

ethnic nationalism as well. Debates about immigration, asylum fraud, or becoming a cultural minority in one's own homeland are widespread across western Europe, not only but especially at election times.

The often emotional responses that people have to such politically and economically highly charged issues once again underline the importance of individuals—leaders and followers alike—and the decisions that they make in determining whether conflict will occur and endure. Yet individuals do not act in a vacuum. Leaders in particular are crucial in the process of catalysing existing tensions into open warfare, but they can do so only if circumstances permit. A difficult economic situation can be talked up into an impending collapse of a country's ability to feed and shelter its citizens, a political impasse in parliament can be presented as a serious crisis, and ambiguous pronouncements by the leaders of other ethnic groups about their intentions can be used to induce fears about the inevitability of violence, but hardly ever does conflict merely 'appear' overnight. An important implication of this build-up towards violent conflict, rather than its sudden eruption, is that although violence may be temporarily prevented or contained by focusing on leaders inside and outside the country and by ameliorating the consequences of serious domestic problems, a conflict itself cannot be resolved without addressing its underlying causes.

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Who fights in ethnic conflicts and how?

Chechen detainees who arrived at the Russian Chernokozovo 'filtration' camp in January 2000 received an ominous welcome. 'Welcome to hell,' the prison guards would say, and then force them to walk through a human corridor of baton-wielding guards. This was only the beginning of a ghastly cycle of abuse for most detainees in early 2000, who suffered systematic beatings, rape, and other forms of torture. Most were released only after their families managed to pay large sums to Russian officials bent on extortion.

This is the beginning of a report by Human Rights Watch, dated October 2000. It further details a litany of human rights abuses committed by Russian troops in Chechnya, including mass arrests and arbitrary detention, torture and abuse, and 'disappearances'.¹ Such 'counter-insurgency' measures are not the only forms of gross human rights violations committed by the Russian government against Chechen civilians. The village of Alkhan-Yurt and the treatment of its population exemplified in many ways the plight of civilians caught between insurgents and government troops in the secessionist province. In November 1999, Chechen rebels were present in Alkhan-Yurt, a strategically important village providing a southern route to and from the Chechen capital Grozny. The village elders wanted the rebels to leave in order to save their village, but rebel commanders refused and threatened to kill village elders. The fighting that ensued between them and the advancing

Russian army was severe, and killed several dozens of Russian soldiers in weeks of heavy fighting, which destroyed large parts of the village. Finally, the rebels retreated and in early December Russian forces gained complete control of Alkhan-Yurt. Enraged by the weeks of fighting over the village and the loss of many of their comrades, Russian forces, rather than bringing peace to the village, went on a rampage of killing, expulsions, looting, and burning. This lasted for more than two weeks, and there was no attempt by Russian authorities to intervene.²

The beginning of a third phase in Sri Lanka's civil war in April 1995 was similarly marked by gross violations of human rights. According to a Human Rights Watch report, the Sri Lankan army used civilians as 'human mine detectors and shields against LTTE attacks'.³ In July of the same year, hundreds of thousands of civilians were forced to flee from areas of the Jaffna peninsula affected by the army's 'Operation Leap Forward'. Hundreds of civilians also died during this campaign. In one particularly infamous example, the destruction of Saint Peter's Church in Navaly by government air raids resulted in hundreds of people being killed and seriously injured.⁴ Similar to other conflicts, Sri Lanka has also witnessed human rights violations on a similar scale committed by insurgents. More than 50 Sinhalese civilians were killed on 18 September 1999 by the so-called Tamil Tigers, the main insurgent group in Sri Lanka seeking independence for the north-east of the country, occupied predominantly by Tamils and Muslim groups. Only three days earlier, 22 Tamil civilians had been killed in a bombing raid by the Sri Lankan Air Force. Such tit-for-tat killings of civilians have been a marked feature of the Sri Lankan civil war for a decade now.

Ethnic conflicts like those in Chechnya and Sri Lanka do not just exist or come into being overnight. As we have seen in Chapter 3, they are the result of deliberate choices of people to pursue certain goals with violent means. Often they see this as their only choice in conditions that are beyond their control. Serbs in Croatia took up arms against the newly independent Croatian state in 1992 when this state adopted a flag, currency, and political rhetoric

that brought back memories of the Second World War, when the fascist Croatian Ustasha regime had conducted a policy against Serbs that was in all but name genocidal. To be sure, the violent conflict that ensued in Croatia and subsequently engulfed Bosnia and Herzegovina as well was not a sudden, unpredictable, and uncontrollable phenomenon of mass violence, but had been carefully and deliberately planned by political leaders in Belgrade, Zagreb, and Sarajevo, and their local allies on the ground.

Kosovo Albanians began to organize militarily and support violent resistance to the Serbs only when they felt that they had exhausted all other means to pursue their goal of self-determination peacefully. Clearly outgunned and outnumbered by Serb armed forces, their use of violence was of a more strategic kind—to provoke a disproportionate response from Belgrade that would compel the international community to intervene with military force. The suicide bombings of Palestinian extremists targeting Israeli civilians have an additional dimension that makes bargaining difficult, if not impossible: they are part of a quasi-religious mission to annihilate the state of Israel. This is, of course, a futile tactic because the suicide bombers hardly pose a threat to the survival of the state of Israel. However, it is also noteworthy that, while the non-recognition of Israel and desire to destroy this state had long been on the agendas of the PLO, Hamas, Hezbollah, and other such groups, suicide bombers are a far more recent phenomenon born out of a combination of the Palestinian desperation at confronting a far superior and at times brutal and cruel adversary and the growing influence of a radical, fundamentalist variety of Islam that thrives in such desperation and finds its willing recruits. This is particularly the case in the Middle East, but it is not a phenomenon exclusive to this region: while Russian tanks and artillery were pounding what is left of the Chechen capital of Grozny, Chechen rebels continued to plot their revenge attacks—kidnappings of soldiers and international observers, bombings in Moscow, and the large-scale hostage taking in the Bolshoy Theatre and a school in Beslan in North Ossetia.

At the same time, and even though ethnic conflicts are for the

most part fought within the borders of existing states, the parties active in them are not only domestic agents. As a result of the threat to international security and stability, international organizations, neighbouring states, and regional and world powers may all have their own interests in particular conflicts: a potential nuclear confrontation between India and Pakistan over Kashmir is a global concern; violence in southern, eastern, and western Sudan remains a threat to the stability of the region; the wars in the former Yugoslavia were a serious source of concern for the EU and NATO as they occurred at their borders. But it is not only states and state organizations that become involved in ethnic conflicts. Stateless groups such as the Kurds or Tamils often have members of their own ethnic group living in neighbouring states or have a diaspora of economically better-off brethren elsewhere in the world willing and able to support their struggle with money, arms, and political lobbying.

Finally, inasmuch as ethnic conflicts create zones of instability and insecurity beyond the reach, and occasionally beyond the grasp, of law enforcement agencies, they are also a favourite 'play-ground' for common criminals and increasingly become operating bases for terrorists with an international agenda as well. This has been the case in Kashmir and the southern Philippines where Islamist extremists from the anti-Soviet war in Afghanistan grafted their own religious struggle on to pre-existing local conflicts and contributed significantly to their escalation in the 1990s. They achieved the same in Chechnya, but failed in Tajikistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo.⁵

This mix of different domestic and international actors is another salient feature of many ethnic conflicts in today's world. Before we can understand more fully why and how some ethnic conflicts can be resolved whereas others seem to evade stable settlement for decades, it is necessary to explore the different kinds of agents that are active in ethnic conflicts, to analyze the strategies of various conflict parties, to examine their justifications for the use of violence and counter-violence, and to show what rationales they have in pursuing specific strategies. That is what this chapter sets

out to do before we turn our attention to matters of conflict resolution in Chapter 5.

