

minority  
rights  
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international

# Peoples under Threat 2013

## Civilian protection and military intervention

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## Introduction

Foreign news reports of a whole community under violent attack in another part of the world quickly prompt the reflection: what should we do? In the Western media, the question is rarely posed without quickly leading to calls for armed intervention. No matter which other potential responses are tried – diplomatic pressure, sanctions, international prosecutions – the failure to intervene militarily inevitably invites the judgment: ‘We did nothing’.

The 2013 release of the *Peoples under Threat* index highlights the need to question this set of assumptions in at least two important aspects. Firstly, in those country situations of most concern in 2013, where the threat of genocide or mass killing is greatest or is rising most quickly, foreign military intervention is not the exception but the norm. Whether it be the deployment of a multi-lateral force under the auspices of NATO, the African Union or the UN, a military intervention launched by a foreign government or governments, or the arming and logistical support of proxy militias by neighbouring or interested states, the great majority of countries where the threat of mass killing is acute or killing is ongoing have been subject to

armed intervention, in some cases on several occasions going back a decade or more.

Secondly, there is a complex causal relationship between civilian security and armed intervention in practice. While it is possible that foreign military action may halt an episode of mass civilian killing or decrease its intensity, it may also prolong or intensify killing, or even initiate a conflict where there was none before. In some cases, it may end one conflict, but start another; or have the effect of shifting violence away from one people or population group onto another or others.

This is the eighth year that *Peoples under Threat* has used statistical analysis based on authoritative indicators to identify those communities or peoples around the world most at risk of mass killing. Unlike most early warning tools, *Peoples under Threat* was developed for the specific purpose of contributing to civilian protection. This year’s release illustrates starkly, however, just how little we know about the efficacy of international action to prevent atrocity. It underlines the urgent need to track the consequences of any foreign military intervention, to ensure that intervention does not do more harm than good.

## Major Risers since 2012

Rank 2013	Rise in rank since 2012	Country	Group	Total
5	1	Pakistan	Shi'a (incl. Hazara), Ahmadiyya, Hindus and other religious minorities; Baluchis, Mohajirs, Pashtun, Sindhis	20.42
6	8	Syria	Political targets, Shi'a/Alawites, Assyrians, Kurds, Palestinians	20.09
10	1	Nigeria	Ibo, Ijaw, Ogoni, Yoruba, Hausa (Muslims) and Christians in the North	18.41
11	2	Yemen	Zaydi Shi'a, 'Akhdam', Southerners	18.35
17	4	Central African Republic	Kaba (Sara), Mboum, Mbororo, Gula, Aka	15.88
23	13	Libya	Black Libyans, Sub-Saharan migrants, Tebu, Berbers	13.71
25	36	Mali	Tuareg, Arabs, Maure, and others in the north	13.11
26	5	Equatorial Guinea	Bubi, Annobon Islanders	12.99
27	19	Kenya	Borana, Kalenjin, Kikuyu, Luyha, Luo, Muslims, Turkana, Endorois, Masai, Ogiek, other indigenous groups	12.92
28	6	Algeria	Berbers, Saharawi	12.89

## Rising threats in 2013

At least half the states that have risen most significantly in *Peoples under Threat* in 2013, and eight out of 10 of those most at risk, have been subject to recent large-scale or systematic foreign military interventions.

The two states that have risen most prominently in the index this year are both at the centre of intense controversy concerning international intervention. The recent general election in Pakistan saw fierce criticism of US military action, in particular the systematic use of unmanned drones to drop bombs in the north and west of the country. Drone killings, including an unverified number of civilian casualties, have caused intense resentment among communities in the tribal areas. While the elections were hailed as the first transfer of power from one elected government to another in Pakistan's history, they were marked by violence and the outcome shows deep regional divisions. Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and other sectarian extremists, widely believed to be funded from abroad, have intensified a murderous campaign against the Shi'a and other religious minorities, and have operated with almost complete impunity.

