Simon Maina / AFP / Getty Images. KENYA.

CHAPTER 2

Towards a New Peace in Africa?

Recent news from sub-Saharan Africa has not been good. Since the end of 2007, spiralling intercommunal violence in Kenya has killed more than 1,000 people and displaced well over a quarter of a million. Somalia, still without a functioning government, has become the battleground of a bitter low-level proxy war between Eritrea and Ethiopia. The growing violence in Darfur has spilled over to envelop neighbouring Chad and the Central African Republic, while in southern Sudan, the 2005 peace agreement that stopped a civil war that has cost 2 million lives is in grave risk of breaking down. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), elevated levels of disease and malnutrition caused by almost a decade of political violence have been killing an average 45,000-plus people a month—half of them children—since 2003.[98]

The current horror stories are real enough, but behind the headlines is another very different and far less depressing reality—one that gets little media coverage. Not withstanding the current violence, sub-Saharan Africa is dramatically more secure than it was less than 10 years ago. Twenty-three of the region's states, some half of the total, were embroiled in state-based conflict at sometime during the 1990s—a decade that saw conflicts erupting across the continent at double the rate of the 1980s. However, in the new millennium something remarkable happened.

The Decline in Armed Conflicts

Between 1999 and the end of 2006, the number of state-based armed conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa—those in which a government is one of the warring parties—declined sharply, as Figure 2.1 indicates. In 1999 (and 1991) there were 16 such conflicts in the region, the highest number since 1946; in 2006 there were just seven—a drop of 56 percent. The overwhelming majority of these conflicts were fought within, not between, states—a pattern that has been fairly constant throughout the world for more than 30 years. This has been a *net* decline, of

Figure 2.1 State-Based Armed Conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1946-2006

Data Sources: UCDP/PRIO; UCDP/Human Security Report Project Dataset.[99]

In sub-Saharan Africa conflict numbers plunged in the new millennium.

course. Conflicts have continued to break out since 2000, but at some 60 percent of the rate of the 1990s. And, more importantly, conflicts are now ending at more than twice the rate of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s.

In 2006 the centre of gravity of political violence in sub-Saharan Africa was the arc of instability in northeast and Central Africa with conflicts in Burundi, the Central African Republic, Chad, Somalia, Uganda, and Ethiopia. But while a source of great human suffering, these conflicts are far less deadly than those of the late 1990s. (Although the war in Darfur is directly linked with the conflicts in Chad and the Central African Republic, it is not included in the sub-Saharan Africa conflict totals because Sudan is part of the Middle East and North African region.)

Between 1999 and 2006, most of the major conflicts in West Africa (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire) and Central Africa (notably Angola and the DRC), as well as the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, either came to an end, or the violence sharply de-escalated leading to major reductions in fatality tolls.

Figure 2.2 Reported Battle-Deaths from State-Based Armed Conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1946-2006

Data Sources: Lacina/Gleditsch Dataset; UCDP/Human Security Report Project Dataset.[100]

Just two wars—those in the DRC and between Ethiopia and Eritrea—drove most of the dramatic increase in fatalities from 1997 to 1999.

As Figure 2.2 shows, the battle-death toll from state-based conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa increased more than tenfold between 1961 and 1986—reflecting in part the increase in conflict numbers. It then declined sharply to the mid-1990s, before rising dramatically again from 1997 to

1999. The estimated fatality toll in 1999 was in the vicinity of 99,000, the highest in the region since the end of World War II. Just two wars accounted for more than three-quarters of the battle-deaths that year. An estimated 48,000 people were killed in the DRC and 30,000 in the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The tolls in Angola and Sierra Leone were 10,000 and 7,000, respectively.

> Conflicts have continued to break out since 2000, but at some 60 percent of the rate of the 1990s.

Then things changed. By 2001 the Ethiopia/Eritrea and Sierra Leone conflicts were over. By 2002 the major fighting was over in Angola and the DRC, and the fatality count for the region as a whole had shrunk to less than 5,000. The level of violence continued to drop, and by 2005 the fatality estimate for sub-Saharan Africa was less than 2,000, the lowest in 45 years and less than 2 percent of the 1999 fatality count.

