**1. Rwanda Conflict:**

**Background:**

Ethnic tension in Rwanda is nothing new. There have been always been disagreements between the majority Hutus and minority Tutsis, but the animosity between them has grown substantially since the colonial period during the 20th century. The two ethnic groups are actually very similar; they speak the same language, inhabit the same areas and follow the same traditions. When the Belgian colonists arrived in 1916, they produced identity cards classifying people according to their ethnicity. The Belgians considered the Tutsis to be superior to the Hutus. Not surprisingly, the Tutsis welcomed this idea, and for the next 20 years they enjoyed better jobs and educational opportunities than the Hutus. Hatred among the Hutus gradually built up, culminating in a series of riots.

In Rwanda’s capital, Kigali, the presidential guard (rebels) took control and immediately initiated a campaign of vengeance against Tutsi. Leaders of the political opposition were murdered, and almost immediately, the massacre of Tutsis and some Hutus began. Within hours, recruits were dispatched all over the country to carry out a wave of killing. The early organizers included military officials, politicians and businessmen, but soon many others joined in the chaos.

Soldiers and police officers encouraged ordinary citizens to take part. In some cases, Hutu civilians were forced to murder their Tutsi neighbors by military personnel. Participants were often given incentives, such as money or food, and some were even told they could appropriate the land of the Tutsis they killed.

On the ground at least, the international community largely left the Rwandans alone. United Nations troops withdrew after the murder of 10 soldiers.

**Aftermath:**

Finally, in July, the RPF (**Rwandese Patriotic Front)** captured Kigali. The government collapsed and the RPF declared a ceasefire. As soon as it became apparent that the RPF was victorious, an estimated two million Hutus escaped to Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo). Although the killing in Rwanda was over, the presence of Hutu militias in the Democratic Republic of Congo has led to years of conflict there, causing up to five million deaths. By the end of the Rwandan genocide in 1994, over 800,000 people, mostly men, were killed.  Today adult males make up only 20% of the population.  Many families are headed by women, which is a drastic change from the typical patriarchal households that used to exist.  Women are still learning to take on this role and often find it very difficult to do so in a culture that characteristically placed men in a dominant role.  Nearly 100,000 children were left orphaned after the genocide. Rwanda's now Tutsi-led government has twice invaded its much larger neighbor, saying it wants to wipe out the Hutu forces. And a Congolese (from Congo) Tutsi rebel group remains active, refusing to lay down arms, saying otherwise its community would be at risk of genocide. Meantime, the world's largest peacekeeping force (UN) has been unable to end the fighting

**2. Israeli-Palestine Conflict:**

**Background:**   
Is the ongoing struggle between Israelis and Palestinians that began in the early 20th century. It has been locked in conflict over ownership of land considered holy by Jews, Christians and Muslims since its creation in 1948. The division of the former British mandate of Palestine and the creation of the state of Israel in the years after the end of World War II was the culmination of the Zionist movement (national movement for the return of the Jewish people to their   
homeland). After the Nazi Holocaust, pressure grew for the international recognition of a Jewish state and in 1948 Israel declared its independence following a United Nation vote to partition (divide) Palestine.

Much of the history of the area since that time has been one of conflict between Israel on one side and Palestinians - represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) - and Israel's Arab neighbors on the other. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were displaced in the fighting in 1948, during which Israel's Arab neighbors came to the aid of the Palestinian Higher Council. Israel lost one percent of its population in the fighting,which ended in a series of uneasy armistices (stop fighting).

**Aftermath:**

Within Israeli and Palestinian society, the conflict generates a [wide variety of views and opinions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Views_of_the_Arab%E2%80%93Israeli_conflict" \o "Views of the Arab–Israeli conflict). This highlights the deep divisions which exist not only between Israelis and Palestinians, but also within each society. A hallmark of the conflict has been the [level of violence (terrorism) witnessed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Violence_in_the_Israeli%E2%80%93Palestinian_conflict" \o "Violence in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict) for virtually its entire duration. Fighting has been conducted by regular armies, paramilitary groups, terror cells and individuals. [Casualties](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli%E2%80%93Palestinian_conflict" \l "Fatalities_1948.E2.80.93present" \o "Israeli–Palestinian conflict) have not been restricted to the military, with a large number of fatalities in civilian population on both sides.

