage between war, disease and malnutrition is not well understood.

A government or rebel group that slaughters hundreds of civilians in wartime can, in principle, be brought to justice before the International Criminal Court. But if the same government or rebel group acts in a knowingly reckless and negligent manner, and in so doing causes tens or even hundreds of thousands to perish from disease and hunger, it is unlikely ever to be charged with a crime, let alone be successfully prosecuted.

### Violent crime

While violent crime is clearly a threat to human security, attempts to track global and regional trends in criminal

violence are hampered by lack of data, under-reporting and under-recording, conflicting definitions and, in some cases, the reporting of war deaths as homicides.

Part II includes a review of the available data on global trends in homicide (Figure 2.9) and rape (Figure 2.10). But the discussion is in part an exercise in demonstrating how little we know. The rape data are particularly problematic. It is impossible, for example, to determine whether the increase in rape rates in many regions is a function of increased rape, increased reporting, or both.

Between 1946 and 1991 there was a twelvefold rise in the number of civil wars—the greatest jump in 200 years.

The extent of rape in war is examined in Part III, but here, too, the discussion is hampered by the absence of reliable cross-national data. However, a major recent case study in Sierra Leone found a clear association between displacement and being a victim of sexual violence. Displaced women were twice as likely to be raped as those who remained in their homes.

Case study evidence indicates that this association may exist in other conflict zones as well. If so, then it is reasonable to assume that the fourfold increase in displacement between the early 1970s and the early 1990s (Figure 3.1) was associated with a major increase in the incidence of sexual violence.

### The causes of peace

Over the past three decades two epochal changes in international politics have had a huge but little analysed impact on global security. These changes help explain both the increase in armed conflict around the world from the end of World War II to the early 1990s and its subsequent sharp decline.

Between 1946 and 1991 there was a twelvefold rise in the number of civil wars—the greatest jump in 200 years.<sup>15</sup> The data suggest that anti-colonialism and the geo-

politics of the Cold War were the major determinants of this increase (Figure 5.2).

By the early 1980s the wars of liberation from colonial rule, which had accounted for 60% to 100% of all international wars fought since the early 1950s, had virtually ended. With the demise of colonialism, a major driver of warfare around the world—one that had caused 81 wars since 1816—simply ceased to exist.

Then, in the late 1980s, the Cold War, which had driven approximately one-third of all wars (civil as well as international) in the post-World War II period, also came to an end. This not only removed the only risk of violent conflict between the major powers and their allies, it also meant that Washington and Moscow stopped supporting their erstwhile allies in many so-called proxy wars in the developing world. Denied external support, many of these conflicts quietly ground to a halt.

With the colonial era and then the Cold War over, global warfare began to decline rapidly in the early 1990s. Between 1992 and 2002 the number of civil wars being fought each year plummeted by 80%. The decline in all armed conflicts—that is, wars plus minor armed conflicts—was 40%.

The end of the Cold War not only removed a major source of conflict from the international system, it also allowed the UN to begin to play the security-enhancing role that its founders had intended, but which the organisation had long been prevented from pursuing.

With the colonial era and then the Cold War over, the number of armed conflicts began to decline rapidly in the early 1990s.

With the Security Council no longer paralysed by Cold War politics, the UN spearheaded a veritable explosion of conflict prevention, peacemaking and post-conflict peace-building activities in the early 1990s. Part V of this report

describes the extent of this unprecedented surge in activism, which included:

- A sixfold increase in the number of preventive diplomacy missions (those that seek to stop wars from starting) mounted by the UN between 1990 and 2002.
- A fourfold increase in peacemaking activities (those that seek to stop ongoing conflicts) over the same period (Figure 5.5).
- A sevenfold increase in the number of 'Friends of the Secretary-General', 'Contact Groups' and other government-initiated mechanisms to support peacemaking and peacebuilding missions between 1990 and 2003.
- An elevenfold increase in the number of economic sanctions in place against regimes around the world between 1989 and 2001.
- A fourfold increase in the number of UN peacekeeping operations between 1987 and 1999 (Figure 5.6). The increase in numbers was not the only change. The new missions were, on average, far larger and more complex than those of the Cold War era and they have been relatively successful in sustaining the peace. With 40% of post-conflict countries relapsing into war again within five years, the importance of preventing wars from restarting is obvious.

The UN did not act alone, of course; the World Bank, donor states, a number of regional organisations and thousands of NGOs worked closely with UN agencies and often played independent conflict prevention, conflict mitigation and peacebuilding roles of their own. Prior to the end of the Cold War there had been little sustained activity in any of these areas.

Not one of the peacebuilding and conflict prevention programs *on its own* had much of an impact on global security in this period. Taken together, however, their effect has been profound.

As the upsurge of international activism grew in scope and intensity through the 1990s, the number of crises, wars and genocides declined. Correlation does not prove cause,

of course, and Part V reviews other possible explanations for the dramatic decline in political violence in the post-Cold War era.

Over the long term the evidence suggests that the risk of civil war is reduced by equitable economic growth, increased state capacity and inclusive democracy. Development is a necessary condition for security—and vice versa.

But Part V demonstrates that none of these factors can account for the sharp decline in political violence around the world that started in the early 1990s and has continued ever since. It argues that the single most compelling explanation for this decline is the upsurge of international activism described briefly above and in more detail in Part V.

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The *Human Security Report 2006* will include a more detailed examination of the debates that continue to divide the scholarly community about the causes of peace.