## Non-State Conflicts: A Long-Ignored Category of Political Violence

Most quantitative analyses of Africa's wars focus on state-based conflicts. They do not include non-state conflicts, those that are fought between various armed groups—rebels fighting rebels, warlords fighting warlords, and between different ethnic and religious communities. These conflicts, whose distinguishing feature is that none of the warring parties is a government, are completely ignored by most of the major conflict databases.[101] This is a serious omission since in some years there have been more non-state conflicts being fought around the world than state-based conflicts.

Until recently there was no comprehensive annually updated dataset on non-state conflicts. However, in 2004 the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) created a new dataset for the Human Security Report Project. The trend data on sub-Saharan Africa's non-state conflicts, shown in Figure 2.3, are instructive.

Two things are apparent from Figure 2.3. First, there were two or more times as many of the rarely reported non-state conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa as state-based conflicts in every year save 2006.

Second, the number of both non-state and state-based conflicts declined throughout the period: the former by 54 percent, the latter by 46 percent. The overall decline was

Figure 2.3 State-Based and Non-State Armed Conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa, 2002-2006

Number of Conflicts

45
40
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0

■ State-Based Conflicts
■ Non-State Conflicts

2002   2003   2004   2005   2006

Year
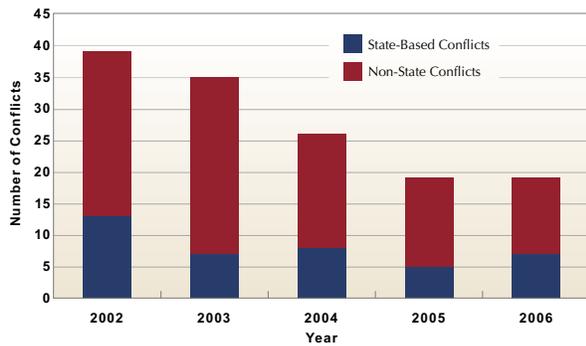
Data Source: UCDP/Human Security Report Project Dataset.

The number of non-state conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa dropped by more than 50 percent between 2002 and 2006.

from 39 conflicts (state-based and non-state) in 2002, to 19 in 2006.

When we look at the non-state conflict battle-death tolls we find a similar pattern of decline. As Figure 2.4 indicates, there were some 4,600 non-state battle-deaths in 2002; in 2006 there were just over 1,300—a decline of some 70 percent. The combined fatality toll from state-based and non-state conflicts dropped by almost two-thirds from 2002 to 2006.

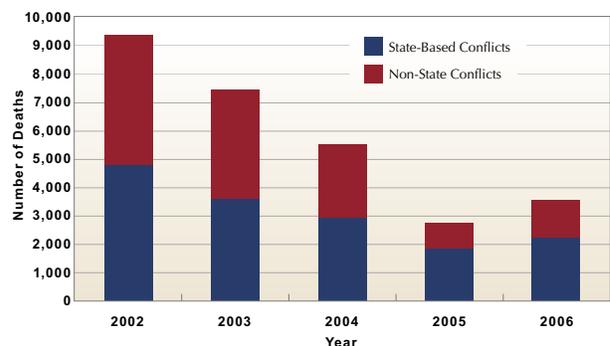## Organized Violence against Civilians

A third category of political violence focuses on deadly assaults on civilians—by both governments and armed non-state actors. UCDP calls this phenomenon "one-sided violence." The rationale for having this separate category is that killing defenseless civilians is fundamentally different from armed conflict and should therefore be treated as such. This is already standard practice with genocides—an extreme form of one-sided violence.[102] For a campaign of one-sided violence to be recorded, 25 or more civilians must be killed by a government or organized non-state group within a calendar year.

Most, but not all, campaigns of violence against civilians take place in the context of civil wars. This was certainly the case with the world's worst single case of one-sided violence since World War II—the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, when an estimated 500,000 to 800,000 civilians—Tutsis and moderate Hutus—were slaughtered in the space of little more than three months.[103] If the higher estimate in Rwanda is correct, then the death toll is greater than the total number

of people killed in *all* the wars being waged around the world in 1950—the deadliest year for battle-deaths since the end of World War II.

