

# CRS Report for Congress

## Armed Conflicts in the World Since the End of the Cold War (1989 - Present)

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# Armed Conflicts in the World Since the End of the Cold War (1989 - Present)

## **Summary**

This report contains a compiled list of wars and armed conflicts in the world – both civil and inter-state – that began after 1989 or were in progress at that date. Because of definitional problems related to classifying wars, this information should be used with some caution. This report includes lists arranged both chronologically and alphabetically.

# Armed Conflict in the World Since the End of the Cold War

(1989 - Present)

## Summary

The report contains a compiled list of wars and armed conflicts in the world from 1989 to the present. The data is presented in a table format, with columns for the year, the type of conflict, the location, and the number of deaths. The data shows a significant increase in the number of armed conflicts since the end of the Cold War, with a peak in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The report also includes a discussion of the causes of armed conflict and the impact of international law.

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This report has been prepared in consultation with Richard F. Grimmett, Specialist in National Defense, Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division.

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# Armed Conflicts in the World Since the End of the Cold War (1989 - Present)

## Background

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 was the most dramatic signal that the Cold War between the world's two superpowers was coming to an end. During the Cold War, most wars were considered an extension of the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. However, the end of the Cold War did not bring the end of armed conflict. Despite the termination of the Cold War, nations continue to fight wars, both internally and with their neighbors. The following tables are a listing, compiled from several sources (see attached source list), of post-1989 civil and inter-state wars, including those conflicts that began prior to that date.

Sources differ as to what constitutes a war. For the purposes of this compilation, a civil war is a conflict contained within the borders of one country where national government military forces were actively involved in fighting, the opposing side offered effective resistance, and there were at least 1,000 combatant casualties. An inter-state war is a military conflict between two entities that are commonly recognized as sovereign states where at least 1,000 battle deaths occurred.

Various discrepancies exist among the sources used in this compilation regarding data on casualties, onset and termination dates, and the nature of some conflicts:

- A common definition of war includes conflicts with at least 1,000 casualties. However, reliable casualty figures – especially for smaller conflicts – often do not exist. It is not unusual for different sources to report conflicting casualty figures.
- Fixing dates as to when a war began or ended is also problematic.
  - Flare-ups or resummptions of fighting pose one problem. For example, a renewal of fighting after a break in hostilities is sometimes classified as a continuation of a previous war and at other times as a new war.
  - In some conflicts, the participants disagree about when the conflict is resolved. One may claim victory while the other vows to carry on the struggle.
  - In some cases, delineating between wars where one party is fighting several others is a point of disagreement among sources. Some

sources consider such a case to be multiple wars, but other sources consider it to be one extended war.

- Since most wars include aspects of both civil and interstate conflict, definitional problems also extend to classifying wars as either civil or inter-state. Because of these difficulties, credible sources often differ in what they include in their listings of current wars.

In compiling this list, the authors loosely followed the definition of civil and inter-state wars offered by the University of Michigan's Correlates of War Project. However, when questions arose about a conflict's exact identifying characteristics, the most expansive estimates were used.



