

# Africa's forgotten wars shame the media

## A Russian Perspective

By [Global Research](#)

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The world is holding its breath that the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas holds. Three weeks of violence killed and injured thousands, many of them civilians. The casualties in Gaza, however, pale in comparison with the numbers killed in Africa's many ongoing wars - many of which go unreported.

An army of journalists is leaving with the Israeli soldiers - about 1,500 have been reporting on Israel's war in Gaza, mostly from the same spot on the Israeli-Gaza border. Israel didn't allow journalists into Gaza during the offensive. The question is: where is the world's media circus heading next?

Not to Africa, for sure. While the cameras focused on the Israel-Gaza border for the 22 days of the conflict, human tragedies were unfolding on another continent.

Thousands were killed in the Democratic Republic of Congo as rebel fighting continues. In Darfur, 3,461 people died in the civil war; while in Zimbabwe, 1,500 died from cholera. However, very few cameras were recording these tragedies.

Yossi Meuller, an NBC producer, has covered news around the world. He has filmed Palestinian intifadas, the Yugoslavian civil war and has spent a few weeks in Africa. He says that Africa remains of little interest.

"Most of the time it was really a small story. Somalia was a story just because there was starvation and the interests of the USA were at stake. Nobody cares about what happened there," he said. "In Rwanda, we arrived after 30,000 or 60,000 people were killed. And we didn't care, nobody cared. It was a story for a few days, not more than that."

Genocide in Africa rarely makes breaking news headlines.

Some say the decision from where to report and what to report has nothing to do with the journalists but about money and politics.

"Nobody wants to touch Africa. People just want to make money in Africa, that's it. No country wants to be there. France ran away, Italy ran away, everybody ran away from Africa," said Meuller.

On Tuesday the world's cameras are all turned on Washington to record for the first time in history a black man becoming the leader of a superpower

It remains to be seen whether Barack Obama's policies can alter the media's agenda -

turning cameras onto Africa and keeping them there.

Ongoing wars and conflicts around the world

Democratic Republic Of Congo

### **Kivu Conflict**

2004 - Present

An armed conflict between the Military of the DR Congo and rebel forces of the National Congress for the Defence of the People (CNDP), led by Laurent Nkunda. Despite a peace deal signed in January 2008, the rebel forces have restarted the conflict. Nkunda says he is fighting to protect his Tutsi community from attack by Rwandan Hutu rebels in DR Congo. All sides are accused of committing atrocities against civilians, including mass rape. Since the fighting started officials state 5.4 million people have been killed, and some 45,000 continue to die each month. Children account for almost half of the deaths, many dying from disease and malnutrition as a result of the conflict.

Sudan

War in Dafur

2003 - Present

An ethnic and tribal conflict in the Dafur region of western Sudan. On the one side is the Sudanese Military and the militia group the Janjaweed. On the other side are rebel groups such as the Sudan Liberation Movement and the Justice and Equality Movement. An accurate death toll has been difficult to state due to the government's attempts to cover up the conflict, but estimates state 450,000 deaths and 2.5 million people displaced. The UN Mission has accused Sudan's government of orchestrating "gross violations" and taking part in war crimes against the people in Dafur.

Chad

Civil War in Chad

2005 - Present

Ongoing conflict involving the Chadian government and rebel groups such as the United Front for Democratic Change. Because of the rebel group's affiliation with Janjaweed militias, the Chad War has largely become an extension of the conflict in Dafur. Sudan has been accused of involvement but denies allegations. Estimates of deaths and casualties: over 400 Chadian forces and almost 700 rebel forces.

Somalia

Somali Civil War

1988 - Present

It began with an insurgency against the repressive regime of dictator Siad Barre, who was ousted from power in 1991. The situation soon spread to a humanitarian crisis and a state of anarchy. The conflict has since led to a number of self-declared autonomous states within Somalia and order has still not been restored. According to human rights groups the Islamist-led insurgency that began in early 2007 has killed almost 9,000.

## Uganda

### Lord's Resistance Army insurgency

1987 - Present

A Guerilla campaign by the Lord's Resistance Army waged against the Ugandan government. This is one of Africa's longest-running conflicts and has led to a severe humanitarian crisis, with the LRA accused of widespread human rights violations such as torture, rape, abduction of civilians, use of child soldiers and massacres. The estimated death toll is 12,000, with many more dying from disease and malnutrition as a direct result of the conflict.