An easy way to begin addressing the various issues involved in coming to terms with understanding agents and their agendas and tactics in ethnic conflicts is to begin by mapping out different types of ethnic conflict according to which conflict parties are involved. A very simple distinction would be between inter-ethnic conflicts—that is, conflicts between different ethnic groups—and conflicts in which one or more ethnic groups are in conflict with the state in which they live. However, as we have seen earlier on, ethnic groups and the states in which they live are not the only agents involved in today's ethnic conflicts. Nevertheless, this distinction is a good starting point for further discussion, because we are concerned with ethnic conflicts in the sense that the ethnic dimension—at least one group defining the causes, fault lines, and potential solutions of the conflict along a real or perceived ethnic divide—is the predominant one in the conflict. In other words, purely or predominantly criminally motivated turf wars between gangs and insurrections caused by ideological or class differences are of lesser concern for the following examination of the parties to ethnic conflicts. On the other hand, however, ethnic conflicts at times overlap with other forms of violent conflict and some conflict parties occasionally even depend on their ability to continue the conflict by 'branching out' into other forms of violence, for example, to finance their war effort.

Let us begin our analysis from the perspective of individual groups. In their attempts to preserve, express, and develop their distinct identities, ethnic groups perceive threats and opportunities. The more deeply felt these perceptions are, the more they will be linked to the very survival of the group and the more intense will the conflict be that they can potentially generate. This is what we described earlier as the ethnic security dilemma. In a situation in which an ethnic group can rely only on itself to secure conditions in which its members can survive, it needs to acquire or retain sufficient power to fulfil this function—that is, to defeat the threats to, and seize the opportunities for, its survival. An ethnic group's

desire to gain political power is, as we have seen in Chapter 2, expressed in the concept of ethnonationalism.

It is easy to see that different ethnic groups will have incompatible doctrines of ethnonationalism—manifest, for example, in claims to identical stretches of territory, attempts to eradicate other groups' cultural heritage, or the simple denial of their existence as distinct groups. Again, there is no automatism that leads from the existence of distinct groups in one state or region to intense violent conflict. It takes some people to lead and many to follow down a path at the end of which stands not peaceful accommodation, as in Switzerland or Belgium or many parts of India, but genocidal violence as in the Balkans or Rwanda.

In the relationship between different ethnic groups and between groups and the state in which they live, opportunities for, and threats to, group survival have various, yet concretely identifiable, meanings. For groups, these threats and opportunities relate, broadly speaking, to their secure survival as groups. For states, what is at stake is primarily their territorial integrity and their ability to enforce law and order. As we will see in Chapter 5, for ethnic groups, opportunities will manifest themselves, for example, in specific cultural rights or arrangements for self-government, realized in local, regional, or federal frameworks within the state in which they live. In the absence of these and similar forms of accommodation, the only real opportunities for ethnic groups to secure their survival may be secession followed either by independent statehood or by unification with another state. Threats to group survival generally occur when states or other ethnic groups deny an ethnic group access to the resources that the latter deems essential for its survival as a distinct group—for example, access to linguistic, educational, or religious facilities, and to positions of power in the institutions of the state. Threats can also become manifest in policies of forced assimilation, in discrimination, and in deprivation. At their most extreme, they take the form of ethnic cleansing and genocide.

It is in these most extreme cases that the distinction between inter-ethnic and group-state conflict becomes increasingly

blurred—that is, one or more ethnic groups have monopolized the institutions of the state and now use them to commit gross human rights violations. The most obvious example of this kind is the Holocaust. In other recent cases of ethnic cleansing, such as in the Balkans and the Darfur region of western Sudan, and genocide, such as in Rwanda, states either partially relied on or backed allied ethnic groups to do their dirty work. Using irregular militias—the Janjaweed in western Sudan and Arkan's Tigers and Vojislav Seselj's Chetniks in Bosnia and Herzegovina spring to mind—states are, or at least think they are, able to keep their hands clean of war crimes while still achieving their aims in the conflict.

To be sure, genocide and large-scale ethnic cleansing are not the rule in most ethnic conflicts. Yet, even in its less extreme forms, the groups and gangs fighting in violent ethnic conflicts are responsible for the deaths of tens if not hundreds of thousands of people every year. In most cases, the overwhelming majority of these victims are civilians. At the dawn of the twentieth century, civilians accounted for about 10 per cent of war fatalities. By the Second World War, this figure had risen to about half of those killed in wars being civilians. In the Second World War, mostly as a consequence of Nazi Germany's total war strategy and its policy of extermination of 'inferior peoples', as well as to some extent the increased use of aerial bombardment by the Nazis and the Allies, civilian death tolls rose to about two-thirds of all people killed. By the beginning of the twenty-first century, more than 90 per cent of the victims of violent conflict were civilians. Apart from 'technological' reasons, such as the greater availability and use of airpower and missiles, the main reason for this staggering increase in civilian casualties is the changing nature of conflicts from battlefield wars between the regular armed forces of states to conflicts involving in part or wholly non-state actors, as is the case in all ethnic conflicts. These conflicts are fought among, and sometimes against, civilian populations. One reason for this is also that distinctions between combatants and non-combatants become difficult in the streets and squares of cities and villages where rival factions and insurgents do not always, if ever, identify themselves as fighters.

Another reason is that strategy and tactics in ethnic conflicts in many ways deliberately target civilians—to exact revenge, intimidate their opponents, and displace or destroy whole enemy populations defined on the basis of ethnic criteria. This means that civilians are increasingly no longer accidental victims caught in cross-fire.

The reasons why groups and states act in such a manner—that is, why they deny others the resources essential to their survival as a group, physically and/or culturally—differ. As we have seen, in some cases greed is the underlying motive; in others it is the perception of a threat aimed at one's own group that makes it seem rational to deprive another group of the means and opportunities to carry out this alleged threat. These are, of course, very general and unsatisfactory explanations. The underlying problem is that at this level of generalization—what explains the actions of all actors in all conflicts—explanations cannot but be highly general too. The alternative to this kind of generalization is to look at individual cases and perhaps small groups of cases and apply a more sophisticated analysis that involves several different levels.

Such a breakdown into different levels of analysis is useful, because it allows provision of a more systematic and accurate account of factors causing, or facilitating, the outbreak of ethnic conflict and their specific role. Such an understanding then enables the analyst to make more precise and potentially effective policy recommendations for the management, settlement, and prevention of ethnic conflicts. Taking us back to the analysis of causes of ethnic conflicts, it also allows us to be more specific about why people at times make particular decisions that have predictably grave consequences.

The different levels of analysis that should be considered when explaining ethnic conflicts are individuals (leaders and followers), groups (as direct and indirect factors: groups act on their own and influence the state's actions), the state (which can be a party to the conflict and/or a mediator between warring groups), the regional context (state and non-state actors interacting in processes of escalation and de-escalation), and the broader international setting in

which a conflict originates and escalates (again, involving both state and non-state actors).

