

DISCUSSION PAPER 24-003

# The New Dynamics of Contemporary Conflicts

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USIP convened an expert panel of scholars and researchers over a four-month period in 2023–24 to explore lessons learned from the management of conflicts in prior periods of global turbulence. This is the first paper in a three-part series from the convenings and focuses on the examination of contemporary conflict trends, drivers, and dynamics and how these differ from prior conflicts. The series was designed and managed by the Learning, Evaluation, and Research team at USIP's Center for Thematic Excellence.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the past few years, the unthinkable has become reality: a land war in Europe, a vicious conflict between Israel and Hamas, another devastating conflagration in Sudan, and a rise in great power tension of a magnitude not seen since the end of the Cold War. In 2023, Azerbaijan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Israel, Ukraine, Syria, Sudan, and Yemen led the list of new and continuing conflict contexts. In each of them, gross violations of human rights have occurred. Regionally, Africa, the Middle East, and South and Southeast Asia are particularly affected by ongoing and new conflicts.<sup>1</sup>

In an earlier moment of post–Cold War hope, we thought that these types of violence would never happen again or never happen at all. Despite the vast experience the world has accrued about peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding, the current environment suggests a global failure to predict, prevent, or tame conflict. One reaction to this dismal situation would be to walk away, to accept that the lessons we have learned about conflict since 1990 simply do not work in the current geopolitical world. Another approach would be to identify those lessons that are still pertinent to today’s conflicts and become adept at their use.

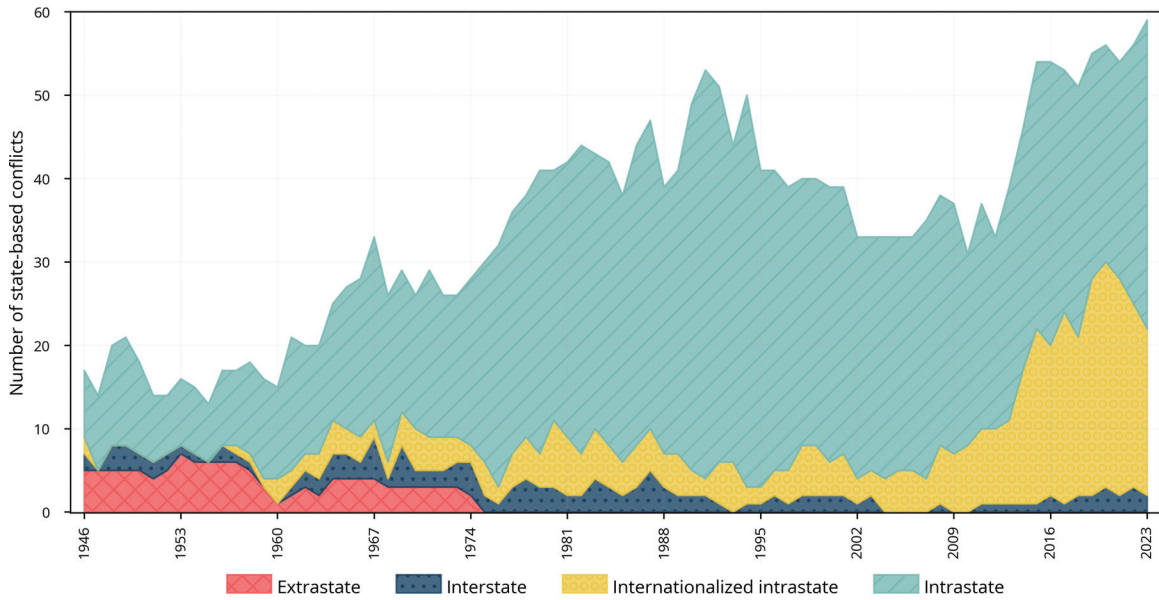
To take the second path—applying insights from past experiences to resolving today’s conflicts—it is important to start with a strong understanding of what makes these conflicts different from those that characterized earlier periods. Only then can we identify how the institutions of conflict management and approaches to peacemaking that were honed over a long period of civil, intrastate wars are still relevant to the new environment and what needs to change in order to make them more effective. This discussion paper on the new dynamics of contemporary conflicts attempts to do just that.

There is extensive, evidence-based expert consensus that conflict conditions have significantly and steadily deteriorated since the mid-2000s. Turbulent social dynamics, including identity disputes, land competition, and competition over the control of markets at local, state, regional, and global levels, fuel the increase in internationalized intrastate wars. These conflicts have new drivers

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<sup>1</sup> Bruce D. Jones and Stephen John Stedman, “Civil Wars and the Post-Cold War International Order,” *Daedalus* 146 (4) (2017): 33–44.