## Wars (Chronological)

**Table 1. Civil Wars (1989 to Present)**

Name	Begin	End	Notes
Burma	1950	Ongoing	Burmese (Myanmar) gov. vs. ethnic guerrilla armies, political opposition groups and narcotics dealers.
Basque Separatist Movement	1958	Ongoing	Basque Fatherland and Liberty Group vs. both Spain and France.
India	1967	Ongoing	Various ethnic and separatist conflicts.
Guatemala	1969	1996	Gov. of Guatemala vs. UNRG (coalition of anti-government forces).
Northern Ireland	1969	1999	Political conflict with religious overtones.
Philippines (Moro Rebellion)	1969	Ongoing	Internal ethnic and religious conflict.
Philippines (New People's Army)	1972	1995	Philippines gov. vs. NPA (includes communist, Muslims, and other rebels).
Indonesia	1974	1999	Indonesian gov. vs. East Timor. Ended by international intervention.
Angola	1975	Ongoing	Angola gov. and Namibia (since 1989) vs. UNITA.
Lebanon	1975	1990	Conflict between Muslim and Christian forces.
Afghanistan	1978	Ongoing	Power struggle between religious and secular forces.
Ethiopia - Tigrean War	1978	1991	Ethnic conflict in Ethiopia.
Cambodia (Kampuchea)	1979	1991	Cambodian gov. vs. PDK (Khmer Rouge).
El Salvador	1979	1985	Gov. vs. National Liberation Front.
Mozambique (RENAMO War)	1979	1992	Mozambique gov. vs. opposition party RENAMO.
Senegal (Casamance)	1980s	Ongoing	Civil war vs. southern rebels.
Israel (Lebanon conflict)	1982	2000	Israel and South Lebanese Army vs. Lebanese gov., various Islamic militias and Palestinian guerrillas.
Nicaragua	1982	1998	Sandinistas vs. Contras.
Peru	1982	Ongoing	Peruvian gov. vs. Shining Path guerrillas.
Somalia	1982	Ongoing	Fighting among rival faction leaders for control of the state government.
Sri Lanka (Tamils)	1983	Ongoing	Sri Lanka gov. vs. Tamil Tigers.
Sudan	1983	Ongoing	Sudan gov. vs. National Democratic Alliance.
Colombia	1984	Ongoing	Colombia gov. vs. FARC and ELN.
Turkey (Kurds)	1984	Ongoing	Internal ethnic conflict.
Iraq (Kurds/Shiites)	1985	Ongoing	Internal ethnic conflict.
Indonesia (Aceh)	1986	Ongoing	Internal ethnic conflict.
Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Kharabak)	1988	1994	Fighting over disputed territory (Armenian) with Russian involvement. Has inter-state elements.
Liberia	1989	1997	Rebels vs. rebels vs. Liberian gov.

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Name	Begin	End	Notes
Mali	1989	1994	Internal conflict.
Romania	1989	1989	Violent overthrow of the Communist regime.
Bougainville	1990	1998	Residents of Bougainville vs. Gov. of Papua New Guinea for independence.
Chad	1990	Ongoing	Gov. vs. various rebel groups.
Rwanda	1990	Ongoing	Ethnic conflict between Tutsis and Hutus.
Sierra Leone	1990	Ongoing	Sierra Leone gov. and ECOMOG vs. AFRC and RUF.
Georgia	1991	1991	Struggle for power following collapse of Communist government.
Haiti	1991	1995	Military vs. democratically elected government.
Yugoslavia - Croatia Independence	1991	1995	War securing independence for Croatia from Yugoslavia following Communist collapse.
Algeria	1992	Ongoing	Algerian gov. vs. Islamic rebels.
Egypt	1992	Ongoing	Egyptian gov. vs. Muslim rebels.
Georgia (Abkhazia)	1992	1995	Georgian gov. vs. Abkhazian separatist.
Georgia (Ossetia)	1992	1995	Georgian gov. vs. Ossetian separatists.
Moldova	1992	1992	Ethnic conflict following Communist collapse.
Russia	1992	Ongoing	Russian gov. vs. Chechen rebel separatists.
Tajikistan	1992	1997	Tajikistan gov. vs. Muslim rebels.
Yugoslavia - Bosnia (Serb rebellion)	1992	1995	Fighting for Bosnian independence with international intervention.
Burundi	1993	Ongoing	Burundi gov. vs. CNDD and Palipehutu.
Mexico	1994	Ongoing	Mexico gov. vs. Zapatista rebels.
Uganda	1994	1999	Ugandan gov. vs. LRA and ADF.
Yemen	1994	1994	Gov. vs. secessionists.
Central African Republic	1996	1997	Military coup and civil war.
Cambodia	1997	1998	Internal armed conflict.
Congo (Brazzaville)	1997	Ongoing	Congolese gov. vs. local ethnic militias.
Dem. Rep. of Congo	1998	Ongoing	Formerly Zaire. Gov. of Dem. Rep. of Congo with support from Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Chad vs. RCD and MLC, supported by Rwanda, and Uganda. Also has elements of an inter-state war.
Guinea-Bissau	1998	Ongoing	Gov. of Guinea-Bissau with Senegal and Guinea vs. military faction.
Yugoslavia - Kosovo	1998	1999	Serb-led gov. vs ethnic Albanians with inter-state intervention.
Indonesia (Moluccas/Irian Jaya)	1999	Ongoing	Gov. of Indonesia vs. separatist forces.