If we were to apply such an approach to analyzing the conflict in Kosovo as it headed towards escalation and international intervention in the second half of the 1990s, five levels of analysis are appropriate: Kosovo's inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic situations; involving individuals and groups; the situation in Serbia (the state level); the regional context (former Yugoslavia and its successor states); and the international setting of the post-Cold War era.

The inter-ethnic situation in Kosovo at the time was characterized by a curious numerical and power balance between the groups that saw the numerically largest group—Kosovo Albanians—deprived of political power by a local minority of Serbs backed by Belgrade. Splits between these two groups were ethnic, linguistic, and religious with virtually no overlap between them. Although the socio-demographic structure of Kosovo also included other small ethnic minorities such as Roma and Turks, the main line of confrontation existed between ethnic Albanians and ethnic Serbs, and the main bone of contention was over political power and the attendant privileges that it brought with it, such as access to education, healthcare, jobs, all of which had been largely denied to ethnic Albanians from the early 1990s onwards. Serb dominance in the 1990s, however, only reversed a pattern of discrimination experienced by Serbs themselves in the 1970s and 1980s when ethnic Albanians dominated the institutions of the province under the old Yugoslav constitution.

It would be misleading to assume that the two main groups in the conflicts—Serbs and Albanians—were homogeneous actors. Albanians were united by the common goal of achieving independence from Serbia, but agreed on little else. Some favoured violent rebellion, others argued for a campaign of civil disobedience. Some sought accommodation with local Serbs; for others every individual Serb was one too many in a territory in which Albanians claimed to have been the first settlers. Finally, some ethnic Albanians harboured a dream of a greater Albania uniting all Albanians in the Balkans in one state (and thus making territorial claims to

Macedonia, southern Serbia, and Montenegro as well), others 'merely' demanded a greater Kosovo bringing together all the Albanians from the former Yugoslavia, and others again were content with just an independent Kosovo.

Serbs in Kosovo were similarly divided over some crucial issues. Although some favoured accommodation with ethnic Albanians in order to preserve what was left of the former Yugoslavia, others took a more radical view. In particular, Serbian refugees from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina who had been resettled in Kosovo after losing their homes as a result of the wars fought across the former Yugoslavia had no intention of living anywhere but in a Serb-dominated state, even if this meant large-scale killings and expulsions of ethnic Albanians. This war-hardened and highly radicalized faction was the one that received most support from Belgrade, similar to the increasing support that militant Albanians, soon to become the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), received from the Albanian diaspora in western Europe and the USA. Thus, intra-ethnic factionalization and inter-ethnic discontent mutually fed off each other and contributed to the violent turn that the conflict increasingly took after 1996.

Although the situation on the ground was where most of the dynamics of escalation played out, it is equally clear that developments at other levels contributed to this and interacted with factors in Kosovo. Not only did outside forces support different factions within Kosovo and thus help swing the pendulum away from the possibility of accommodation, but they also had agendas of their own in which Kosovo and the conflict there were merely one among many factors. For Serb President Milosevic, Kosovo was the last stand in his desperate attempt to cling on to power in Belgrade. Allowing Kosovo to break away from what by then had become the two-state Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, consisting of Serbia and Montenegro and the two provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina within Serbia, was tantamount to conceding the end of even this much-reduced state. Having risen to power on the back of a rallying cry to defend Serbs wherever they lived and having lost this battle in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Milosevic saw himself

in no position to compromise; nor was any of the so-called democratic opposition in Serbia able or willing to challenge Milosevic over his Kosovo policy, because much of the Serbian public bought into the mythology over Kosovo—a historically significant, culturally important part of Serbia in which Serbs had been victimized by Albanians as much today as when they had been defeated in a fourteenth-century battle defending Christian Europe against the Ottoman Turks. Nor did Milosevic think that he needed to bow to international demands. Assuming Russia to be on his side and ready to stand up to Western powers, he was, however, sorely disappointed when this proved a miscalculation and NATO did launch air strikes against Serbia after the breakdown of negotiations in Rambouillet in March 1999.

For the international community, Kosovo was as important symbolically as it was for Milosevic. Having reacted too late and too indecisively, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to prevent the war and ethnic cleansing there, Kosovo was meant to be a lesson learned from earlier failure. In addition, NATO was on the look-out for a new mission in the post-Cold War world, and humanitarian intervention seemed a worthwhile goal for which to employ its military capabilities. Finally, Milosevic was no longer seen as the guarantor of stability in the Balkans as he had portrayed himself during and after the Dayton negotiations that ended the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Rather, he had become something like public enemy number 1, and strategists in Western capitals were well aware that defeating him in Kosovo would deal him a significant blow. At the same time, Kosovo was in itself considered a major factor of instability with regard to neighbouring Macedonia. Here relations between ethnic Albanians—about a quarter of the population—and ethnic Macedonians had been uneasy and tense, but violent conflict had been avoided throughout the 1990s. With the deteriorating situation in Kosovo, however, a very grave risk of spill-over was perceived, which the international community was desperate to avoid. Thus, achieving a particular settlement for Kosovo became very important: independence would have sent the wrong signal to a similarly aggrieved Albanian minority in Macedonia, while

standing by in the face of an increasingly brutal counter-insurgency campaign by Serbian security forces was equally counter-productive because this could have encouraged more radical elements among ethnic Macedonians to 'deal' with their particular situation in a similar way.

Thus, a multi-level analysis of the escalation of the Kosovo conflict reveals that grievances of ethnic groups, power struggles between and within them, personal agendas of power preservation, regional dynamics of past and present conflicts, and considerations of international security all interacted in a unique way that cannot be captured by broad generalizations about greed, creed, or grievances.

Another case that benefits from a more nuanced analysis at several levels is the Rwandan genocide, which is a particularly instructive example of why, by whom, and how an entire group can become the target of ethnic violence. Rwanda had a past history of inter-ethnic violence. Tutsi, a small minority of less than 20 per cent of the population, had ruled the country for a long period of time, backed by Belgium as the colonial power. They were ousted in 1959 when Rwanda became independent and held elections. The violence that accompanied and followed this 'revolution' until the late 1960s killed about 20,000 Tutsi and drove 10 to 15 times as many into exile. As discrimination continued in the years thereafter, the number of Tutsi in Rwanda decreased further. According to the 1991 census, the reliability of which is disputed, fewer than 10 per cent of Rwanda's population were Tutsi.

Decades of emigration and exile had radicalized many Tutsi in neighbouring Uganda from where they launched an attack on Rwanda in October 1990, spearheaded by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). Although initially not a serious military threat, Rwanda's Hutu president Juvenal Habyarimana saw the RPF as an opportunity to consolidate his power and suppress internal Hutu opposition to his nearly two-decade reign. In the course of the next three-and-a-half years, Habyarimana and his circle of advisers and allies managed to 're-align' Rwanda's population into true 'Rwandans'—those Hutu who supported the incumbent

regime—and 'enemies'—the Tutsi in Rwanda and Hutu who opposed the president. Identifying Tutsi did not pose great logistical difficulties. Each citizen of Rwanda had had to register his or her ethnic identity since colonial times, and the physical appearances of Hutu and Tutsi are also different. However, despite a legacy of Tutsi domination, there was a relatively high degree of integration between the two groups. They spoke the same language, and had a shared history, similar customs, traditions, and religious beliefs. There were few signs of a cultural division of labour or of a segregated school system. In addition, divisions within each group were often more important than ethnic group membership: regional distinctions between the north-west and the rest of the country and between the poor and the better off were much more significant for most ordinary Rwandans, regardless of their ethnic background.