**Figure 1. State-Based Conflicts by Type of Conflict (1946–2022)**



Based on UCDP 24.1 data

Source: Uppsala University, Uppsala Conflict Data Program, <https://ucdp.uu.se/>.

and dynamics compared to previous wars. While earlier post–Cold War conflicts in the 1990s and early 2000s were mostly internal, the nature of civil wars has changed over time. Today, civil conflicts start more readily than in the past; are frequently afflicted by direct, active international involvement by regional or global powers; involve ideologically motivated groups that reject the state-based international system; and last longer.

Independent academic and organizational monitoring of the prevalence, extent, and type of conflict around the world are in unison in highlighting an identifiable trend since 2007: organized violence globally is increasing, with no sign that the trend is peaking.

The Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) finds the number of armed conflicts coded as *wars* (with more than 1,000 battle-related deaths in a year) has risen to levels three times that of 2007 (see figure 1).<sup>2</sup> Drawing on this data, the 2018 World Bank and United Nations report

<sup>2</sup> Shawn Davies, Therése Pettersson, and Magnus Öberg, “Organized Violence 1989–2022, and the Return of Conflict between States,” *Journal of Peace Research* 60 (40) (July 2023): 691–708.

*Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict* found that more countries experienced some form of violent conflict in 2016 than at any time in the last 30 years.<sup>3</sup>

- There are also more conflicts globally than ever before. In 2023, the UCDP reported 59 conflicts in its state-based armed conflict dataset, the highest number conflicts in the dataset that starts in 1946. The data points to “unusually deadly” wars at the moment, exceeding historical patterns.<sup>4</sup> Such dynamics have further complicated investigating and preventing impunity when atrocities occur. There were 55 active state-based conflicts in 2022, a level not seen since 1992. Global monitors also reported increases in so-called “one-sided violence” by armed groups. Much of this violence is related to Islamic State fighters and franchises, which attacked civilians in more than 13 countries, causing 3,700 fatalities.<sup>5</sup>
- Significantly, in 2022, the number of conflict-related deaths globally reached a 28-year high, a level not seen since just after the end of the Cold War in 1996 when new conflicts escalated in the turbulent wake of the dissolution of the Soviet Union.<sup>6</sup> The most recently available data finds that fatalities resulting from organized violence increased by 97 percent in 2022, up to 237,000 battle-related deaths that year.
- Fatalities associated with armed conflicts have risen sharply since 2010. The Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project reports that political violence targeting civilians rose by 12 percent in 2022. Fatalities from direct targeting of civilians in armed-conflict contexts grew by 16 percent year-on-year. Most of these deaths were caused by domestic security forces, external forces in conflict contexts, rebel groups, and other militant organizations, such as political militias, mobs, and identity-based militias.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> United Nations and World Bank, *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2018), [www.pathwaysforpeace.org/](http://www.pathwaysforpeace.org/).

<sup>4</sup> Shawn Davies, Garoun Engström, Therése Pettersson, and Magnus Öberg, “Organized Violence, 1989-2023, and the Prevalence of Organized Crime Groups,” *Journal of Peace Research*, no. 4 (July 2024): 673-693.

<sup>5</sup> Jones and Stedman, “Civil Wars and the Post-Cold War International Order.”

<sup>6</sup> Anna Marie Obermeier and Siri Aas Rustad, “Conflict Trends: A Global Overview, 1946–2022,” *Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)*, 2023, [www.prio.org/publications/13513](http://www.prio.org/publications/13513).

<sup>7</sup> The Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), *ACLED Year in Review: Global Disorder in 2022*, January 31, 2023, <https://acleddata.com/2023/01/31/global-disorder-2022-the-year-in-review/>.

