



# Peace and Security

Preventing conflict, sustaining peace  
and promoting human security

Armed conflict is the main driver of increased humanitarian needs and of forced migration. Since the COVID-19 Pandemic an additional 20 million people are living in extreme poverty in countries affected by fragility, conflict and violence and by the end of 2023 more than 114 million people had been displaced by war and violence worldwide. These figures demonstrate that the international community needs to step up its activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of armed conflict. In 2023, Sida's disbursement to the sector "Conflict, peace and security" was SEK 1.08 billion, which represents a decrease by about SEK 200 million from 2022. Nevertheless, the Swedish government's aid agenda 'Development assistance for a new era – freedom, empowerment and sustainable growth' underlines that Sweden's development cooperation should contribute to preventing war and armed conflicts, addressing ongoing aggressions and promoting security and stabilisation after armed conflict.



## DEVELOPMENT IN THE WORLD

Armed conflicts have devastating consequences in terms of human suffering, loss of lives, displacement and increased levels of poverty. The World Bank estimates that an additional 20 million people are living in extreme poverty in countries affected by fragility, conflict and violence since 2020<sup>1</sup> and more than 114 million people are displaced by war and violence worldwide<sup>2</sup>. Conflict contributes to increased levels of poverty, however, wealth is not a guarantee of peace, especially not when these resources are distributed unevenly across identity groups. The number of conflicts is currently growing fastest in middle-income countries.<sup>3</sup>

The world experiences the highest number of active state-based armed conflicts since the Second World War<sup>4</sup> and the negative trend with increased number of conflicts and increased fatalities from organised violence is expected to continue.<sup>5</sup> Some of the most violent conflicts in 2023 were Russia's illegal war on Ukraine and the civil conflicts in Myanmar, Ethiopia and Sudan.<sup>6</sup> In addition, the

Israel-Palestine conflict escalated to its deadliest levels since the Yom Kippur war in 1973.<sup>7</sup>

There are many ways of measuring conflict and a large share of violence takes place in areas affected by multiple, deadly, small conflicts where a number of armed groups, militias and gangs operate. For example, according to Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED), Mexico was the most dangerous country for civilians in 2023 as a myriad of armed groups and gangs target civilians in their violent competitions.<sup>8</sup> Non-state Armed Actors (ANSAs) are also becoming increasingly internationalised in terms of their presence, networks and operations. Secondary state actors use ANSA's as proxies in internal conflicts of strategic importance to their foreign-policy goals. The internationalisation of civil wars and conflicts greatly contributes to their protraction and complicates their resolution.

## MAIN AREAS OF SUPPORT

The Swedish Government's aid agenda 'Development assistance for a new era – freedom, empowerment and sustainable growth' identifies armed conflict as the main driver of increased humanitarian needs and of forced migration. Sweden's development cooperation should therefore contribute to preventing war and armed conflicts, addressing ongoing aggressions and promoting security and stabilisation.

<sup>1</sup> The World Bank, Fragility Conflict and Violence, 27 April 2023.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations office at Geneva, Over 114 million displaced by war, violence worldwide, 25 October 2023.

<sup>3</sup> ACLED Conflict Index, updated January 2024.

<sup>4</sup> Davies, S. et al, Organized violence 1989–2022, and the return of conflict between states, Journal of Peace Research, 13 July 2023, vol. 60, issue 4, s. 691.

<sup>5</sup> Uppsala University, Annica Hulth, Still many conflicts in the world, 2023-12-17.

<sup>6</sup> ACLED Conflict Index, updated January 2024.

<sup>7</sup> Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Year in Review 2023, p. 1, SIPRI 2024.

<sup>8</sup> ACLED Conflict Index, updated January 2024.

## THE GLOBAL GOALS

The Global Goals for Sustainable Development include everyone – and we can all contribute. The goals are interdependent and therefore indivisible. Sida's main contribution is to implement development cooperation, thereby reducing poverty and saving lives. Together we can build a better future where no one is left behind.



## Results

tion after armed conflict.<sup>9</sup> In 2023, 21 out of 46 development cooperation strategies implemented by Sida included a focus on peace and security.

In addition to targeted contributions, about 9 percent of Sida's disbursements in 2023 had peace and security as principal objective and 33.4 percent as a secondary objective. This statistical marker also includes criteria related to the integration of conflict sensitivity in Sida-supported initiatives. The share of Sida's disbursements that do not meet these criteria has increased from 50.3 percent in 2022 to 57.5 percent in 2023.

