

Chapter 2

Trends in Human Security and Conflict

During the first five years of the 21st century, the number of armed conflicts around the world was lower than at any time since the 1950s. According to the *Human Security Report*,⁴ the number of battle-related deaths was also at an all-time low, though the number does not reflect civilians deliberately targeted in war. Table 4 summarizes the main indicators for the six case-study countries. Only two countries (Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo) are still experiencing direct conflict-related deaths. Needless to say, indirect deaths from conflict, resulting, for example, from landmines, unexploded

ordnance and illegal armed groups continue long after the cessation of hostilities.

Despite the decline in the number of people killed in conflicts, many people in large parts of the world live in intolerable situations of insecurity, often as a result of conflict. High levels of insecurity in all the case-study countries are indicated by the levels of refugees and displaced persons and the low ranking in human development indicators. Although Guatemala and Tajikistan fare better in terms of population displacement and human development indicators, they also experience high levels of crime and human

TABLE 4. HUMAN SECURITY, ODA AND UNDP EXPENDITURE IN SIX CASE-STUDY COUNTRIES

Country	Battle-related deaths in 2003 ^a	Internally displaced persons in 2003 ^b	Refugees abroad ^b	HDI 2003 ^c	HDI ranking 2003 ^d	ODA 2003 ^e (US\$ millions)	ODA/GNI 2003 ^f (%)	UNDP total expenditures in 2004 ^g (US\$ millions)	UNDP expenditures/ODA (% in 2004)
Afghanistan	317	200,000 - 300,000	2,500,000			1,595	34.74	328.564	15
Democratic Republic of the Congo	2,154	3,200,000 - 3,400,000	429,000	.385	167	5,421*	98.61	32.037	2
Guatemala			11,600	.663	117	247	1.01	55.199	25**
Haiti			25,800	.475	153	200	6.88	17.710	7
Sierra Leone			71,000	.298	176	303	31.51	14.457	4
Tajikistan			59,800	.652	122	147	10.07	8.802	4

* Official development assistance (ODA) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was particularly high in 2003, so this figure should be read with caution: annual ODA receipts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo from 2000 to 2005, respectively, were 184; 263; 1,188; 5,421; 1,815. In Afghanistan, ODA receipts increased steadily during the period 2000 to 2005 (with the 2003 figure slightly higher than the average for this period); in the other countries in this table, ODA receipts remained relatively stable over this period.

** For all countries this figure should be treated with caution due to the possibility of double-counting aid in terms of ODA and UNDP expenditures: UNDP figures contain large elements of trust funds that donors probably report separately to the World Bank and OECD. This should be a minor problem as the volume of UNDP is relatively small; however, in Guatemala, the government contributes large sums to UNDP projects under cost-sharing arrangements. The figure for Guatemala should therefore be treated with particular caution.

Sources: (a) Human Security Report; (b) US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants; (c,d) UNDP; (e,f) OECD/World Bank; (g) UNDP Intranet.

4 Human Security Centre, University of British Columbia, Canada. *Human Security Report 2005: War and Peace in the 21st Century*. New York: Oxford University Press. Available at: <http://www.humansecurityreport.info/>

**HUMAN RIGHTS
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rights violations, as well as unemployment, as discussed below. Most remain heavily dependent on external assistance, especially Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sierra Leone. Moreover, the rise in terror and the war on terror, especially as pursued within conflict-affected areas, has compounded the sources of insecurity.

2.1 TRENDS IN HUMAN SECURITY IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED COUNTRIES

2.1.1 Conflicts

Civilian deaths probably account for around 80–90 percent of total casualties in contemporary warfare. This includes deaths from deliberate violence and deaths that result from the humanitarian crises associated with war.⁵

A noteworthy feature of contemporary conflicts is the very high level of population displacement. According to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the global refugee population rose from 2.4 million people in 1975 to 14.4 million people in 1995. It subsequently declined to 9.6 million in 2004, primarily as a consequence of increased repatriation. This figure only includes refugees who cross international boundaries.⁶ Figures provided by the US Committee on Refugees and Immigrants include internally displaced persons (IDPs) and are much higher, increasing from 22 million in 1980 to 38 million in 1995 (of whom approximately half were internally displaced), and declining to 32.8 million in 2004 (of whom two thirds were IDPs).⁷ The number of refugees and internally displaced persons per conflict can be estimated to have increased more than threefold from 1969 to 2004—from 327,000 to 1,093,300.⁸

Table 5 and Table 6, respectively, present indicative figures for casualties and population displacement in the six case-study countries. The scale of civilian casualties, both as a result of political violence and war-related disease, and the scale of displacements given by even the most conservative estimates, are striking. An important feature of the tables is the variation in reported figures from the small selection of sources presented. The reader may wish to refer to the UNDP Evaluation Office website (www.undp.org/eo) for a short discussion of the considerable problems associated with data on human security, and a fuller presentation of data from a number of sources.

