

# Conflict Research and Lake Chad Crisis

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## When was the last time you thought about war and violence?

The moment we turn on the news, watch Netflix, play games – we often engage with violent content. But what do we actually know about those things?

This poster shall give a (very) short overview to how we think about these issues. It further will make you familiar with intense „water conflicts“, which are often overlooked in the media.

### Conflict Research – The Heidelberg Approach

The Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIK) is a non-profit-organization based at the Institute of Political Science of the University of Heidelberg, and is devoted to the research, documentation, and evaluation of intra- and inter-state political conflicts. It continually updates and maintains the CONTRA database. The annual publication, the Conflict Barometer, is produced annually and presents research results on all political conflicts occurring throughout the world in one calendar year. Therein we refrain from a deeper analysis but limit ourselves to neutral and verifiable observations. Our basic research therefore serves as starting point for other scientists, studying the dynamics of collective violence.

Do you know where conflicts of high intensity are happening? Can you say which parties are fighting, and about what or why?

A state usually has the monopoly on violence – this means that police and military have the legal authority to force, or even hurt, people to abide by the government's rules. Broadly speaking, if many people inside a country challenge this authority, HIK acknowledges this as a political conflict. The central questions are then, how do we assess conflicts and measure "violence"?

HIK has a unique approach which shall be shortly introduced: A five-level scale shows the intensity of a conflict (see right), two of which are non-violent. It is computed by the aggregated conflict measures of one calendar year. A conflict measure can contain qualitative, as well as quantitative indicators. These are conflict related deaths, personnel, and internally displaced persons or refugees (quantitative indicators), and levels of destruction (of infrastructure, housing, etc.) and weapon usage (qualitative indicators). Can you think of other ways to measure collective violence?

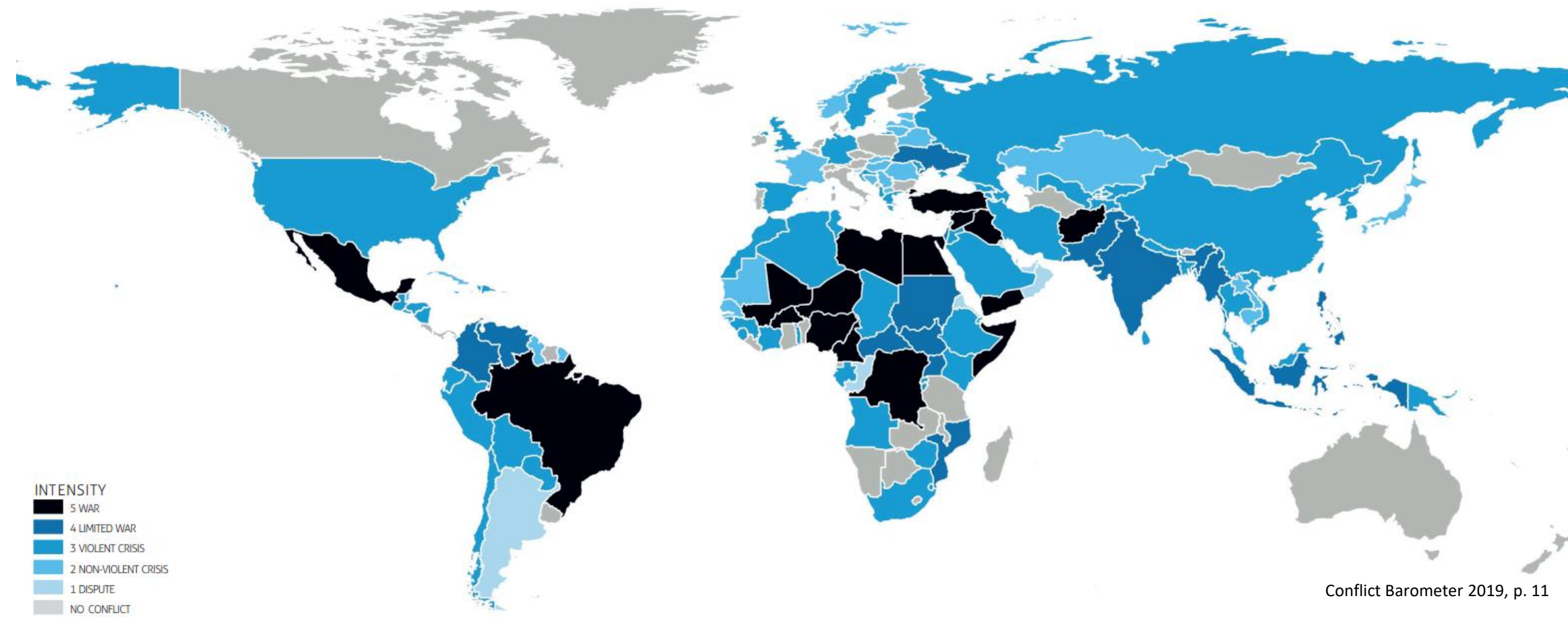
Around 200 conflict observers collect all these information by having a look at open-source material, like newspapers or NGO reports. Naturally, they focus on the reliability of the presented data – because as a famous quote goes "The first casualty of war is truth"(origins disputed).