At least 93,000 people are now estimated by the UN to have been killed in Syria's conflict. This is the third year in a row that Syria has risen in the index, and previous fears expressed in *Peoples under Threat* that whole communities would become at risk of sectarian killings are sadly being increasingly realized. In June 2013 the US announced for the first time that it would provide direct military support to Syrian rebels, joining a long list of other states that are already engaged in supporting one or other side in the war, including Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Russia and Iran. The involvement of the Lebanese group Hezbollah in support of the Syrian government has also increased the danger of the conflict spilling further into Lebanon, which itself rose in the index this year.

In Yemen in 2012 a major military offensive, supported by the US, targeted Islamic militants in the south, and the conflict displaced tens of thousands of civilians. The US continued a separate campaign of drone strikes across the country. In the north, scene of an earlier Saudi Arabian military intervention in 2009, continuing conflict between al Houthi rebels and the government and Sunni tribes caused casualties and displacement in

both Zaydi Shi'a and Sunni communities. Yemen now has the dubious distinction of having risen in the *Peoples under Threat* index seven years in a row.

The government of President François Bozizé of the Central African Republic had benefitted from military support from both neighbouring Chad and from France over the years, but he was finally overthrown in a rebellion in March 2013. Victorious fighters of the Séléka alliance have been responsible for a wave of human rights abuses, tens of thousands of people remained displaced and the humanitarian situation in the country has deteriorated markedly in one of the world's forgotten crises.

Libya and Mali are two recent cases where success has been claimed for large-scale foreign military interventions, the first in support of rebels, the second in support of the government. Both countries have risen sharply in the index this year, following major rises last year too.

NATO air power helped topple Libya's President Gaddafi in 2011 and led to democratic elections in 2012. Large areas of the country, however, remain under the effective control of different militia groups, and security for much of the population worsened over the last year. Most of the Sub-Saharan population were expelled during the rebellion in 2011 and dark-skinned Libyans, including former residents of Tawergha, remain vulnerable to racist attacks and arbitrary detention.

French President François Hollande was awarded the Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize by UNESCO in June 2013 for his decision to send French troops to Mali earlier in the year to regain the north of the country from Islamist rebels. Following the intervention, Arab properties in Timbuktu and other key northern towns were looted and much of the Arab population forced to flee, as were Tuaregs who were perceived to have initiated the rebellion. The UN estimated that some 470,000 people in all have fled the fighting, with Arabs and Tuaregs remaining at risk of reprisal attacks as well as inter-ethnic clashes in the north.

## Peoples at greatest risk

At the head of the *Peoples under Threat* table are those country situations where peoples are at greatest risk. Somalia, Afghanistan and the Demo-

cratic Republic of Congo have all been subject to multiple military interventions by both foreign armies and by inter-governmental organizations, over the course of decades.

Both the Kenyan and Ethiopian armies were active again in Somalia over the last year, conducting major bombing and ground operations against al Shabaab, a rebel group formed in 2006 to oppose a previous Ethiopian invasion. The African Union mission in Somalia was able to claim considerable success in pushing al Shabaab back from major cities including Mogadishu, although the group was responsible for a deadly attack on the UN compound in June 2013 and continues to control large areas of South-Central Somalia, including those where the vulnerable Bantu population live. A further 78,000 people fled Somalia as refugees in 2012, according to UNHCR.

Civilian deaths in Afghanistan continue to run at nearly 3,000 a year, the great majority due to attacks by the Taliban and other anti-government forces. The US has sought peace talks with the Taliban in advance of a withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan in 2014, but Tajik, Uzbek and Hazara leaders have formed a new National Front to oppose any accommodation with the Pashtun-

dominated Taliban, in a move which underscores the deep ethnic divisions in the country.

Nigeria re-entered the top 10 this year as the threat rose from conflict between Christian and Muslim communities, much of it over land, in Plateau and neighbouring states and in the north-east. The Islamist group Boko Haram issued an ultimatum calling on Christians to leave in January 2012 and then launched a campaign of attacks on Christians in the north-east, killing hundreds and displacing thousands. Following the imposition of a state of emergency in three states in north-eastern Nigeria in May 2013, accompanied by a media blackout, the Nigerian army has been accused of arbitrary killings and disappearances in its operations against Boko Haram.