- Moreover, the Russian aggression in Ukraine in February 2022 marked the “return” of international conflict to the international state system. This was the first major international war in nearly 20 years and the “first interstate armed conflict since World War II where a major power in the international system seeks both territorial gains for itself and the subjugation of another state through regime change.”<sup>8</sup>

Some experts caution that the analysis of conflicts in terms of historical periods must be informed by disaggregation of the broad global trends. Many see the concentration of conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and the Horn of Africa subregions as drivers of these contemporary conflict trends.<sup>9</sup> Others emphasize that a close inspection of historical trends reveals that today’s conflict contexts are driven by recurrences or new escalations in settings with a prior history of conflict. From 2010 to 2019, recurrences of conflict rose by 44 percent and the onset of new conflicts increased by 150 percent. Thus, it is important to focus anew on recurring situations of conflict—often waged by newly emergent conflict groups rather than the same configurations as previously—as well as new outbreaks of violence.<sup>10</sup>

Conflicts have simply overwhelmed the ability of global humanitarian action to respond, creating additional national security and humanitarian crises. More than 108 million people are currently displaced internally or are refugees, mostly fleeing conflict, contributing to a global migration crisis and generating among humanitarian relief organizations an “exhausting gloom.”<sup>11</sup> Levels of forced population displacement have nearly doubled since 2017.

The burden of increasing armed conflict globally has undermined security for all countries worldwide. Due to growing domestic insecurity and interstate rivalry, total global military expenditures reached \$2.24 trillion in 2022.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Jones and Stedman, “Civil Wars and the Post-Cold War International Order,” 697.

<sup>9</sup> Jones and Stedman, “Civil Wars and the Post-Cold War International Order.”

<sup>10</sup> Jason Quinn and Matthew Hauenstein, “Global Termination and Recurrence Macro Trends: A Follow Up to Licklider and Dixon,” *Civil Wars* 25 (2–3) (2023): 268–89.

<sup>11</sup> Filippo Grandi, “Foreword,” *UNHCR Global Report 2022*, <https://reporting.unhcr.org/global-report-2022>.

<sup>12</sup> Nan Tian et al., “Trends in World Military Expenditure 2022,” Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), April 2023, [www.sipri.org/publications/2023/sipri-fact-sheets/trends-world-military-expenditure-2022#:~:text=World%20military%20expenditure%20rose%20by,risen%20every%20year%20since%202015](http://www.sipri.org/publications/2023/sipri-fact-sheets/trends-world-military-expenditure-2022#:~:text=World%20military%20expenditure%20rose%20by,risen%20every%20year%20since%202015).

## **PROLIFERATING PROTAGONISTS: MORE ARMED GROUPS**

Contemporary conflicts are more complex and are more likely to be entangled in regional conflict dynamics of cross-border linkages together with involvement by globally powerful actors, including states and transnational terror or criminal groups.

- The number of conflicts between nonstate armed groups has more than doubled since 2010. Barbara Walter finds that while an average of eight rebel groups were active in civil wars in 1950, this number has increased to an average of 14 organized rebel organizations in contemporary conflicts.<sup>13</sup> Additional research highlights that the number of active armed groups in the international system has increased in recent decades.
- The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) reports in its Armed Conflict Survey 2023 a year-on-year 14 percent increase in the number of fatalities globally and a 28 percent increase in the number of armed conflict events. The IISS finds in its Armed Conflict Survey “notable concern” regarding the proliferation of armed groups in Africa and the Middle East and North Africa, finding that in these regions some 259 groups are operating with global networks and are in some instances supported by third-party states or backed by international mercenaries such as Russia’s Wagner Group.<sup>14</sup>

The average campaign duration for an armed group in 1980 lasted approximately three years. Before the outbreak of major conflicts in Libya, Syria, and Yemen, this number increased to four years in 2010. While left-wing armed groups had, on average, the longest militant campaigns between 1970 and 2012, the number of active ethnonationalist and jihadist groups increased the most frequently during this period.<sup>15</sup> The share of conflicts involving jihadist organizations rose to more

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<sup>13</sup> Barbara F. Walter, “The New Civil Wars,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 20 (2017): 469–86.

<sup>14</sup> Irene Mia, “Editor’s Introduction,” *Armed Conflict Survey 2023*, International Institute for Security Studies, December 6, 2023, [www.iiss.org/en/publications/armed-conflict-survey/2023/editors-introduction/](http://www.iiss.org/en/publications/armed-conflict-survey/2023/editors-introduction/).

<sup>15</sup> For further discussion of these trends, see Iris Malone, “Unmasking Militants: Organizational Trends in Armed Groups, 1970–2012,” *International Studies Quarterly* 66 (3) (September 2022): 1–12.

than 40 percent in 2014, increasing from around 5 percent in 1990.<sup>16</sup> These organizations have played a major role in conflict dynamics.<sup>17</sup> UCDP data highlight that “transnational *jihadist* groups have either driven or had a major impact on the trends in all categories of violence” from 2010 to 2019.<sup>18</sup> Complicating peace efforts, many of these organizations reject the international order and the idea of engaging in negotiations with states.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to differentiate among the types of groups and the extent of their internal coherence organizationally and in terms of goals and objectives, and to fully grasp the extent of material and moral-support linkages across groups in different conflict settings. While armed groups created websites to publish propaganda in the 2000s, these actors have more recently used social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, as well as encrypted message platforms like Telegram, to coordinate and connect with potential allies globally.