On the right, below the world map, you can find a graphical representation of the findings of 2019. The "conflict type" denotes the structure of a conflict: Are only non-state actors fighting inside the same state (Substate), a state vs. a group inside its territory (Intrastate), or one (or several) non-state actor vs. several states (Transstate)? This is an important distinction because the conflict dynamics differ substantially between these types. The findings show a high number of conflicts by conflict type. This corresponds with the conflict items – the most and fiercest of the fighting was about the distribution of power (inside) a state.

For the specific conflict descriptions or a deeper explanation of HIK's methodology, visit our website (hiik.de) or take a look at the Conflict Barometer 2019, which can be downloaded for free.

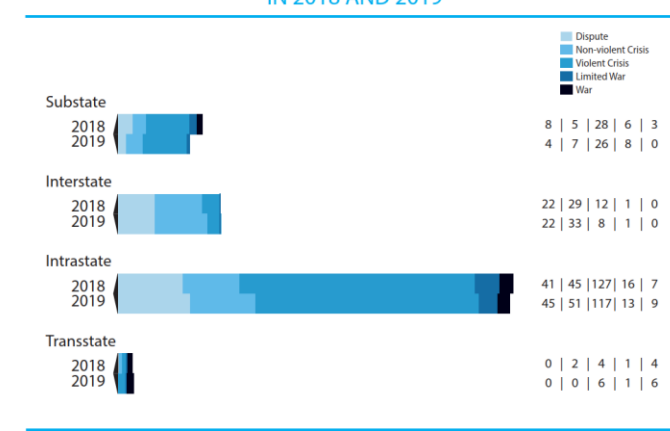
Did you become interested in conflict research? We are currently looking for applicants. How? Simply send us a mail to info@hiik.de or talk to the speakers.

CONFLICTS IN 2019 (NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL)