In Darfur in Sudan the joint UN/African Union peace-keeping force (formerly the world's largest) scaled back to 16,000 troops as progress was made with the implementation of the Darfur peace agreement. Conflict between rebels and the government continued, however, and included attacks by the Sudanese air force and by government-backed militias on civilians in IDP camps. A set of humanitarian crises continue to unfold on both sides of the border with the newly-

#### **Peoples most under threat – highest rated countries 2013**

Rank	Country	Group	Total
1	Somalia	Minorities incl. Bantu, Benadir and 'caste' groups (Gabooye etc.); clan members at risk in fighting incl. Hawiye, Darod, etc.	23.29
2	Sudan	Fur, Zaghawa, Massalit and others in Darfur; Dinka, Nuba, Beja	21.93
3	Afghanistan	Hazara, Pashtun, Tajiks, Uzbeks, Turkmen, Baluchis	21.44
4	Iraq	Shi'a, Sunnis, Kurds, Turkmen, Christians, Mandaeans, Yezidis, Shabak, Faili Kurds, Baha'is, Palestinians	20.59
5	Pakistan	Ahmadiyya, Baluchis, Hindus, Mohhajirs, Pashtun, Sindhis, other religious minorities	20.42
6	Syria	Political targets, Shi'a/Alawites, Assyrians, Kurds, Palestinians	20.09
7	Burma/Myanmar	Kachin, Karen, Karen, Mons, Rakhine, Rohingyas, Shan, Chin (Zomis), Wa	20.06
8	Dem. Rep. of the Congo	Hema and Lendu, Hutu, Luba, Lunda, Tutsi/Banyamulenge, Batwa/Bambuti, other groups	19.92
9	Ethiopia	Anuak, Afars, Oromo, Somalis, smaller minorities	19.30
10	Nigeria	Ibo, Ijaw, Ogoni, Yoruba, Hausa (Muslims) and Christians in the North	18.41

independent state of South Sudan. In South Kordofan and Blue Nile in Sudan, the Sudanese armed forces were responsible for indiscriminate shelling of villages in their campaign against the Sudan Revolutionary Front, an alliance of existing rebel groups. In the latest agreement between Sudan and South Sudan in March 2013, their respective forces were due to undertake a UN-monitored withdrawal from a demilitarized zone on the border, but violations have already been reported. Inter-ethnic violence continued in Jonglei state in South Sudan, particularly between Lou-Nuer and Murle.

### International trade and cooperation

Foreign military intervention lies at one end of a spectrum of possible international engagement and it is instructive first to consider peaceful means of influencing a state's human rights performance.

Although international relations with any given state are complex and can have negative as well as positive effects on human rights, a condition of general isolation from international exchange and cooperation, when combined with other factors, signals danger. The *Peoples under Threat* index uses the country credit risk classification assigned by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as a proxy for low trade openness, one of the known antecedents to genocide or mass political killing (see box: 'How is *Peoples under Threat* calculated?').

Under this rubric, embeddedness in the international system not only brings with it a range of economic benefits which it would be costly to lose, but also exposes a national government to a level of continuous pressure to conform to minimum international standards.

Globalization, the expansion of international trade and the growth in inter-governmental organizations have significantly reduced instances of international isolation. The remaining exceptions – of which North Korea is the most striking example – present profound human rights challenges.

Emerging from relative isolation over the last two years, Burma/Myanmar has made tentative moves towards democratization, most visibly in the appointment of a civilian government and the release from house arrest and election to Parlia-

ment of the opposition leader, Aung San Suu Kyi. Burma has accordingly fallen in the index this year, although it remains in the top 10. In addition to widespread human rights violations associated with renewed conflict in Kachin state, inter-community violence has caused the deaths of hundreds of Muslims, particularly Rohingya in Rakhine state. Dam construction and other major development projects across the country have drawn a huge increase in international investment, but have themselves created further concerns for indigenous and ethnic minority communities who fear displacement and the loss of their livelihoods.