Yet, as the invasion of the RPF grew in pace and the government became militarily weakened and was eventually forced into signing a peace agreement that provided for Tutsi participation in the government, it became increasingly easy for Habyarimana and his supporters to create a situation in which perceptions of a security dilemma could take hold among large sections of the country's Hutu population. In parallel, Habyarimana and his allies began to train the youth wing of his party militarily, as did other Hutu parties. The spread of militias and the fact that most of their attacks on Tutsi and political opponents of the president were not prosecuted made violence more widely acceptable to many Rwandans. As the RPF grew politically and militarily more powerful, security concerns spread beyond supporters of the president to other Hutu who were easily susceptible to the political messages broadcast by the new pro-regime radio station Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines and joined the so-called Hutu Power movement, especially after Tutsi soldiers in neighbouring Burundi killed the country's first democratically elected Hutu president in October 1993. This easily confirmed anxieties among Rwandan Hutu about Tutsi intentions to restore the old regime of Tutsi-dominated government and made many of them fear for their status and security.

With increasing numbers of militarily trained young Hutu available, most of them armed with machetes specifically imported for subsequent use in the genocide, and all of them indoctrinated with fear and hatred of Tutsi, all that was needed for the mass killings of Tutsi and Hutu opponents to president Habyarimana and his regime to begin was a triggering event. This occurred when on 6 April 2004 a plane carrying Habyarimana was shot down. In a coup-like scenario, the Presidential Guard and other troops commanded by Habyarimana's closest associates initially turned against Hutu government officials and politicians opposed to the late president and his regime, thus establishing the political control of state institutions necessary to begin the systematic slaughter of almost one million Tutsi over the coming months. Virtually unopposed by a small UN force in the country and facing an international community unable and unwilling to intervene quickly and decisively, the genocide organizers gradually forced and gave incentives to ever greater numbers of Hutu to participate in the killing of their Tutsi neighbours.

Soldiers and policemen led the initial stages of the genocide in the capital and in major cities and towns. Their military training and technological advantages over unarmed Tutsi civilians made it possible for comparatively few of them to commit large-scale murder and prepare the ground for militias and civilians armed with machetes and other low-tech weaponry to finish what the military had begun with their machine guns.

By the time that the organizers of the genocide were weakened militarily by the advances of the RPF and threatened by an increasing determination in the organized international community to stop the genocide, they had murdered about three-quarters of the Tutsi population of Rwanda. Popular support for the genocide also waned, and ever-smaller numbers of civilians participated in it. Intra-Hutu rivalries began to resurface, further undermining the government, which was eventually defeated by the RPF in summer 2004, engaging in massive revenge killings that cost the lives of tens of thousands of Hutu by the end of August.

In almost all other ethnic conflicts in recent years, genocidal

violence of the scale seen in Rwanda has been largely absent. Violence, rape, torture, and mass killings have, however, occurred, but their purpose has been to terrorize, intimidate, and expel members of other ethnic groups rather than to exterminate an entire group. Take the example of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Even though the conflict in this successor state of the former Yugoslavia was not the first one in which mass rape was used as a weapon of war, it was the one that brought the issue to broad public attention. With tens of thousands of rape victims—a conservative estimate by the European Commission in 1993 already spoke of 20,000—Bosnia is among the largest documented cases of this kind in recent history. What distinguishes the use of rape as a weapon of war from instances where rape occurs in the course of conflict is that it is a deliberate, systematic, and well-organized strategy that serves purposes well beyond the sexual gratification of those who commit the crime. As a military strategy and an ethnonationalist 'policy', rape, often conducted in public, is used systematically to force communities to flee their villages in fear of further atrocities. This kind of rape-induced ethnic cleansing often acts in the fashion of the domino principle: the people fleeing one village will tell their stories to people in the next village who will then also try to escape. If used only in this way, rape as a military strategy aiming at ethnic cleansing would need only a small number of actual cases to terrorize an entire ethnic group into giving up their homeland. Yet rape as an ethnonationalist policy expresses deep inter-ethnic hatred and manifests itself in the kind of mass rape that happened in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the early 1990s. It is meant to humiliate, demoralize, and eventually destroy an ethnic group, not merely to force it to leave a piece of territory claimed by a different group. Rape as a war strategy and expression of extreme ethnonationalist hatred often goes hand in hand with torture and killing.⁶ Many rape victims in Bosnia and Herzegovina were subjected to prolonged ordeals of rape and torture in prisons and camps, and some of the victims were later killed by their tormentors for fear of retribution.

Even though rape, torture, summary executions, and ethnic

cleansing were committed by all parties in the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Serbs were infamous for the largest number of these gross human rights violations. Well-documented accounts of their victims allow the establishment of a pattern of modern ethnic warfare that, although often connected to the harrowing images of places like Srebrenica, has been commonplace in many other conflicts. Regular or irregular forces would arrive in villages and towns, often after prolonged bombardments and artillery fire, and concentrate the non-Serb population in public squares or buildings. Following the public execution of political and community leaders, women, children, and elderly people would be 'evacuated' while men of fighting age would be liquidated and their bodies buried in mass graves. What is particularly disturbing about many such cases is that local Serbs often aided paramilitaries in identifying, torturing, raping, and killing their non-Serb neighbours—out of fear of reprisals, and, as in Rwanda, out of a sense of misplaced loyalty to their own ethnic group, out of greed in the hope of sharing in the spoils of looting left properties, and often out of sheer lust in humiliating people of a different ethnic group.

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is by no means unique. In many ways, it even pales when compared with other incidents of ethnic conflict, such as in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where civilians have borne the brunt of the humanitarian disaster unleashed by one of Africa's worst conflicts. Even since the official 'end' of the war, the area remains cut-off from government services and humanitarian aid by continuing insecurity and because of its geographical remoteness. Human suffering is additionally compounded by the plethora of human rights violations inflicted on the civilian population by as many as 10 different armed groups active in the area, including local gangs, government forces, and irregular and regular combatants based in neighbouring countries. Civilians also suffer disproportionately from the consequences of the material destruction afflicted on agricultural land, local hospitals, health centres, and schools. Sporadic and local violence has not only taken a devastating toll on civilians but has also threatened the resurgence of a wider war involving

neighbouring Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda. In early June 2004, Tutsi forces of the so-called RCD-Goma, who are opposed to the transitional government established as part of the peace agreement, attacked and took control of the capital of South Kivu province, Bukavu, close to the border with Rwanda. According to an Amnesty International report, more than 100 civilians were killed and many rapes committed in the few days before forces loyal to the transitional government recaptured the city.⁷ The report also emphasises that the scale at which rape was committed in the DRC was unprecedented: some 40,000 cases have been reported in total for the eastern areas of the DRC, which is likely to be only the tip of the iceberg. Health problems, unwanted pregnancies, and being socially ostracized are the most common consequences that rape victims have to endure, in addition to the violence and humiliation committed against them during the actual rape or during their often weeks- and months-long enslavement in the camps of armed groups.

