**MIDDLE EAST CONFLICTS: BILATERAL & REGIONAL**

A variety of countries make up the Middle East including Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

Major Conflicts:

* **Israel-Palestine Conflict**
* **Shiite-Sunni Conflict**
* **Civil Wars after Arab Spring**
* **Battle against ISIS**

**For detailed major conflicts**

**See this link also given in OCD**

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=6b440bfdf67e48de818a4cc7867f2bda>

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**Conflict trends in the Middle East:** Over the past decade, the bulk of the world’s deadliest conflicts have been in the Middle East, such as those taking place in Syria, Yemen, Iraq and Turkey. Syria has also been the deadliest conflict in the world since 1989. In addition, countries bordering the Middle East – Afghanistan being by far the most significant here – are also very high on the list of deadly conflicts. Overall, the concentration of armed conflicts has shifted quite dramatically through the years – and if we look at the whole period from World War II to the present, the Middle East figured very prominently during the 1980s (with the Iran-Iraq war). Other regions that had been hard hit in decades prior to the 1980s – East Asia, Latin America, even sub-Saharan Africa – do not, either because conflicts have settled, or because they are much less intense, or both.

**Decrease in state-based conflicts:** 2019 saw 10 state-based conflicts in the Middle East, two less than in 2018. While Asia and Africa have the largest share of the conflicts, the Middle East has seen the largest relative increase in the past six years. The seven civil wars in the Middle East between 2016 and 2018 marked an all-time high since 1996. The deadliest year in the Middle East was 1988, when more than 330,000 battle-related deaths were recorded, most of them in the IranIraq war (1980–1988). Since 1991, 2014 was the deadliest year, with almost 80,000 battle-related deaths. Since 2014, battle-related deaths have been steadily declining, which is largely attributable to the de-escalation in Iraq and Syria. While there was a decrease in the number of civil wars and battle-related deaths in the Middle East, the number of internationalized conflicts has been at its highest level ever since 2015.

**Humanitarian ceasefires are on the rise and peace agreements remain rare:** Since 1989, the number of ceasefires in the Middle East has increased. The number peaked in 2016 when in total 48 ceasefires were recorded, all of them in Syria and Yemen. The Middle East also experienced a relatively large number of humanitarian ceasefires over time. In 2015, a record number of 25 humanitarian ceasefires were recorded in Syria and Yemen, a gruesome reminder of the severity of those conflicts. Compared to other regions, peace agreements in the Middle East are relatively rare. Conflict severity, the number of actors, and the protracted nature of some conflicts all make it difficult to reach a negotiated settlement to conflicts in the region. The highest number of peace agreements (12) concluded within one year was in 1975, all of them between the governments of Iran and Iraq. The last peace agreement in the region was concluded in 2014 in Yemen between the government, the Southern Movement, and Ansarallah.

**Non-state conflicts decreased, but remain one of the most serious threats:** The number of nonstate conflicts skyrocketed in 2011. However, we have seen a decline since 2014, with 2019 marking the lowest number (8) since 2009. Nevertheless, the number of non-state conflicts is still much higher than before 2011. The number of battle deaths related to non-state conflict reached an all time high in 2017, followed by a sharp decrease. Still in 2019, 4,000 people were killed in non-state conflict battle-related events. The Middle East is characterized by fighting between highly organized actors. Syria has been the hardest hit country by non-state conflicts; in 2019, five different non-state conflicts were recorded in the country.

**Increase in one-sided violence from 2018:** There is a general downward trend in one-sided violence from 2005 onwards (except for 2013 and 2014). While in 2018, the number of fatalities (54) were the lowest since 1989, this number doubled (108) in 2019, mostly due to violence perpetrated by Syrian insurgents, the Islamic State (IS), and the Government of Iran.