Cooperation extends beyond trade relations. International cooperation to promote and encourage respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is actually enshrined in international law as one of the founding principles of the UN. Such cooperation includes oversight mechanisms, including the UN Human Rights Council, through which member states' pledge to promote human rights can be scrutinized. Whether it be through the agencies of the UN, through regional inter-governmental organizations, or through bilateral cooperation, states can also benefit from a wide range of 'technical assistance' programmes, from advice on legal drafting and rights monitoring through to training in human rights standards for judges, lawyers and law enforcement agencies.

More generally, international aid for development is a major source of income for most of the world's poorest states, including many near the top of the *Peoples under Threat* table. Whether or not it is a formal condition for receiving aid, accepting international observation or assistance on human rights is often seen as part of the package. Conversely the removal of aid, or the threat of its removal, can provide a major lever of influence over a government to improve its human rights performance. In 2012, for example, the EU and a number of other governments partly suspended aid to Rwanda following a report by a UN group of experts into Rwandan support for the M23, a rebel group in neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) whose murderous activities have sparked a renewed humanitarian crisis.

### The toolbox of coercion

Beyond international oversight and the provision

or withholding of aid, a range of other means are available to the international community to seek to modify a state's behaviour. These include, but are not limited to, diplomatic pressure, litigation before international tribunals or the International Court of Justice, suspension or expulsion from international organizations, severance of diplomatic relations, economic sanctions, arms embargoes, international prosecutions of military or political leaders, and travel bans or asset freezes.

The use of a number of these tools is illustrated by the response to inter-ethnic violence in Kenya, when over 1,300 people were killed following a disputed general election in December 2007. Intense diplomatic pressure, including a threat from the EU Development Commissioner to reduce aid and the imposition of a US travel ban on a number of Kenyans, led to a set of power-sharing accords, mediated by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. A commission of inquiry established under the accords recommended the prosecution of those most responsible for the violence, with a recourse to the International Criminal Court (ICC) should national prosecutions not progress. In the event, the ICC opened an investigation in 2010. A new general election in Kenya in March 2013 passed off relatively peacefully, but resulted in the election as President and Deputy President of two men with outstanding ICC indictments for crimes against humanity for their role in the 2007-8 post-election violence. Kenya rose sharply again in the *Peoples under Threat* table this year.

Both Kofi Annan and his successor as UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, described the Kenya mediation as the first application of the new norm of 'responsibility to protect' (R2P). At the UN world summit in 2005, UN member states had agreed that, although an individual state carried the primary responsibility for protecting its population, the international community also had a 'responsibility to protect' populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. This responsibility was to be discharged through 'appropriate diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful means' but, should peaceful means be inadequate and national authorities manifestly fail to protect their populations, also through taking collective action, 'in a timely and decisive manner', through the

UN Security Council.

Much of the groundwork for developing the norm of responsibility to protect was undertaken by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, set up under the auspices of the Canadian government. Borrowing heavily from just war theory, the Commission identified six necessary criteria for a justified military intervention: just cause, right intention, last resort, proportional means, reasonable prospects and right authority. For the just cause threshold to be met, the Commission explained that there must be serious and irreparable harm – such as large-scale loss of life or ethnic cleansing – occurring to human beings or imminently likely to occur. The criteria of just cause and right intention in particular remain deeply controversial, given that most military interventions in history have not been undertaken for humanitarian reasons and that the intention or motivation of states can be difficult to certify.

The responsibility to protect envisages states taking collective or multi-lateral action, but it does not specify which form of mandate might be appropriate for such action, other than that it should be in accordance with the UN Charter, including Chapter VII. The first military implementation of the responsibility to protect is accepted to be Security Council Resolution 1973 in 2011 which authorized UN member states to 'take all necessary measures . . . to protect civilians and civilian populated areas' in Libya, including by the establishment of a no-fly zone (although NATO was later criticized for exceeding its mandate when it went on to support the overthrow of President Gaddafi). Since the 1990s, however, UN missions have evolved from a traditional peace-keeping role, in which lightly-armed personnel were deployed post-ceasefire with the consent of both parties to the conflict, to multi-function missions with wide humanitarian aims including, increasingly, 'peace enforcement'. The UN's largest peace-keeping operation, in the DRC, provides a good case study of this development, with the mission's latest incarnation including an 'intervention brigade' with the power to 'carry out targeted offensive operations' to neutralize armed groups threatening state authority and civilian security (UNSC 2098, March 2013).