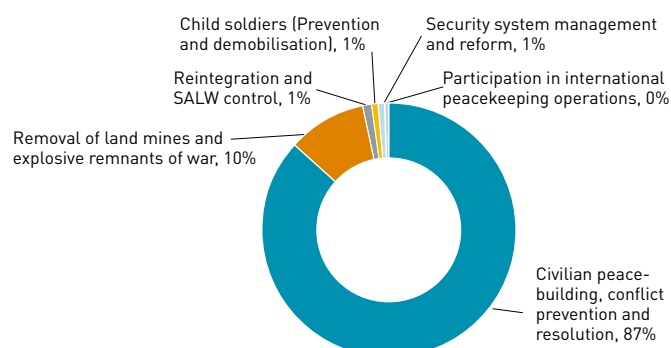
### SIDA'S SUPPORT

In 2023, Sida's disbursement to the sector "Conflict, peace and security" was SEK 1.08 billion, a decrease of about SEK 200 million from 2022. A large part of the decline, SEK 80 million, was due to a decreased budget of the Strategy for sustainable peace (2017-2022).<sup>10</sup> The disbursements to the sector from the Strategy for Sweden's regional development cooperation with Sub-Saharan Africa (2022-2026) also decreased by SEK 50 million. The sector's share of Sida's total disbursements has decreased from 5.4 percent in 2022 to 4.3 percent in 2023.

While the number of strategies with peace and security objectives have increased by six over a five-year period, Sida's total disbursements to the sector has stagnated at about SEK one billion. In 2023, the Strategy for Sweden's reconstruction and reform cooperation with Ukraine (2023-2027) was adopted. Security and stabilisation is one out of five strategy objectives and the strategy has become the second largest contributor to the sector after the Strategy for sustainable peace. The rest among the 21 strategies contributes with amounts below SEK 100 million and the majority with less than SEK 50 million to the sector.

The sector 'Conflict, peace and security' includes six OECD/DAC statistical sub-sectors as illustrated in figure 1. 'Civilian peace-building, conflict prevention and resolution' remained the largest sub-sector with 86.8 percent of total disbursements. The sub-sector includes a wide range of initiatives in support for e.g. peaceful dialogue and mediation, transitional justice and inclusive peace processes and strengthening the meaningful participation of women and youth in conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

FIGURE 1. DISBURSEMENT BY SECTOR WITHIN CONFLICT, PEACE AND SECURITY IN 2023 (MILLION SEK)



### EXAMPLES OF SIDA'S SUPPORT TO CONFLICT PREVENTION

In line with the United Nations' twin resolutions on sustaining peace<sup>11</sup> Sida regards conflict prevention as activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of armed conflict. Nine out of the 21 Swedish development cooperation strategies that include a focus on peace and security specifically mention conflict prevention.

Sida supports different initiatives to strengthen global, regional and national systems to prevent and manage conflicts with peaceful means. At the regional level, Sida supports the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), which focuses on mitigating violence during democratic elections in the region.<sup>12</sup> At the national level, Sida contributes to strengthening the conflict prevention and peacebuilding capacity of the Iraqi government through support to the UNDP Funding Facility for Stabilisation (FFS). The initiative supports local governance in areas that have been liberated from the Islamic State. Local organisations have also implemented 350 different initiatives to prevent and respond to gender-based violence and to strengthen social cohesion at the community level.<sup>13</sup>

Sida also prioritises prevention within humanitarian assistance with a focus on reduced risk of violence, threats and abuse. Humanitarian partners are encouraged to address protection issues that intersect with their formal mandates and sector-specific responsibilities. This can, for example, include dialogue with armed actors to strengthen their adherence to International Humanitarian Law or community-based preparedness and early warning mechanisms that can help ensure rapid evacuation of civilians.

<sup>11</sup> Twin resolutions on review of the UN peacebuilding architecture: General Assembly [A/RES/70/262] and the Security Council [S/RES/2282(2016)].

<sup>12</sup> WANEP – Core Support 2021-2015, contribution number 14782.

<sup>13</sup> Strategirapport för Sveriges utvecklingssamarbete med Irak 2022 – 2026, 15 mars 2023, s. 13. Ärendenummer: 23/000447.

<sup>9</sup> Regeringskansliet Utrikesdepartementet, Bistånd för en ny era – Frihet, egenmakt och hållbar tillväxt, UD Kom 2023.

<sup>10</sup> The strategy was extended until 31 March 2024.