Organized violence, 1989–2018 and peace agreements

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Abstract

This article reports on trends in organized violence and peace agreements collected by the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP). The number of fatalities in organized violence decreased for the fourth consecutive year, to reach the lowest level since 2012. In 2018, UCDP recorded almost 76,000 deaths: a decrease of 20% compared to 2017, and 43% compared to the latest peak in 2014. State-based armed conflict drives this downward trend in organized violence, with Syria accounting for much of the change. The number of civilians killed in one-sided violence also dropped in 2018, reaching its lowest level since 2012. In contrast, non-state conflict remained on a high level. The general decline in fatalities from organized violence does not correspond with the trend in the number of active conflicts. In fact, the world has seen a new peak in the number of conflicts after 2014, matched only by the number of conflicts in the early 1990s. In 1991, the peak in the number of armed conflicts corresponded with a similar peak in the number of signed peace agreements. This was followed by a decrease in the number of conflicts in the late 1990s and early 2000s. However, the most recent rise in armed conflicts has not been matched by a similar rise in the number of peace agreements. Two circumstances that characterize the recent rise in conflicts have also been found to make conflicts harder to solve: explicit religious claims and high levels of internationalization.

Keywords

armed conflict, conflict data, non-state conflict, one-sided violence, peace agreements, war

Organized violence 1989–2018[1]

In 2018, the number of fatalities in organized violence decreased for the fourth consecutive year, now being at the lowest level since 2012. Figure 1 shows that UCDP recorded almost 76,000 deaths in 2018: a decrease of 20% compared to 2017, and 43% compared to the latest peak in 2014. As in most years, state-based conflict drives this trend. The de-escalation of violence in Syria and Iraq was the primary cause of this decrease. The number of civilians killed in one-sided violence also

dropped in 2018, reaching its lowest level since 2012. In contrast, non-state conflict continued on a high level.[2]

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[1] UCDP collects data on state-based armed conflict, non-state conflict, and one-sided violence. The categories are mutually exclusive and can be aggregated as 'organized violence'. They also share the same intensity cut-off for inclusion – 25 fatalities in a calendar year.

[2] State-based armed conflict involves violence where at least one of the parties is the government of a state, meaning violence between two states or violence between the government and a rebel group. Non-state conflict is the use of armed force between two organized groups, such as rebel groups or ethnic groups, neither of which is the government of a state. One-sided violence contains violence by the government of a state or by a formally organized group targeting unarmed civilians. For full definitions of all key concepts, see the Online appendix. A major change in the definitions since last year is the allowance of external state support in non-state conflict, discussed in detail in the Online appendix.

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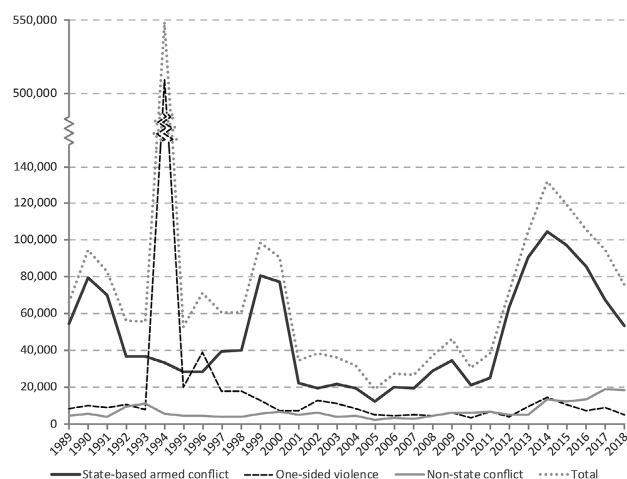Figure 1. Fatalities in organized violence by type, 1989–2018

Figure 2. State-based armed conflict by type, 1946–2018

The general decline in fatalities from organized violence does not correspond with the trend in the number of active conflicts. In fact, the world has seen a new peak in the number of conflicts after 2014, matched only by the number of conflicts in the early 1990s. In 1991, the peak in the number of armed conflicts corresponded with a similar peak in the number of signed peace agreements. However, the most recent rise in armed conflicts has not been matched by a similar rise in the number of peace agreements.

State-based conflict 1946–2018
In state-based conflict, the number of conflicts remained on a high level. However, substantial de-escalation in several countries contributed to the number of battle-related deaths decreasing for the fourth consecutive year.

UCDP recorded 52 active state-based armed conflicts in 2018, an increase by two compared to 2017.[3] Figure 2 shows that the years since 2014 have been characterized by the highest numbers of armed conflict since 1946.[4] For the fourth consecutive year, UCDP registered more than 50 ongoing conflicts. Only one year prior to 2014 experienced numbers this high: 1991 with 52 conflicts. This trend is largely driven by the expansion of the Islamic State (IS) to countries beyond Iraq where it originated. Despite their reported defeat in several
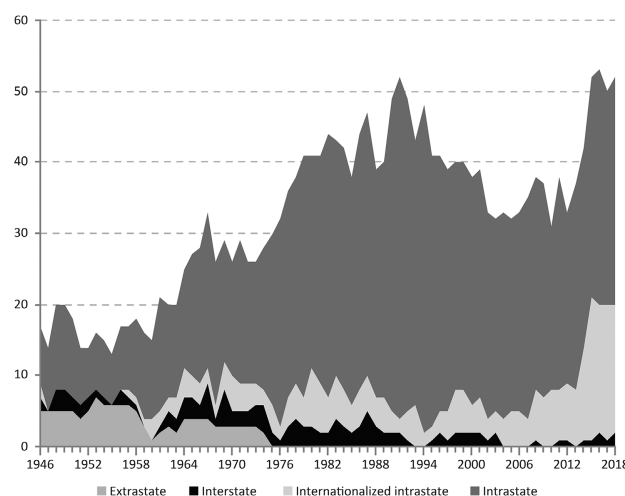
countries, including Syria and Iraq, the group was active in 12 different state-based armed conflicts around the world in 2018. Nonetheless, this is a decrease from 16 conflicts in 2017. The four conflicts, in Lebanon, Iran, Turkey, and Bangladesh, de-escalated following government offensives in 2017 and did not result in 25 fatalities during 2018.