The sections that follow summarize the main trends in other aspects of human security in conflict-affected countries.

2.1.2 Human rights violations and crime

Contemporary conflicts are associated with high levels of human rights violations and violations of humanitarian law, including forced detention, atrocities such as amputation or decapitation, widespread or systematic rape and other forms of sexual abuse and violence, the use of child soldiers, child labour and using women and children as sex slaves, abduction and kidnapping of hostages and of women into forced marriages, and the destruction of historic buildings and cultural symbols. All the conflicts in the case-study countries witnessed most of these human rights violations, although the conflict in Sierra Leone was probably the most gruesome in terms of all these types of violations.

In most cases, human rights violations continue after the cessation of overt hostilities, although their form may change. The reasons have to do with a weak rule of law,

5 The increase in the share of civilian deaths was already observed in the 1990s. Kaldor, Mary and Basker Vashee (eds.). 1997. *Restructuring the Global Military Sector: Vol I: New Wars*. London; Washington: Pinter.

6 Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. 17 June 2004. Global Refugee Trends. Geneva: UNHCR.

7 See the website of US Committee on Refugees and Immigrants: www.refugees.org

8 The first number is taken from Myron Weiner. 1996. 'Bad Neighbours, Bad Neighbourhoods: An Inquiry into the Causes of Refugee Flows.' *International Security* 21(1). The second number is estimated using the above figures and the Uppsala database. See Harbom, Lotta and Peter Wallerstein. 2005. 'Armed Conflict and its International Dimensions, 1946-2004'. *Journal of Peace Research*, 42(5).

TABLE 5. CONFLICT CASUALTIES IN SIX CASE-STUDY COUNTRIES

Country	Years of conflict	Uppsala/PRIO Lacina & Gleditsch Battleddeaths estimates		Project Ploughshares	Genocide Watch
		'Best estimate' for period given in parentheses	Notes		
Afghanistan	1978-2003	564,495 (1978-2002)	No figures available for Northern Alliance, Taliban, or Al Qaeda losses since 2001	As many as 1.5 million people, two thirds of whom were civilians, have died since 1978 1.5 million between 1978 and 1992 [World Military and Social Expenditures, Ruth Leger Sivard, 1993]	840,000 (1978-1996) plus 'thousands of government supporters' (1996-2001)
Democratic Republic of the Congo	1996-2000	149,000 (1996-2001)	The invasion of the Democratic Republic of the Congo from 1996-1997 was accompanied by large-scale massacres, not included here as battle deaths. About 350,000 civilians were killed by violence from 1998-2001, and approximately 2.5 million have died from all war-related causes	(Implied 1990-January 2006): Total: An estimated 350,000 people killed as a direct consequence of violence. In total, an estimated 4 million deaths resulting from the conflict, mostly from mal-nutrition and disease	3,120,000 (1994-2005)
Guatemala	1982-1996	44,450 (1969-1995)	Estimates for the total number of people killed in political violence since 1954 range from 100,000 to over 200,000, with many authors citing a figure of 140,000. Mostly civilians murdered by the government and right-wing death squads		200,000 Mayans (1950s-1980s)
Haiti	1989-	250 (1991)		Over 2,000 people have been killed by armed and criminal groups since February 2004 (implied until January 2006)	
Sierra Leone	1991-2002	12,997 (1991-2000)	One estimate of war-related deaths from 1991 to 1995 is 30,000	Implied 1991-2002: Estimates of the total conflict deaths range from 20,000 to over 50,000. In addition, 30,000 civilians, including children, have had limbs hacked off by the rebels. An estimated 215,000 to 257,000 women have been victims of sexual violence	100,000 (1991-2003)
Tajikistan	1992-1997	51,300 (1992-1997)		The war is estimated to have killed about 50,000 people, most of them in 1992	

Sources: www.prio.no/cwp/armedconflict/current/Codebook_v3-2005.pdf;
www.ploughshares.ca/libraries/ACRText/ACR-TitlePageRev.htm; www.genocidewatch.org/genocidetable2005.ht