Impunity, 'reward', superstition, and fetishism are among the most common individual motivations to commit rape, according to Amnesty International. However, as sexual violence in the DRC, just as in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bangladesh, Chechnya, and elsewhere, also has a clear ethnic dimension, individual motivation is not enough to account for its widespread occurrence. Rape remains a strategy of ethnic warfare to assert control, demoralize opponents, and force people to flee. One of Amnesty International's informants and her two sisters were gang raped in Bukavu in June 2004 while rebel Tutsi forces had control of the town. Her account is typical of the experiences of the countless victims of sexual violence in ethnic conflicts everywhere:

That evening, we could see them sitting with their vehicle in front of our house. The electricity in the town had been cut off and as soon as it got dark, they came in. They looted everything, and took it away in a truck. Then they asked us how old we all were. They only took the youngest—my mother and eldest sister were not touched. Jeanette was raped by seven soldiers in the storeroom, Francine by eight soldiers in the shop. They put me in the bathroom. I fought with five of the soldiers when they tried to

make my brothers watch me being raped. But they beat me so hard. They tore off my clothes. It was the first time I'd had sexual relations. When I bled the soldier hit me in the face because he said I had 'dirtied' him. At some point my mother and brothers were brought in to watch. When one group had finished, another group came in. I just lay there, without moving. It lasted all night.

These and other cases also illustrate in dramatic fashion the inability and unwillingness of the organized international community to intervene decisively during the early stages of this and many similar conflicts. In Srebrenica, probably the best-documented case of this kind, 7,500 Bosnian Muslim men were killed in what was supposed to be a UN-designated safe haven, protected by some 800 poorly equipped Dutch soldiers with an ill-conceived mandate. By the time the Bosnian Serb army under the now indicted war criminal Ratko Mladić took Srebrenica, the UN peace keepers, morally and physically exhausted after a long siege, had little resistance to offer and received no back-up from international forces elsewhere in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Knowingly or unknowingly, they assisted Mladić and his troops by helping separate men from women and children, who were 'evacuated' from Srebrenica and negotiated their own free passage from the area while the remaining Muslim men were summarily executed.

More than a decade later, a similar scenario of ethnic cleansing, rape, torture, and mass killings unfolded in the Darfur region of western Sudan. In many ways, it bore all the hallmarks of the Bosnian experience: an ethnic conflict in which irregular forces fight each other, one side with the backing of the government, leading to massive displacement, a humanitarian crisis within Sudan and neighbouring Chad, and an international community that takes little if any action. Violence in the Darfur region in western Sudan erupted in February 2003 when an armed rebel group, calling itself the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A), began to launch attacks on government targets. Made up mainly of members of the Fur, Zaghawa, and Masalit ethnic groups of the region, it claimed underdevelopment as its main grievance. Two months later a second group, the so-called Justice and Equality

Movement (JEM), emerged, and the two groups continued their insurgency against the central government in Khartoum at a time when peace negotiations aimed at ending the decade-old conflict between the predominantly Arab Muslim north and the Christian black African south were headed towards conclusion, with a deal beginning to take shape according to which the south was to gain greater autonomy and a greater share in the oil revenue generated from its relatively rich natural resource base. Long a concern of the international community, the widespread, albeit fluctuating, attention that the north-south conflict had received was something that had eluded the western regions of Sudan thus far. The conflict between settled black African communities and nomadic Arabs and their Janjaweed militia had similarly been ongoing for some time, but the humanitarian disaster with which the international community was confronted in the summer of 2004 began to develop only as the government responded to the SLA and JEM insurgency. The main trigger for the government's counter-insurgency operation seems to have been an SLA attack on the airport of Al-Fashir, in which 70 members of the Sudanese army were killed. As in Kosovo some years earlier, insurgents used violence strategically to provoke a disproportionate government crackdown, in the hope of generating international attention and intervention. Their failure to achieve the latter has had tremendous consequences in terms of human suffering, borne, as always, by the civilian population of the region.⁸

During the conflict that developed, rebels as well as government-backed militias and government troops are said to have committed human rights abuses against civilians. Amnesty International reported in July 2004 that the SLA and JEM were implicated in a number of cases of deliberately targeting civilians, including torture and rape. There were also allegations of unlawful killings and hostage taking on the part of the insurgents, but few, if any, of them could be verified by the human rights organization as a result of the difficult situation on the ground.⁹

The government's main strategy so far has been to rely on irregular forces, the so-called Janjaweed, who are given free reign in their

raids on villages of other ethnic groups thought to support the SLA and JEM. A young woman, interviewed by Amnesty International in a refugee camp in eastern Chad, described the tactics of the Janjaweed when attacking her village:

The attack took place at dawn in September 2003 when many Janjaweed arrived on camels, horses and by cars. Some Arab women, on donkeys and on camels, accompanied them. The women took part in the looting. I was sleeping when the attack took place. I was taken away by the attackers in khaki and in civilian clothes, along with dozens of other girls, and had to walk for three hours. During the day, we were beaten up and the Janjaweed they told us: 'you, the black women, we will exterminate you; you have no God.' We were taken to a place in the bush where the Janjaweed raped us several times at night. For three days, we did not receive food and almost no water. After three days, the Janjawid had to move to another place and set us free. They told us: 'next time we come, we will exterminate you all, we will not even leave a child alive'.¹⁰

There have also been reports of joint operations between government troops and militia. This is a 'tried and tested' approach that the government in Khartoum had also used in the civil war with the south, and its consequences are, if anything, even more devastating in the Darfur region. The scorched-earth tactics of the Janjaweed had, by early July 2004, resulted in 30,000 dead, 1.2 million people displaced within Sudan, and 130,000 refugees in neighbouring Chad. Using executions, rape, and torture, the aim of the government and its allied militias appears to be the systematic ethnic cleansing of the Darfur region in order to quell the rebellion, 'reward' its allies, and set an example for other potentially restive regions in the country that resent the exclusive nature of the north-south deal on power sharing and wealth sharing.

In the same way in which the international community remained restrained, if not silent, in relation to Kosovo until the Kosovo Liberation Army took up arms against Serbian government forces and Serb civilians because President Milosevic was thought to be an important guarantor of stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina, nothing was done over Darfur for nearly two years in order not to endanger the north-south peace negotiations. In both cases, the

result of delayed action by the organized international community has contributed to the unfolding of major humanitarian crises. But there is another important point that arises from this discussion. American scholar Alan Kuperman has repeatedly made the point that international intervention creates a moral hazard. As the international community, spurred on by widespread news coverage, tends to intervene in cases of gross human rights violations, insurgent movements who are too weak to win their battles with the central government without external assistance have a clear incentive to provoke vastly disproportionate government crack-downs affecting significant numbers of civilians. There is certainly a lot of substance to this argument, especially if one considers Kosovo, Rwanda, and more recently Darfur. What it also highlights is that belated, if any, international intervention remains the predominant feature of the international community's approach to most conflicts, but also that rebel movements are prepared to sacrifice large numbers of innocent civilians in pursuit of their goals. This general acceptance of innocent victims, the consequential brutalization of all sides in ethnic conflicts, and the long-term traumatic effects on the societies in question are some of the most worrying features of this kind of 'new war'.¹¹

Yet, not all the news is bad. Over the past several years, there have also been cases in which intervention occurred early on and prevented the massive escalation of conflicts into the genocidal violence that we have seen in Rwanda and to a lesser extent in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the mid-1990s, and in the Darfur region in western Sudan more recently. The best examples of relatively successful preventions of possibly major ethnic conflicts are Macedonia and Burundi. As we return to specific strategies of conflict resolution in Chapter 5, including the role of external actors, a brief account of these two cases focusing on the key strategies applied in both conflicts will suffice to examine this other dimension of the roles of international organizations in ethnic conflicts.