## Nigeria

### Conflict in the Niger Delta

2004 - Present

Ongoing ethnic and political unrest. Nigeria's Delta region is home to vast oil reserves, making the country one of the world's largest oil exporters. Competition for oil wealth has fueled violence between a number of ethnic groups. Armed militia groups, such as the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta, are dedicated to the struggle against what they see as exploitation of the region. The favoured tactics of armed rebels are sabotaging oil production and kidnapping foreign workers for ransom. The death toll is unknown.

## Algeria, Mauritania and Morocco

### Insurgency in the Maghreb

2002 - Present

Conflict waged against the government by the Islamist militia group the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, which has allied itself with the Al Qaeda Organisation in the Islamic Maghreb. Insurgency is marked by terrorist attacks such as suicide bombings. Death toll 6,000 on both sides.

## Sri Lanka

### Sri Lankan Civil War

1983 - Present

Between the government and the Tamil Tigers, an armed separatist organisation which is fighting for the creation of an independent state named Tamil Eelam. It's one of the world's deadliest ongoing armed conflicts, killing 70,000 people since it began. 200,000 people have been displaced within the country.

## Pakistan

### The War in North-West Pakistan

2004 - Present

An armed conflict between the Pakistani Army and local Islamist militants the Taliban, as well as foreign extremists. The tensions stem from the Pakistani Army's search for members of Al Qaeda in the mountainous Waziristan area, which was met by armed resistance from local tribesmen. The death toll: 5,000 militants, over 5,500 civilians and 1,500 Pakistani soldiers.

## Mexico

## Mexican Drug War

2006 - Present

An ongoing armed conflict between rival drug cartels and government forces. Mexico is the main supply route of Colombian cocaine entering the United States. As a result of government crackdowns, many cartels have been left without leaders, but this has led to violent power struggles between potential new leaders. Around 14,000 have been killed on both sides.

## Colombia

### The Colombian Armed Conflict

1964 - Present

Ongoing guerrilla insurgency campaigns against successive Colombian governments ever since the organizations the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia and the National Liberation Army were founded in the 60's. Estimates suggest that the conflict has claimed the lives of over 34,000 combatants and over 18,000 civilians.

## Philippines

### Insurgency in the Philippines

1969 - Present

Double-sided insurgency against the government by both Islamist and Communist armed groups who carry out bombings, assassinations and abductions. The conflict has caused the deaths of over 160,000 since the start. Many of the militant groups are deemed "foreign terrorist organisations" by the US. Since the US launched Operation Enduring Freedom in 2002 (aimed at advising the Filipino army in combating terrorism) just over 400 Filipino soldiers and almost 1,000 militants have been killed.

## Turkey

The Turkey-Kurdistan Workers Party Conflict 1970s - Present A conflict between the Republic of Turkey and armed ethnic separatist group the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which says Turkey is denying Kurdish identity. Both the PKK and the Turkish army have been accused of committing human rights abuses throughout the conflict. According to the Turkish military, the conflict has resulted in the death of 32,000 PKK members, 6,482 soldiers, and 5,560 civilians.

## India/Pakistan

### Insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir

1989 - Present

Ongoing violence mainly on the Indian side of the disputed territory of Kashmir, caused by confrontation between Kashmiri separatists.

Human rights groups have labeled Kashmir as the most volatile region in the world, with an average of 2,500 incidents of militancy every year. The death toll is estimated to be over 60,000 since the conflict began.

## Thailand

### South Thailand Insurgency

2004 - Present

A separatist campaign by Islamist rebels in Thailand's Southern provinces. There is almost

daily violence including shootings and bombings, despite a massive military presence in the region. The true identity of the insurgents remains a mystery. Death toll: 3,500, including over 1,600 civilians.

Burma

Internal Conflict in Burma

1948 - Present

Low intensity armed conflict between the government and various ethnic groups who are against the military regime that has ruled the country since 1962. The uprisings began as soon as Burma gained independence from Great Britain in 1948. This is the oldest current conflict in the world. Over 7,000 people have been killed during anti-government uprisings.

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For media inquiries: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)