

# ARMED CONFLICTS REPORT 2009

A message from **Dr. James Orbinski, MD**



After extensive field experience with Médecins Sans Frontières / Doctors Without Borders, Dr. Orbinski served as its international president from 1998 to 2001. In 1999 he accepted the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to MSF for its pioneering approach to medical humanitarianism and most especially for its approach to witnessing. Dr. Orbinski is now a research scientist at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto, Canada, and an associate professor of both medicine and political science at the University of Toronto.

**I HAVE WORKED INTERNATIONALLY FOR MORE THAN 20 YEARS.** My most enduring memory came when I was working with Médecins Sans Frontières / Doctors Without Borders during the 1994 genocide of Rwanda's Tutsis. An injured woman said to me, when I was overwhelmed by the many hundreds of other patients on the street that day, "Ummera. Find your courage and go on." I was treating her after she had been carefully brutalized with a machete. There were hundreds of women, children, and men brought to the hospital that day—so many that we had to lay them out on the street. And in many cases, we operated on them then and there, as the gutters around the hospital literally ran red with blood.

The world continues to be plagued by violence. This *Armed Conflicts Report* indicates that in 2008 there were 28 armed conflicts in 24 countries. Every death in combat and from the attending horrors—primarily visited upon civilians—of hunger, malnutrition, opportunistic disease, and infection represents an opportunity to choose. For me, I choose to work practically in a focused and targeted medical way.

When I began working as a humanitarian doctor I naively accepted the cloak of the apolitical doctor. I believed humanitarianism—with its principles of neutrality, impartiality, and independence—to be outside of politics, in some ways even superior to it, and a way of avoiding its messy business. But I have come to see humanitarianism not as separate from politics but in relation to it, and as a challenge to political choices that too often kill or allow others to be killed.

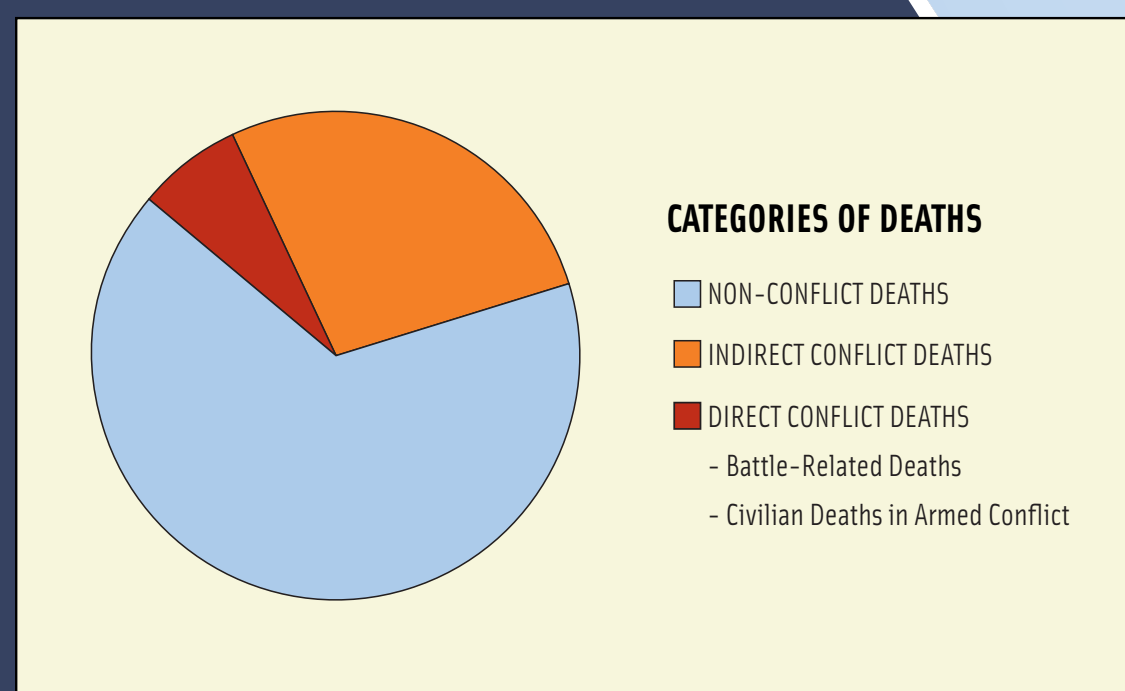
Humanitarianism is about more than medical efficiency or technical competence. In its sacred present, humanitarianism seeks to relieve the immediacy of suffering, and most especially of suffering alone. In choosing to be with those who suffer, we are led not simply to pity but to solidarity.