Although military interventions authorized

by the UN Security Council or other inter-governmental organizations have increased in recent years (see opposite), it should be noted that most interventions continue to be undertaken by neighbouring states or world powers. Furthermore, interventions using the regular forces of a national government or governments are themselves outnumbered by the widespread practice of providing military, financial or logistical support to proxy militias or rebel groups.

### Armed intervention and mass killing: cause or effect?

Ten years ago in 2003 the United States led a military coalition to intervene in Iraq. One narrative for what then happened describes the removal of a government responsible for gross human rights abuses and the installation of a fledgling democracy. Another version of the same events tells how an illegal invasion started a war which has to date cost the lives of at least 112,000 civilians and left the country in a semi-permanent state of conflict, with approximately 400 civilians continuing to be killed every month.

That both these narratives can exist, credibly, at the same time is an indication of the difficulty in identifying cause and effect in a series of events that appear over-determined. The Iraqi case has perhaps occasioned more debate than any other in recent years, but difficult questions on the aims and effects of armed intervention could equally be posed concerning many of the critical country situations in the *Peoples under Threat* index, including *inter alia* Somalia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, the DRC, Yemen and Libya. In each case, humanitarian grounds have been among those cited to justify military intervention, but it remains hard to establish whether the majority of civilian killing is the *cause* or the *effect* of sustained intervention, particularly in the case of interventions that comprise multiple episodes.

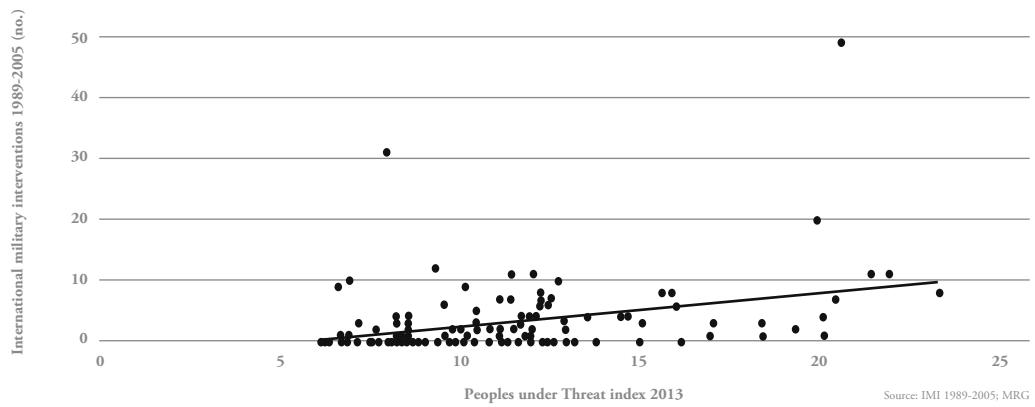
In specific cases it may be possible to draw at least interim conclusions. Even in the case of Iraq, most commentators would agree both that the population of Iraqi Kurdistan feel more secure following the removal of their nemesis Saddam Hussein and also that the 2003 invasion triggered an unprecedented level of sectarian violence between Arab Sunni and Shi'a. Two international military interventions that produced

a definite, immediate improvement in civilian protection were the UK operations in Sierra Leone in 2000 to help halt a rebel advance on the capital Freetown; and the EU/French Operation Artemis to secure the town of Bunia in Ituri in the DRC in 2003. (It is notable that both these were limited operations focused on securing one urban area and were launched with the cooperation of the national host government.) However, with over 16 years' continuous experience of repeated foreign interventions by both foreign governments and inter-governmental actors, the DRC case more than any other demonstrates the complexity of disentangling the lines of causality linking intervention and civilian killing or protection.