### **No grounds for complacency**

The dramatic improvements in global security documented in this first *Human Security Report* are real and important. But they are no cause for complacency. Some 60 wars are still being fought around the world and the post-Cold War years have also been marked by major humanitarian emergencies, gross abuses of human rights, war crimes, and ever-deadlier acts of terrorism. But the conflicts that remain—in Iraq, Darfur and elsewhere—continue to exact a deadly toll.

Moreover, the fact that wars come to an end does not necessarily mean that their underlying causes have been addressed. Indeed, a recent UK government report argues that much of the decrease in armed conflict is due, in fact, to its 'suppression or containment, rather than

resolution'.<sup>16</sup> In addition to creating a legacy of bitter hostility that hampers reconciliation, armed conflicts invariably exacerbate the structural conditions that led to their outbreak in the first place. This is why the greatest single risk factor for armed conflict is a recent history of political violence.

Some current developments suggest that the progress of the past dozen years now may be at risk. In May 2005 the International Crisis Group reported that ten conflict situations around the world had deteriorated in the previous month; only five had improved.<sup>17</sup> In June 2005 the influential *Peace and Conflict 2005* report noted that 'risks of future genocides and political mass murder remain high in a half-dozen countries and a significant possibility in a dozen others.'<sup>18</sup>

The risk of new wars breaking out—or old ones resuming—is very real in the absence of a sustained and strengthened commitment to conflict prevention and post-conflict peacebuilding. The post-Cold War decline

in conflict numbers was not inevitable—and it is certainly not irreversible.

But while there is no room for complacency, nor is there any cause for pessimism. The international community's successes in reducing armed conflict worldwide in the post-Cold War era have been achieved despite inadequate resources, ad hoc planning, inappropriate mandates (in the case of UN peace operations) and lack of support from the countries most able to help. With additional resources, more appropriate mandates, and a greater commitment to conflict prevention and peacebuilding, far more could be achieved.

Effective policy doesn't just need extra resources and greater political commitment. It also requires a better understanding of global and regional security trends—and of why some conflict prevention and mitigation strategies succeed while others fail.

Providing the data and analysis to further such an understanding is the central goal of the *Human Security Report*.

## OVERVIEW

# ENDNOTES

1. References for all statistics in the Overview are found in the main body of the *Report* unless otherwise noted.
2. The data cited here refer to conflicts in which a state is one of the warring parties. Until 2002 no data were collected for armed conflicts in which a state was *not* a party.
3. This finding—from Monty G. Marshall and Ted Robert Gurr, *Peace and Conflict 2005*, Center for International Development and Conflict Management (College Park, MD: University of Maryland, May 2005)—is not discussed in the *Human Security Report 2005* because *Peace and Conflict 2005* was published after the relevant section of this report was written.
4. There was no comparably sustained decrease in the number of internally displaced persons—that is, those who had fled their homes but had not crossed into another country and become refugees.
5. John Mueller, *Retreat from Doomsday: The Obsolescence of Major War* (New York: Basic Books, 1989).
6. Heidelberg Institute on International Conflict Research, *Conflict Barometer 2004* (Heidelberg: Insitute on International Conflict Research, University of Heidelberg, 2005), [www.hiik.de/en/ConflictBarometer\\_2004.pdf](http://www.hiik.de/en/ConflictBarometer_2004.pdf) (accessed 31 May 2005). These findings will be discussed in detail in the *Human Security Report 2006*.
7. Note that this claim refers to people killed in *fighting*, not those who die of war-induced disease and/or malnutrition.
8. See John J. Mearsheimer, 'Why We Will Soon Miss the Cold War', August 1990, <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=713> (accessed 31 May 2005).
9. The discussion on Africa draws on a paper prepared for this report by Monty G. Marshall and Ted Robert Gurr and on their *Peace and Conflict 2005*.
10. While the UN was collecting refugee data during this period, little effort was made to collect data on internally displaced persons (IDPs). The IDP data, which are now collected by independent organisations such as the Global IDP Project, almost certainly underestimate the true number of people displaced within their own borders between the 1960s and the beginning of the 1980s.
11. UN High Commissioner for Refugees, *The State of the World's Refugees: Fifty Years of Humanitarian Action* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
12. This is not always the case, of course. More people were killed in the Rwandan genocide in 1994 than on all the world's battlefields in 1950, the year with the highest battle-death toll in the post-World War II era.
13. Pew Research Center, 'A Year After Iraq: Mistrust of America in Europe Ever Higher, Muslim Anger Persists', Survey Reports, Pew Research Center website, <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?PageID=796> (accessed 15 August 2005).
14. The central focus of the Political Terror Scale is state repression; however, the identity of the perpetrators of human rights abuses is not always clear, so some of the violence that is recorded may be perpetrated by non-state groups.
15. Note that civil wars are defined here as conflicts that have incurred at least 1000 battle-deaths. Only armed conflicts in which a government was one of the warring parties are discussed.
16. Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, 'Investing in Prevention: an International Strategy to Manage Risks of Instability and Improve Crisis Response', *The Challenges of Instability: Overview of Instability*, [http://www.strategy.gov.uk/downloads/work\\_areas/countries\\_at\\_risk/report/chapter1.htm](http://www.strategy.gov.uk/downloads/work_areas/countries_at_risk/report/chapter1.htm) (accessed 30 August 2005).
17. International Crisis Group, 'Crisis Watch', no. 21, 1 May 2005, International Crisis Group website, [www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?l=1&id=3399](http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?l=1&id=3399) (accessed 31 May 2005).
18. Monty G. Marshall and Ted Robert Gurr, *Peace and Conflict 2005*.