Solidarity implies a willingness to confront the causes and conditions of suffering that persist in destroying dignity, and to demand a minimum respect for human life. Solidarity also means recognizing the dignity and autonomy of others, and asserting the right of others to make choices about their own destiny. It is about the struggle to create the space to be fully human.

Finally, humanitarianism is a practical activity—executed with skill, conducted in solidarity with those who suffer, and sometimes supported only by the courage to go on.

## THE BREADTH OF ARMED VIOLENCE

A recent study<sup>1</sup> of all aspects of armed violence reports that armed violence outside of armed conflict is responsible for the majority of deaths caused by the use of arms. This graph depicts the relative numbers of people killed directly by armed conflict, indirectly by the effects of armed conflict (largely due to preventable illnesses and communicable diseases), and as the result of criminally or politically motivated armed violence outside of armed conflicts.

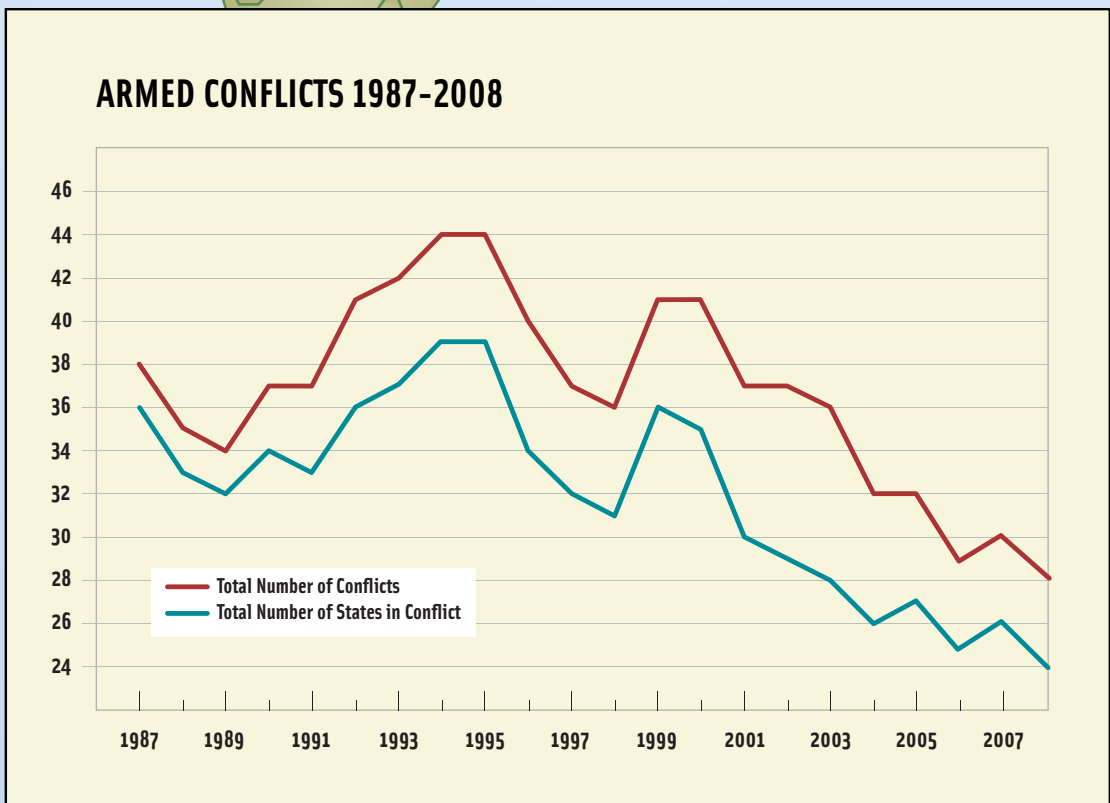
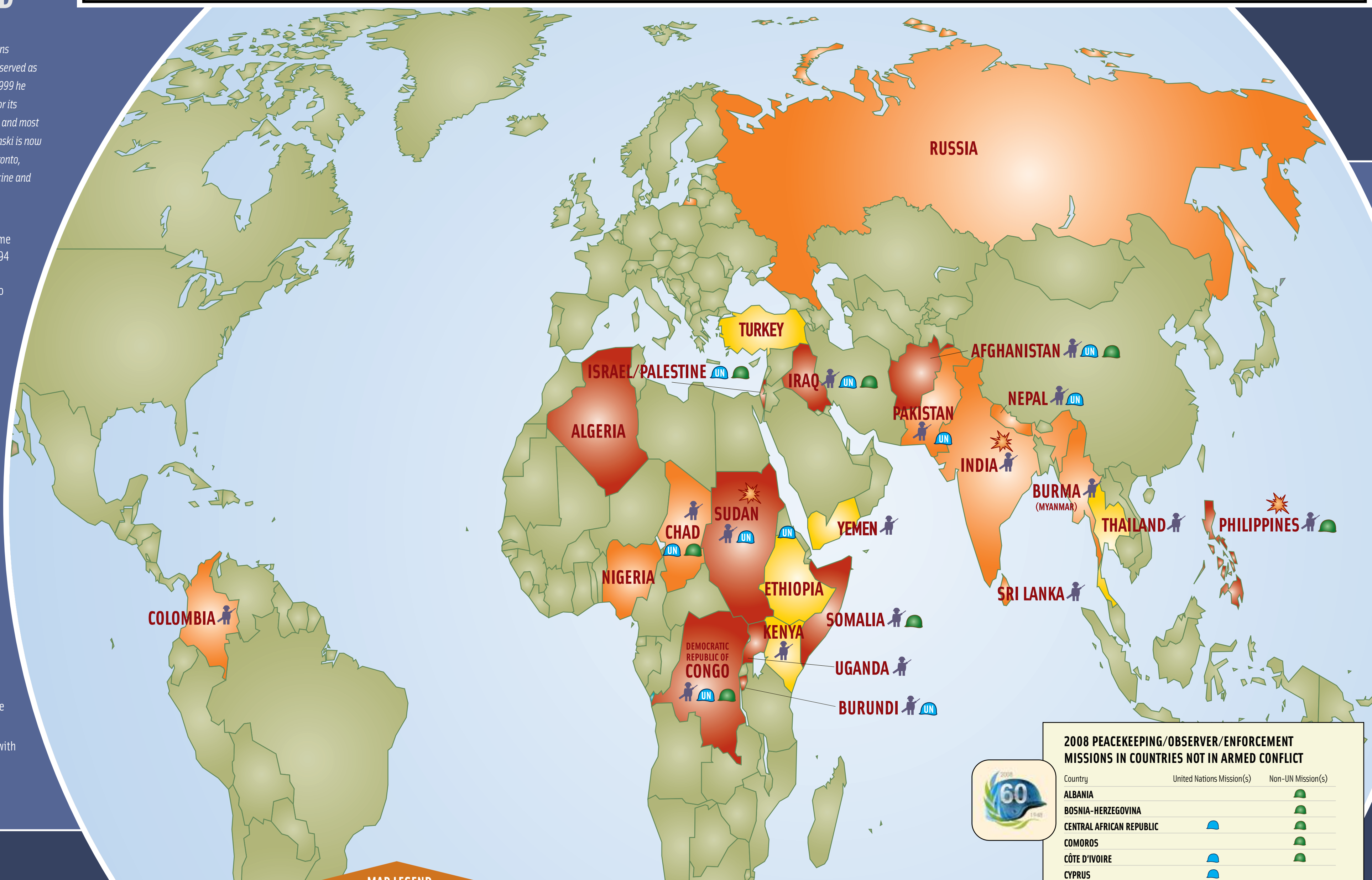