## CONFLICTS GO GLOBAL, QUICKLY

The post-2007 increase in armed conflict was accompanied by a sharp increase in the number of *internationalized intrastate* disputes—that is, where international or regional countries have become militarily involved in what are fights waged internally within a country. The Pathways report finds that spillover of civil wars across borders and increased internationalization of conflicts by powerful regional and international actors have made contemporary armed conflicts more complex.<sup>19</sup> Additional factors in the internationalization of disputes include factors such as border instability and border-related relationships, transnational ideological solidarities and global coalitions, extractive industry and primary commodity international economic relationships, and

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<sup>16</sup> James D. Fearon, “Civil War and the Current International System,” *Daedalus* 146 (4) (Fall 2017): 18–32.

<sup>17</sup> Jihadism remains a contested concept in political violence research. For additional discussion surrounding this concept, see Anne Stenersen, “Jihadism after the ‘Caliphate’: Towards a New Typology,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 47 (5) (2020): 774–93.

<sup>18</sup> Therése Pettersson and Magnus Öberg, “Organized Violence, 1989–2019,” *Journal of Peace Research* 57 (4) (July 2020): 597–613.

<sup>19</sup> Davies, Pettersson, and Öberg, “Organized Violence,” 691–708.



the role of diaspora communities or kinship groups in material and moral transnational solidarity.<sup>20</sup>

The replication of conflict dynamics in countries and contexts, such as in situations of protest and support for Israel or Palestine in countries around the world, reveals new patterns of *cascading fragility*. That is, violence in one context deepens polarization in other settings. Such polarization may set the stage for future violent confrontations and hate crimes. Fragility “cascades” in these situations: polarization and weak social cohesion contribute to these new conflict dynamics.

## **MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES ARE INCREASINGLY AT RISK**

In comparison to prior periods, expert monitoring of the global environment reveals two important differences in today’s conflicts. First, conflicts more frequently occur in middle-income countries. This is in addition to around 60 low-income countries that have suffered from chronic fragility where violence is driven more strongly by lack of access to acute needs such as water, food, and livelihoods. Today’s conflicts in middle-income countries are more likely to be driven by factors such as political polarization, minority-group grievances, religious nationalism, access to globally traded natural resources, and long-standing border disputes.

Second, conflicts between localized groups and the government, and between informal local armed groups, are happening in geographically, economically, or politically peripheral areas where state capacity is weak or mostly absent. Such *subnational* conflicts are increasingly common. For example, Ethiopia today is experiencing as many as seven distinct conflicts involving the government, separatists, and ethnic militias.<sup>21</sup> In India, the far-peripheral conflict in Manipur is equally indicative of these new subnational conflict dynamics.<sup>22</sup> In Myanmar, a plethora of armed groups—

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<sup>20</sup> Amy L. Freedman, ed., *The Internationalization of Internal Conflicts: Threatening the State* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2014).

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, International Crisis Group, “Ethiopia’s Ominous New War in Amhara,” November 16, 2023, [www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/ethiopia/b194-ethiopias-ominous-new-war-amhara](http://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/ethiopia/b194-ethiopias-ominous-new-war-amhara).

<sup>22</sup> International Crisis Group, “Ethnic Clashes Roiling Manipur Pose Test for India’s Modi,” July 26, 2023, [www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-asia/india/ethnic-clashes-roiling-manipur-pose-test-indias-modi](http://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-asia/india/ethnic-clashes-roiling-manipur-pose-test-indias-modi).

some with support from China—battles a religious-nationalist military junta over territory, minority rights, and natural resources. Such groups are involved in global criminal markets including cyber-attacks and international online theft rings.<sup>23</sup>

- More than half of the conflicts in 2023 were in middle-income countries, with the rest occurring in low-income and chronically fragile contexts. Conflicts in contexts such as Lebanon, Kenya, or Thailand have various causal drivers, and such settings have seen large-scale civil wars (e.g., Syria, Iraq, and Yemen), subnational conflicts (e.g., Nigeria), and widespread political violence (e.g., Mexico).<sup>24</sup>
- The number of low-intensity conflicts has risen by 60 percent since 2007.<sup>25</sup> Subnational conflicts or locally contained and experienced conflicts that escalate to the level of armed conflict as coded by UCDP researchers occur typically on the territorial periphery of states, such as the long-running Kashmir conflict in India’s far northwest. These subnational conflicts have been most commonly seen in Asia (e.g., the Philippines and Thailand), but subnational conflicts have also been on the rise in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa (e.g., Cameroon). Between 2000 and 2015, subnational conflict affected 24 countries, causing 100,000 battle-related deaths.