Figure 2 shows that interstate conflict continues to be a rare event; only two of the 52 conflicts in 2018 were between states. The border conflict between India and Pakistan continued on a high level in spite of the parties' announcement in May 2018, that they would restore the ceasefire agreement from 2003. Skirmishes across the border resulted in over 100 fatalities during the year, and India reported the highest number of ceasefire violations since 2003 (Hindustan Times, 2019).

For the first time, the conflict between Iran and Israel became active in 2018. Diplomatic relations had been tense since the Iranian Revolution in 1979 and worsened following the conflict between Israel and Iran's proxy, Hezbollah, in 2006. Iran's Ayatollah Khamenei (2014) has called for the elimination of the Israeli regime through armed confrontation since 2014, while Israel has fired missiles into Syria, partially targeting Hezbollah and Iranian forces as well as Syrian military installations since 2013. In May 2018, Israel accused Iran of hitting Israeli positions in the Golan Heights and retaliated with 'Operation House of Cards' against Iranian forces in Syria (McKernan, 2018; Lahad, Stern & Fuchs, 2018).

Eighteen of the 50 intrastate conflicts were internationalized in the form of troops from external states supporting one or both sides in the conflict, which has been shown to increase both conflict duration and

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[3] Last year, we reported 49 active conflicts for 2017 (Pettersson & Eck, 2018). Based on new information, one conflict in Cameroon, over the Ambazonia territory, was added.

[4] Since the end of World War II, 627 dyads have been active in 286 conflicts in 158 locations. Corresponding numbers for the 1989–2018 period are 385 dyads in 179 conflicts in 96 locations. See the Online appendix for definitions.
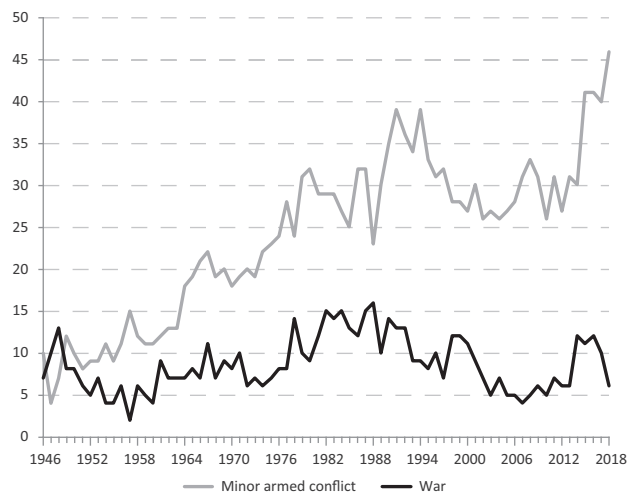
Figure 3. State-based armed conflict by intensity level, 1946–2018

lethality (Balch-Lindsay, Enterline & Joyce, 2008; Lacina, 2006). A case in point is Afghanistan, one of the most protracted conflicts still active, and the bloodiest one in 2018. Over the years, numerous external parties have been involved in the conflict with troops on the ground, including the Soviet Union in the 1980s, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) during the 2000s, and the USA in recent years. For five consecutive years, more than 30% of the conflicts have experienced this type of external involvement, a level never witnessed previously in the post-World War II period. Just as in 2017, the USA was involved in more conflicts as a secondary warring party than any other country in 2018 and maintained engagements in seven internationalized intrastate conflicts. By the end of 2018, however, US President Donald Trump signaled that the country would pull its forces out of, or severely reduce their numbers in, countries including Syria and Afghanistan (Issa & Karam, 2019; Gibbons-Neff & Mashal, 2018).

In 2018, six conflicts reached the intensity level of war, with at least 1,000 battle-related deaths. This is a decrease by four from 2017, and the lowest number recorded since 2013. As Figure 3 shows, this number is on par with the low numbers of wars witnessed during the first decade of the 21st century. All six wars were also internationalized, which illustrates the general pattern that conflicts with external involvement tend to be more lethal.

The decline in the number of wars corresponds to a substantial reduction in battle-related deaths during 2018. As Figure 1 shows, the number of fatalities decreased for the fourth consecutive year, reaching the lowest level since the Arab spring in 2011. At just over 53,000 fatalities, the numbers decreased by 21% since 2017 and by almost 50% since the peak year of 2014 when UCDP recorded over 104,000 fatalities. Driven by the conflicts in Syria, 2014 was one of the bloodiest years since the end of the Cold War but it was nowhere near as violent as the wars in Korea, in Vietnam, and between Iran and Iraq during the Cold War era. This continuing decline in battle-deaths lends support to the claim that we live in an increasingly peaceful world (e.g. Goldstein, 2011; Pinker, 2011). In Syria, conflicts involving the government caused around 11,500 deaths during 2018. Down by nearly 9,000 from 2017, the conflicts in Syria reached their lowest level since 2011.

Several other conflicts also experienced substantial de-escalation during 2018. The most prominent example is Iraq where fatality numbers decreased by more than 9,000 fatalities, or 92%, down to just over 800. In December 2017, the Iraqi Prime Minister announced that IS was defeated (BBC, 2017) and the conflict did not reach the intensity of war in 2018. This has only happened once since the 2003 invasion of the US-led coalition, in 2012.

Yet, the overall reduction in violence did not affect all parts of the world. In Yemen, fatality numbers almost doubled as the conflict escalated and became increasingly complex with numerous external actors involved. The UN (2018) has described Yemen as the world's worst humanitarian crisis, and the peace negotiations in Sweden in December 2018 failed to put an end to civilian suffering. Another country in which historic peace talks during the year failed to halt the escalating violence is Afghanistan. Violence has been on the rise there during the last decade, particularly since 2013. In 2018, fatality numbers reached a new high with almost 26,000 killed in state-based conflict, and Afghanistan surpassed Syria as the country hardest hit by this type of violence. The Hazara population was the target of many attacks during the year: the Taliban movement pushed deep into Hazara-populated areas in Ghazni and Uruzgan in October, while IS carried out numerous suicide attacks in Hazara-populated neighborhoods in the capital, Kabul.

Non-state conflict 1989–2018

Non-state conflict remained on a high level in 2018, in terms of both the number of conflicts and the number of fatalities in these conflicts.

