Civilian Victimization and Conflict Escalation

Executive Summary

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Abstract of the Executive Summary

This project sought to advance our understanding of the consequences of violence against civilians by armed actors for subsequent patterns of conflict escalation. Focusing on ethnic violence in particular, our goals was to shed light on the conditions and mechanisms through which campaigns of armed violence against civilians contribute to the escalation from nonviolent to violent forms of contestation, the risk of civil war onset, and – once armed conflict is underway – the escalation and duration of civil wars. To that end, we collected novel data on the ethnic identity of civilian victims in violent campaigns by armed actors, as well as patterns of deliberate ethnic profiling in campaigns of violence against civilians around the globe. Moreover, in-depth case studies were conducted to investigate the theorized causal mechanisms as well as mechanisms that our theories might have overlooked. Among our emerging findings are the insight that ethnic inequality is one of the main drivers of ethnic state violence against civilians, and that ethnic violence against civilians by armed groups tends to escalate conflicts.
1. Motivation and Core Hypotheses

Intra-state conflicts between state forces and opposition movements often cause considerable harm to civilian populations, much of which results from direct attacks against noncombatants. Apart from the horrendous suffering such campaigns inflict directly on the targeted populations, civilian victimization also has the potential to trigger, intensify, and prolong civil wars, causing even more damage in terms of human lives lost.

In this project we sought to advance our understanding of the effects of civilian victimization by state and non-state actors on subsequent patterns of conflict escalation. We hypothesized that campaigns of violence against civilians (1) contribute to the transformation of nonviolent forms of contestation into violent ones, hence increasing the probability of armed conflict onset; (2) drive the intensification of armed competition from low-intensity conflicts into major civil wars; and (3) increase the duration of armed conflicts.

To test these hypotheses, and as one of the major empirical contributions of the project, we collected novel data on the ethnic identity of civilian victims in violent campaigns around the globe. Specifically, together with our partner team at the University of Uppsala, we collected information on the ethnic identity of the victims of ‘one-sided violence,’ i.e., the deliberate and violent targeting of civilians by armed organizations (Eck and Hultman, 2007). This information was then be mapped onto our own data on ethnic groups and their connections to armed organizations (Cederman, Wimmer and Min, 2010; Wucherpfennig et al., 2011, 2012). In addition to identifying the ethnic identity if civilian victims of targeted violence, we also collected data on the nature of the targeting, i.e., whether there was evidence that civilians were targeted because of their alleged ethnic identity. We also collaborated with two organizations engaged in conflict regions to incorporate in-depth qualitative case knowledge from the field and to contribute to interventions that potentially help to reduce the risk of civilian victimization, child soldiering, and conflict escalation at the local level. Specifically, the NGO Geneva Call, who tries to incentivize many non-state armed groups around the globe to comply with international humanitarian norms,\(^2\) worked with us on the collection of qualitative information. Geneva Call placed particular emphasis on a form of violence against civilians less illuminated by our quantitative work: The recruitment of child soldiers. In addition to our close collaboration with Geneva Call, we will also collaborate with UNITAR to transfer our research findings to the policy community in 2017. This project thus also aims to improve our policy-relevant

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1 This section draws on our original project proposal.
2 On non-state actors and their compliance with international law, see Jo (2015).
understanding of escalatory conflict dynamics, and to contribute to the development of measures aimed at civilian protection and the de-escalation of armed conflicts.

2. Data Collection

One of the major goals of the project was the compilation of a new dataset on ethnic violence against civilians around the globe. We have achieved these goals. Specifically, we have gathered information on the ethnic identity of the victims of ‘one-sided violence,’ i.e., the deliberate and violent targeting of civilians by armed organizations (Eck and Hultman, 2007). This information has then been mapped onto our own data on ethnic groups and their connections to armed organizations (Cederman, Wimmer and Min, 2010; Wucherpfennig et al., 2011, 2012). We completed the coding of the dataset and have already started the revising phase for the published version, which will be available on the GrowUp website at ETH Zurich and on the website of the Uppsala Conflict Data Program. The Uppsala node mainly worked on the African continent, while the Zurich-Geneva node (i.e., the SNIS-funded part of the team) focused on the other countries.