## **CONFLICTS INVOLVE THE COMPLEX INTERACTION AMONG ROOT CAUSES**

Earlier debates about whether conflicts are driven by primarily economic factors or grievances, such as deep-rooted injustices against minority groups, have been replaced by efforts to identify conflict root causes and how these deep drivers of violence interact.

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<sup>23</sup> “Rebel Fire and China’s Ire: Inside Myanmar’s Anti-Junta Offensive,” *Reuters*, December 17, 2023, [www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/rebel-fire-chinas-ire-inside-myanmars-anti-junta-offensive-2023-12-15/](http://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/rebel-fire-chinas-ire-inside-myanmars-anti-junta-offensive-2023-12-15/).

<sup>24</sup> World Bank, “Fragility, Conflict, and Violence in Middle-Income Countries” (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2022).

<sup>25</sup> Between 25 and 999 battle-related deaths per year.

Experts find explanations at global, regional, national, highly localized, and individual levels in explaining the *root-cause* conditions that produce today’s deteriorating conflict contexts. There is both “appetite” for violent conflict, or justifications and injunctions to commit violence in pursuit of an aim, and problems of “credible commitment,” or the failures of governance in which fears and power-seeking override trust in political systems and rule-based management of conflicts. Conflict cleavages are increasingly blurred between putative rebels, militias, criminal cartels, armed trafficking groups, and violent extremists, who may coalesce around disparate grievances, claims, ideology, or specific resource flows.

While there is no consensus on a single most important factor as to why so many conflicts have emerged in the 2010s and 2020s, governance failures figure prominently in most expert explanations. Growing autocracy around the world and increasing political exclusion, state-based violations of human rights, and entrenchment by kleptocratic elites provide fuel for violent conflicts. In turn, governance failures provide the enabling conditions for social stress, radicalization, and extremism. Autocracy contributes to conflict dynamics in many ways, and experts are most concerned about how it becomes a tool for the spread of disinformation, which can contribute to enmity and conflict escalation.

More specifically, religious extremism is seen in an increasing number of contexts. The Religious Civil War dataset designed by Monica Duffy Toft finds that 71 percent of conflicts that were ongoing at the end of 2014 had a clear religious component. This high percentage led to the conclusion that “religious civil wars today pose some of the biggest strategic challenges to the global order.”<sup>26</sup> Toft’s research explores these dynamics and affirms analysis by Nader Hashemi and Danny Postel on the dynamics of “sectarianization” in recent civil wars.<sup>27</sup>

Further, youth vulnerability to violent extremism provides the individual-level and bottom-up explanations needed to explain contemporary conflicts. According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), early childhood traumatic experiences, extremist religious indoctrination, and social vulnerability of unemployment, food insecurity, and displacement may drive armed-group

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<sup>26</sup> Monica Duffy Toft, “Getting Religion Right in Civil Wars,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 65 (9) (October 2021): 1607–34.

<sup>27</sup> On the escalation of sectarian divisions in MENA, see Nader Hashemi and Danny Postel, eds., *Sectarianization: Mapping the New Politics of the Middle East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

recruitment, organizational strategies, and the ideological radicalization of youth in the Sahel.<sup>28</sup> Groups with varying ideological beliefs have influenced local dynamics in these conflicts. For example, the rise of the Islamic State and other jihadist groups in Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen contributed to the increase in civil wars during the 2010s.<sup>29</sup>

Climate change, environmental degradation, and natural disasters may also influence conflict dynamics. These environmental factors intersect with social stressors such as urban poverty, water scarcity, and land disputes.<sup>30</sup> Expert analysis frequently highlights the impact of climate stressors on social dynamics, including localized group-based inequalities, grievances over pollution, marginalization, and rent-seeking. These analyses also concentrate on resource conflicts centered on human needs, such as water scarcity.<sup>31</sup>

## CONCLUSION

This discussion paper has addressed the question: What are the new drivers and dynamics of contemporary conflicts that render them less amenable to negotiated outcomes? Overall, it finds that turbulence across the international system exacerbates conflict dynamics in two ways: international powers' lack of common purpose enables local conflicts to occur, and the proliferation of conflicts from the bottom up stresses an already polarized international system of responding to conflict crises.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> The UNDP “Journeys to Extremism” reports are available at <https://journey-to-extremism.undp.org/enter>.

