

# Global conflicts on the rise

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40 armed conflicts were active in 2014, the highest number of conflicts since 1999 and an increase of 18% when compared to the 34 conflicts active in 2013. New data from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) shows an increase in both the number of active conflicts but also in the number of battle-related deaths in these conflicts.

In 2014, the conflict in Syria and the escalating violence in countries like

Iraq, Afghanistan, Nigeria and Ukraine, resulted in the highest yearly [death](#) toll in the post-Cold War period.

In an article in the Journal of Peace Research, the UCDP describes the recent trend in armed conflicts and battle-related deaths. During 2014, 40 armed conflicts, causing at least 25 battle-related deaths, were active. After the end of the Cold War, the number of conflicts in the world decreased substantially. However, for the last ten years the UCDP has recorded an uneven, yet clearly visible upward trend. In particular, the number of conflicts involving troops from other states, so called internationalized conflicts, has increased.

'Nevertheless, this ten-year period is also where we find the year with the lowest number of active conflicts in the post-Cold War period', says Therése Pettersson, project leader at the UCDP. 'This illustrates the variations in the number of conflicts, and the difficulties of speaking of the long term trend'.

The number of conflicts which are defined as wars, resulting in at least 1000 battle-related deaths per year, has also increased, from six in 2013 to 11 in 2014. This represents the largest relative increase since the early 1960s. In recent years, the number of battle-related deaths has increased dramatically, largely due to the developments in Syria. In 2014, the UCDP recorded the highest number of battle-related deaths since the end of the Cold War.

'Besides Syria, we have also seen violence escalating in several other conflicts, such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Nigeria and Ukraine', Therése Pettersson says. 'Even when excluding Syria, 2014 witnessed the highest number of battle-related deaths in 15 years'.

One positive development is that 10 peace agreements were signed during 2014, four more than in 2013.

'We have for example seen a historic agreement signed in the Philippines', says Peter Wallensteen, UCDP's Director. 'Unfortunately, several attempts at negotiations in the most violent [conflicts](#) have collapsed, one reason being the tensions between the West and Russia'.

**More information:** Uppsala Conflict Data Program:  
[www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/?languageId=3](http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/?languageId=3)

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