The coding procedure involved different steps (the remaining sections of 2.2. are based on Schubiger and Fjelde 2015): First, we identified the victims of one-sided violence recorded in the UCDP OSV dataset (Eck and Hultman, 2007; Sundberg and Melander 2013) in terms of their ethnic identity, the latter being based on the definitions and categories of the ETH EPR dataset (Cederman, Wimmer and Min, 2010; Vogt et al 2014). One-sided violence refers to violence on behalf of state actors and non-state armed group deliberately and directly targeting civilians and resulting in at least 25 recorded fatalities a year (Eck and Hultman 2007). In a second step, we identified the logic of the targeting. More specifically, we determined whether or not ethnicity was a decisive factor in the selection of victims of one-sided violence. We used various sources, including the original sources underlying the UCDP data, the UCDP coding notes, as well as human rights reports (e.g., Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch), and country-specific sources (e.g., truth commission reports).

We focused on the ethnic identity of civilian victims and tried to assess the proportion of civilians killed per year and perpetrator belonging to a given ethnic group. Whenever members of a given ethnic group are clearly identifiable as victims of one-sided violence, we assigned the respective fatalities to the categories ‘Ethnic Group 1,’ ‘Ethnic Group 2,’

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3 We worked with the UCDP GED version of the UCDP data (GED refers to “Georeferenced Event Dataset”, Sundberg and Melander, 2013) in those cases where this version was available and with the actor-year version in those cases in which it was not.
In order to assess the intention for ethnic targeting, we first of all evaluated for each perpetrator, ethnic victim group, and year whether the available evidence pointed to selective, individualized targeting, b) collective targeting (i.e., profiling based on potential victims’ alleged membership in particular groups), or c) targeting that was completely arbitrary in the selection of victims. If the evidence pointed to collective targeting, we investigated the role of ethnicity in particular.

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people being targeted at least partially based on their ethnic identity (i.e., their alleged ethnic affiliation), based on other collective identities (e.g., political orientations), or based on their behavior.

Our unit of analysis is the perpetrator-year, to which several ethnic and non-ethnic victim groups can be assigned. The intention variable is hence coded for each perpetrator-ethnic group-year. A perpetrator-ethnic group-year is coded as ethnic targeting (Int = 1) if there was clear information that at least 50% of the victims were killed because of their ethnic identity. This can be identified through evidence of identity-based screening or indications of systematic ethnic targeting through statements made by the perpetrator and/or indication given by credible sources. If ethnicity was not a reason for the killing of the victims of ethnic groups in at least 50% of the victims per perpetrator, ethnic victim group, and year, then a given perpetrator-ethnic group-year is coded as non-ethnic targeting (Int=0).

\textit{Level of Uncertainty about Ethnic/Non-Ethnic Targeting}

For every coding decision, we included an assessment of the confidence level with which a given coding decision could been made. The cases are coded as ethnic targeting with low level of uncertainty (Intconf = 1) where explicit information in the UCDP or other consulted sources about systematic ethnic targeting was available that referred to the same events as UCDP and covered all victims or more than 50% of the victims. If only implicit information about systematic ethnic targeting was available such as general statements of international organizations about systematic ethnic targeting, or if there was evidence of ethnic targeting but a lack of direct links between the UCDP dataset and additional sources, the cases were coded as ethnic targeting with some level of uncertainty (Intconf = 2) or a high level of uncertainty (Intconf = 3).