As part of the Balkan quagmire, Macedonia had been on the radar screen of international organizations since the early 1990s. The only one of the former Yugoslav republics to secede peacefully from

the socialist federation, it has a significant minority of ethnic Albanians, comprising about 25 per cent of the country's total population and living mostly in the western part of the country bordering Kosovo and Albania. In the 1990s, small UN and NATO missions prevented a spill-over of the conflict from Kosovo to Macedonia. Yet, frustrated with a lack of recognition of their distinct identity, especially their language, in public life and education and supported, if not incited, by their ethnic brethren in Kosovo, ethnic Albanians in Macedonia formed their own National Liberation Army and began to attack government targets in 2000. Initially low level, the violence soon escalated with insurgents shelling the capital's airport and government forces retaliating against ethnic Albanian settlements suspected of sheltering the rebels. Intense pressure from the EU and NATO on both sides, as well as on Kosovo Albanian politicians, and mediation of negotiations between the Albanian political parties in Macedonia and the government in the summer of 2001 led to the conclusion of the so-called Ohrid Agreement in August, bringing a swift end to the violence. Subsequent cease-fire monitoring missions sponsored by the EU ensured that both sides stuck to their commitment to give up violence. Although the EU-led conflict prevention effort arguably failed to prevent all violence, it managed to stop hostilities before they escalated into a full-blown civil war. The two military operations by the EU—*Concordia* and *Proxima*—conducted to support the stabilization of the country, and thus to create conditions under which the Ohrid Agreement could be implemented, have arguably also been part of a larger strategy of efforts to prevent re-ignition of the conflict and towards eventual settlement.

In Burundi, the stakes were far higher, because here, as in neighbouring Rwanda, a potential genocide was on the cards. In Burundi, ethnicity began to dominate political and economic competition only after the country's independence in 1966. As in Rwanda, the minority Tutsi population—14 per cent—came to control the government and military, whereas the majority Hutu population—85 per cent—remained confined to providing labour for the large agricultural sector. Little wonder that the Hutu developed serious and

legitimate grievances about their situation as well as a determination to change this. Equally unsurprisingly, however, the Tutsi had little interest in giving up their privileged status.

As a consequence, Burundi has seen inter-ethnic violence for almost four decades. In 1972, a failed Hutu rebellion led to 150,000 Hutu killed and tens of thousands displaced. Another 150,000 Hutu died in 1988 in the course of violent confrontations between the (Tutsi-dominated) armed forces of Burundi and the Hutu opposition movement. Again, there were tens of thousands of displaced people and large numbers of refugees fled to neighbouring countries, especially Tanzania. Here they formed their own militias and intensified their attacks against government targets and Tutsi civilians in Burundi. In turn, army reprisals killed further thousands of Hutu and forced many more out of the country. In 1993, under a new constitution, multiparty elections took place resulting in the leader of the (Hutu) *Front pour la démocratie au Burundi*, Melchior Ndadaye, winning the presidency. Four months later, in October 1993, Ndadaye was assassinated by radical Tutsi elements in the armed forces, triggering a fully fledged civil war in which, first, large numbers of Tutsi were massacred, and then several hundred thousand Hutu were killed in quasi-genocidal retaliation strikes by the Tutsi-dominated military mostly against civilians. In April 1994, the newly elected president of Burundi, Cyprien Ntaryamira, together with his Rwandan counterpart Juvenal Habyarimana, died in a plane crash, which triggered the long-prepared Rwandan genocide. Hutu refugees from Rwanda further destabilized the situation in Burundi and heightened the acute perception of a serious security dilemma among all parties. A massacre of Hutu refugees in 1995 was followed by a successful Tutsi coup in 1996. A further coup attempt failed in 2001, and sporadic but intense violence continued until 2004, all of which begs the question how Burundi can be considered a successful case of conflict prevention.

Conflict prevention is a moving target. To the extent that we can say that fully fledged civil war in Macedonia was prevented, it is just as easy to condemn the failure to prevent the outbreak of

violence between the ethnic Albanian National Liberation Army and government forces earlier on. In Burundi, the success–failure equation is similar: the international community failed to prevent all violence, but succeeded in averting genocide, the ingredients and example for which were all present. Similar to the situation in Macedonia, a sense of guilt and the lessons learned from failure elsewhere were the fundamental reason why extensive efforts to prevent genocidal conflict escalation in Burundi were made and eventually succeeded. The UN established a mission for Burundi immediately after the 1993 coup. Within a few years, and especially after the genocide in Rwanda and the escalating conflicts in the DRC, the UN changed from a country-specific approach to a regional one and appointed a Special Representative of the Secretary General for the entire Great Lakes Region. A proposal by the then UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to invoke Chapter VII of the UN Charter, which allows for peace enforcement without the consent of the warring parties, failed, mostly as a result of a lack of support from France and the USA, which wanted to avoid a repetition of other failed Chapter VII missions, such as in Somalia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Organization for African Unity (OAU, later renamed African Union [AU]) also focused its attention on the ensuing crisis and crucially began to facilitate all-party peace talks under the leadership of former Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere. The OAU's basic goal was to engage Burundi in negotiations. Between the spring of 1996 and 1998 several unsuccessful rounds of on-and-off negotiations were held in Arusha, Tanzania. After Nyerere's death in 1998, the peace process regained momentum when Nelson Mandela was appointed chief mediator and managed to secure wider regional and international support for the Arusha process, resulting in a transitional power-sharing agreement, signed on 28 August 2000. Regional support was crucial in brokering this success. Rwanda, Tanzania, and the DRC were determined to end the conflict that destabilized the entire region and acted collectively and mostly within the framework of the OAU to achieve this.

The case of Burundi is also noteworthy for the involvement of

non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as active players in an ethnic conflict rather than as merely delivery vehicles of humanitarian aid. After the 1996 coup in Burundi, the Rome-based Community of Sant'Egidio facilitated secret peace talks between the Tutsi government and the Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie (CNDD)—together with its military wing, the Forces pour la défense de la démocratie (FDD), one of the main armed Hutu opposition groups. Four rounds of meetings in Rome in 1996 and 1997 did not, however, end in a political settlement, because the parties could not agree on a new constitution. Only after the EU and the USA, which backed these efforts by the Community of Sant'Egidio, had had to acknowledge the failure of the talks, and the government and CNDD re-engaged in the Arusha process, which was backed by the UN and OAU and by 1998 mediated by Nelson Mandela, did the process move towards an inclusive settlement, even though the FDD and another Hutu rebel group initially refused to participate in it. Although there has been significant and legitimate criticism of Sant'Egidio's secret negotiation efforts and failure to involve other Hutu guerilla groups, it did, however, manage to engage representatives of the government and the CNDD/FDD into negotiations for a political solution, thus breaking down barriers between two of the major conflict parties.

The most important lesson that can be learned about conflict prevention, or more precisely the prevention of genocidal conflict escalation, from Burundi and Macedonia is that there must be an engagement of all conflict parties in conflict settlement. The early failure of Nyerere's efforts to broker a breakthrough in Arusha in 1996 and 1997 was the result of the parallel, but equally non-inclusive, negotiations in Rome. Thus, if the international community is partial towards talks with moderates only and lacks comprehensive coordination of all external efforts, it is bound to fail in conflict prevention. This, of course, must not be taken as blueprint prescription for successful conflict prevention as such: even well-coordinated, sustained, and inclusive outside efforts will always be limited to the extent that domestic actors have, or lack, a genuine interest in peace. They can be given incentives, and

sometimes pressured to develop such an interest, but in the end external mediation is unlikely to overcome a domestic determination to fight a specific conflict to the bitter end.