TABLE 6. REFUGEES AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN SIX CASE-STUDY COUNTRIES

Year	Afghanistan (1978-2003)		Democratic Republic of the Congo (1996-2000)		Guatemala (1982-1996)		Haiti (1989-)		Sierra Leone (1991-2002)		Tajikistan (1992-1997)	
	IDPs	Refugees abroad	IDPs	Refugees abroad	IDPs	Refugees abroad	IDPs	Refugees abroad	IDPs	Refugees abroad	IDPs	Refugees abroad
1995	159,628	2,679,133		89,738	13,700	42,899		13,925	654,600		16,700	
1996	273,840	2,674,236		158,794	11,200	40,342		15,118	654,600		25,285	
1997	296,795	2,676,674		173,995	1,650	37,508		15,481	670,000			
1998	315,800	2,667,115		158,833		32,747		13,538	670,000			
1999	258,625	2,601,691		255,950		28,082		8,766	500,000			
2000	758,625	3,587,336	3,000	371,713		20,711		7,561	300,000			
2001	1,200,000	3,809,767	3,458	392,146		16,867		7,248				
2002	665,156	2,510,294	9,000	421,362		13,888		7,718				
2003	184,269	2,136,043		453,465		6,696		7,547				
2004	159,549											

Source: UNHCR (www.unhcr.org)

the availability of small arms, and the presence of illegal armed groups. In the case studies, the presence of international troops does seem to have reduced the incidence of human-rights violations committed by governments, particularly in Sierra Leone and Haiti, although it is difficult to establish a direct link in the case of Haiti. In Guatemala and Tajikistan, the governments continue to be repressive. And although the right to life is respected, arbitrary arrest and detention remains frequent. In Afghanistan, there continue to be widespread reports of murder, rape, kidnappings, illegal detentions, torture and land seizures committed by both state agents and non-state actors, and lack of access to justice (see case study). And in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, ordinary citizens are subject to daily harassment, illegal taxation and bribe-taking as well as other violations of human rights at the hands of the police and armed forces.

In all these cases, crime levels are very high and, indeed, it is often difficult to distinguish between crime—acts undertaken for private motives—and human rights violations undertaken by illegal armed groups or by

people in the uniforms of state agents. High-crime statistics can be viewed as an indicator of the weakness of institutions that are supposed to uphold the rule of law and the lack of opportunities for legal employment. In Haiti, the presence of illegal armed groups has created ‘no-go’ areas, such as Cité Soleil, where neither the police nor international troops dare enter. In Guatemala, violent crime is rising dramatically—from some 27,000 incidents in 2001 to 34,000 in 2004. In Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, many former militia groups and warlords have been absorbed into the police and armed forces, but continue to be responsible for crime and human rights violations. Trafficking in people, arms, drugs or valuable commodities is also characteristic of all case-study countries.

2.1.3 Violence and discrimination against women

All forms of violence against women remain high in post-conflict situations, including domestic violence, rape, forced and child marriage (Afghanistan), harassment and trafficking. Its incidence ranges from ‘common’ (Haiti), ‘widespread’ (Tajikistan), ‘persistent’ (Afghanistan), to ‘alarming’ (Guatemala).⁹

⁹ A list of human rights violations recorded in the six case-study countries can be found on the online version of this report on the UNDP Evaluation Office website: www.undp.org/eo

In Guatemala, women are the victims of *feminicidio*—murders targeting women that continue to be a phenomenon around the country. A typical feature of contemporary conflict is widespread or systematic rape. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in South Kivu, for example, some 5,000 women were raped between October 2002 and February 2003, according to UN estimates. Women and children are also abducted and detained as ‘bush wives’, ‘sex slaves’ and, especially children, as spies.

In many cases, continued violence against women remains linked to the conflict. For example, violence committed by those suffering from post-traumatic stress, by men returning to households headed by women during the war, by men facing dislocation and unemployment on return, by a reinforcement of traditional/conservative attitudes towards women, and by continued violence from armed groups, as in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Haiti. The destruction of communities during the conflict may also mean the disappearance of social structures that might previously have offered a safety net. The health consequences of violence may prevent women from being able to work or attend school. Women survivors of violence during the conflict may find their reintegration and return to normal life prevented by attitudes that condemn or

even ostracize women and men who have suffered sexual abuse.

Other forms of violence are rooted in traditional attitudes and practices (for example, in Sierra Leone, some 80 percent of women have undergone female circumcision), which are sometimes reinforced by conflict.