3. Results

3.1 Dataset

The following tables and graphs illustrate the final results of our data collection and codings. We stress that these data are based on \textit{reported} violence and thus the reader should keep the data sources, coding criteria, and uncertainty levels in mind when interpreting the data.
We identified 209 ethnic victim groups around the globe (Europe, Americas, Middle East, Asia and Africa), from which 132 ethnic victim groups have experienced deliberate targeting based on ethnicity according to our coding criteria.

Tables 4, 5, and 6 show the “actor-years” in terms of their victim groups (“actors” being state actors or non-state armed groups involved in one-sided violence that resulted in at least 25 civilian deaths a year): 65.76% of the actor-years in our dataset have been coded as the perpetrator having targeted the members of at least one identifiable ethnic group (see Table 3); 41.07% actor-years have been coded as the perpetrating actor having targeted at least one ethnic group based on collective targeting, the targeting criterion being ethnicity (see Table 4); and 37.97% actor-years have been coded as the perpetrator having targeted members of at least one identifiable ethnic group based on collective yet non-ethnic targeting (see Table 5).

Table 3. Actor-years with at least one ethnic group identified among the civilian victims (1989 – 2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic group identified</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Europe</th>
<th>Middle East</th>
<th>Asia</th>
<th>Africa</th>
<th>Americas</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>276   (34.24 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>530   (65.76 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>33</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>806   (100.00 %)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2. Working Papers

Beyond these descriptive results, we have investigated the research questions guiding this project in several working papers so far: A first paper by Hanne Fjelde, Livia Schubiger, Lisa Hultman, Lars-Erik Cederman and Simon Hug (Fjelde et al. 2016) assessed the rationale of ethnic state violence against civilians along ethnic lines. This paper was presented in a workshop at the London School of Economics and Political Science in May 2016 and at the
annual convention of the American Political Science Association (APSA). Mohammad Aghdam researched to what extent the ideological differences between armed actors explain variation in the organizational choice of mobilization strategies, a paper with important implications for violence against civilians that was presented at the Fourth Global Conference on Public Policy and Administration in the Middle East Cairo, Egypt, in December 2015 (Aghdam 2015). Simon Hug and Livia Schubiger, in a theoretical paper, considered the way in which one-sided violence may affect recruitment both by non-state actors and government forces (Hug and Schubiger 2016). This paper was presented at the Encore conference in January 2016 in Geneva, at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association in Atlanta in February 2016, and again at the APSA conference in San Francisco in September 2016. One of their main finding is that strategies of one-sided violence can hardly been studied in isolation for one actor and without considering the broader consequences on the conflict dynamic. This latter dynamic is the focus of the paper by Lars-Erik Cederman, Simon Hug, Livia Schubiger and Francisco Villamil (Cederman et al. 2017). Analyzing the consequences of one-sided violence this study shows that such violence perpetrated by government forces increases the likelihood of conflict onset and to some extent also conflict escalation. This paper is scheduled to be presented at the annual convention of the European Political Science Association in June 2017. Finally, Hanne Fjelde, Livia Schubiger, Lisa Hultman, Lars-Erik Cederman, Simon Hug, and Margareta Sollenberg are currently working on a paper that will introduce the dataset to the academic audience (Fjelde et al 2017).

3.3. Geneva Call’s selected case studies

Geneva Call conducted interviews with relevant representatives of the following armed groups as well as human rights and child protection actors and current and former child soldiers:

1. Alliance des Patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain (APCLS), Democratic Republic of Congo
2. Karen National Union/Karen National Liberation Army (KNU/KNLA), Burma/Myanmar
3. People’s Protection Units (YPG)/Women’s Protection Units (YPJ), Syria

In addition to these interviews, Geneva Call relied on reports from human rights and child protection actors, such as international inquiry commissions, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Children and Armed Conflict, UNICEF, Child Soldiers International, Human Rights Watch, local NGOs and CBOs. It also relied on media reports and Geneva Call’s own mission reports.
3.3.1. Case Study 1: APCLS, Democratic Republic of Congo

The People’s Alliance for a Free and Sovereign Congo, also known by its French initials APCLS (Alliance du Peuple pour un Congo Libre et Souverain) is considered one of the largest Mai Mai self-defense groups operating in North Kivu. Formed in 2006, the militia, led by "General" Janvier Buingo Karairi, draws most of its support from the local Hunde population. It has fought both government forces and other armed groups over time.