Benign and constructive intervention by international organizations or coalitions of states is not, however, the only form of external influence on ethnic conflicts. The other two major external actors that we need to consider in our treatment of who participates in ethnic conflicts, and how, are diasporas and neighbouring states. To begin with the latter, neighbouring states, broadly defined as states of the same region even if they do not have a common border with the state in which the ethnic conflict takes place, often become willingly or unwillingly involved in such conflicts. We can distinguish between two different ways in which other states may be drawn into an ongoing conflict—diffusion and escalation.¹² Diffusion means that because of an ongoing conflict in one state conflict also occurs, or is at least more likely, in another. Both of the examples discussed earlier in this chapter fall into this category. The tensions in Rwanda and Burundi mutually heightened perceptions of a security dilemma among Tutsi and Hutu in both countries, and the 1993 coup in Burundi and the violence that followed it were, arguably, one of the factors that led radical Hutu elites in Rwanda to intensify their preparations for genocide.

In Macedonia, the conflict in neighbouring Kosovo had a similar effect. Radicalized and well-armed elements among the ethnic Albanian population in Kosovo lent their active support to their cousins in neighbouring Macedonia in the increasingly bitter struggle for more rights and recognition in which they were involved. The other way in which ethnic conflict in one country can 'spread' is through outside states intervening in an ongoing conflict elsewhere. Such escalation has occurred, for example, in the case of the DRC where several neighbouring states have intervened by supporting or harbouring militants, sending their own troops in to 'pacify' border regions, but also in order to share in the spoils of exploiting the DRC's rich mineral resource base. If we look at the Balkan wars in the 1990s, Serbia's involvement in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Croatia could also be seen as a case of

escalation. The rationale behind Serbian strategy was, however, different. It was a mission of territorial aggrandizement seeking to create a Greater Serbia, and it had a clear domestic purpose—helping Milosevic tighten his grip on power in what was left of the former Yugoslavia. Finally, the example of Russia's role in the south Caucasus, especially in Georgia, is typical of the behaviour of a regional hegemon trying to assert and maintain a position of power and influence in neighbouring states. The presence of Russian 'peacekeeping' troops in Georgia's two break-away regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia ensures the continued separation of both territories from the rest of Georgia and keeps them beyond the control of the central government in Tbilisi. At the same time, Russia justifies its presence there both with an existing mandate of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which authorized Russian peacekeepers in South Ossetia, and with the need to fight Chechen terrorism, which is said to have bases in Abkhazia as well as in other regions of Georgia bordering Chechnya. Thus, the motivations that draw neighbouring states into ethnic conflicts elsewhere range from local and regional stability to serving national security interests to pursuing a specific domestic agenda to seeking economic gain. The two predominant modalities of their involvement are either direct military intervention or the covert or not so covert support for militant groups. In other words, states fight in ethnic conflicts elsewhere either themselves or by proxy. As we have seen in the preceding section, and will see again in Chapter 5, not all intervention by neighbouring states is malign. Often intervention is driven by humanitarian concern rather than narrowly defined self-interest. From this perspective, a temporary escalation of an ethnic conflict through the active military involvement of one or more neighbouring states may be a legitimate step towards an eventual peace settlement that brings the conflict to an end.

As with states, the role of diaspora communities can be both positive and negative. Diasporas can support moderates in their search for peace, but they have also been known to provide the funding for militants who pursue an otherwise legitimate agenda

by means of violence. In many cases, the two even go hand in hand, because splits within a community on the ground about how best to promote its interests are often reflected in the diaspora as well. Take the examples of Northern Ireland and Kosovo. The Irish diaspora in the USA, for many years, was a major fundraising source for the IRA, but from the mid-1990s, and especially after the terrorist attacks on the USA on 11 September 2001 (9/11), it became instrumental in securing and maintaining two IRA ceasefires and pushing the paramilitary organization towards its first-ever act of decommissioning some of its weapons. In Kosovo, the Albanian diaspora communities in western Europe and the USA for many years provided financial assistance to Ibrahim Rugova's Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) which peacefully pursued the goal of Kosovo independence and funded the Kosovo Albanian shadow state after 1991. However, a large portion of the funds that helped the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) establish itself in the mid-1990s also came from diaspora circles.

Another example of the destabilizing influence of diaspora groups is illustrated by recent developments in Macedonia. As part of the August 2001 Ohrid Agreement that ended the ethnic Albanian insurgency for greater rights and recognition in Macedonia, the country had to implement a controversial decentralization law that was to give greater autonomy to local governments, but also meant redrawing local administrative boundaries and reducing the number of local districts, leading to ethnic Macedonians losing their majority position to ethnic Albanians in a number of the new districts. While the inter-ethnic coalition government haggled in secret for weeks if not months over the precise details of the reform, unofficial local referenda were already taking place against any proposed boundary changes among ethnic Macedonians. The government, with a secure parliamentary majority, chose to ignore these referenda rather than engage with the population and address their concerns. This provided an opportunity for the World Congress of Macedonians to enter the debate. This international diaspora organization advocates 'Macedonia for the Macedonians' and casts its territorial net suitably wide to include not only

the current Republic of Macedonia but also Aegean Macedonia, 'presently' within the borders of Greece, Pirin Macedonia 'at the moment' within the borders of Bulgaria, and two 'currently' Albanian regions, Mala Prespa and Golo Brdo.¹³ It launched and funded an initiative for a referendum in Macedonia against the decentralization law and gathered 180,000 signatures in a six-month campaign—30,000 more than needed to force the government to hold a referendum on the decentralization law. Even though the referendum failed, because of deliberately low turn-out on the part of ethnic Albanians and pro-accommodation ethnic Macedonians, the issue has created new security concerns in Macedonia and throughout the wider region, contributed to renewed polarization in the country, and cast at least some doubt on the long-term future of inter-ethnic relations which had stabilized after the brief spell of violent conflict in 2001.

Although the impact of states, diaspora groups, and international governmental organizations and NGOs on ethnic conflicts can be both positive and negative as we have seen, that of criminal and terrorist networks is exclusively negative. The main reason for this is that criminal and terrorist networks benefit from the instability and insecurity created by ethnic conflicts. In turn, political leaders in conflict situations often depend on resources and revenues generated by organized criminal activity. As a consequence, criminal and political objectives become ever more closely intertwined the longer a conflict lasts, and the conflict becomes more protracted because its continuation serves the interests of key players.