Since 1994 there has been nothing remotely as horrific as the Rwandan genocide in sub-Saharan Africa—or indeed anywhere else in the world. The recent violence in Kenya, while garnering a huge amount of media attention, has accounted for little more than a tiny fraction of the Rwandan death toll. However, campaigns of one-sided violence, by governments as well as rebels, continue to kill the innocent across sub-Saharan Africa. After fluctuating in the 1990s, the number of campaigns of one-sided violence peaked in 2002. But as Figure 2.5 reveals, this was followed by a sharp though uneven decline: between 2002 and 2006 the number of campaigns of one-sided violence dropped by 67 percent. The steep decrease in organized violence against civilians in sub-Saharan Africa between 2002 and 2006 parallels similar declines in both state-based and non-state conflicts over the same period.

Figure 2.4 Reported Battle-Deaths from State-Based and Non-State Armed Conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa, 2002-2006

Number of Deaths

10,000
9,000
8,000
7,000
6,000
5,000
4,000
3,000
2,000
1,000
0

■ State-Based Conflicts
■ Non-State Conflicts

2002   2003   2004   2005   2006

Year

Data Source: UCDP/Human Security Report Project Dataset.

Battle-deaths from non-state conflicts declined by 70 percent between 2002 and 2006.

Like the fatality count from state-based and non-state conflicts, the death toll from organized violence against civilians also declined sharply from 2002 to 2006. Given the big decline in the number of campaigns of one-sided violence in this period this is not surprising. Figure 2.6 shows the extent of the decline in fatalities from one-sided violence: The death toll in 2006 was just over one-sixth of that in 2002. As noted in Chapter 4, the one-sided violence fatality statistics are the most prone to error. While we are confident that

Figure 2.5 Campaigns of One-Sided Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa, 2002-2006

Number of Campaigns (y-axis); Year (x-axis)
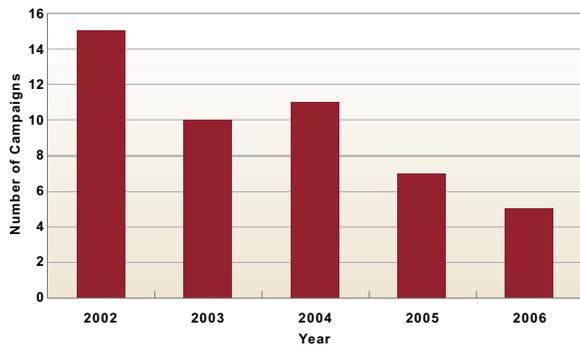
Data Source: UCDP/Human Security Report Project Dataset.

Between 2002 and 2006 the number of campaigns of organized violence against civilians fell by two-thirds.

the downward trend from 2002 to 2006 is correct, the absolute numbers for any particular year may be subject to quite a wide margin of error.

What about Indirect Deaths?

Battle-deaths and deaths from one-sided violence are only a relatively small part of the human cost of Africa's wars. The number of "indirect deaths"—fatalities caused by war-exacerbated disease and malnutrition—is many times greater than the number of deaths that occur as a direct consequence of violence in most poor-country wars.

There is very little in the way of reliable statistics on indirect deaths for sub-Saharan Africa—or anywhere else in the world for that matter. Indeed, there is only one country, the DRC, for which there are nationwide estimates of indirect deaths over time. These estimates derive from a series of mortality surveys undertaken by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) since 1999.

The most recent IRC survey, released in January 2008, estimates that there have been some 5.4 *million* "excess" or indirect deaths in the DRC since 1998.[104] The overwhelming majority of these deaths were from war-exacerbated disease and malnutrition. This extraordinary figure raises an obvious question. Since we do not have comparable data for any other sub-Saharan African country, how do we know that indirect deaths have not been rising in the region while violent deaths have been declining?

The short answer is that we cannot be absolutely sure, but that it is unlikely for a number of reasons.[105] The key

drivers of indirect deaths are the intensity and scope of the violence, the number of displaced people, the state of local health services before and after the conflict, and access to humanitarian assistance. We know that since 1999:

- There has been a major decline in the scope and intensity of conflicts.
- Refugee numbers have shrunk substantially.
- The share of global humanitarian assistance going to Africa doubled between 1999 and 2006—from 23 percent to 46 percent.[106]

The combined effect of these factors suggests that indirect deaths in the region have very likely declined, along with conflict and fatality numbers, and numbers of campaigns of one-sided violence and their resulting fatality tolls since 1999.