UCDP has recorded 721 non-state conflicts since 1989, with a yearly average of 39 active conflicts. In 2018, UCDP registered 76 non-state conflicts. Albeit a

decrease by seven from the 83 conflicts recorded in the peak year of 2017,[5] the number of active non-state conflicts remains on a high level. UCDP registered just under 18,300 deaths in 2018, almost the same level as in 2017, which is the peak year of the entire 1989–2018 period. The past six years have all recorded higher levels of non-state violence than any other year since 1989. The better part of this surge in non-state violence is due to the many interrebel conflicts in Syria, intercartel violence in Mexico, and communal conflicts in Nigeria, mainly along farmer–herder lines.

As in previous years, the countries hardest hit by this type of violence in 2018 were Syria and Mexico, together responsible for 30% of the non-state conflicts, and 67% of the deaths. In Syria, many rebel groups were severely weakened by the government offensive against rebel-controlled areas, including the siege of Eastern Ghouta during the first months of the year, and there was also a merging of groups into bigger alliances fighting common enemies. The net result was a decrease in the number of conflicts in Syria from 15 in 2017 to 10 in 2018. This decline in the number of conflicts corresponded to a reduction by 35% in the number of fatalities. By contrast, the recent trend in Mexico has been one of fragmentation among the main cartels, particularly of the Sinaloa Cartel. As the Cartel has been losing ground, others have stepped in to fill the void, most notably the Jalisco Cartel New Generation that was involved in six different non-state conflicts in 2018. In total, Mexico registered 13 intercartel conflicts, an increase by five compared to the year before, making it the country with the largest number of non-state conflicts in 2018.

In both Syria and Mexico, formally organized groups, such as rebel groups or criminal cartels, were involved in the non-state conflicts recorded. Formally organized groups generally have access to more resources, better training, and sturdier command structures than informally organized groups such as communal groups. Therefore, these conflicts may result in more severe encounters and more deaths. Rebel groups are also more likely to function as proxies for other states and, thereby, increase their capabilities through military support from these external actors (Themnér & Wallensteen, 2014). The data show that conflicts between informally organized groups, on average, result in lower fatality numbers but Figure 4 reveals that for many years in the late 1990s
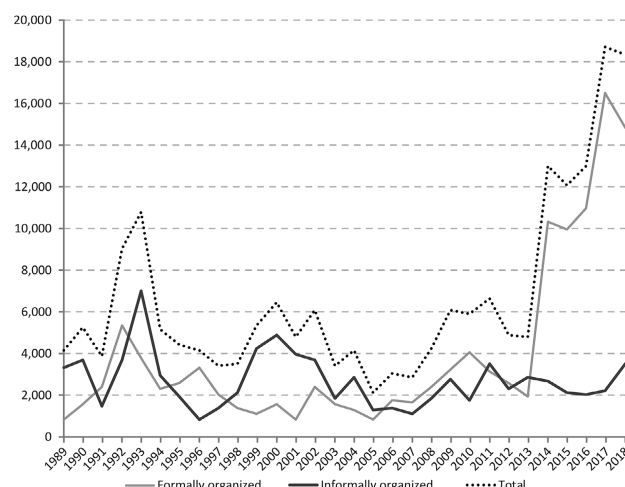

Figure 4. Fatalities in non-state conflict, by type of actor, 1989–2018

and early 2000s, conflicts between such groups resulted in more fatalities than conflicts between more organized groups.[6] Since 2014, however, conflicts between formally organized groups have dominated the picture. Of the 18,300 deaths recorded in non-state conflicts in 2018, at least 14,800, or 81%, occurred in conflicts between formally organized groups.

Although less lethal than the recent interrebel and intercartel violence, conflicts between informally organized groups increased in intensity in 2018, reaching the highest level of fatalities since 2011. Two countries driving this trend were Ethiopia and DR Congo.

In Ethiopia, the political reforms of the new regime under Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed have resulted in economic liberalization and increased political openness, which in turn enabled the peace processes of 2018 discussed below. However, this loosening state control also led to an upsurge in ethnic violence, resulting in five different communal conflicts, and more people becoming internally displaced in Ethiopia than in any other country in the world during 2018 (ICG, 2019).

In Western DR Congo, a longstanding history of rivalry between Nunu and Tende ethnic groups resulted in heavy fighting during December 2018. Although the burial of a Nunu leader in Tende territory sparked the recent violence, some reports attributed increased tension to the December elections, with Tende supporting the then ruling coalition and Nunu the opposition

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[5] Last year, we reported 82 active conflicts for 2017 (Pettersson & Eck, 2018). Based on new information we have added one conflict, taking place in Sudan and South Sudan.

[6] Non-state conflicts, by definition, include groups of the same organizational level (see the Online appendix).

(ACAPS, 2019). By the end of the year, the conflict had caused almost 900 deaths.

The 2019 version of the dataset is the first to code troop support from an external state in non-state conflicts, covering the 1989–2018 period. This change in the non-state conflict data was made in order to capture a type of situation that has become more common following the expansion of transnational groups such as al-Qaida and IS. State support in non-state conflicts became an important feature in Syria following the IS declaration of an Islamic caliphate in 2014. A pertinent example of a non-state conflict with external involvement is the fighting between IS and the Kurdish-led alliance Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) supported by US-led coalition airstrikes as well as ground troops. This conflict alone has caused almost 19,000 deaths over the past four years, more than any other non-state conflict recorded by the UCDP.[7]

The total number of non-state conflicts with external state involvement is too small to draw any clear conclusions from, but most of the cases occurred in the past four years. The number peaked in 2015, with seven of the 67 non-state conflicts having external state support. In 2018, this number had dropped to three out of 73.

One-sided violence 1989–2018

UCDP recorded a decrease in one-sided violence in 2018, in both the number of actors registered and the number of civilians killed.

UCDP has recorded a total of 274 actors engaged in one-sided violence since 1989, with a yearly average of 33 active actors. In 2018, 32 actors were included in the UCDP data, a decrease by one compared to 2017. The most substantial reduction in one-sided actors took place in DR Congo, from eight actors in 2017 to three in 2018. The country experienced an escalation of violence in 2017, following President Kabila's postponing of elections and the spread of the Kamuina Nsapu movement. Kamuina Nsapu was a tribal leader who supported the opposition. When the government refused to recognize his chiefdom, he and his followers launched a rebellion, which spread to several provinces of the country.