The consequences of violence are accentuated where there are no refuges, where law enforcement and health officials are not trained in gender-based violence and legal remedies are inadequate. Women have particular problems in accessing justice and, in all the case studies, levels of literacy and numeracy are lower for women than for men. In Afghanistan, despite huge improvements, there are still 1.5 million girls who do not attend school—indeed, 79 percent of all women, and 90 percent of women in rural areas, cannot read. In many conflict-affected countries, health facilities for women are non-existent or inadequate.

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2.1.4 Economic insecurity

Contemporary conflicts often result in dramatic falls in gross domestic product (GDP) and in the human development index (HDI). Figures 1 and 2 show that this has been the case in all six countries studied except Guatemala. Afghanistan,

FIGURE 1. CHANGES IN PER CAPITA GDP FOR FIVE CASE-STUDY COUNTRIES

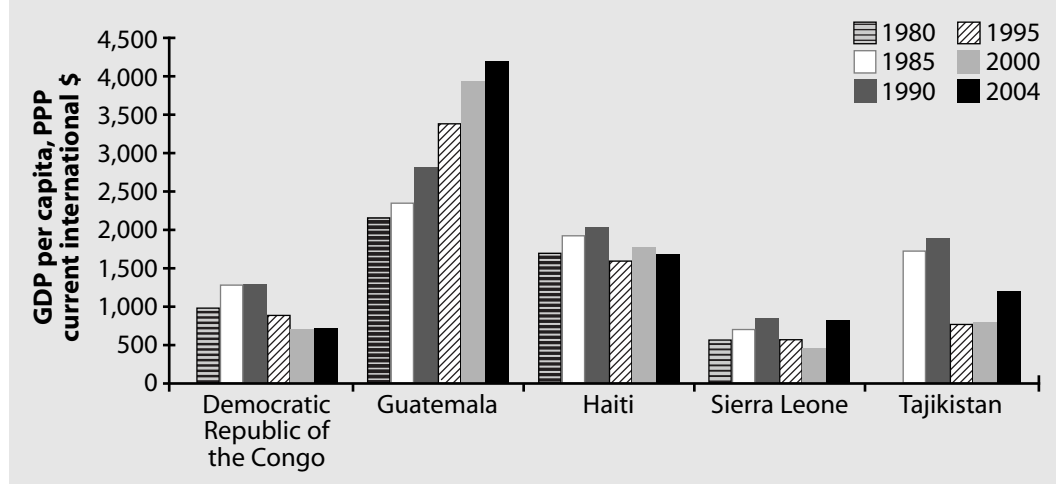
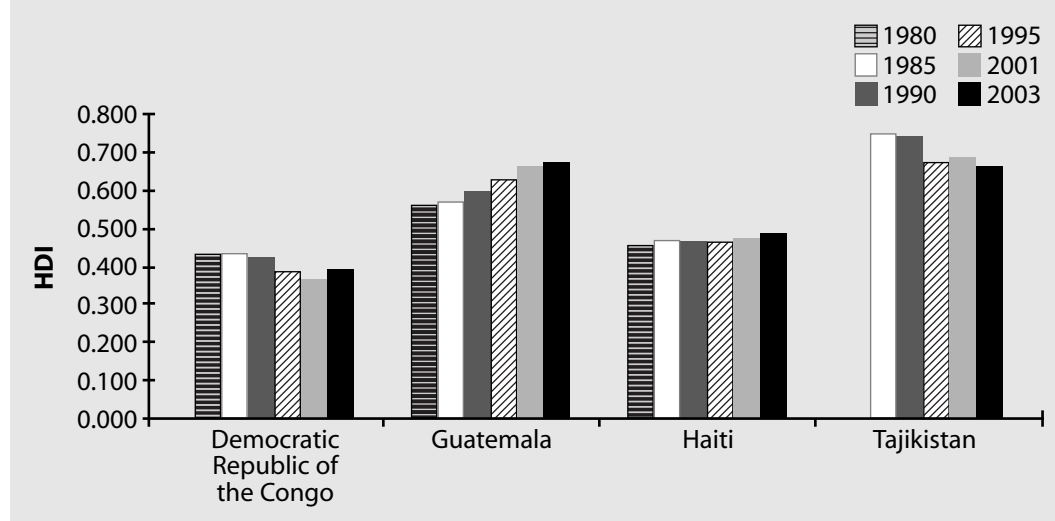