The next *Human Security Report* will examine the "hidden costs of war," focusing in particular on the factors that drive indirect deaths.

Figure 2.6 Reported Deaths from One-Sided Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa, 2002-2006

Number of Deaths (y-axis); Year (x-axis)
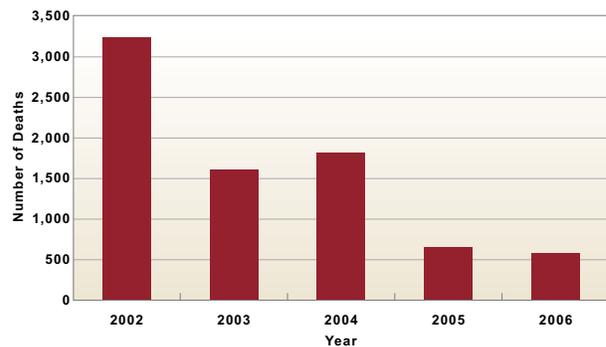
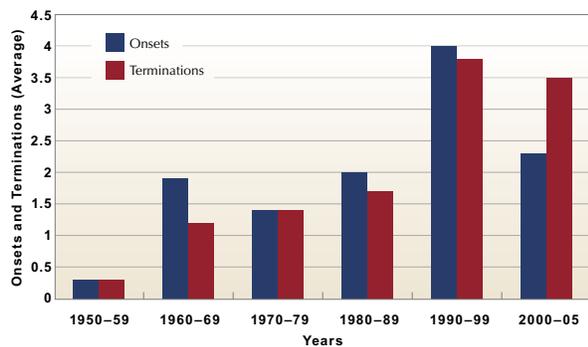Data Source: UCDP/Human Security Report Project Dataset.

Fatalities from one-sided violence declined by more than 80 percent from 2002 to 2006.

Stops and Starts: Explaining Sub-Saharan Africa's Conflict Trends

The security situation in sub-Saharan Africa in the 1990s was extraordinarily volatile. During this decade there were twice as many state-based conflict onsets—including old conflicts that had restarted—as in the 1980s, but there was also an even larger increase in the number of conflicts that ended.[107]

Understanding trends in onsets and terminations is important for policy-makers. A net increase in conflict numbers, for example, could be due to more onsets or to fewer terminations. The first would suggest that conflict

Figure 2.7 State-Based Conflict Onsets and Terminations per Year in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1950-2005

Data Source: UCDP/Human Security Report Project Dataset.

The rate at which conflicts were starting and ending in the 1990s was twice that of previous decades.

prevention policies were having little effect; the second that efforts directed at stopping conflicts—"peacemaking" in UN-speak—were ineffective.

As Figure 2.7 shows, in the 1990s the average number of conflicts starting each year was twice that of the previous decade. This unprecedented increase suggests that any conflict prevention efforts that were being tried in this period were having a negligible impact. However, the average number of terminations per year was more than twice that of the 1980s, *and* a growing percentage of these terminations were negotiated settlements, which suggests that peacemaking efforts were meeting with increasing success.

While this latter development is encouraging, the fact that in the new millennium the average number of conflict onsets per year remains higher than in every decade since World War II, save the 1990s, is a source of continuing concern. It reflects the ongoing political instability in the region and the continuing failure of conflict prevention policies to have much impact.

Why the Sharp Increase in State-Based Conflict Numbers in the 1990s?

The increase in new state-based conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa in the 1990s was not unique to the region and was clearly related to the end of the Cold War. Regimes and rebel groups that had long been propped up by the assistance given by one or the other of the two superpowers suddenly found that this support—political as well as economic—had disappeared. The result in many cases, not

just in sub-Saharan Africa, was regime change and ongoing political instability.

However, in sub-Saharan Africa something else was happening: The countries of the region, to a greater degree than in other parts of the world, were undergoing profound and wrenching political change. In 1988 nearly 90 percent of sub-Saharan African states had autocratic governments. By 2006 there were just two autocracies in the region, while the number of democracies had increased sixfold, from three to 18.

Had the only change been a decrease in autocracies and an increase in democracies, it would likely have enhanced regional security since democracies tend to experience fewer armed conflicts than do autocracies. But these were not the only changes.