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[7] Troop support to a non-state conflict can never be coded if the country in question has its own incompatibility with the group, or if the country is already a secondary warring party to a state-based conflict against the same group in the same country. Hence, state-based armed conflict trumps non-state conflict. See the Online appendix for more information.
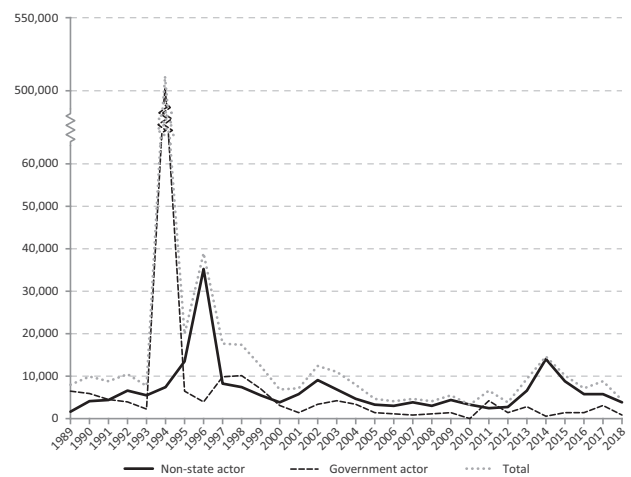

Figure 5. Fatalities in one-sided violence, by type of actor, 1989–2018

During 2018, this movement disintegrated and many fighters surrendered after the victory of Félix Tshisekedi in the presidential elections. Violence continued in other parts of the country, albeit with a lower intensity, and created problems for the response to the Ebola outbreak in conflict-ridden North Kivu province in August 2018 (Moran, 2018).

Figure 5 shows that the number of civilians killed in one-sided violence also dropped, reaching its lowest level since 2012. UCDP estimates that governments or formally organized groups targeted and killed at least 4,500 civilians during 2018. Only four years in the 1989–2018 period have witnessed fewer fatalities incurred in this type of violence.

With nearly 1,800 civilian fatalities recorded in 2018, IS continued to be the actor most heavily involved in this type of violence. However, the number of people killed by IS has decreased steadily since 2015 and last year reached its lowest level in seven years. The geographic focus of IS attacks changed drastically during the year. In previous years, Syria, Iraq, and Nigeria have seen the vast majority of killings. Although Syria remains hardest hit, violence in 2018 shifted to Asia, more specifically to Afghanistan and Pakistan. Moreover, IS did not carry out any large-scale terrorist attacks in Europe during 2018.

With a few exceptions, most notably Rwanda in 1994, non-state actors have targeted civilians more frequently than states have. 2018 followed this trend with governments being responsible for a mere 18% of the fatalities. The accountability costs induced by civilian targeting are generally higher for governments than for rebel groups, which may lead states to delegate

suppression of civilians to pro-government militias.[8] It may also be cost-effective to employ locally based militias in areas where the state presence is weak (Carey, Colaresi & Mitchell, 2015). Examples of this type of outsourcing include Sudan, where Janjaweed carried out large-scale violence against civilians for the better part of the 2000s, and Colombia where the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC) targeted opponents of the regime during the 1990s and early 2000s.

Although states have been less frequent in targeting civilians in recent years, one of the new actors recorded in 2018 was the Nicaraguan government, which violently cracked down on protesters opposing a new social security reform. The response to this state repression was further protests, which intensified and eventually called for President Ortega to step down. Protests, both peaceful and violent, continued well into 2019.

Trends in peace agreements, 1975–2018

One suggested explanation for the decline in the number of armed conflicts after 1991 is that the ending of the Cold War rivalry made conditions fortuitous for solving many longstanding conflicts, as well as making new conflicts shorter (Eck, Lacina & Öberg, 2008). The updated version of the UCDP Peace Agreement Dataset, which includes all peace agreements between warring parties active in the UCDP data in the 1975–2018 period, indeed shows that in 1991, the peak in the number of armed conflicts corresponded with a similar peak in the number of peace agreements. Figure 6 shows that between 1991 and 1994, UCDP reported 192 active conflict years. In the same period, 82 peace agreements were concluded in 28 conflicts involving 40 dyads. In contrast, the most recent rise in armed conflicts has not been followed by a similar rise in the number of agreements. In the 207 conflict years recorded between 2015 and 2018, only 23 peace agreements were concluded in 14 conflicts, involving 15 dyads.[9]

According to UCDP's definition, peace agreements address the incompatibility, or conflict issue, stated by the warring parties, by either settling all or part of it, or by clearly outlining a process for how to regulate it (Harbom, Högbladh & Wallensteen, 2006).[10] In all, the
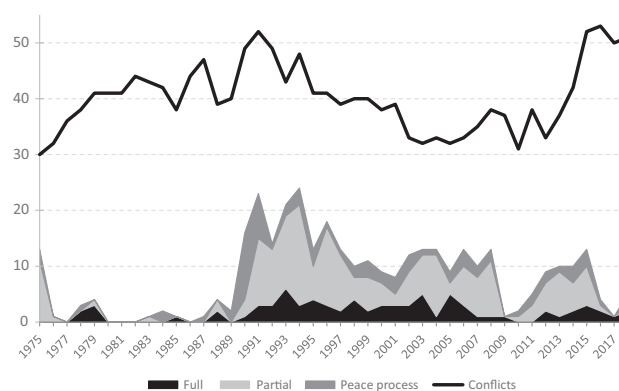

Figure 6. Number of conflicts and number of peace agreements by type, 1975–2018

dataset covers 355 peace agreements. Peace agreements were found in 34% of all conflicts recorded in the time period and involved 27% of all dyads. Approximately half of these dyads had largely ceased their violence prior to the signing of an agreement, while the other half experienced active conflict violence in the same year as signing their agreements. Since 2015, fewer of the agreements were signed in active years, whereas most of the dyads signing peace agreements in the 1990s were still actively fighting each other while concluding their agreements.

UCDP registered termination due to peace agreements[11] in seven conflicts between 1991 and 1994. Since 2015, only one peace agreement led to conflict termination, the *Final Colombian Peace Agreement* between the government of Colombia and Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) in 2016.

Unlike in the early 1990s, the recent rise in the number of intrastate armed conflicts has not been accompanied by an equivalent increase in the number of peace agreements. Previous research suggests at least three reasons for why this may be. First, in the early 1990s many longstanding conflicts became possible to settle as the Cold War rivalry ended (Eck, Lacina & Öberg, 2008). There is nothing similar occurring today. Second, the recent rise in armed conflict is driven by the expansion of IS, and the resulting large share of conflicts with explicit religious claims may also reduce the likelihood

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[8] If a pro-government militia engages in violence together with the government, the violence is recorded for the government in question. The same holds for violence carried out by militias that are paid by, and take orders from, the government.