**Table 2. Inter-State Wars (1989 to Present)**

Name	Begin	End	Notes
Eritrea	1958	1992	For independence from Ethiopia.
Afghanistan	1979	1989	Soviet invasion.
Israel	1982	2000	Israeli invasion of Lebanon.
Iran-Iraq War	1980	1989	Iraqi invasion of Iran led to protracted conflict.
Gulf War	1990	1991	U.S.-led coalition countering Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.
Kashmir	1991	Ongoing	Indian and Pakistani border dispute.
Azeri-Armenian	1992	1994	An extension of the Nagorno-Kharabakh dispute.
Nigeria	1994	1995	vs. Cameroon; border conflict.
Ethiopia	1995	Ongoing	vs. Sudan; border conflict.
Sudan	1995	Ongoing	vs. Uganda; border conflict.
Ethiopia	1997	Ongoing	vs. Somalia; border conflict.
Dem. Rep. of Congo (Zaire)	1998	Ongoing	Govt. of Dem. Rep. of Congo, Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Chad vs. Congolese Democratic Rally, Congolese Liberation Movement, Rwanda, Uganda. Also has elements of a civil war.
Eritrea	1998	Ongoing	vs. Ethiopia; border conflict.
Kosovo	1998	1999	With NATO intervention vs. Serbia.



## Wars (Alphabetical)

**Table 3. Civil Wars (1989 to Present)**

Name	Begin	End	Notes
Afghanistan	1978	Ongoing	Power struggle between religious and secular forces.
Algeria	1992	Ongoing	Algerian gov. vs. Islamic rebels.
Angola	1975	Ongoing	Angola gov. and Namibia (since 1989) vs. UNITA.
Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Kharabak)	1988	1994	Fighting over disputed territory (Armenian) with Russian involvement. Has inter-state elements.
Basque Separatist Movement	1958	Ongoing	Basque Fatherland and Liberty Group vs. both Spain and France.
Bougainville	1990	1998	Residents of Bougainville vs. Gov. of Papua New Guinea for independence.
Burma	1950	Ongoing	Burmese (Myanmar) gov. vs. ethnic guerrilla armies, political opposition groups and narcotics dealers.
Burundi	1993	Ongoing	Burundi gov. vs. CNDD and Palipehutu.
Cambodia (Kampuchea)	1979	1991	Cambodian gov. vs. PDK (Khmer Rouge).
Cambodia	1997	1998	Internal armed conflict.
Central African Republic	1996	1997	Military coup and civil war.
Chad	1990	Ongoing	Gov. vs. various rebel groups.
Colombia	1984	Ongoing	Colombia gov. vs. FARC and ELN.
Congo (Brazzaville)	1997	Ongoing	Congolese gov. vs. local ethnic militias.
Dem. Rep. of Congo	1998	Ongoing	Formerly Zaire. Gov. of Dem. Rep. of Congo with support from Angola, Namimbia, Zimbabwe and Chad vs. RCD and MLC, supported by Rwanda, and Uganda. Also has elements of an inter-state war.
Egypt	1992	Ongoing	Egyptian gov. vs. Muslim rebels.
El Salvador	1979	1985	Gov. vs. National Liberation Front.
Ethiopia - Tigrean War	1978	1991	Ethnic Conflict in Ethiopia.
Georgia	1991	1991	Struggle for power following collapse of Communist government.
Georgia (Ossetia)	1992	1995	Georgian gov. vs. Ossetian separatists.
Georgia (Abkhazia)	1992	1995	Georgian gov. vs. Abkhazian separatist.
Guatemala	1969	1996	Gov. of Guatemala vs. UNRG (coalition of anti-government forces).
Guinea-Bissau	1998	Ongoing	Gov. of Guinea-Bissau with Senegal and Guinea vs. military faction.
Haiti	1991	1995	Military vs. democratically elected government.
India	1967	Ongoing	Various ethnic and separatist conflicts.
Indonesia (Moluccas/ Irian Jaya)	1999	Ongoing	Gov. of Indonesia vs. separatist forces.
Indonesia (Aceh)	1986	Ongoing	Internal ethnic conflict.