A variety of studies provide differing casualty data for the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. According to the [Stockholm International Peace Research Institute](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stockholm_International_Peace_Research_Institute" \o "Stockholm International Peace Research Institute), 13,000 Israelis and Palestinians were killed in conflict with each other between 1948 and 1997, other estimations give 14,500 killed between1948–2000. Palestinian fatalities during the 1982 Lebanon War were 2,000 PLO combatants killed in armed conflict with Israel.

**3. Kashmir Conflict:**

**Background:**

At the end of British occupation in 1947, two countries stood where there once was one. Pakistan divided with the intention of being the nation for the Muslims of India. Kashmir, the roots of the boundary dispute between the two nations, was an autonomous state under British rule and remained so post-partition (post-division), when initially given a choice between Pakistan and India. Eventually though, in October of 1947, the ruling prince of Kashmir decided in India favor. This decision was viewed as fraudulent, unfair, and completely unrecognized by the Pakistani government. Due to its strategic position and unique and exquisite nature, Kashmir has been of particular interest to both countries. The main goal of Islamabad from Pakistan is to gain control of this region, thus completing the vision of an independent Muslim state outside of India considering that Kashmir is majority Muslim. New Delhi, India on the other hand, has the goal of retaining Kashmir in order to support the interpretation of India as a secular nation (organized nation).

**Aftermath:**

Approximately 25,000 people have been killed in the last 5 years. Most of those killed have been Kashmiri Muslims in the Kashmir Valley killed by Indian troops either as suspected guerrillas or guerilla sympathizers. Indian tactics of collective revenge have included detentions, "disappearances", and summary executions of young men; systematic gang rape of women; and razing of entire villages and even dense urban neighborhoods suspected of harboring nationalist militants. Medical workers, journalists, and political and human rights activists have been specially targeted for harassment and assassination. Virtually all those detained are tortured, then either executed summarily (bodies of the disappeared turn up regularly along roads and in rivers and canals) or transferred for indefinite detention without trial in prisons outside Kashmir, often a thousand miles or more away.

Vastly smaller numbers of Indian soldiers and police, and of Kashmiri Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, and Sikhs suspected of being Indian agents and informers, have been killed by Kashmiri nationalists in guerilla raids, ambushes, and assassinations. India maintains between 400,000 and 500,000 troops in Kashmir, including regular soldiers, border patrols, and paramilitary police.

**4. Korean conflict:**

**Background:**

Previous to the Japanese occupation of the Korean Peninsula in the beginning of the 20th century, there was one unified country in the peninsula. After World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union gained control over the Korean Peninsula. Due to the difference in their views, the powers decided to divide the peninsula into two section using the 38th parallel as a reference. The northern part of the peninsula adopted communism, while the southern half adopted capitalism. Skirmishes between the two new nations were common leaving approximately 100,000 deaths. It wasn’t until the North Korean invasion of South Korea on June 25, 1950 that a full on war was declared. The North Koreans were backed by the Soviet Union and China, while the South Koreans were backed by the United States. None of the sides was happy with the 38th parallel boundary, thus the push to conquer the other. Fearing direct war with China and Soviet retaliation in Europe, the war ended on July 27, 1953 with a stalemate. Both parts agreed to a ceasefire, but never signed a peace treaty.

**Aftermath:**

As a result of the treaty, the boundary was pushed north, in favor of South Korea. The death toll of the war was about 5 million, however, more than half of the deaths were civilians. Today, the remanents of the war are still visible. In consequence for not signing a peace treaty, North Korea and South Korea share the most militarized border in the world. There is a permanent military presence of the United States in South Korea. Because of the desolution of the Soviet Union and the Chinese desire to participate in global markets, North Korea lost support and became an isolated nation. The hatred and constant military threats has turned the Korean peninsula into one of the most unstable regions of the world.