[9] For a list of peace agreements, see the Online appendix.

[10] Each peace agreement is categorized as a full peace agreement, a partial peace agreement or a peace process agreement, depending on

how it deals with the incompatibility. Full peace agreements settle the incompatibility between the parties, while in partial peace agreements there are still issues to be solved. Peace process agreements only outline negotiations on the core issues of the conflict.

[11] Termination by peace agreement is coded for years where the conflict activity drops below 25 deaths in the year after the agreement was signed.

of peace agreements. In June 2014, IS declared a Caliphate, and contested the legality of all authorities in the world where the group had set their foot. Islamic laws would rule the Caliphate under the Caliph (Al-Shami, 2014). Svensson (2007) has found that termination through negotiated settlement is less likely when the parties have made explicit religious claims, explained by the parties' perception that the issues at stake are indivisible. A third factor that may work against negotiated resolution of conflicts is the last few years' remarkably high proportion of internationalized conflicts. Balch-Lindsay, Enterline & Joyce (2008) find that third-party interventions in armed conflicts increase the time until a negotiated settlement is reached, and that intervention on both sides of the conflict decreases the likelihood of a negotiated settlement. UCDP data does not immediately mirror these findings. Rather, peace agreements are as common in dyads where one of the sides received foreign troop support as they are in other dyads. Only 1% of the dyad-years have intervention on both sides of the conflict. These are too few observations to draw any conclusions.

Although research suggests that peace agreements are less likely under the circumstances mentioned above, they do occur. A closer look at peace agreements signed in these contexts can inform future peace processes in current conflicts.

Explicit religious claims were present in the conflict between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the secular Philippine government. On 27 March 2014, the parties concluded the *Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro* (CAB), reaffirming agreements from the 2001–13 peace process. The CAB solved the incompatibility by creating an autonomous Bangsamoro entity in Mindanao. The religious aspects were touched upon in agreements from 2012; the parties recognized the need to strengthen the Shari'ah courts in the new political entity and established that Shari'ah should only relate to Muslims. In July 2018, President Duterte implemented CAB by creating the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Only two agreements were signed in dyad-years where both sides received warring support, both in DR Congo in 1999 and 2001. In 1999, the warring parties signed a peace agreement in Lusaka. The agreement provided for an inter-Congolese dialogue between the government – the armed groups as well as unarmed political forces of the country – to prepare for a democratic transition through general elections. All secondary warring parties involved in the conflict also signed the agreement, which stipulated the complete withdrawal of foreign troops

from the territory within nine months. In spite of this, the agreement broke down after less than a month. An agreement reaffirming Lusaka terminated the conflict in 2001 after President Laurent Kabila was killed and replaced by his son. The inter-Congolese dialogue resulted in a full peace agreement in April 2003.

During 2018, five peace agreements were concluded in four conflicts: Eritrea–Ethiopia, Ethiopia: Ogaden, Myanmar: Mon, and the conflict over government power in South Sudan. Two peace agreements were signed in an interstate conflict while the other three were in intrastate conflicts. All three categories of peace agreements were represented in 2018; these are used below to illustrate the difference between the three types.

The relationship between Eritrea and Ethiopia improved after Ethiopia's new Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed announced the acceptance and adherence of the peace agreement signed between the countries in December 2000 and the boundary commission's 2002 decision. In July 2018, Eritrea's President Isaias Afewerki and Abiy Ahmed pledged to restore diplomatic relations and open their borders to each other. On 9 July, they signed the *Joint Declaration of Peace and Friendship between Eritrea and Ethiopia*, which formally ended the Eritrean–Ethiopian border conflict. A final peace agreement, in which both countries agreed to implement the Eritrea–Ethiopia Boundary Commission's decision, was signed on 16 September 2018. Both agreements are full peace agreements since they settle the incompatibility.

On 12 September 2018, a partial peace agreement was concluded between the government of South Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition (SPLM/A - IO). The *Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan* (R-ARCSS) is the only 2018 agreement signed in an active dyad-year. Although the conflict de-escalated following the agreement, it did not terminate the conflict between the signatories. The R-ARCSS included a pre-transition phase that ends on 12 May 2019. After this date, the agreement stipulates the forming of a transitional government and the re-installation of Riek Machar as first vice president, which is crucial to the accord's implementation (UN Security Council, 2019). The R-ARCSS is a partial peace agreement since it did not settle the central issue on boundaries and the number of states in South Sudan.

Two peace process agreements were concluded in 2018. In Myanmar, the New Mon State Party, a group that had not been active in UCDP data since 1991,

joined the national peace process through signing the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA). In Ethiopia, the *Joint Declaration between the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Ogaden National Liberation Front* established a joint committee to further discuss substantive issues pertaining to the root causes of the Ogaden conflict. The two agreements are peace process agreements since they provide forums for negotiations on the core issues of the conflicts.

Conclusion

The number of fatalities in organized violence decreased for the fourth consecutive year, to the lowest level since 2012. State-based violence drives this downward trend, particularly through the reduction of violence in Syria and Iraq. For the fifth consecutive year more than 30% of the state-based conflicts were internationalized, a level not witnessed before in the post-World War II period. In recent years, UCDP has also observed this type of involvement from external states in non-state violence. Research on state-based conflict suggests that external involvement tends to make conflicts bloodier and harder to solve, and there is no reason to believe that this argument does not also apply to non-state conflicts. The world has seen a new peak in the number of conflicts after 2014, matched only by the early 1990s. In 1991, the peak in the number of conflicts corresponded with a similar peak in the number of peace agreements. However, a similar rise in the number of agreements has not accompanied the recent rise in armed conflicts.

Replication data

The complete datasets (UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset, UCDP Dyadic Dataset, UCDP Battle-Related Dataset, UCDP Non-State Dataset, UCDP One-Sided Dataset, and UCDP Peace Agreements Dataset) updated to 2018 are found at http://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/. Older versions of these datasets can also be found at this address (all datasets) and www.prio.no/cscw/armedconflict (the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset). The tables and figures in this article were created directly from the Excel sheets at the UCDP web page. Detailed descriptions of the individual cases are found in the UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia at www. ucdp.uu.se/. Replication data for this article can be found both at http://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/ and https://www.prio.org/jpr/datasets/.