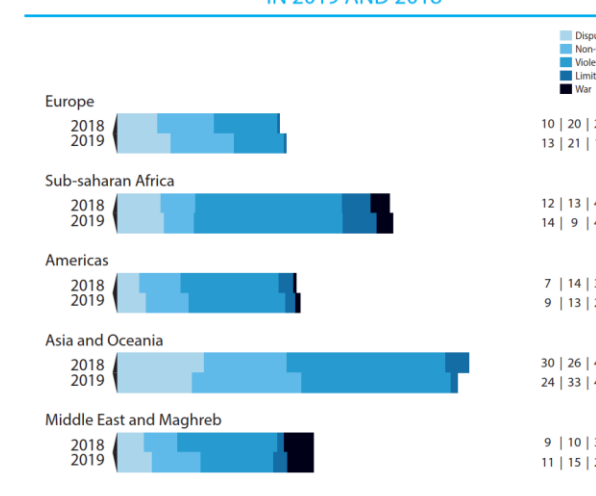


Conflict Barometer 2019, p. 11

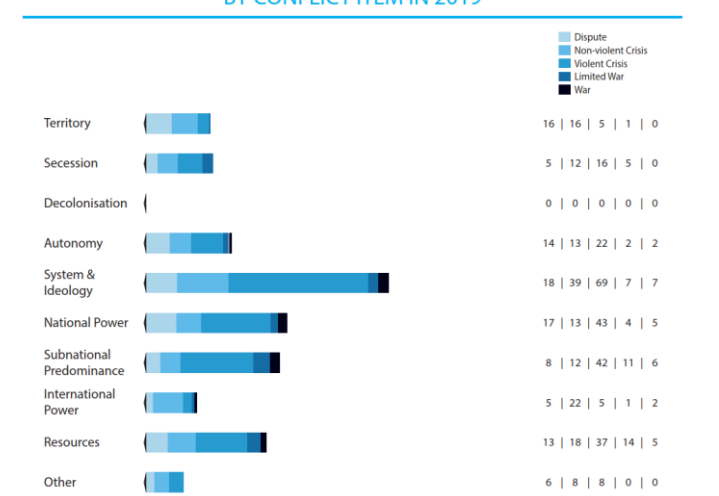
FREQUENCY OF CONFLICT INTENSITIES BY CONFLICT TYPE IN 2018 AND 2019



FREQUENCY OF REGIONAL CONFLICT INTENSITIES IN 2019 AND 2018



FREQUENCY OF CONFLICT INTENSITIES BY CONFLICT ITEM IN 2019



Conflict Barometer 2019, p. 16

## The Lake Chad Water Crisis

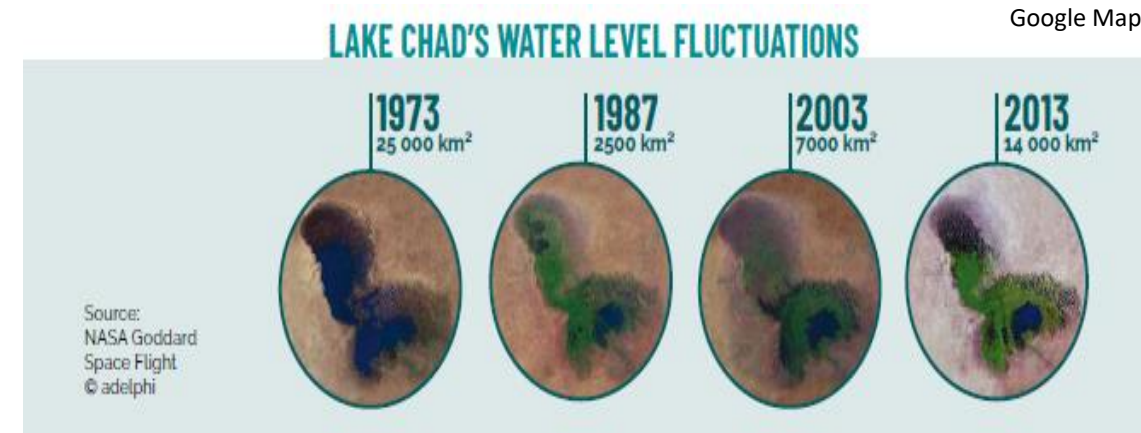
### VIOLENT INTRASTATE CONFLICT IN THE LAKE CHAD BASIN

#### Boko Haram/Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP):

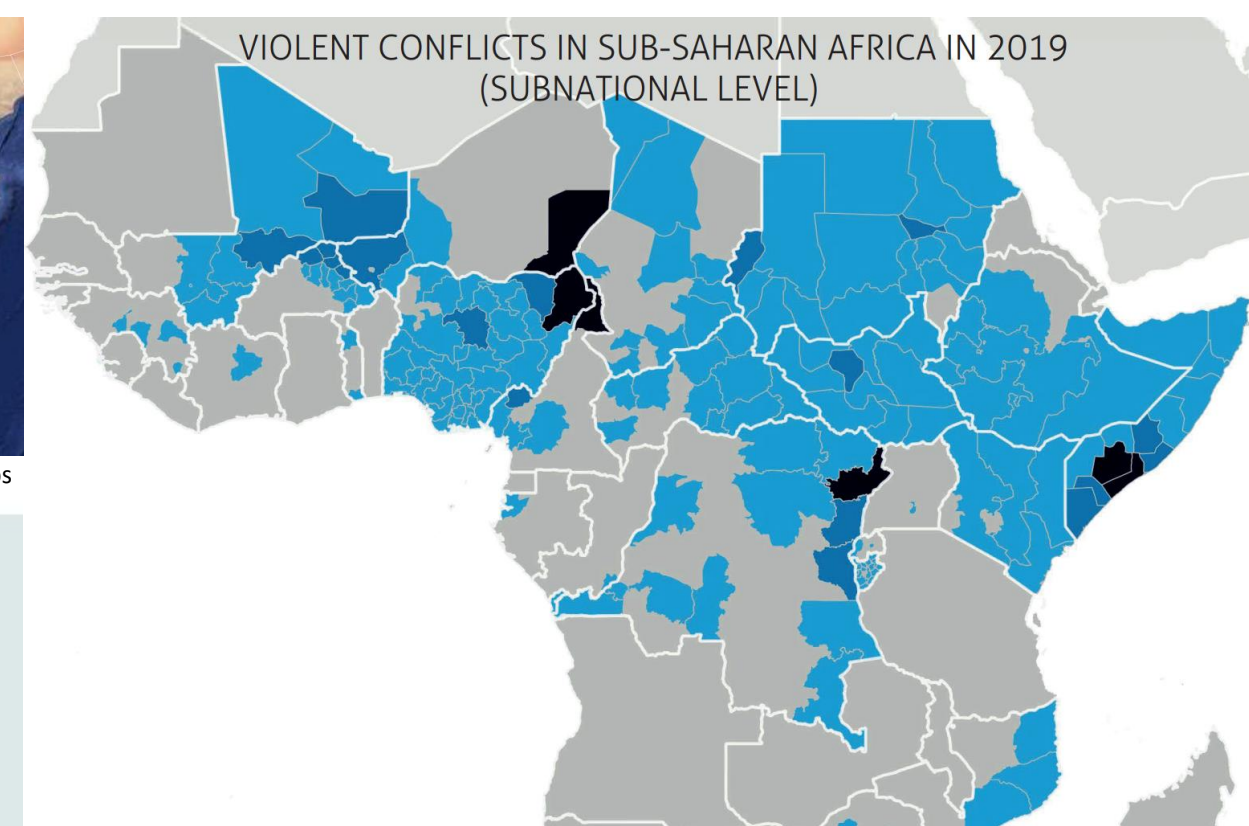
- Conflict Start: 2003
- Affected Countries: Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger (especially around the shores of Lake Chad)
- Conflict Item: System/Ideology
  - Both groups fight to establish an Islamic caliphate.
- Main drivers of the conflict:
  - Religious and socio-economic grievances
- Over 25.000 deaths and up to 2 Million displaced people

#### THE LAKE CHAD WATER CRISIS – FACTS&FIGURES

- Lake Chad provided a livelihood for approx. 20 Million people
- Due to droughts and insufficient water management Lake Chad lost approx. 90 Percent of its surface area
- As a consequence of the shrinking, in some areas dense vegetation made parts of the lake less workable
- Between 1983 and 1994 the volume of water diverted for irrigation accounted for 50 percent of the decrease in the lake's size
- New research shows that Lake Chad has been increasing since 1990 (see right)
- Today unpredictable rainfall is the main cause for food insecurity and destabilizing effects