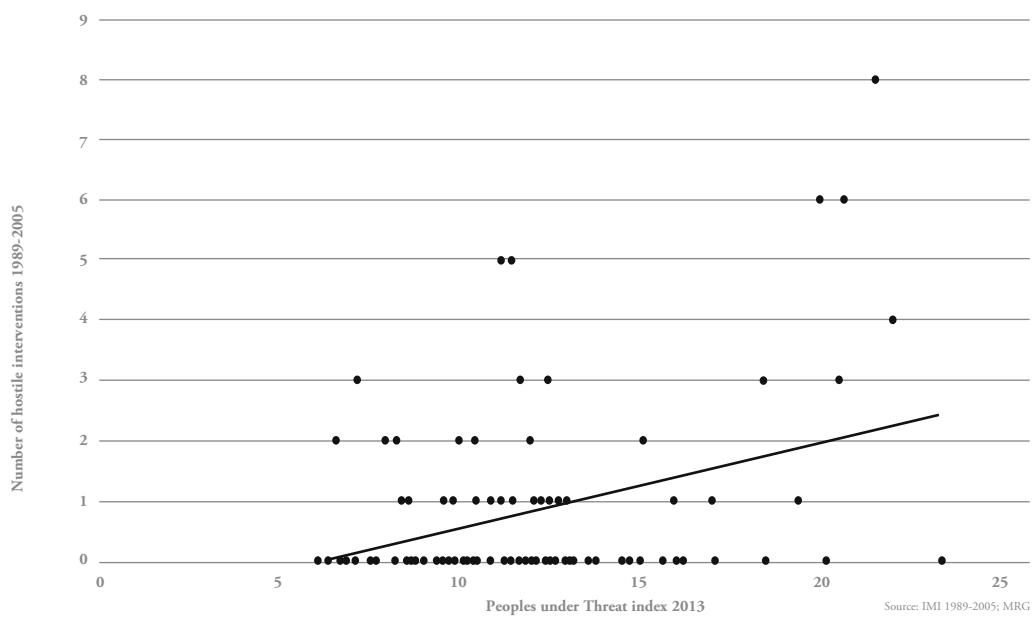
A growing number of academic research institutes now compile data on inter-state conflict and other instances of international military action. Of particular interest is the updated International Military Intervention dataset (IMI), compiled by Jeffrey Pickering and Emizet F. Kisangani at Kansas State University. This records 444 separate instances of military intervention across international boundaries by regular armed forces from 1989 to 2005. It has the advantage of using the same definitions and coding as an earlier dataset covering the Cold War era, thus providing a consistent body of data from 1946 onwards, and includes information on the direction of military intervention (for example whether it was hostile, supportive or neutral) and on the motivation or issues driving intervention. (The data excludes support for proxy militias, paramilitaries, mercenaries or other non-regular forces.)

IMI records an increase in the use of foreign military intervention, from approximately 16 foreign military interventions launched every year during the Cold War period to 26 interventions initiated per year in the post-Cold War years of 1990-2005. Interventions by major powers (i.e. the five permanent members of the UN Security Council) increased slightly, with US and French activities accounting for most of the increase, but the greatest proportional increase was seen in interventions mounted by international organizations, including the UN, NATO and other regional organizations (Pickering and Kisangani, 'The International Military Intervention Dataset: An updated resource for conflict scholars',

## Peoples under threat following military interventions



## Higher threat after hostile interventions



*Journal of Peace Research 46, 2009).*

This finding of an increase in foreign military intervention is consistent with the high levels of armed intervention noted earlier in countries

ranked highly in the 2013 *Peoples under Threat* index. Other studies in the literature demonstrate a relationship between armed invention and an increase in human rights violations.

Working from a sub-set of the IMI data for the period 1981-2001, Dursun Peksen finds that foreign military intervention increases the likelihood of violations of physical integrity rights, particularly in the case of interventions that are supportive towards the target government or neutral ('Does Foreign Military Intervention Help Human Rights?', *Political Research Quarterly* 65, 2012). He hypothesizes that the use of repression is essentially a policy choice adopted by the government and that supportive or neutral military intervention enhances the state's coercive power and encourages more repressive behaviour. Interestingly, he finds no major statistically significant difference between humanitarian intervention and non-humanitarian intervention. He notes the value of these findings in shedding light 'on the empirical relevance of ongoing policy debates showing that interventions might inadvertently do more harm than good – at least in the case of human rights – even if they are initiated by IGOs or liberal democracies'.