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Appendix 1. State-based armed conflicts

Table I. State-based armed conflicts active in 2018
This list includes all conflicts that exceeded the minimum threshold of 25 battle-related deaths in 2018 and fulfilled the other criteria for inclusion.[1] The column Year shows the latest range of years in which the conflict has been active without interruption. The start year is found in parenthesis in the Incompatibility column, which indicates when the armed conflict reached 25 battle-related deaths for the first time. If a conflict has been inactive for more than ten years or if there has been a complete change in the opposition side, the start year refers to the onset of the latest phase of the conflict. The column 'Intensity in 2018' displays the aggregated number of battle-related deaths. Thus, if more than one dyad is active in the conflict, the intensity column records their aggregated intensity. Three fatality estimates are given in the table: low, best and high.

Location	Incompatibility	Opposition organization(s) in 2018	Year	Intensity in 2018		
				Low	*Best*	*High*
Europe						
Russia	Territory (Islamic State) (2015)	IS	2015–18	28	28	29
Ukraine	Territory (Novorossiya) (2014)	DPR, LPR[2]	2014–18	159	234	248
Middle East						
Egypt	Territory (Islamic State) (2015)	IS	2015–18	516	676	678
Egypt	Government (2017)	Harakit Sawa'id Misr	2017–18	28	28	28
Iran, Israel	Government (2018)		2018	103	103	119
Iran	Territory (Kurdistan) (2016)	KDPI	2018	33	44	78
Iran	Government (2005)	PJAK	2018	26	27	36
Iraq	Government[3] (2004)	IS	2004–18	821	831	861
Israel	Territory (Palestine) (1949)	Hamas	2018	58	58	64
Syria	Government[4] (2011)	Syrian insurgents	2011–18	7,167	7,210	7,384
Syria	Territory (Islamic State)[5] (2013)	IS	2013–18	4,239	4,258	4,336
Syria	Government/Territory (Rojava Kurdistan) (2016)	SDF	2018	30	30	82
Turkey	Territory (Kurdistan) (1983)	PKK	2015–18	859	886	875
Yemen	Government (2009)	AQAP, Forces of Hadi[6]	2009–18	4,457	4,523	6,620
Asia						
Afghanistan	Government[7] (1978)	Taliban	1978–2018	21,476	22,837	24,765
Afghanistan	Territory (Islamic State)[8] (2015)	IS	2015–18	2,770	2,842	5,149
India	Government (1991)	CPI-Maoist	1996–2018	302	307	316
India	Territory (Kashmir) (1990)	Kashmir insurgents[9]	1990–2018	386	387	390
India Asia)	Territory (Western South East (2015)	UNLFW	2015–18	26	27	28
India, Pakistan	Territory (Kashmir) (2014)		2014–18	102	105	140
Indonesia	Territory (West Papua) (2018)	OPM	2018	24	25	41
Myanmar	Government (2013)	PSLF	2017–18	32	43	49
Myanmar	Territory (Arakan) (2016)	AA	2016–18	15	27	39
Myanmar	Territory (Kachin) (2011)	KIO	2011–18	22	26	34
Pakistan	Government[10] (2007)	TTP	2007–18	147	147	155
Pakistan	Territory (Islamic State) (2016)	IS	2016–18	51	51	51
Philippines	Government (1969)	CPP	1999–2018	103	144	149
Philippines	Territory (Mindanao) (1972)	ASG, BIFM-K	1993–2018	108	108	108
Philippines	Territory (Islamic State) (2016)	IS	2016–18	134	168	173
Thailand	Territory (Patani) (2003)	Patani insurgents[11]	2003–18	27	36	36
Africa						
Algeria	Government (1991)	AQIM	1991–2018	33	33	37
Burkina Faso	Government[12] (2018)	JNIM	2018	41	43	58
Cameroon	Territory (Ambazonia) (2017)	Ambazonia insurgents	2017–18	751	755	1,007
CAR	Government (2018)	UPC (Ali Darass Fulani supporters)	2018	47	47	59

Table I (continued)

Location	Incompatibility	Opposition organization(s) in 2018	Year	Intensity in 2018		
				Low	Best	High
Chad	Territory (Islamic State) (2015)	IS	2017–18	108	108	109
Chad	Government (2018)	CCMSR	2018	42	42	89
DR Congo	Government (2011)	CMC, CNPSC (Yakutumba), Kamuina Nsapu, UPLC	2016–18	420	420	434
Kenya	Territory (Northeastern Province and Coast) (2015)	Al-Shabaab	2015–18	59	69	147
Libya	Territory (Islamic State)[13] (2015)	IS	2015–18	44	44	45
Mali	Government[14] (2009)	JNIM	2012–18	365	392	426
Mali	Territory (Islamic State)[15] (2017)	IS	2017–18	113	125	160
Mozambique	Government (2018)	Ansar Al Sunnah Mozambique	2018	46	52	52
Niger	Territory (Islamic State)[16] (2015)	IS	2015–18	71	74	113
Nigeria	Government[17] (2009)	Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad[18]	2011–18	321	335	454
Nigeria	Territory (Islamic State)[19] (2015)	IS	2015–18	693	836	1,158
Rwanda	Government[20] (2001)	FDLR	2018	25	25	26
Somalia	Government[21] (2006)	Al-Shabaab	2006–18	1,813	2,086	2,965
Somalia	Territory (Somaliland) (2018)	Republic of Somaliland	2018	105	121	172
South Sudan	Government (2011)	SPLM/A In Opposition	2011–18	507	536	737
Sudan	Government (1983)	SRF	1983–2018	194	246	503
Uganda	Government[22] (1980)	ADF	2013–18	263	334	335
Americas						
Colombia	Government (1964)	ELN, FARC dissidents	2018	142	142	142
Total number of battle-related deaths in 2018				50,452	53,081	62,289

[1] See Online appendix for definitions.

[2] DPR and LPR were supported by troops from Russia.

[3] The Iraqi government was supported by troops from Australia, Belgium, France, Jordan, Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, United Kingdom, and United States of America.

[4] The Syrian government was supported by troops from Iran and Russia.

[5] The Syrian government was supported by troops from Iran and Russia.

[6] Forces of Hadi was supported by troops from Bahrain, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and United Arab Emirates.

[7] The Afghan government was supported by troops from Pakistan and United States of America.