<sup>1</sup> Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2008, *Global Burden of Armed Violence* (Geneva, Switzerland), [www.genevadeclaration.org/resources-armed-violence-report.html](http://www.genevadeclaration.org/resources-armed-violence-report.html).

Project Ploughshares gratefully acknowledges the ongoing financial support of the many individuals, national churches and church agencies, local congregations, religious orders, and organizations across Canada that ensure the work of Project Ploughshares continues.

We are particularly grateful to The Simons Foundation in Vancouver for its generous support.

Project Ploughshares is an agency of The Canadian Council of Churches with a mandate to advance policies and actions that prevent war and armed violence and build peace. To order additional copies of this poster, download the order form from our website or contact: Project Ploughshares | 57 Erb Street West, Waterloo ON N2L 6C2 | 519-888-6541, [plough@ploughshares.ca](mailto:plough@ploughshares.ca).

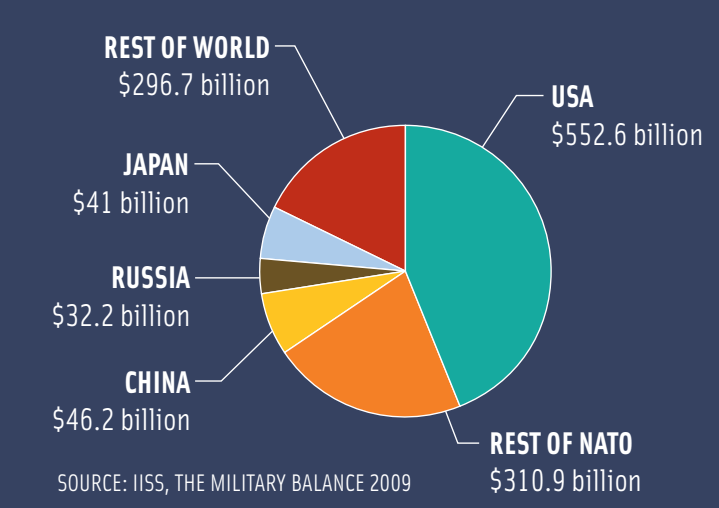


**2008 PEACEKEEPING/OBSERVER/ENFORCEMENT MISSIONS IN COUNTRIES NOT IN ARMED CONFLICT**

Country	United Nations Mission(s)	Non-UN Mission(s)
ALBANIA		
BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA		
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC		
COMOROS		
CÔTE D'IVOIRE		
CYPRUS		
EAST TIMOR		
EGYPT		
ERITREA		
GEORGIA		
GUINEA-BISSAU		
HAITI		
LEBANON		
LIBERIA		
MACEDONIA		
MOLDOVA		
MONTENEGRO		
NORTH KOREA		
SERBIA (KOSOVO)		
SIERRA LEONE		
SOLOMON ISLANDS		
SOUTH KOREA		
SYRIA		
WESTERN SAHARA		

## WORLD MILITARY SPENDING 2007

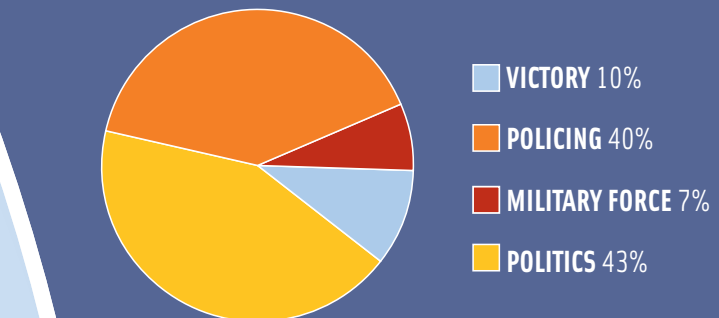
Global Total \$1,279.6 Billion US



In 2007, total NATO spending (including Canada at \$18.5 b) accounted for more than two-thirds of the world's military spending.

The annual budget for all UN peacekeeping in fiscal year 2007-8 was about US\$5.8 billion, which is equal to approximately one half of one per cent of global military spending.

## HOW 268 TERRORIST GROUPS WORLDWIDE ENDED, 1968-2006



A recent RAND Corporation research study analyzed terrorist groups that existed worldwide between 1968 and 2006. The study found that most terrorist groups ended because of local police or intelligence agency operations, or because these groups joined a political process. Rarely have terrorist groups ceased to exist as a result of winning or losing a military campaign.

*How Terrorist Groups End: Lessons for Countering al Qaeda*, Seth G. Jones and Martin C. Libicki, 2008, RAND Corporation

## SUMMARY

With 28 conflicts being fought in 24 countries, 2008 saw a return to the prevailing downward trend in armed conflicts\* that started in 2000. (In 2007 there was a slight increase from 29 to 30.) No new conflicts were added in 2008 and major armed conflicts in Haiti and Côte d'Ivoire ended.

While Haiti continues to struggle with security and humanitarian issues, the past two years have seen armed conflict casualty figures that are well below the 25-deaths-per-annum threshold that is required for removal from the Armed Conflicts Report. Côte d'Ivoire has seen the 2007 peace accord hold and in each of 2007 and 2008 there were fewer than 25 armed conflict deaths. Côte d'Ivoire is one of the 15 member countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). In recent years, seven of the ECOWAS countries have experienced armed conflict but, with Côte d'Ivoire's successful conflict resolution efforts, Nigeria remains the only West African country hosting war. This regional turnaround has been aided in several cases by forces from ECOWAS member countries as well as intervention by the United Nations.

## GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF ARMED CONFLICTS\* IN 2008

Region	Number of countries in region	Number of conflicts in region	Number of countries hosting conflicts	Per cent of countries in region hosting conflicts	Per cent of world conflicts
AFRICA	50	11	10	20	39.3
ASIA	42	11	8	19	39.3
EUROPE	42	1	1	2.4	3.6
THE AMERICAS	44	1	1	2	3.6
MIDDLE EAST	14	4	4	29	14.2
WORLD TOTALS	192	28	24	12.5	100

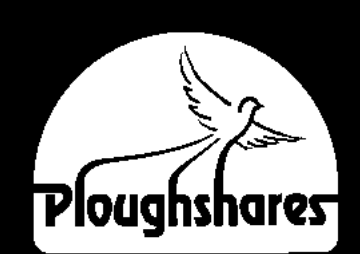
\*Defining Armed Conflict: For the purposes of the annual Armed Conflicts Report an armed conflict is defined as a political conflict in which armed combat involves the armed forces of at least one state (or one or more armed factions seeking to gain control of all or part of the state), and in which at least 1,000 people have been killed by the fighting during the course of the conflict. An armed conflict is added to the annual list of current armed conflicts in the year in which the death toll reaches the threshold of 1,000.

An armed conflict is deemed to have ended if there has been a formal ceasefire or peace agreement and, following which, there are no longer combat deaths (or at least fewer than 25 per year); or, in the absence of a formal ceasefire, a conflict is deemed to have ended after two years of dormancy (in which fewer than 25 combat deaths per year have occurred).

Africa and Asia continued to be most affected by war, hosting 11 armed conflicts each, or over three-quarters of the world's total, leaving the three remaining regions of Europe, the Americas, and the Middle East with a combined share of less than one-quarter.

Between 1999 and 2008, 30 armed conflicts ended, with Europe, the Middle East, and the Americas realizing regional net gains. In Europe, two conflicts were resolved with one still active; in the Middle East six were resolved while four conflicts remain active; and in the Americas, two conflicts have been resolved with one still active.

Full descriptions of all 2008 armed conflicts are available in the *Armed Conflicts Report 2009* under the "Library" link on the Project Ploughshares website ([www.ploughshares.ca](http://www.ploughshares.ca)). Project Ploughshares has reported annually on armed conflicts since 1987.



Additional information on armed conflicts and on a range of peace and security issues is available on the Project Ploughshares website:

[www.ploughshares.ca](http://www.ploughshares.ca)

## ABOUT PROJECT PLOUGHSHARES

### VISION AND MANDATE

Our name and vision come from the enduring vision in Isaiah, which sees the material and human resources consumed by preparations for war transformed into resources for human development – a transformation that goes to the roots of war itself:

*God shall judge between the nations, and shall decide for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more.*

Founded in 1976, Project Ploughshares is an agency of The Canadian Council of Churches, with a mandate to advance policies and actions that prevent war and armed violence and build peace.

### PROGRAM

Working with churches, governments, and civil society, in Canada and abroad, Project Ploughshares undertakes research, policy development, and public engagement to:

- > Prohibit the use, possession, and manufacture of nuclear weapons;
- > Prevent the weaponization of space;
- > Control the supply and reduce the demand for weapons;
- > Reduce the resort to military force; and
- > Build sustainable peace in conflict zones.

### SUPPORT

We welcome your comments and support. Core support for the work of Project Ploughshares is provided each year by contributions from our national sponsoring churches, religious orders, civic agencies, foundations, and particularly by the donations of thousands of individuals. Contributions are tax creditable. You can make your donation online at [www.ploughshares.ca](http://www.ploughshares.ca), by calling our toll-free donation number, 1-888-907-3223, or by mailing your cheque, payable to Project Ploughshares, to the address below.

Project Ploughshares | 57 Erb Street West | Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 6C2  
Affiliated with the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, Conrad Grebel University College, University of Waterloo

## PROJECT PLOUGHSHARES

# ARMED CONFLICTS REPORT 2009

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Additional information on armed conflicts is available from our website at

[www.ploughshares.ca](http://www.ploughshares.ca)

#### Our website information on armed conflict includes:

- > Detailed descriptions of all current armed conflicts, updated annually;
- > Descriptions of recently ended armed conflicts; and
- > Maps and charts providing additional information on armed conflict issues and trends.

The Project Ploughshares website also contains information and analysis on a range of peace and security issues.

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