*Peoples under Threat* is designed to assess the risk to population groups not just from government repression but also from the activities of rebel groups, from inter-ethnic or inter-religious conflict, or indeed from foreign attack. The correlation between the level of current threat to population groups and a history of international military intervention can be demonstrated by plotting the 2013 index (for 114 countries) against the IMI data on military interventions by target country over the period 1989-2005. The correlation is particularly strong for hostile interventions (i.e. those coded in IMI as opposing governments or supporting rebels). A higher number of *hostile* interventions in the 1989-2005 period corresponds to higher levels of current threat (see graph above).

### Monitoring the impact of intervention

It should be stressed that even if there is a correlation between military intervention and a subsequent rise in the level of threat to civilian population groups, it cannot be assumed that one causes the other. There might be significant differences in the situation in target countries *ex ante*, or intervening variables – the nature or direction of the intervention, the level of wider international support – may be as or more important. But it does underline the need for more research. It also

highlights the point that interventions, particularly belligerent ones, often do not turn out the way they were intended, as the case of Iraq tragically demonstrates.

One of the conditions for a justified intervention under the R2P doctrine is a reasonable prospect of success. It might be argued that a test based only on reasonableness sets the bar too low, but it would help if the test were correctly applied. Reasonable prospect is often judged just in terms of the immediate military objective, whether it be gaining air supremacy, defeating a military force, or establishing effective control of territory. But if the just cause for an armed intervention is civilian protection, then success should also be judged in terms of civilian protection. As Taylor Seybolt, author of a major study on military interventions, has argued: '*A reasonable prospect of success* is as critical to legitimate humanitarian intervention as just cause. If an intervention is not likely to do more good than harm from a humanitarian point of view, it cannot be justified in humanitarian terms. This is true even if the other criteria of right authority, right intention, last resort and proportional means are met. Despite its essential character, the prospect of success is undervalued and has been the subject of too little study. This lack of attention may help to explain why so many humanitarian interventions have gone awry' (Taylor B. Seybolt, *Humanitarian Military Intervention*, SIPRI, OUP, Oxford, 2007, p. 26).

There is perhaps no older ethical problem in politics than the morality of the use of force. The state will reserve to itself the monopoly of the legitimate means of violence, but when and how violence can be employed to maintain order are questions that have been posed by governments through the ages. In the era of decolonization, we also became familiar with the revolutionary's dilemma: is it right to spill blood to win liberty? Although the answer to such questions may be influenced by an estimation of how much blood might be necessary, it also depends on the wider political beliefs of the individual confronted by the dilemma and the relative value he or she places on life, as opposed to freedom or order. As such, the problem always escaped simple resolution.

In the current debates over responsibility to protect and armed intervention, the fundamental moral question is perhaps more straightforward:

how many lives should be risked to save other lives? The calculus is still complex, but the currency is the same. Perhaps the greatest scandal, under such circumstances, is the failure to monitor loss of life following an armed intervention, so the question can at least be put. After the Libyan intervention, for example, NATO was heavily criticised for failing to investigate over 70 civilian deaths caused by its aerial bombardment. But there remains even more confusion about the far greater numbers killed in the Libyan conflict by both government and rebel forces, the majority

after the start of foreign intervention. Even today, credible estimates of the number killed range from 15,000 to 30,000 (around half of them civilians). If there is a basic failure even to count the dead, then the relative success of an intervention can never be properly evaluated.

As the threat of mass killing continues to be faced by peoples around the world, there is an urgent need for reliable data on the consequences as well as the causes of military intervention, to ensure that civilian protection is improved in practice. *Additional research by Jack Dentith.*

## How is *Peoples under Threat* calculated?

Since the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, our ability to identify those situations most likely to lead to genocide or mass killing has improved. A number of comparative studies of the factors preceding historic episodes of political mass killing had been undertaken since the 1970s, including by Helen Fein and Ted Robert Gurr, but it was not until the 1990s that researchers such as Rudolf Rummel and Matthew Krain pioneered quantitative longitudinal analysis of a wide range of such factors, enabling the testing of different causal hypotheses. Rummel, for example, showed the very strong relationship between concentration of government power and state mass murder; Krain demonstrated the correlation between existing armed conflict or political instability and the onset and severity of mass killing.

