

Sudden rise in the number of wars

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The number of on-going wars exceeded ten during 2014, which is high compared to previous years since the new millennium. The increase from seven wars in 2013 is also the most significant increase in fifteen years, state researchers at the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) in a preliminary assessment of the global conflict situation at the end of 2014.

Several of the on-going wars also have very high numbers of deaths, primarily the [conflicts](#) in Syria and Iraq.

The large increase depends partly on entirely new wars that have flared up, such as the wars in Ukraine where the UCDP differentiates between the two separatist groups. But 2014 has also seen an escalation of previously low-intensive conflicts. The seven week long Gaza [war](#) is the deadliest confrontation between Isreal and Palestinian groups in two decades. Drawn-out conflicts are also ongoing in Afghanistan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen. South Sudan may also be included when the collected data has been analysed closely.

A war is defined as an [armed conflict](#) where at least 1,000 people have died in fighting in one year. Minor armed conflicts are those with 25–999 deaths per year. Some of the less intense conflicts have seen increased activity in 2014, for instance the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. However, it is still too early to pin down the precise number of conflicts since this requires more work by the researchers at the UCDP.

"These data should give the international community stronger incentives to make sure the conflicts in the Middle East don't escalate further and to find peaceful solutions. Also, the developments in Afghanistan should be followed closely since NATO's military operation has ended", says Project Manager Therése Pettersson.

The researchers also point to a few positive events during the year. A peace agreement has been signed in the long-lived conflict in Mindanao in the Phillipines.

"This is an agreement that bridges conflicts between Christians and Muslims. It is also the first where a female chief negotiator is the first name on the document. Also, the peace process in Colombia has moved forward, since the president was given a renewed mandate in the election earlier in the year and a general has been released by the gerilla", says Peter Wallensteen.

Provided by Uppsala University

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