FIGURE 2. CHANGES IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX RANKINGS IN FOUR CASE-STUDY COUNTRIES



the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sierra Leone have among the lowest HDIs in the world. In all six countries, there are very high levels of poverty and unemployment. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is probably the poorest, with over 80 percent of the population estimated to be living on less than \$1 a day. In Sierra Leone and Haiti, 51 percent and 56 percent, respectively, are living on less than \$1 a day. Insecurity is also the consequence of a lack of sustainable livelihoods. High levels of population displacement are linked to the loss of rural occupa-

tions as people are forced to leave their homes, which were the traditional source of subsistence. In addition, conflicts contribute to the destruction of urban infrastructure, including opportunities for work in manufacturing and services. Data on levels of unemployment or participation in precarious activities in the informal sector are inadequate. But it is evident from all the case studies that high levels of joblessness are a common feature of conflict-affected countries. Bands of unemployed young men provide a ready source of manpower for conflicts, and the

TABLE 7. ACCESS TO IMPROVED SANITATION FACILITIES AND SOURCES OF WATER IN 2004 IN SIX CASE-STUDY COUNTRIES

Country	Access to improved sources of water: proportion of population (%)			Access to improved sanitation facilities: proportion of population (%)		
	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural
Afghanistan	39	63	31	34	49	29
Democratic Republic of the Congo	46	82	29	30	42	25
Guatemala	95	99	92	86	86	90
Haiti	54	52	56	30	57	14
Sierra Leone	57	75	46	53	53	30
Tajikistan	59	92	48	51	70	45

Source: Millennium development indicators.

loss of hope contributes to the willingness to engage in violence.

Lack of environmental health is an important indicator of material insecurity. This includes inadequate health care and lack of access to primary health care as well as to clean water and sanitation facilities. Table 7 illustrates the inadequacy of water and sanitation facilities in the six case-study countries.

Illiteracy rates are also high in all the case-study countries except Tajikistan, ranging from 22 percent in Guatemala to 39 percent (Democratic Republic of the Congo), 49 percent (Haiti) and 64 percent (Sierra Leone and Afghanistan). The one indicator that has significantly improved for all six countries is communication, that is, access to telephone lines and the Internet.

Women's economic security is undermined by sex discrimination, for example, in the context of labour and job allocation and in laws relating to access and ownership of land. Fear of violence, or shame, may inhibit women from going out in public and thus from working. Poverty makes women vulnerable to sexual exploitation, trafficking and further violence. Where there is no employment (or where preference is given to former male combatants), women may resort to prostitution or begging.

Although economic stability and economic growth greatly improved after the establishment of international missions and the return to relative stability, the domestic revenue base of governments in all the case studies is very low. There is a heavy dependence on external assistance, either in the form of official aid (Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sierra Leone—see Table 4) or remittances, especially in Tajikistan and Haiti.

In addition, government capacity remains very low. The proportion of national budgets

devoted to wages is very high, while average salaries are very low and usually well below minimum levels required. This results in moonlighting, loss of the best qualified civil servants and general weakness of key institutions. Thus the sustainability of stability and growth is open to question, both because it depends on external assistance and because the capacity of national institutions to take over the international role is inadequate.

2.1.5 Environmental insecurity

Contemporary conflicts often contribute to environmental degradation and greater vulnerability to natural disasters. Moreover, emergency responses are weakened or non-existent as a result of conflict. In Tajikistan, for example, the conflict diminished the country's capacity to respond to frequent earthquakes and flash floods. In Haiti, the continuing political crises are said to have contributed to the severity of no less than 20 internationally recognized natural disasters, including hurricanes and tropical storms, earthquakes, floods and landslides. The increased frequency and intensity of such disasters is believed to be linked to severe environmental degradation in Haiti. Chronic poverty, a high population density¹⁰ and a weak institutional capacity to address long-term issues such as the environment have contributed to anarchic urbanization, deforestation and overexploitation of agricultural land.

2.1.6 Terror and the war on terror

Terror, meaning violence for the deliberate purpose of intimidation, is typical of contemporary conflicts. However, the term is usually used just to refer to "violence, or the threat of violence, calculated to create an atmosphere of fear and alarm, ... designed to coerce others into actions they would not otherwise undertake, or refrain from actions they desired to take"¹¹ undertaken by non-state actors. On the basis of this definition, terrorism has increased over

10 The population density in Haiti is nearly 300 inhabitants per square kilometre.

11 National Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism. Terrorism Knowledge Base. Available at: <http://www.tkb.org/Home.jsp>

the last five years—from 1,139 domestic and international incidents in 2000 to 4,924 in 2005.¹²

The war on terror has had considerable impact on human security, as is evident in Afghanistan. The use of military means to combat terror has led to high civilian casualties, especially in south-eastern Afghanistan, partly because it is difficult to distinguish terrorists from civilians and partly because civilians are unprotected.¹³ Addressing terror through ‘war’, rather than criminal justice, in Afghanistan and elsewhere, involves military—not policing—action. This can result in shoot-on-sight policies, intrusion into people’s homes, a spiralling of violence in terrorism and counter-terrorism, and non-observance of the principles of international humanitarian law (for example, proportionality).