<sup>29</sup> See the analysis that finds “these are not clashes of civilizations, [as] most of the victims are Muslim” in Nils Petter Gleditsch and Ida Rudolfson, “Are Muslim Countries More Prone to Violence?” *Research & Politics* 3 (2) (April–June 2016).

<sup>30</sup> See, for example, Colin P. Kelley, Shahrzad Mohtadib, Mark A. Cane, Richard Seager, and Yochanan Kushnir, “Climate Change in the Fertile Crescent and Implications of the Recent Syrian Drought,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 112 (11) (2015): 3241–46. See also Margaret Suter, “Running Out of Water: Conflict and Water Scarcity in Yemen and Syria,” *Atlantic Council MENASource*, September 12, 2017, [www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/running-out-of-water-conflict-and-water-scarcity-in-yemen-and-syria/](http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/running-out-of-water-conflict-and-water-scarcity-in-yemen-and-syria/).

<sup>31</sup> For a current review of this approach, see Halvard Buhaug et al., “Climate Driven Risks to Peace over the 21st Century,” *Climate Risk Management* 39 (2023): 1–14.

<sup>32</sup> In earlier turbulent periods in international politics, James Rosenau found that “long-standing structures of authority weaken, collectivities fragment, subgroups become more powerful at the expense of states and governments, national loyalties are redirected, and new issues crowd onto the global agenda.” James N. Rosenau, *Turbulence in World Politics: A Theory of Change and Continuity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990).

Weakness in a rules-based international order is linked to the proliferation of transnational armed groups, criminal networks, and diaspora-group mobilization. Diaspora groups can both fuel conflict and contribute to peaceful outcomes, and information and communication technologies have increased their relevance and roles in conflicts commensurate with increasing flows of information and real-time videography of conflicts in process.

Given compounding “polycrisis” conditions and pessimism over the ability to see strongly collective responses, it is essential to evaluate anew the knowledge base and evidence-based findings surrounding the underlying drivers of conflict globally as a precursor to understanding and evaluating contemporary concerns.<sup>33</sup> There is cause to be concerned about how global turbulence may spawn new conflict conditions in the international system, and these are different types of crises that critical multilateral actors like the UN are ill-equipped and unable to handle. Moreover, missteps such as the failed initial UN efforts to manage the conflict in Libya after the fall of the Qaddafi regime in 2012 tipped the scales away from international engagement to stem conflict escalation.

The worsening conditions of conflict and stark changes in the causes and patterns of contemporary conflicts underscore the need to urgently develop more effective approaches to peacemaking. The lessons from this paper demonstrate the necessity of:

1. Understanding the increasing complexity of conflicts, including the proliferation of armed groups and internationalized intrastate wars.
2. Adapting to the changing nature of conflicts, including new peacekeeping and peacebuilding strategies, tools, and approaches for engaging with nonstate actors and ideologically motivated groups.

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<sup>33</sup> The “polycrisis” perspective argues that there are interconnected and related global crises that have deep social implications, such that there are, according to the World Economic Forum, “a cluster of related global risks with compounding effects, such that the overall impact exceeds the sum of each part.” The Forum’s Global Risks Report 2023 explores such interconnected risks emanating from economic, environmental, geopolitical, societal, and technological factors and their potential effects on global interactions and national and local volatility; see World Economic Forum, “The Global Risks Report 2023,” 18th ed. (Davos: World Economic Forum, 2023), [www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_Global\\_Risks\\_Report\\_2023.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Global_Risks_Report_2023.pdf).

3. Prioritizing conflict resolution efforts in regions with a history of recurring violence, addressing subnational conflicts by strengthening state capacity in peripheral areas, and implementing localized conflict resolution mechanisms to address specific grievances.
4. Scaling up resources and support for humanitarian aid to address displacement and refugee crises.
5. Providing targeted support to middle-income countries experiencing conflict due to political polarization and resource competition.

To understand how peacemaking efforts can secure negotiated settlements to conflicts and can succeed given the new drivers and dynamics of armed conflict, the second and third papers in this series provide a set of strategies, approaches, and options for policy and practice for multilateral organizations and for the United States.