



# PRESS RELEASE

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Heidelberg Institute for  
International Conflict Research

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## No peace on the horizon: **18 wars** – in 15 states

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*Heidelberg, 21st of February 2013.* The Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIC) presents with the „Conflict Barometer 2012“ its current data and analyses concerning global conflict occurrences in the year 2012. The conflict researchers counted 43 highly violent conflicts among the total of 396, that is, confrontations which are characterized by a massive use of organized violence, as well as by causing dire and far-reaching consequences. Out of these conflicts, 18 reached the highest intensity level of a war. These occurred in 15 countries, dispersed over four world regions.

Eleven of the aforementioned wars had already been evaluated as such in the previous year, further seven escalated to a war in 2012. The HIIC hereby identifies 17 intrastate wars. Moreover, the first interstate war since 2008 manifested itself in 2012. In total, nine wars were carried out in Sub-Saharan Africa, five in the Middle East and Maghreb, three in Asia and Oceania, and one in the Americas. The European continent remains, as in the years before, spared from wars.

While Sub-Saharan Africa accounted for the highest number of wars, those in the Middle East and Maghreb recorded the greatest amount of casualties. The five wars of the region alone claimed 65,000 lives, including the 55,000 lost in the Syrian civil war. The government troops of President Bashar al-Assad and the armed opposition continued to engage in fierce combats over strategically integral cities and transportation routes. Nearly 2.8 million people fled the battles. Also the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq persisted with an unchanged intensity. The war between Turkey and the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party PKK led anew to heavy fights in the east of the country. In Yemen, the government succeeded in forcing Islamist militants out of several cities in the south, in a large-scale operation supported by the USA. Compared to last year, the war-count in the region has indeed decreased. However, the conflicts associated with the Arab Spring lasted, partly in milder form, under the newly instated governments.

The first worldwide interstate war since 2008 was carried out between Sudan and South Sudan. Both countries were further affected by intrastate conflicts, minding that the conflict in the south Sudanese Darfur region has been executed with high violence for ten years running. On the grounds of continuous encounters between rebels and the government in the border regions of Blue Nile and South Kordofan, 180,000 civilians had to flee. In 2012, clashes including various ethnic groups in South Sudan claimed once again at least 1,000 fatalities. In Mali, mutual advances of Tuareg rebels and Islamist combatants against the government resulted in heavy fighting in the north, consequently leading to hundreds of thousands of refugees. The Islamist groups Boko Haram in Nigeria and al-Shabaab in Somalia further steered wars against their respective governments. Additionally, tensions between mostly Christian farmers of the Berom tribe and Muslim Fulani nomads in Nigeria culminated in a war for the first time. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo the war between the government and the M23 group reached a new magnitude, following M23's takeover of the eastern city of Goma in November. More than 800,000 were forced to flee their homes.

In the Americas, the war between the Mexican government and a manifold of armed drug mafias endured, despite the announcement of a strategy change by the new president Peña Nieto. Again, over 12,000 people were killed in the course of the ongoing drug wars.

In northeast of India, 400,000 civilians fled the war between numerous militant groups. Myanmar saw the escalation of the conflict between militias of Kachin State and the government to the level of a war, following failed negotiations. Pakistan experienced the death of 4,000 people, among them hundreds due to drone attacks, caused by the war between Islamist groups and the government, the latter being supported by the US.

Europe was the setting for socio-economic conflicts set off by the European financial crisis, ultimately leading to violent opposition conflicts and constitutional crises, such as in Romania and Greece.

Whereas the sum of wars slightly declined in 2012, the number of limited wars grew by six. „Therefore one cannot speak of a more peaceful world“, emphasizes Board Member Simon Ellerbrock.

*The HIIC is dedicated to the research, documentation, and evaluation of intra- and interstate political conflicts worldwide since 1991. The annually published „Conflict Barometer“ contains an overview of the current developments of violent as well as non-violent conflicts. The latest edition can be downloaded free of charge at [www.hiik.de](http://www.hiik.de) (as of the 21st of February 2013, 12 p.m.).*

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**Please notice: this announcement is under a strict retention period until Thursday, 21st of February 2013, 12 p.m.**

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