The war on terror has also reduced humanitarian space, as the United Nations discovered in Iraq and Afghanistan. Heavy security restrictions, especially in countries where the war is taking place, have greatly hampered the capacity to respond to human security needs (see below).

In addition, the war on terror has influenced priorities for official development assistance as well as the conditions attached to aid, and has affected the legitimacy of international efforts. Priorities for aid are often based on a country’s allegiances in the war on terror, rather than on need, and repressive regimes that are engaged in the war are less liable to be challenged by the international community. Among the case-study countries, this has affected Afghanistan, and to some extent, Tajikistan, as well as neighbouring Central Asian countries.

2.2 THE CHANGING CHARACTER OF CONFLICT

2.2.1 Weak states and weak civil societies

In the 20th century, war was often linked to the construction of militaristic states. Contemporary wars tend to be associated with the disintegration of such states. All the case-study countries were formerly authoritarian regimes, either closed one-party states (Afghanistan, Sierra Leone and Tajikistan) or oligarchic dictatorships (Guatemala, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Haiti). Moreover, they were regimes heavily dependent on outside support—either through foreign assistance, external fiscal transfers or dependence on mineral exports. Cold War politics served to prop up dictatorial regimes, as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Guatemala, or led to proxy wars, as in Afghanistan and Guatemala.

All of these regimes underwent a process of state unravelling, sped up by the impact of liberalization and opening up to the outside world (both politically and economically), especially after the end of the Cold War. Tajikistan became independent as a result of the break-up of the Soviet Union. The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan led to a shaky coalition of former Mujahadeen factions. In the other case-study countries, challenges to repressive dictators were compounded by external pressures for political and economic liberalization.

All the case-study countries had a low domestic tax base that fell further because of declining investment and production, increased corruption and clientelism, and declining legitimacy. The declining tax revenue led to even greater dependence on external or private revenue sources, through,

12 Ibid. 2000: 1,139 incidents; 2001: 1,733 incidents; 2002: 2,647 incidents; 2003: 1,898 incidents; 2004: 2,646 incidents; 2005: 4,924 incidents.

13 Taking Iraq as an example, estimates of civilian casualties can go up much higher. There are two main sources of data for civilian casualties in Iraq. One is Iraqbodycount.org, which is based on reports of violent incidents in the media. The estimates for October 2005 range from 26,457 to 29,795. The other is a painstaking study reported in the British medical journal, *The Lancet*. This study estimated that there were an additional 98,000 deaths throughout Iraq, excluding Fallujah, compared to a similar period before the war. See also Kaldor, Mary (forthcoming). *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*, Third Edition. Cambridge: Polity Press, chapter 7.

for example, access to mineral rents (Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo), private oligopolies (Guatemala) or criminal/corrupt activities. Reductions in public expenditure as a result of the shrinking fiscal base as well as pressure from external donors for macroeconomic stabilization and liberalization (which also may reduce export revenues) led to weakening public services and further eroded legitimacy. A growing informal economy associated with increased inequalities, unemployment and rural-urban migration, combined with the loss of legitimacy, further weakened the rule of law and indeed led to the re-emergence of privatized forms of violence.

These are the typical conditions in which contemporary conflicts take place. The rationales of conflict are varied; they include social and economic exclusion (Guatemala, Sierra Leone, Democratic Republic of the Congo) as well as ethnic and religious grievance or ideology (Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Democratic Republic of the Congo). But what these conflicts have in common are the conditions that make it more likely that conflicts will be pursued through violent means.

It is often argued that conflicts are more likely to take place in societies that are divided ethnically or religiously. It is true that many contemporary conflicts are fought in the name of identity politics—that is to say, the claim to power on the basis of identity, be it ethnic or religious. However, most societies are characterized by ethnic and religious pluralism. What has to be explained is why, in some countries, these differences lead to violence during certain periods. In former authoritarian states, ethnic or religious ideologies are often constructed by leaders anxious to retain power or by opportunists who try to

use moments of transition to gain power, and mobilize through the media, especially radio and television. Indeed, war itself can be considered a form of mobilization around exclusive or sectarian identities because of deliberate strategies to generate fear and hate.