Following the early work of the Clinton administration's policy initiative on genocide early warning and prevention, Professor Barbara Harff, a senior consultant with the US State Failure Task Force, constructed and tested models of the antecedents of genocide and political mass murder and her results were published in 2003 ('Assessing Risks of Genocide and Political Mass Murder since 1955', *American Political Science Review* 97, February 2003). Her optimal model identifies six preconditions that make it possible to distinguish, with 74 per cent accuracy, between internal wars and regime collapses in the period

1955-1997 that did, and those that did not, lead to genocide and political mass murder (politicide). The six preconditions are: political upheaval; previous genocides or politicides; exclusionary ideology of the ruling elite; autocratic nature of the regime; minority character of the ruling elite; and low trade openness.

Minority Rights Group International has drawn on these research findings to construct the *Peoples under Threat* table, although responsibility for the final table is exclusively our own. *Peoples under Threat* is specifically designed to identify the risk of genocide, mass killing or other systematic violent repression, unlike most other early warning tools, which focus on violent conflict as such. Its primary application is civilian protection.

Indicators of conflict are included in the table's construction, however, as most, although not all, episodes of mass ethnic or religious killing occur during armed conflicts. War provides the state of emergency, domestic mobilization and justification, international cover, and in some cases the military and logistic capacity, that enable massacres to be carried out. Some massacres, however, occur in peacetime, or may accompany armed conflict from its inception, presenting a problem to risk models that focus exclusively on current conflicts. In addition, severe and even violent repression of minorities may occur for years before the onset of armed conflict provides the catalyst for larger scale killing.

The statistical indicators used all relate to

the state. The state is the basic unit of enquiry, rather than particular ethnic or religious groups at risk, as governments or militias connected to the government are responsible for most cases of genocidal violence. Formally, the state will reserve to itself the monopoly over the means of violence, so that where non-state actors are responsible for widespread or continued killing, it usually occurs with either the complicity of the state or in a ‘failed state’ situation where the rule of law has disintegrated. Certain characteristics at the level of the state will greatly increase the likelihood of atrocity, including habituation to illegal violence among the armed forces or police, prevailing impunity for human rights violations, official tolerance or encouragement of hate speech against particular groups, and in extreme cases, prior experience of mass killing. Egregious episodes of mass killing targeted principally at one group have also seen other groups deliberately decimated or destroyed.

However, some groups may experience higher levels of discrimination and be at greater risk than others in any given state. Minority Rights Group International has identified those groups in each state which we believe to be under most threat. (This does not mean that other groups or indeed the general population may not also be at some risk.) It should be noted that although these groups are most often minorities, in some cases ethnic or religious majorities will also be at risk and in relevant cases are therefore also listed in the table. In some cases, all the groups in the country are at risk of ethnic or sectarian killing.

One indicator that has been tested and discarded by a number of studies is the general level of ethnic or cultural diversity in a society. Krain did not find any correlation between ‘ethnic fractionalization’ and the onset of genocide or political mass killing. Similarly, neither of the patterns of ethnic diversity tested by Harff had any effect on the likelihood of mass killing (although she did find the minority character of the ruling elite to be significant). These findings are supported by research on the relationship between diversity and conflict.

The overall measure is based on a basket of 10 indicators. These include indicators of democracy or good governance from the World Bank; conflict indicators from the Center for Systemic Peace and other leading global conflict research institutes; indicators of group division or elite factionalization from the Fund for Peace and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; the State Failure Task Force data on prior genocides and politicides; and the country credit risk classification published by the OECD (as a proxy for trade openness). For citations and further information, see the notes to the table. For a fuller discussion of the methodology, see *State of the World’s Minorities 2006*.

Based on current indicators from authoritative sources, *Peoples under Threat* seeks to identify those groups or peoples most under threat in 2013.

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