Links between ethnic conflicts and organized crime, and more recently also between ethnic conflicts and international terrorism, are very real and add another dimension to the complexity that these conflicts already pose. In Afghanistan, continued inter-ethnic tensions and violence facilitate, and are sustained by the country's vast opium growth and trade. Drug trafficking also provides much-needed resources to buy weapons and reward followers in Chechnya and in the various Uighur separatist conflicts involving China, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. Narcotics trafficking is also rampant in

the instability created by ethnic conflicts in Burma, Kosovo, Kenya, Laos, Malaysia, Lebanon, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, and the ethnic Albanian areas of southern Serbia bordering Kosovo. Drug-related organized crime may be the most common and most profitable activity that flourishes in the context of many ethnic conflicts, but it is not the only one. Human trafficking in its various forms—from the smuggling of illegal immigrants to that of prostitutes—is happening, for example, in Bangladesh, Chechnya, Kosovo, and Macedonia. Weapons are illegally traded and smuggled both for local 'consumption' and as a source of financing ongoing ethnic conflicts in Georgia, Ghana, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, the Solomon Islands, and Somalia. Kidnapping for ransom is common in Chechnya, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, the Philippines, and Somalia, whilst in Mauritania and Sudan it has also been associated with modern forms of slavery. Diamond smuggling has sustained several parties in the civil war in the DRC, as well as in a number of non-ethnic conflicts elsewhere in Africa. That the connections between ethnic conflict and organized crime are not simply a phenomenon in developing countries is evident from Northern Ireland. Here paramilitary groups on both sides have financed their terrorist activities through a wide-ranging portfolio of criminal activities from extortion rackets to drug trading to the cross-border smuggling of petrol and diesel. On occasion, such as in the summer of 2001, turf wars between rival Loyalist gangs—otherwise claiming to defend the rights of Protestants—have exposed paramilitary activity as greed rather than grievance driven. This, however, does not mean that such conflicts are exclusively greed motivated. In many cases agendas of greed and grievance coexist in the same conflict, and not always in an uneasy way.¹⁴

Social, political, and economic instability, ethnic conflict, and organized crime often become so closely linked, and mutually reinforce each other to such an extent, that, over time, it becomes increasingly difficult to establish any clear causal relationships. In other words, in many cases it is impossible to determine whether criminal agendas drive ethno-political agendas or vice versa, whether instability is a cause or consequence of conflict and crime,

and it is often difficult to distinguish politicians from criminals, warlords from community leaders, and paramilitaries from businessmen. We have already seen how, in relation to the DRC, ethnic, political, economic, and security concerns became intertwined in such a way that the 'civil' war there eventually involved regular and irregular armed forces based in several different countries across the region. Links between organized crime and ethnically based politicians in the former Yugoslavia are equally strong, yet on occasion the business interests of criminal gangs trump the political and ethnic rivalries of nations and national minorities. Ethnic Albanian and ethnic Serb gangs have allegedly struck deals with each other in carving up the 'market' for the sex trade and illegal migration, and during the siege of Sarajevo, local crime networks used their pre-war links with criminals among Serbian paramilitaries to supply the city with food, petrol, weapons, and ammunition.

In some of the successor states of the former Soviet Union, crime has also flourished, in particular in those regions where ethnic conflicts have occurred. Take the example of Transdniestria, a region in Moldova that has had quasi-state status for more than 10 years now. Here, the complete absence of any recognizable system of accountable and transparent government has created and sustained a continued market for illegal weapons, a flourishing drugs trade and transnational drug trafficking, automobile theft, the smuggling of various types of goods across borders, and a sizeable contribution to illegal migration and the sex trade. The situation in Transdniestria is in many ways similar to that in the southern Caucasus and central Asia. Politics, business, and crime have become indistinguishable in Georgia's separatist regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, in Nagorno-Karabakh, a territory disputed between Armenia and Azerbaijan for more than a decade, and in parts of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan.

Increasingly over the past 10 years, in many of the cases where a link between ethnic conflict and organized crime has emerged, a triadic relationship has subsequently become dominant, incorporating international terrorist networks or their local offspring. This relationship is predominantly one of convenience and necessity

rather than one that has its basis in a common political agenda. Nevertheless, it contributes to perpetuating ethnic conflicts, delegitimizes often justified grievances of ethno-political movements, and presents governments with an opportunity to crack down on opponents without significant outside criticism, which in turn contributes to increasing polarization and intractability of ethnic conflicts.

The primary link between ethnic conflicts and local, regional, and international terrorist networks remains, however, the instability created by ethnic conflicts that seriously limits central government control over portions of states' territories, which can then become safe havens for terrorists to establish the bases from which they can plan operations and create the training camps in which they can 'educate' local and foreign recruits. Take the example of Somalia. The almost complete lack of anything resembling, even remotely, a functioning central government means that it is an ideal location for international terrorist networks offering easy access to Asia Minor and presenting a potential transit route from and to the Arab world. A domestic fundamentalist Islamic group, Al-Ittihad al-Islami, has over the past few years carried out attacks in Ethiopia, targeted Western interests in the Horn of Africa, and maintained links with al-Qaeda and provided local assistance to its members.

Similar cases in which social, political, and economic instability, causing and resulting from ethnic conflicts, provides the conditions in which terrorists can operate exist in Asia. Despite a large international troop presence, continuing lawlessness in Afghanistan and the rivalries between local warlords, who often have their support bases in specific clans and ethnic groups, still create the conditions in which remnants of the Taliban and significant numbers of al-Qaeda members can operate with impunity in the Afghan-Pakistan border regions. Further to the east in Asia, Kashmir remains a terrorist flashpoint providing a focus of activity for Islamist terror groups infiltrating from Pakistan and Pakistan-controlled Kashmir and attacking Indian government targets in the region as well as in India proper. In south-east Asia, the Philippines are

another terrorist hotspot. Separatist Muslim forces in Mindanao have been 'credited' with a number of domestic terrorist attacks, whilst regional terrorist groups, such as Jemaah Islamiya, have used the Philippines as a basis for operations in the wider Asia-Pacific region. Other separatist groups in south-east Asia, such as in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, have, similar to those in the southern Philippines and in contrast to Jemaah Islamiya, a primarily domestic agenda in their struggle. However, their background in the Afghan Jihad in the 1980s fighting Soviet forces that had invaded the country in 1979 still provides regional links among them and between local groups and wider international terrorist networks such as al-Qaeda.

In the Middle East, Israel, the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank remained the main focus of terrorist activity, even though terrorist organizations, such as Hamas, the Palestine Islamic Jihad, the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, and Hizbollah, received support from and shelter in other states in the region, including Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan. Suicide bombings, rocket attacks, and car bombs remain the preferred tactic of these organizations, who focus their activities predominantly on Israel, but who have occasionally also attacked Western targets in the region.

Links between terrorists and the parties fighting in ethnic conflicts are not a unique feature of the Middle East, Asia, and parts of Africa. In Europe, Georgia remains a crucial terrorist 'hub' for Chechen terrorists and their foreign partners. Bosnia and Herzegovina, too, continues to struggle to combat terrorism in the form of foreign Islamic extremists who provided support to Bosnian Muslim forces during the war in the early 1990s, and have subsequently used their local contacts to build a network of Islamic organizations, such as the Benevolence International Foundation, the Al-Haramain Islamic Foundation, and the Global Relief Fund, all of which reportedly have direct links to al-Qaeda.

In many parts of the world in which ethnic conflicts are ongoing we are thus faced with an increasing complexity of involved actors and a concurrent overlapping and interlocked interest structure. This may not necessarily be a novel feature of ethnic conflicts, but

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it is one that has become more and more 'routine'. There are fewer and fewer 'traditional' ethnic conflicts in which an aggrieved minority fights for greater recognition and more rights. As Chapters 3 and 4 have demonstrated the stakes in contemporary ethnic conflicts are high and diverse for a range of different actors, who include political leaders of states and rebel movements, as well as ordinary criminals and international terrorists who all fight fierce and ruthless campaigns, predominantly against civilians. This has important implications for the management and settlement of ethnic conflicts—the issue that we turn to in Chapter 5.



1. Skulls of the victims of the Ntarama massacre in Rwanda during the 1994 genocide, Nyamata, February 2004. © Gianluigi Guercia/AFP/Getty Images