Figure 2.8 uses data from the Polity IV Project at the Center for Systemic Peace in Virginia. This dataset tracks not only trends in the number of autocracies and democracies but also trends in "anocracies"—a third regime type, one that is neither fully democratic nor fully autocratic, but a mix of both systems.

Figure 2.8 Regime Type in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1946-2006
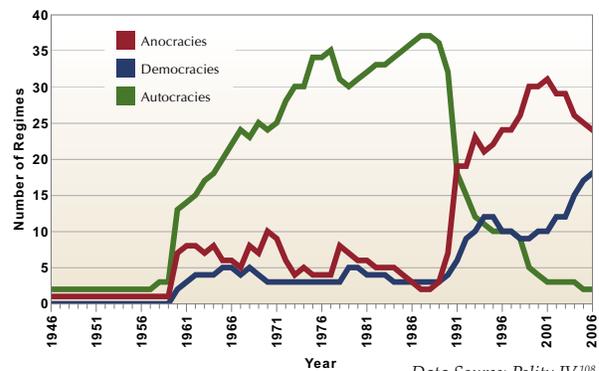
Data Source: Polity IV.[108]

The number of autocracies declined dramatically following the end of the Cold War.

The increase in the number of anocracies in sub-Saharan Africa between 1988 and 2000 is startling—far greater than in any other region of the world. In 1988 there were two anocracies and 37 autocracies in sub-Saharan Africa. By 2000 there were just four autocracies, but 30 anocracies. This change is an important part of the explanation for the sharp increase in conflict numbers in the 1990s. As Monty Marshall and Benjamin Cole point out in their "Global Report on Conflict, Governance and State Fragility, 2008":

Figure 2.9 State-Based Armed Conflict Terminations in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1950-2005

Years	VICTORIES			NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENTS			OTHER			TOTAL TERMINATIONS		
	Total No.	No. Restarted in under 5 Years	% Restarted in under 5 Years	Total No.	No. Restarted in under 5 Years	% Restarted in under 5 years	Total No.	No. Restarted in under 5 Years	% Restarted in under 5 Years	Total No.	No. Restarted in under 5 Years	% Restarted in under 5 Years
1950-59	1	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	2	0	0.0	3	0	0.0
1960-69	9	0	0.0	1	0	0.0	2	2	100.0	12	2	16.7
1970-79	9	4	44.4	1	0	0.0	4	0	0.0	14	4	28.6
1980-89	9	1	11.1	4	0	0.0	4	1	25.0	17	2	11.8
1990-99	6	1	16.7	12	8	66.7	20	14	70.0	38	23	60.5
Total 1950-99	34	6	17.6	18	8	44.4	32	17	53.1	84	31	36.9
2000-05	1*	0	0.0	10*	0	0.0	10*	6	60.0	21*	6	28.6
Total 1950-05	35	6	17.1	28	8	28.6	42	23	54.8	105	37	35.2

Data Source: UCDP/Human Security Report Project Dataset.

Since the end of the Cold War, the number of conflicts ending in negotiated settlements has increased; the number ending in victories has decreased.

*Includes terminations for which it is too early to determine a failure rate over the five-year period.

Anocracies have been much more vulnerable to new outbreaks of armed societal conflict; they have been about six times more likely than democracies and two and one-half times as likely as autocracies to experience new outbreaks of societal wars.[109]

Given this, and given that the number of anocracies in sub-Saharan Africa increased fifteenfold between 1988 and 2000, it is not surprising that there were twice as many new state-based armed conflicts in the 1990s as in the 1980s.

Other explanations for the sharp increase in war onsets in the 1990s are much less compelling. The quantitative literature on the causes of armed conflict stresses "structural" variables like income per capita, demographic factors such as disproportionate numbers of young unemployed males, or dependence on primary commodities. What all these factors have in common is that, unlike political regimes, they change very slowly.

The association between income per capita and conflict is the most robust finding in the quantitative literature. Yet, average incomes have to change a great deal to bring about a significant change in the risk of new conflict onsets. The changes in average per capita incomes in sub-Saharan African countries in the early 1990s were not nearly sufficient to explain the doubling of conflict onsets in that decade.

How Conflicts End

Understanding why more conflicts have been ending—and not restarting—since the end of the Cold War requires a more detailed examination of the different ways in which conflicts were coming to an end in this period.