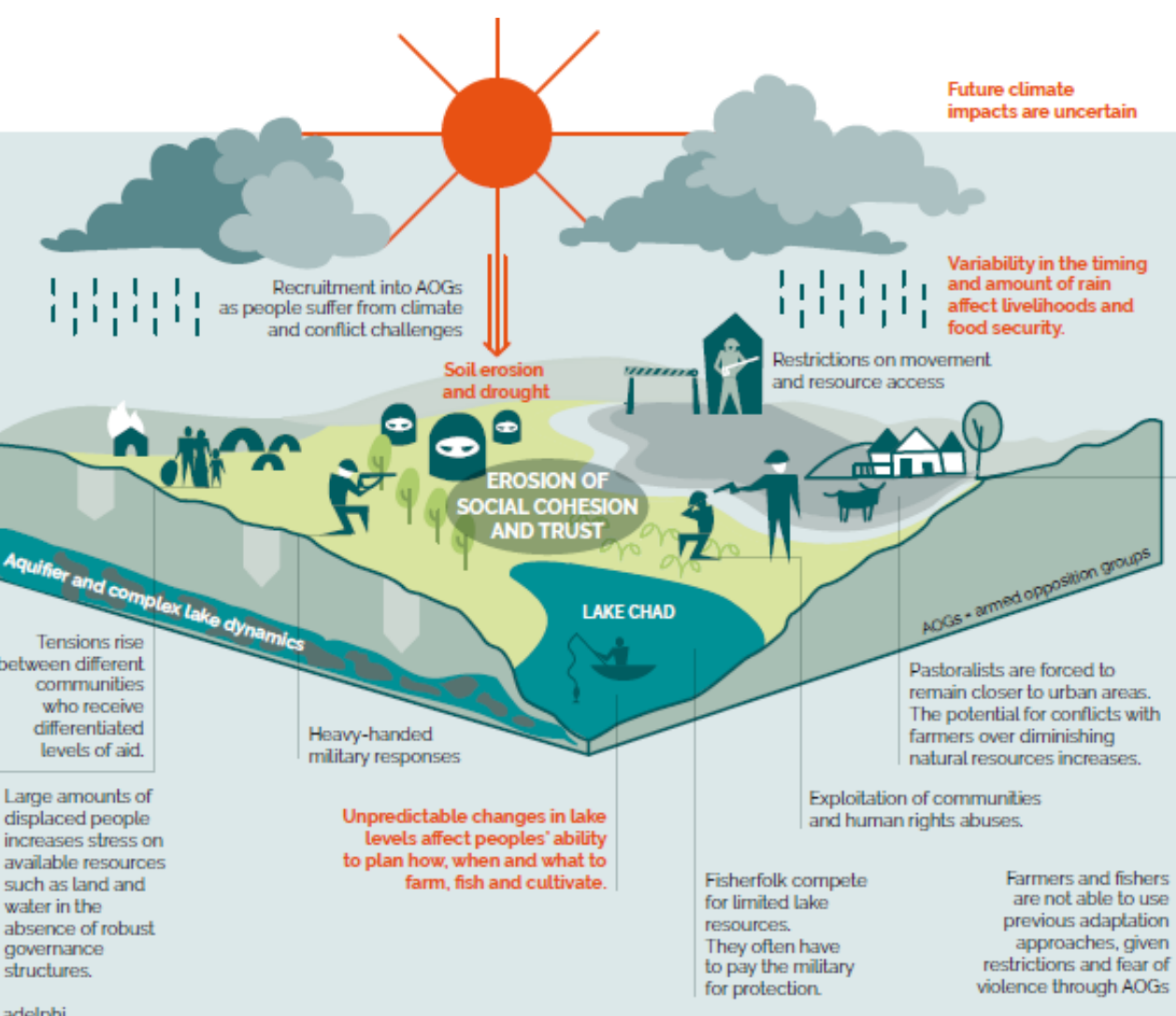
Shoring up Stability - Addressing Climate And Fragility risks in the Lake Chad region, Adelphi, 2019, p. 44



Conflict Barometer 2019, p. 55

#### Farmers – Pastoralists Conflict:

- Conflict Start: 1960
- Affected Countries: Nigeria (similar conflict dynamics can be found throughout the whole Sahel Region)
- Conflict Items: subnational predominance, resources
  - Farmers and nomadic herders clash over arable land and access to water
- Main drivers of the conflict:
  - droughts, desertification and less predictable rainfall
- Up to 10.000 in the last 10 years and approx. 340.000 internally displaced people



Shoring up Stability - Addressing Climate And Fragility risks in the Lake Chad region, Adelphi, 2019, p. 16

### THE NEXUS BETWEEN THE WATER SCARCITY IN THE LAKE CHAD BASIN AND VIOLENT INTRASTATE CONFLICT:

**Direct effects:** Livelihoods threatened by water scarcity/unpredictability

1. Allocation of water between different users and uses can lead to conflicts between different identity groups.
  2. Less reliable access to water can threaten the sustainability of different types of livelihoods (fishing, farming and cattle herding) which can have various effects, all of which have the potential to cause or intensify Intrastate Conflicts.
- Mass migration
  - Increased urbanization
  - Loss of trust in institutions
  - Joining an armed group to provide income

**Indirect effects:** Livelihoods threatened by strategies used by security forces to counter violent conflicts

1. Heavy-handed military responses – banning access to certain areas
2. Closing of borders – restriction of access to markets and cross border trade

→ The correlation between direct and indirect effects have the potential to create a circle which fuels violent intrastate conflict.