By and large, the regions most prone to violence are those in which civil society is weakest. Where liberalization is the consequence of external pressure rather than pressure from civil society, transitions are particularly fragile. Political legitimacy is constructed by civil society. A strong civil society promotes civic as opposed to sectarian values, as well as the norms that underpin the rule of law and political authority. It also increases accountability and transparency and contributes to the efficiency of tax collection. Of course, civil society has its dark side, but this argument is predicated on the assumption that public debate as opposed to violent conflict provides space for democratic opinion. Linked to civil society are the informal institutions around the family, small businesses, educational establishments and local media outlets that play an influential role in shaping the strength of social networks and community ties.

A number of scholars have made the point that it is the opportunity for conflict, rather than the proximate causes of conflict, that have common characteristics that can be identified in order to develop methods of conflict prevention.¹⁴ All human societies are prone to conflict. The real question is what determines the resort to violence.

2.2.2 Military means

All of the conflicts discussed have been fought by armed networks of non-state and state actors. They include paramilitary groups organized around a charismatic leader,

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14 See, for instance, Fearon, James and David Laitin. 2003. 'Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War'. *American Political Science Review* 97:75-90; Fearon, James and David Laitin. 1996. 'Explaining Inter-ethnic Cooperation.' *American Political Science Review* 90(4): 715-735; Nathan, F. April 2000. 'The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: The Structural Causes of Crisis and Violence in Africa'. *Peace & Change* 25(2); Abacus International for UNDP. 'Halting the Downward Spiral: Returning Countries with Special Development Needs to Sustainable Growth and Development'.

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warlords who control particular areas, terrorist cells, volunteers such as the Mujahadeen, organized criminal groups, units of regular forces or other security services as well as mercenaries and private military companies. Often these networks cross borders, making use of members of the diaspora, foreign mercenaries or volunteers, or agents of neighbouring states. Thus the war in Sierra Leone began with an invasion from Liberia backed by Charles Taylor. The Afghan Mujahadeen recruited from all over the Muslim world. Seven neighbouring states were involved in the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. For most of these conflicts, the availability of small arms—often as the result of previous wars or of the Cold War—has been a significant contributing factor.

As mentioned previously, the typical military strategy in these wars is deliberate violence against civilians. In much of the literature, the debate about ‘greed and grievance’ tends to focus either on economic motives for killing civilians (looting and pillaging, for example) or psychological motives for atrocities. What is often neglected is the military logic of contemporary wars. In contemporary conflicts, the warring parties, like guerrilla movements, aim to control territory politically. But they do so through terror, rather than by capturing popular support. This is why the warring parties use techniques such as genocide, population displacement and systematic rape as deliberate war strategies. Violations of humanitarian and human rights law are not a side effect of war, but the central methodology of violent conflict. This explains the high level of civilian casualties and population displacement.

2.2.3 The conflict economy

Contemporary conflicts also generate a specific type of economy. Or, to put it another way, as exemplified by all the case studies, these wars speed up the unravelling process described above and stimulate not a capitalist market but a new type of informally regulated economy based on violence.

Because these conflicts take place in states where systems of taxation have collapsed and where little new legitimate wealth is being created, and where the conflict has destroyed physical infrastructure, cut off trade and created a climate of insecurity that prohibits investment, the warring parties have to seek alternative, exploitative forms of financing. They raise money through looting and plundering, through illegal trading in drugs, arms, oil, diamonds, illegal immigrants, cigarettes or alcohol, through ‘taxing’ humanitarian assistance, through support from sympathetic states and through remittances from members of the networks. Women are sold and bought for sex and other forms of exploitation. All these types of economic activity are predatory and depend on an atmosphere of insecurity. Indeed, the new wars can be described as a central source of the globalized informal economy—the transnational criminal and semi-legal economy that represents the underside of globalization. Thus both the economy and the state are even weaker in the aftermath of conflict.

2.2.4 Effects in time and space

Contemporary conflicts are very difficult to end because they exacerbate the conditions that led to conflict—weak states lacking effective and operational institutions, weak civil societies, high unemployment, criminality and the availability of arms and ex-combatants. Moreover, the warring parties may have a vested interest in continuing conflict, either for economic reasons, or because their political power depends on fear, or because of complicity in war crimes. The areas where conflicts have lasted longest have generated cultures of violence.