The pattern of war terminations in sub-Saharan Africa has changed substantially over the past two decades—as it has in the rest of the world. The number of state-based conflicts that terminate in victories has decreased sharply, while the number ending in negotiated settlements has risen.

These changes, as Figure 2.9 indicates, are striking. From 1950 to 1989, 28 state-based conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa ended in victories, six in negotiated settlements. Then from 1990 to 1999, there were six victories and 12 negotiated settlements. The third type of termination recorded in Figure 2.9 is labelled "Other." This is the category that includes conflicts that peter out without either a victory or a peace agreement—or where the death toll falls below the threshold of 25 for a full calendar year. As was the case with negotiated settlements, there was an explosion of "Other" terminations in the 1990s.

As Figure 2.9 reveals, in the new millennium, the number of conflicts ending in victories continued to shrink while the number ending in negotiated settlements continued to grow. Between 2000 and 2005 just one state-based conflict

THE RISE AND DECLINE OF COUPS D'ÉTAT IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

In sub-Saharan Africa, the most coup-prone region in the world, the number of coups d'état peaked in the 1980s. The cause of the subsequent decline remains a matter of dispute.

Sub-Saharan Africa has the dubious distinction of being the most coup-prone region in the world. Over the six decades from 1946 to 2006 it has suffered no less than 44 percent of the world's coups and attempted coups.[110]

There were no African coups in the colonial era. But as the colonial powers withdrew from the continent in the 1960s and 1970s, struggles over who would control the post-colonial states intensified and the number of coups in the region began to rise.

The peak decade, as Figure 2.10 illustrates, was the 1980s, when the region endured an average of 6.4 coups a year. But since then, coups have become far less common. In the period 2000 to 2006, there were an average of four coups per year—a decline of some 39 percent.

In 2005 Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler published a quantitative study that posed a critically important question: "Why does Africa have so many coups d'état?" Drawing on a dataset created by Arizona State University's Patrick McGowan, they used a number of statistical significance tests to determine the major risk factors for coups and attempted coups in Africa between 1960 and 2001.

The authors found that although coups were far more prevalent than armed conflicts, the risk factors for both were remarkably similar. The lower a country's income per capita and the lower its growth rate, the greater the risk of a coup. Sub-Saharan Africa's low growth rates (at least until the mid-1990s) and extreme poverty made it particularly coup-prone. They also found that a history of past coups increases the risk of future coups—just as a past history of armed conflict increases the risk of future conflicts.

Perhaps surprisingly, Collier and Hoeffler found that other factors—notably the degree to which governments were democratic, autocratic, or a mix of the two—were not significantly associated with the risk of experiencing a coup. The authors' key finding—that income and growth levels are critical determinants of coup risk—led them to argue that "Africa looks more likely to be saved from the menace of coups if it could achieve economic growth than by further political reform."[111]

In the long term, the statistical evidence certainly supports the claim that increasing economic growth will reduce the risk of coups. But this path to risk reduction is painfully slow and there is no way it can explain the sharp decline in the number of coups per year in sub-Saharan Africa since the 1980s.

African economies stagnated in the 1980s and early 1990s. Only since the mid-1990s has the region managed an average rate of growth of around 4 percent. At that rate it would take more than 17 years for a country to double its income, but this would reduce the risk of experiencing a coup by only 14.3 percent.[112]

There have to be other explanations for the decline in the number of coups. Writing a decade ago, Morton Halperin and Kristen Lomasney suggested that the answer may lie in a shift in global norms and practices:

In recent years, the international community has decisively intervened on a number of occasions, through sanctions and other means, to restore to power democratically elected officials who
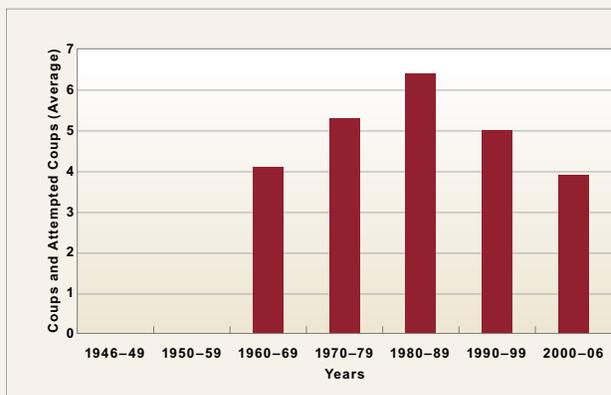

Figure 2.10 Coups d'État and Attempted Coups d'État per Year in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1946-2006

There were no coups in sub-Saharan Africa during the colonial era but by the 1980s, the region was averaging 6.4 coups per year. Coups have since become much less common.