Name	Begin	End	Notes
Indonesia	1974	1999	Indonesian gov. vs. East Timor. Ended by international intervention.
Iraq (Kurds/Shiites)	1985	Ongoing	Internal ethnic conflict.
Israel (Lebanon conflict)	1982	2000	Israel and South Lebanese Army vs. Lebanese gov., various Islamic militias and Palestinian guerrillas.
Lebanon	1975	1990	Conflict between Muslim and Christian forces.
Liberia	1989	1997	Rebels vs. rebels vs. Liberian gov.
Mali	1989	1994	Internal conflict.
Mexico	1994	Ongoing	Mexico gov. vs. Zapatista rebels.
Moldova	1992	1992	Ethnic conflict following Communist collapse.
Mozambique (RENAMO War)	1979	1992	Mozambique gov. vs. opposition party RENAMO.
Nicaragua	1982	1998	Sandinistas vs. Contras.
Northern Ireland	1969	1999	Political conflict with religious overtones.
Peru	1982	Ongoing	Peruvian gov. vs. Shining Path guerillas.
Philippines (New People's Army)	1972	1995	Philippines gov. vs. NPA (includes communist, Muslims, and other rebels).
Philippines (Moro Rebellion)	1969	Ongoing	Internal ethnic and religious conflict.
Romania	1989	1989	Violent overthrow of the Communist regime.
Russia	1992	Ongoing	Russian vs. Chechen rebel separatists.
Rwanda	1990	Ongoing	Ethnic conflict between Tutsis and Hutus.
Senegal (Casamance)	1980s	Ongoing	Civil war vs. southern rebels.
Sierra Leone	1990	Ongoing	Sierra Leone gov. and ECOMOG vs. AFRC and RUF.
Somalia	1982	Ongoing	Fighting among rival faction leaders for control of the state government.
Sri Lanka (Tamils)	1983	Ongoing	Sri Lanka gov. vs. Tamil Tigers.
Sudan	1983	Ongoing	Sudan gov. vs. National Democratic Alliance.
Tajikistan	1992	1997	Tajikistan gov. vs. Muslim rebels.
Turkey (Kurds)	1984	Ongoing	Internal ethnic conflict.
Uganda	1994	1999	Ugandan gov. vs. LRA and ADF.
Yemen	1994	1994	Gov. vs. secessionists.
Yugoslavia - Kosovo	1998	1999	Serb-led gov. vs ethnic Albanians with inter-state intervention.
Yugoslavia - Bosnia (Serb rebellion)	1992	1995	Fighting for Bosnian independence with international intervention.
Yugoslavia - Croatia Independence	1991	1995	War securing independence for Croatia from Yugoslavia following Communist collapse.

**Table 4. Inter-State Wars (1989 to Present)**

Name	Begin	End	Notes
Afghanistan	1979	1989	Soviet invasion.
Azeri-Armenian	1992	1994	An extension of the Nagorno-Kharabakh dispute.
Dem. Rep. of Congo (Zaire)	1998	Ongoing	Govt. of Dem. Rep. of Congo, Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Chad vs. Congolese Democratic Rally, Congolese Liberation Movement, Rwanda, Uganda. Also has elements of a civil war.
Eritrea	1998	Ongoing	vs. Ethiopia; border conflict.
Eritrea	1958	1992	For independence from Ethiopia.
Ethiopia	1997	Ongoing	vs. Somalia; border conflict.
Ethiopia	1995	Ongoing	vs. Sudan; border conflict.
Gulf War	1990	1991	U.S.-led coalition countering Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.
Iran-Iraq War	1980	1989	Iraqi invasion of Iran led to protracted conflict.
Israel	1982	2000	Israeli invasion of Lebanon.
Kashmir	1991	Ongoing	Indian and Pakistani border dispute.
Kosovo	1998	1999	with NATO intervention vs. Serbia.
Nigeria	1994	1995	vs. Cameroon; border conflict.
Sudan	1995	Ongoing	vs. Uganda; border conflict.



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