[8] The Afghan government was supported by troops from United States of America.

[9] A large number of groups have been active. Some of the groups active in 2018 were Lashkar-e-Toiba, Hizbul Mujahideen, and Jaish-e-Mohammed.

[10] The Pakistani government was supported by troops from Afghanistan.

[11] E.g. BRN-C, GMIP, and RKK.

[12] The Burkinean government was supported by troops from Mali.

[13] The Libyan government was supported by troops from United States of America.

[14] The Malian government was supported by MINUSMA, involving troops from Armenia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, China, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Hungary, Indonesia, Italy, Ivory Coast, Jordan, Kenya, Latvia, Liberia, Lithuania, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mexico, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Portugal, Rumania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States of America. France also contributed troops via the French-led counter-terrorism Operation Barkhane, which succeeded Operation Serval (2013–14).

[15] Ibid.

[16] The Nigerien government was supported by troops from France.

[17] The Nigerian government was supported by troops from Cameroon.

[18] Commonly known as Boko Haram.

[19] The Nigerian government was supported by troops from Cameroon, Chad, and Niger.

[20] The Rwandan government was supported by troops from DR Congo.

[21] The Somali government was supported by AMISOM, involving troops from Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Uganda. Also United States of America contributed troops on the side of the government.

[22] The Ugandan government was supported by troops from DR Congo.

Table II. Unclear cases of state-based armed conflict in 2018

Cases that have been completely rejected because they definitely do not meet the criteria of armed conflict are not included in the list below. For the conflicts listed here, the available information suggests the possibility of the cases meeting the criteria of armed conflicts, but there is insufficient information concerning at least one of the three components of the definition: (a) the number of deaths, (b) the identity or level of organization of a party or (c) the type of incompatibility. The unclear aspect may concern an entire conflict or a dyad in a conflict that is included above.

Location/government	Opposition organization(s)	Unclear aspect
Burkina Faso	Ansaroul Islam	Incompatibility
Burundi	RED-TABARA	Number of deaths
Cameroon	Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad	Number of deaths
Iran	Jaish al-Adl	Number of deaths
Somalia	IS	Number of deaths
United States of America	Al-Qaida	Number of deaths

Appendix 2. Non-state conflicts active in 2018

This list includes all non-state conflicts that exceeded the minimum threshold of 25 deaths in 2018 and fulfilled the other criteria for inclusion.[1] The column 'Start year' shows the first year when the non-state conflict caused at least 25 fatalities (since 1989). The column 'Fatalities in 2018' displays the number of people killed, in the low, best, and high estimate.

Location	Side A	Side B	Start year	Fatalities in 2018		
				Low	Best	High
Middle East						
Syria	Ahrar al-Sham, Nour al-Din al-Zenki, Suqour al-Sham Brigades	Tahrir al-Sham	2018	211	211	211
Syria	Ahrar al-Sham, Southern Front, Tahrir al-Sham	IS	2017	64	64	64
Syria	Aknaf Bait al-Maqdis, Jaysh al-Islam, Tahrir al-Sham	IS	2018	57	57	58
Syria	Hamza Division, Liwa al-Sultan Murad, Sham Legion, The 3rd Corps	Tajamu Shuhada al-Sharqiya	2018	32	32	32
Syria	Hawar Kilis Operations Room[2]	SDF	2016	1,591	2,657	2,874
Syria	IS	SDF[3]	2015	3,661	3,732	4,224
Syria	IS	Tahrir al-Sham	2017	203	203	254
Syria	IS	Southern Front, Tahrir al-Sham	2017	106	106	106
Syria	National Front for Liberation	Tahrir al-Sham	2018	64	64	66
Syria	Suqour al-Sham Brigades, Syrian Liberation Front	Tahrir al-Sham	2018	255	255	264
Yemen	AQAP	Forces of Hadi	2015	184	210	232
Yemen	AQAP	IS	2018	14	42	66
Yemen	Forces of Hadi	STC	2018	38	38	38
Yemen	IS	Forces of Hadi[4]	2015	25	32	32
Asia						
Afghanistan	IS	Taleban	2015	300	577	689
Afghanistan	Taleban	High Council of Afghanistan Islamic Emirate	2015	54	54	94
Africa						
CAR	anti-Balaka	FPRC	2013	28	28	28
CAR	anti-Balaka	UPC/Ali Darass Fulani supporters	2014	166	174	168
CAR	MNLC	RJ	2018	69	69	69

Appendix 2. (continued)

Location	Side A	Side B	Start year	Fatalities in 2018		
				Low	Best	High
CAR	FPRC	MPC	2018	22	30	30
DR Congo	APCLS	APCLS-R, NDC-R	2018	28	28	28
DR Congo	CMC	Mayi Mayi Mazembe	2018	25	25	30
DR Congo	Hema	Lendu	1999	230	230	245
DR Congo	NDC-R	APCLS	2018	52	52	59
DR Congo	Nunu	Tende	2018	891	891	891
Ethiopia, Djibouti	Oromo	Somali (Ethiopia)	2000	49	56	86
Ethiopia	Borana	Garre	2000	39	87	95
Ethiopia	Gedeo	Guji	1995	24	25	97
Ethiopia	Gumuz	Oromo	2008	44	44	44
Ethiopia	Oromo	Gamo, Guraghe	2018	26	26	26
Ethiopia	Oromo	Dorze, Gamo, Guraghe, Silt'e, Wolayta	2018	32	32	32
Libya	Awlad Suleiman	Toubou	2014	28	28	37
Libya	Brigade 301, Ghaniwa Brigade, Nawasi Battalion, TRB	Kaniyat	2018	78	78	78
Libya	DPF	Forces of the House of Representatives	2016	269	286	382
Libya	Forces of Ibrahim Jadhran	Forces of the House of Representatives	2018	100	106	114
Libya	Forces of the House of Representatives	IS	2015	74	77	90
Libya	Jabhat al-Samud, Kaniyat	TPF	2018	35	39	39
Mali	Dogon	Fulani	2012	30	30	45
Mali	Dozos (Mali)	JNIM	2018	38	38	41
Mali, Niger	IS	MSA	2017	32	32	60
Mali, Niger	GATIA, MSA	IS	2017	78	78	114
Niger	Daoussak (Touareg)	Fulani	2018	26	26	26
Nigeria	Bassa Kwomu	Egbura Mozum	2018	24	54	119
Nigeria	Birom	Fulani	2002	277	283	335
Nigeria	Bwatiye	Fulani	2016	111	133	174
Nigeria	Christians (Nigeria)	Muslims (Nigeria)	1991	36	36	80
Nigeria	Fulani	Tiv	2011	539	559	681
Nigeria	Fulani	Irigwe	2017	137	152	158
Nigeria	Fulani	Yandang	2018	27	83	84
Nigeria	Hausa	Kadara	2018	81	81	81
Nigeria	Lunguda	Waja	2018	29	34	41
Somalia	Bahararsame subclan of Dhulbahante clan (Darod)	Qayaad subclan of Dhulbahante clan (Darod)	2016	72	72	140
Somalia	Biide subclan of Habar Jeclo (Isaaq)	Saad subclan of Habar Yonis (Isaaq)	2018	29	32	32
South Sudan	Bul Nuer	Kongor Dinka, Lou Dinka	2018	32	32	32
South Sudan, Kenya	Chiebiliew Yoal (Lou Nuer)	Chiebol Nyak (Lou Nuer)	2018	25	25	40
South Sudan	Gok Dinka, Jalwau Dinka	Luac Jang Dinka, Thiyic Dinka	2018	42	42	42
South Sudan	Jalwau Dinka	Thiyic Dinka	2017	44	66	66
South Sudan	Jie	Murle	2018	182	182	182
South Sudan, Sudan	Misseriya	Nuer	2018	39	39	39
South Sudan	National Salvation Front	SPLM/A In Opposition	2018	51	51	51