Data Source: HIIK.[113]

have been either prevented from taking office or removed from office by force.[114]

During the Cold War years, military coups tended to be treated by the international community, including regional institutions like the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), as issues that lay within the domestic jurisdiction of member states. The principle of noninterference in the internal affairs of member states was rarely challenged.

In sub-Saharan Africa, the African Union (AU), which was created in 2002 as the OAU's successor organization, has taken a very different stance. Article 30 of the AU's Constitutive Act of the Union stipulates that, "Governments which shall come to power through unconstitutional means shall not be allowed to participate in the activities of the Union."[115] Since 2002 the AU has intervened on several occasions in an effort to reverse coups and restore democratically elected governments.[116]

Major donor states have also taken a strong—though not always consistent—line against coups. And they often have considerable leverage. Given that a major incentive for staging a coup is to gain control over the "rents" that development assistance provides, any perception that donors

will deny victorious coup leaders this prize should serve as a deterrent to future military adventurism.

The US, which is the world's largest single aid donor, is a major player here. Section 508 of the Foreign Assistance Act prohibits most forms of US economic and military assistance to countries whose elected head of state is deposed by a military coup. Since the end of the Cold War, the US has invoked section 508 against the Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, and Niger.[117]

The policy prescriptions advocated by Halperin and Lomasney confront would-be coup leaders with *external* disincentives to overthrow elected governments—namely the threat to impose political and economic sanctions in response to coups.

Collier and Hoeffler, on the other hand, prescribe *internal* change—the pursuit of higher incomes via economic growth—as a means of reducing the risk of coups.

The two approaches are very different. One is internally focused and advocates long-term economic development; the other prescribes international action and has a more immediate impact. But the two approaches are in no sense contradictory and over time there is good reason to believe that they would be mutually reinforcing.

ended in victory, 10 ended in negotiated settlements, while the remaining 10 were characterized as "Other." The fact that negotiated settlements constituted almost 50 percent of all state-based conflict terminations between 2000 and 2005, while victories accounted for just 5 percent, represents a major change from the past. From 1950 to 1999 negotiated settlements made up 21 percent of state-based conflict terminations in sub-Saharan Africa, while victories accounted for 40 percent.

The increased number of conflicts ending in negotiated settlements is a source of potential concern since historically these have been more prone to restart than those that end in victories. From 1950 to 1999, just 18 percent of state-based conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa that ended in victories restarted within five years, compared with 44 percent of conflicts that ended in negotiated settlements.

In the new millennium, however, things look quite different. Negotiated settlements now appear to be far more stable—probably because they are much more likely to be supported by the international community than was the case previously. Thus far, none of the 10 settlements negotiated

between 2000 and 2005 in sub-Saharan Africa have broken down. By contrast, 60 percent of the 10 conflicts that came to an end as a result of an "Other" termination during this period have already restarted.

The fact that "Other" terminations have been so consistently unstable suggests that leaving wars to "burn themselves out," a policy prescription advocated by some analysts, is an approach fraught with uncertainty and risk, and that seeking negotiated settlements is far more likely to enhance security in the long term.

The period from 2000 to 2005 is too short, and the number of conflicts too few, for us to be confident that these positive trends will be sustained in the long term. They are encouraging nonetheless.

What Causes Conflicts to End?

Changes in structural factors do not constitute a compelling explanation for the recent increase in the number of war terminations any more than they can explain the increase in conflict onsets. The fact that sub-Saharan Africa's economies have been growing at an average rate of some 4 percent since the

mid-1990s, that inflation is down, and that foreign investment is up is good news for Africa's security in the long term, but it cannot explain the significant changes that have taken place in the short term.[118]

So what then does explain the sharp increase in the number of conflicts that have been brought to an end since the early 1990s? A major part of the answer lies with the extraordinary upsurge in international activism in the region directed towards stopping ongoing wars and seeking to prevent them from starting again.

