

2024: The most war-torn year since World War II

International Desk

Over the past year, more than 92 countries around the globe have faced significant cross-border conflicts, an unprecedented number in the past 80 years after World War II, according to a report by a prominent international organization specializing in war and peace studies.

The 2024 report from the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) group shows that this year has witnessed the intensification of conflicts across various parts of the world, alongside the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine and Israel's war in Gaza. The findings of this report show that this year has seen 56 active conflicts globally, an unprecedented number since World War II. Additionally, conflicts or disputes have doubled in the past five years, and one in every eight people has been exposed to conflict. In the list of top disputes for this year, Palestine, Myanmar, Syria, and Mexico lead the way.

Smoke and flames rise during Israeli airstrikes in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip, April 7, 2024.
ASHRAF AMRA/REUTERS
LEO CORREA/AP

Data from the non-profit Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) group shows that conflict-related deaths have risen from around 180,000 in 2023 to 234,000 in 2024, marking a 30% increase. According to the latest Global Peace Index 2024 report, the global situation in terms of peace is not favorable and requires urgent and international solidarity to improve it. Here are the key reasons:

- 1 Currently, 97 countries have seen their peace index deteriorate since 2008, when the index was first established.
- 2 Conflicts in Gaza and Ukraine were the primary drivers of the global peace decline.
- 3 At present, 92 countries are embroiled in major cross-border conflicts.
- 4 The economic impact of violence has surged to \$19.1 trillion, or \$2,380 per person, by the end

- 5 of 2023, which is equivalent to 13.5% of the global GDP.
- 5 The trend of militarization has intensified with 108 countries increasing their armaments.
- 6 Due to violent conflicts, 110 million people worldwide have been displaced or become refugees, and 16 countries now each host at least half a million refugees.
- 7 Nearly 56 countries are currently engaged in active conflicts.

- 8 The expenditure on peacekeeping stands at \$49.6 billion, which is less than 0.6% of total military spending.
- 9 Iceland remains the most peaceful country in the world, a position it has held since 2008, followed by Ireland, Austria, New Zealand, and Singapore. Yemen has replaced Afghanistan as the least peaceful country in the world, with Sudan, South Sudan, Afghanistan, and Ukraine follow-

- 10 ing closely.
- 10 The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region remains the least peaceful in the world. This region is home to four of the ten least peaceful countries globally and the two least peaceful countries, Sudan and Yemen.
- 11 North America has witnessed a significant rise in violent crimes and fear of violence.
- 12 Palestine was the most dangerous and violent place in the world

in 2024. Eighty-one percent of the Palestinian population is exposed to conflict, with 35,000 casualties recorded in the past 12 months. Civilians continue to face daily bombardments and incursions. On average, 52 conflicts occur daily in Palestinian territories. Due to the high level of violence in Palestine, especially in Gaza, and the lack of a cease-fire between the parties, this conflict is likely to persist into 2025.

Potential for domestic disputes to attract external involvement

A key point of concern in this year's conflicts is that inter-

national wars, which remain the predominant form of conflict globally, are increasingly intertwined with the interventions of regional and global powers

pursuing their own strategic interests. According to international institutions, this trend stems from the growing competition among major powers

and the more assertive foreign policies of many emerging powers. While Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022

marked a turning point, the conflict between Israel and Hamas in the Middle East has challenged peace efforts and heightened the threat of vari-

ous inter-state conflicts more than ever before. This is a situation that the world has witnessed in several regions this year.



A view of destroyed buildings is shown following Israeli strikes in the southern Gaza Strip on Sept. 13, 2024.
LEO CORREA/AP

Asia

In Asia, tensions between the United States and China over the Taiwan Strait and between Pakistan and India have been on the rise. International bodies have also highlighted conflicts in Kashmir and Afghanistan as two significant disputes in Asia, both of which have resulted in substantial human casualties.

It is estimated that civilian casualties in Afghanistan from 2009 to 2022 amounted to 111,000 people.

The Americas

Even in the Americas, a region that has not experienced a major interstate conflict since the 1930s, bilateral tensions flared up following the presidential election in Venezuela in December 2023. In Guyana, while the crisis was mediated by international efforts, it raised the risk of the first interstate conflict in the region in nearly a century.

Moreover, armed violence linked to illegal economies in the Americas remains widespread, with homicide rates nearly three times the global average. Organized crime in this region has significantly impacted various criminal activities, including human trafficking, environmental crimes, and the smuggling of synthetic drugs.