Appendix 2. (continued)

Location	Side A	Side B	Start year	Fatalities in 2018		
				Low	Best	High
South Sudan	Toposa	Turkana	1992	26	26	26
Sudan	Misseriya	Ngok Dinka	2011	52	54	54
Americas						
Brazil	Comando Vermelho	GDE	2017	428	428	537
Mexico	Beltrán Leyva Cartel	Cartel Independiente de Acapulco	2018	83	83	84
Mexico	Gulf Cartel	Los Zetas	2010	50	50	58
Mexico	Jalisco Cartel New Generation	Los Zetas	2011	58	62	125
Mexico	Jalisco Cartel New Generation	Sinaloa Cartel	2015	1,957	1,957	1,960
Mexico	Jalisco Cartel New Generation	La Nueva Familia	2017	35	35	41
Mexico	Jalisco Cartel New Generation	Nueva Plaza Cartel	2018	182	182	186
Mexico	Jalisco Cartel New Generation	Santa Rosa de Lima Cartel	2018	1,965	1,965	1,965
Mexico	Jalisco Cartel New Generation	La Familia	2018	25	25	36
Mexico	Juarez Cartel	Sinaloa Cartel	2004	100	100	163
Mexico	La Union de Tepito	Fuerza Anti Unión	2018	38	39	39
Mexico	Los Aztecas	La Linea	2018	114	114	115
Mexico	Los Zetas - Cártel del Noreste faction	Los Zetas - Old School Zetas faction	2016	44	44	66
Mexico	Sinaloa Cartel	Tijuana Cartel	2004	219	219	219
Total number of fatalities in non-state conflicts in 2018				16,525	18,288	20,309

[1] See Online appendix for definitions.
[2] Hawar Kilis Operations Room was supported with troops from Turkey.
[3] SDF was supported with troops from France, United States of America, and United Kingdom.
[4] Forces of Hadi was supported with troops from United Arab Emirates and United States of America.

Appendix 3. One-sided violence in 2018

This list includes all cases of one-sided violence that exceeded the minimum threshold of 25 fatalities in 2018 and fulfilled the other criteria for inclusion.[1] The column 'Start year' shows the first year when one-sided violence caused at least 25 fatalities (since 1989). The column 'Fatalities in 2018' displays the number of civilians killed, in the low, best, and high estimate.

Location	Actor	Start year	Fatalities in 2018		
			Low	Best	High
Middle East					
Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan[2]	IS	2004	1,695	1,788	1,907
Syria	Syrian insurgents	2012	54	54	57
Asia					
Afghanistan	Taliban	1996	115	122	158
India	CPI-Maoist	2005	75	75	95
India	Kashmir insurgents	1990	28	28	29
Pakistan	TTP	2007	31	31	39
Thailand	Patani insurgents	2004	25	25	28
Africa					
Burkina Faso, Mali	Ansaroul Islam	2017	32	35	36
Burundi, Somalia	Government of Burundi	1995	62	71	269

Appendix 3. (continued)

Location	Actor	Start year	Fatalities in 2018		
			Low	*Best*	*High*
Burundi	RED-TABARA	2018	26	26	26
Cameroon	Government of Cameroon	1994	92	92	143
CAR	FPRC	2013	37	37	40
CAR	anti-Balaka	2013	52	52	53
CAR	UPC (Ali Darass Fulani supporters)	2014	44	44	44
CAR	MNLC	2018	48	48	60
CAR	FPRC, MPC, Self-Defense Mujahidin (CAR)	2018	30	30	31
DR Congo	Government of Congo (Zaire)	1989	126	126	136
DR Congo	ADF	1997	202	205	216
DR Congo	Kamuina Nsapu	2016	28	28	28
Ethiopia	Government of Ethiopia	1989	158	158	216
Mali	Government of Mali	1990	53	53	67
Mali	Dozos (Mali)	2017	105	105	110
Mali	Dan na Amassagou	2018	127	150	174
Mali, Niger	GATIA, MSA	2018	44	47	79
Mozambique	Ansar Al Sunnah	2018	117	117	123
Nigeria	Government of Nigeria	1990	54	54	55
Nigeria	Yan Sakai	2018	35	35	35
Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, Chad	Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad[3]	2010	504	519	672
Somalia, Kenya	Al-Shabaab	2008	82	107	111
South Sudan	Government of South Sudan	2012	151	157	161
Sudan	Government of Sudan	1989	62	62	64
Americas					
Nicaragua	Government of Nicaragua	2018	34	34	34
Total number of fatalities from one-sided violence in 2018			4,328	4,515	5,296

[1]See Online appendix for further information regarding definitions.
[2]The vast majority of the violence took place in these three countries. However, killings were also registered in Australia, Belgium, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Egypt, France, Iraq, Libya, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Philippines, Russia, Somalia, and Tajikistan.
[3]Commonly called Boko Haram.