From the early 1990s, the international community—including the African Union (AU)—was bringing real pressure to bear on warring parties to negotiate an end to hostilities rather than to fight on to the bitter end. The big increase in negotiated settlements during this period suggests that this strategy has been effective.

> Conflict prevention, it seems, is more talked about than practised.

Postconflict peacebuilding missions also expanded rapidly and have played a positive role in helping prevent negotiated peace settlements from breaking down. From 1950 to 1999 there were just 18 negotiated settlements—and nearly half broke down within five years. From 2000 to 2005 there were 10 such settlements—thus far not one has broken down. Postconflict peacebuilding's critical security role lies in helping to make negotiated settlements more stable.

Every indicator of international activism shows a remarkable increase. For example, a 2007 study of deployments of Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSGs), by Friedrich Schiller University's Manuel Fröhlich, revealed that the number of SRSGs in sub-Saharan Africa increased from one in 1990, to 16 in 2006.[119] Since these individuals play a central role in both peacemaking and postconflict peacebuilding, their presence is a good proxy measure for the UN's overall efforts to enhance security in a region.

The UN's major contribution to sub-Saharan African Security is, of course, peacekeeping, which is an essential component of most peacebuilding missions. There are 65,000 peacekeepers currently stationed in sub-Saharan Africa—some three-quarters of the UN's global deployment.[120]

It is not only international organizations like the UN, regional organizations like the AU, and the myriad nongovernmental organizations that are involved in peacemaking and peacebuilding. A recent study by Teresa Whitfield of the New York-based Social Science Research Council traces the evolution of a relatively new security phenomenon—ad hoc groups of states that work together, usually in cooperation with the UN, to help stop wars and prevent them from starting again.[121] Sometimes called "Friends of the Secretary-General" or "Contact Groups," these "coalitions for change" have provided diplomatic, political, and economic assistance to warring parties seeking to end wars, and to governments in countries emerging from war and embarking on the long and difficult process of postconflict peacebuilding.

In 1989 there were just two Friends groups, but by 2006 there were 18. Of these, 13 groups were focused on assisting with postconflict peacebuilding, while five were involved in peacemaking. None were engaged in preventive diplomacy, which is also the case with the work of most of the SRSGs. Conflict prevention, in other words, appears to be more talked about than practised.

Measured in terms of the effectiveness of individual initiatives, this upsurge of activism in sub-Saharan Africa does not have a particularly impressive track record. Critics correctly note of the UN's operations, for example, that the major powers have sometimes been obstructive and often disengaged, mission planning has been ad hoc, mandates inappropriate, and resources inadequate.

However, what the critics fail to note is that the *net* effect of this activism has clearly been positive, despite the failures. A large number of policy initiatives, even if only modestly successful, will have a far greater overall impact than a *very* small number. And in the Cold War years the numbers were very small. In sub-Saharan Africa during the Cold War there was little or no interest in peacemaking or postconflict peacebuilding. The major powers were less intent on stopping wars through negotiated settlements than ensuring that their "proxies" won.

Conclusion

Notwithstanding the recent increases in political violence in the north and east of the region, the changes in sub-Saharan Africa's security environment since 1999 have, on balance, been highly positive. The number of armed conflicts and campaigns of one-sided violence are sharply down and fatality tolls have declined even more steeply. Other security indicators are also positive. Refugee numbers have declined by over 60 percent since 1994 and, as we show in Chapter 4, there has been a modest decline in human rights violations in the region since 1999.

For policy-makers, the fact that more wars are ending in negotiated settlements should be welcome news. It suggests that peacemaking initiatives have become both more common and more successful. And—although it is much too early to make any definitive judgments—it appears that negotiated settlements have become more stable in the new millennium. This suggests that postconflict peacebuilding policies are also making an important difference.

None of these developments is grounds for complacency—the violence in Somalia and elsewhere and the huge ongoing toll from indirect deaths in the DRC—and likely other postconflict countries—point to the gravity of the problems that this region continues to confront. Moreover, the structural risk factors that helped make sub-Saharan Africa the world's most violent and war-prone region in the 1990s remain largely unchanged. But despite the current challenges and past mistakes, the evidence presented here clearly indicates that the international community, working with regional organizations and national governments, can make a major contribution to human security in Africa.