

# Africa: Conflict

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## About conflict in Africa

### Key facts

- 16 countries were involved in internal or border conflicts in Africa in 1999<sup>1</sup>.
- It is estimated that 8.5m people have died as a direct result of conflict since 1947, the vast majority being civilians. At its peak in the early 1990s, conflict forced 23 million people to flee their homes (one in 33 of all Africans)<sup>2</sup>.
- Conflict in Africa costs an estimated \$18 billion per year<sup>3</sup>. One study estimated that on average each £1 spent on conflict prevention generates over £4 in savings to the international community<sup>4</sup>.
- The primary underlying causes of conflict in Africa are weak states and poor governance; control over, or access to, natural resources and a vulnerability to economic and natural shocks fuelled by an abundance of cheap weapons and unemployment.

### Progress made

- There has been a 50% reduction in the number of violent conflicts in Africa between 1999 and 2004.
- Democracy is taking hold – the number of autocratic regimes fell from a peak of 36 in 1989 to only 3 in 2004.
- A stronger and more influential African Union is responding earlier to political challenges, such as attempted coups, or disputed elections, before violent conflict occurs.

## Working to prevent and address conflict and instability in Africa

The level and intensity of conflict in Africa is currently easing, after a peak in the 1990's. However significant challenges still remain. Some of the world's worst conflicts persist in areas such as Darfur and Somalia. Other countries eg. the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone and southern Sudan, where DFID have significant programmes are only just emerging from protracted civil war. Research shows that on average 40% of violent conflicts restart within 10 years.

DFID works to prevent and address conflict and instability in Africa through focusing on development programmes that build security; manage public finances and give citizens the ability to hold their own governments to account. With our partners in the Foreign Office and Ministry of Defence, we are working at the African Union and the United Nations to improve their capacity to identify potential problems early and to respond more effectively, through strengthened mediation or military capabilities.

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<sup>1</sup> Human Security Brief, 2006, Human Security Project, University of British Columbia

<sup>2</sup> DFID: Reducing conflict in Africa, progress and challenges, ACPP performance report 2001 - 2005 (2006)

<sup>3</sup> Oxfam: Africa's missing billions (2007)

<sup>4</sup> Chalmers, M. (March 2004), *Spending to Save? An Analysis of the Cost Effectiveness of Conflict Prevention versus Intervention after the Onset of Violent Conflict*, Centre for International Cooperation and Security, Department for Peace Studies, University of Bradford

## Pan African and regional action to prevent conflict in Africa

The joint DFID, FCO and MOD Africa Conflict Prevention Programme (ACPP) was established in April 2001 to improve the UK Government's contribution to conflict prevention and peacebuilding in Africa by joining-up the UK's development diplomacy and defence efforts. Since 2001, the ACPP has spent between £50m and £60m per annum in Africa, primarily to build the capacity of the African Union and regional organisations in conflict prevention and management and to support initiatives in Africa for improving security sector reform, governance and demilitarisation.

### ACPP achievements

The ACPP works with partner Governments, the African Union, the World Bank, UN, non governmental organisations (NGOs) and the private sector. Highlights of ACPP achievements from 2006/7 include:

- Training some 11,000 African peacekeepers since 2004/05;
- Supporting democratic power transitions and reducing electoral violence in West Africa, particularly in Sierra Leone;
- Supporting the International Mine Action Training Centre in Kenya to train military and civilian personnel from around Africa in mine and ordnance disposal;
- Playing a pivotal role in supporting the African Union's African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), particularly the regional Standby Brigades and the Panel of the Wise;
- Underpinning peace processes in Northern Uganda, Sudan and the Great Lakes region, by facilitating negotiations, mediators and analysis;
- Developing a programme to tackle HIV/AIDS in the South African Department of Defence and the South African National Defence Force;
- Making an increasing contribution to pre-emptive conflict prevention efforts in Somalia, Uganda and Kenya through civil society groups
- Contributing to international understanding of key conflict themes with a major review of Security and Justice Sector Reform in Africa and further work on Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration.

### Recent Country examples

Kenya: the ACPP responded quickly to the request of Kofi Annan to establish an office in Nairobi in support of his mediation efforts following the post election violence.

DRC : Improving security sector governance has been a vital priority, which has been hampered by political challenges. One innovative area of support has been to provide via the UN, accommodation for three army brigades to reduce the burden that they would otherwise place on local populations.

Liberia: Rapid ACPP support for the retrenchment of almost 2,200 Liberian police officers helped support the Liberian Government to unblock the stalled police reform programme.

Somalia: ACPP support to conflict resolution and mediation work done by Interpeace, an international NGO, helped prevent violence spreading from South and Central Somalia into more stable areas such as Somaliland.

For more information about DFID's work on conflict prevention please visit [www.dfid.gov.uk](http://www.dfid.gov.uk)

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