As well as conflicts involving governments, there are two other major forms of political violence: non-state conflicts, which are fought between militias, warlords, and ethnic or religious groups, without the involvement of a government, and one-sided violence, which includes genocides and other mass killings of defenseless civilians.

If a city or a village turns into a war zone, it makes little difference to the victims whether the perpetrators are foreign soldiers, government forces or local militia. But to understand global patterns of political violence, such distinctions are crucial.

Until very recently, there were no reliable records of non-state conflicts. To fill this gap, Uppsala University in Sweden has produced a new set of figures for the Human Security Report. These statistics, so far covering 2002 to 2005, confirm that the previously unrecorded non-state conflicts are almost as numerous as the state-based conflicts on which global conflict analysis used to rely exclusively. Between 2002 and 2005, there were on average 30 non-state conflicts per year, compared with 31 state-based conflicts.

Non-state conflicts tend to occur in poor countries with weak governments – from 2002 to 2005, most of them were in Sub-Saharan Africa. But they are much less deadly; battle-deaths in non-state conflicts are a quarter of those in state-based conflicts.

Are non-state conflicts, like state-based conflicts, decreasing in number? We cannot be sure, because four years is too short a period over which to detect trends with any reliability, and no one has any reliable statistics for longer than that. But non-state conflicts remained more-or-less steady from 2002 to 2005 in all regions of the world, except for Sub-Saharan Africa, where they fell sharply.

The third major type of organized killing is what the experts call “one-sided violence.” This refers not to fighting between armed groups, but to the deliberate massacre of unarmed people, perpetrated either by non-state militias or by government forces.

One-sided violence includes genocide, which is defined by international law as “acts committed with the intent to destroy, in
Between 2002 and 2005, Sub-Saharan Africa suffered well over half of the armed conflicts that did not involve a government. More than two-thirds of deadly campaigns against unarmed civilians between 2002 and 2005 were perpetrated by non-state forces.

The Uppsala figures show that while the number of campaigns of one-sided violence by governments has remained steady, campaigns by insurgents, warlords, and militias have doubled. Of 412 such events logged by Uppsala between 1989 and 2005, three-quarters were in three regions of the world: 35% in Sub-Saharan Africa, 22% in Central & South Asia, and another 18% in the Middle East & North Africa. The remaining quarter was shared among the Americas, East & Southeast Asia & Oceania, and Europe. From 2002 onwards, there was a sharp increase in violent campaigns against civilians in the Middle East & North Africa, notably in Iraq and Sudan. The other regions showed no clear trends.

The next section of this atlas looks at death tolls and compares the number of people who die in the three main forms of organized killing: state-based conflicts, non-state conflicts, and one-sided violence.
Countries with highest number of non-state conflicts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Conflicts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Côte d’Ivoire</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most non-state armed conflicts in these countries involve ethno-nationalist grievances or disputes. The existence of such conflicts suggests that the state is failing in one of its most fundamental functions: to maintain a monopoly over the use of armed force.

About half of all conflicts do not involve the armed forces of any government, but are fought between various guerrilla groups and ethnic or religious militias. Until recently, there were no reliable global data for these non-state conflicts, which tend to be shorter and less deadly than state-based conflicts. The Human Security Report now publishes annual figures, but the counts only go back to 2002. When government forces fail to suppress armed groups, it is a sign of limited state capacity. At present, all non-state conflicts take place in developing countries.

In 2002, the Democratic Republic of Congo experienced five non-state conflicts. By 2005, there were none.

In India’s north-east there were five non-state conflicts between 2002 and 2005. Hindu-Muslim fighting in Gujarat in 2002 killed at least 1,500 people.
KILLING OF UNARMED CIVILIANS
Total number of years in which a country has experienced one or more campaigns of one-sided violence killing 25 or more people
1989–2005

17
11 – 15
6 – 10
0
no data

One-Sided Violence
Between 1989 and 2005 nearly one-third of all states experienced killing campaigns against civilians.

After state-based and non-state conflicts, the third major type of political violence includes genocides, politicides, and other campaigns that deliberately target unarmed civilians. These deadly assaults are called “one-sided” because the victims cannot generally fight back. While the number of armed conflicts has been declining since 1992, campaigns of one-sided violence have increased by more than half – although their death tolls are substantially lower than those from armed conflict.

LONGEST-SUFFERING
Countries experiencing highest number of years of one-sided violence 1989–2005

India
Colombia
Dem. Rep. of Congo
Uganda
Burundi
Rwanda
Angola
Turkey
Sri Lanka

In all nine countries, one-sided violence is closely associated with long-standing insurrections, civil wars or non-state conflicts. India has suffered campaigns of deadly violence against unarmed civilians in all 17 of the years covered.