Indeed the most important condition conducive to conflict is past conflict. A number of conflicts, especially in Africa, have very long histories. Indeed, they have mutated from liberation wars through counter-insurgency to low-intensity wars to the typical wars of the last two decades. This is the case in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and partly the case

in Afghanistan. Sometimes, the warring parties have an interest in peace agreements so as to regroup and re-energize. The last two decades were characterized by large numbers of serial peace agreements, many of which failed. One study of 38 peace agreements between January 1988 and December 1998 showed that 31 failed to survive more than three years.¹⁵ What has changed since 2000 is that more peace agreements have been sustained, for example, Dayton (11 years) and Guatemala (10/11 years), and this may be due to the role of the international community (see discussion below).

Contemporary conflicts are also very difficult to contain. They have a tendency to spread. They spread through refugees and displaced persons, through criminal networks, and through the extremist viruses they nurture. Thus refugees from the aftermath of the genocide in Rwanda helped to ignite a new phase of the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The movement of unemployed ex-combatants has shifted violence back and forth in Sierra Leone. The war in Afghanistan is spilling over into Pakistan and Uzbekistan. Indeed, there is a propensity for regional clusters of warfare in West Africa, Central Africa and the Horn of Africa, Central America, the Balkans, Central Asia and the Caucasus.

Thus, to the list of conditions conducive to conflict enumerated above (a weak or failing state and weak civil society, dependence on external revenue sources, especially primary commodities, the erosion of the monopoly of organized violence, the availability of small arms and unemployed young men, often former soldiers or policemen, and the spread of an illegal/informal economy) should be added previous violent conflict and proximity to conflict. All of these can be summarized as lack of human security.

2.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

There are a number of implications of this analysis for policy.

First, the distinction between different types of insecurity is blurred. Contemporary conflicts involve massive violations of human rights, including violence against women, organized crime, and economic and environmental insecurity. Hence any policy towards conflict needs to be holistic, involving military/political, civil/legal, and economic/social approaches. In particular, humanitarian and development concerns need to be incorporated into peace efforts. Addressing the issues of joblessness, criminality and gender discrimination have to be seen as integral components of peace processes. A strategy for improving human security is, at one and the same time, a strategy for addressing the conditions that lead to conflict.

Second, because the most important condition contributing to conflict is the lack of legitimacy, the core of peace-building has to be the construction of an inclusive political authority, whether this means a state, an international administration or a local municipality. Political authority depends on legitimacy, and legitimacy can only be conferred by the people living in a particular region. External actors can, at most, help to create enabling conditions. But in order to build legitimacy, it is critical that policy-making is inclusive and involves local civil society representatives, and not just the warring parties. Particularly important in this respect is the participation of women. In all the case studies, women played a key role in the processes leading to peace, although they have been made less important—even invisible—in implementation.

Linked to the re-establishment of political authority is legal security. Procedures for legal reform (potentially the entire framework

15 Willett, Susan. 2005. 'New Barbarians at the Gate: Losing the Liberal Peace in Africa'. *Review of African Political Economy* 32(106): 572.

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for civil and criminal law and procedures) might have to be put into place (for example, where there has been a collapse of the legal system or it is rejected as belonging to the previous regime, as in Afghanistan). Reform of substantive law must operate alongside the reform of the police and judicial systems, all of which are central to constitution-building. Legal security is closely related to physical security. Judicial independence and measures to eliminate corruption among police, the judiciary and other law enforcement agencies are required. Training in prosecution and defence advocacy is required. Such measures offer a significant opportunity to build capacity for the protection of human rights. The applicability of non-discrimination and equality to legal institutions must be emphasized and a strategy put in place to ensure their implementation.

Third, because levels of insecurity remain high after overt phases of conflict and because the conditions that led to conflict are exacerbated by conflict, it is difficult to distinguish between phases of conflict. Relief, recovery and reconstruction are, at one and

the same time, prevention. Development, for example, which is supposed to come after the immediate recovery period, needs to be emphasized at all stages of the conflict so as to sustain productive activities.¹⁶ Of course, it is sometimes necessary to prioritize for planning purposes. And, of course, there are many components of strategy—for example, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration or transitional justice—which are common to all conflicts. But exactly what needs to be done when will be specific to each conflict. There are no standard phases. Consulting with people on the ground and taking seriously their views as to needs, priorities and obstacles are crucial in developing specific strategies.

Finally, any approach to conflict has to have a regional focus because of the tendency of contemporary conflicts to spill over borders, through refugees and displaced persons, transnational criminal networks, or extremist ideologies. Regional issues are not just about porous borders and cross-border operations, but also about general instability in neighbouring countries.

16 See Stewart, Francis and Valpy FitzGerald (eds.) 2001. *War and Underdevelopment*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.