APCLS has been listed in the annual reports of the UN Secretary General on children in armed conflict since 2013 among the parties that recruits and uses children in hostilities. It is difficult to estimate the number of children present in APCLS forces. Much of the recruitment is “voluntary” and done generally with the tacit acquiescence of parents and/or guardians. Children have been used for both military and supportive tasks.

Geneva Call began to engage APCLS on child protection in May 2015. First contact was established through a local community-based organization. Since that date, Geneva Call met APCLS seven times and conducted training sessions on international law for both its officers and combatants. During these meetings and training sessions, APCLS leadership explained its existing policies and practices and expressed interest in improving compliance with international standards. Though it claimed not to accept under-18 members, the APCLS admitted to face difficulties in assessing the age of new recruits and agreed to amend its internal code of conduct to include a specific provision on the minimum age of recruitment.

In November 2016, APCLS signed the Geneva Call Deed of Commitment for the Protection of Children from the Effects of Armed Conflict, confirming its pledge to prohibit all forms of recruitment and use of children in hostilities. Planned implementation measures include the translation in Swahili and dissemination of the Deed of Commitment among APCLS combatants, the sensitization of local communities, the appointment of focal persons within APCLS to monitor implementation as well as the development of an age assessment procedure to ensure children are not recruited. Moreover, as some underage members are likely to be still present in APCLS ranks, the group agreed to screen all its troops and release any person whose age is under-18 or unclear. In early 2017, Geneva Call was informed that 12 children aged 15 to 17 left APCLS. Together with its local partner, Geneva Call will support and monitor implementation of the Deed of Commitment, including through regular visits of APCLS military camps and areas under its control.

In less than 18-month engagement on child protection, considerable progress has been made. Sustained dialogue has been established with the leadership; more than a hundred officers and combatants have been trained on international standards; the APCLS formalized its straight 18 years old recruitment policy by amending its code of conduct and
by signing the *Deed of Commitment*; and a combatant was handed over to the State authorities for sexual abuse against a child. Moreover, APCLS showed willingness to engage constructively on allegations of recruitment and use of children and agreed to allow fact-finding visits and to cooperate in the scrutiny of their own compliance. Indeed, no new cases of recruitment are reported in the 2016 annual report of the UN Secretary General on children and armed conflict, compared to 21 cases in 2012, 18 in 2013 and 7 in 2014. This positive trend may indicate an actual change in behavior. Of course, compliance is not perfect; the process will take time and there will probably be still reports of violations against children but a more protective environment and an increased accountability have been created since Geneva Call’s engagement.

How can this change be explained? It appears that two factors have been at play. First, though the practice of using child soldiers is entrenched in local culture, APCLS strong command-and-control structure provided favourable conditions for policy change. The leadership attaches importance to military discipline and has developed at its own initiative several internal regulations. Second, APCLS cares about its reputation, both within its constituency and the international community. It enjoys some support from the Hunde population and has been open to engage with humanitarian actors since the early years of its existence. This explains the strong reaction the group manifested when it realized it was included in the UN “list of shame” as a party that recruits and uses children in hostilities. APCLS decision to sign the *Deed of Commitment* should also be understood in this context. The leadership views the signing of this document as an opportunity to demonstrate the movement’s good faith and accountability in front of the international community. This shows how the “naming and shaming” approach of the UN works in complementarity to Geneva Call’s constructive engagement and how both approaches benefit from each other. While the Secretary General annual reports increased pressure on the APCLS, Geneva Call sustained dialogue, training and monitoring has been instrumental in bridging the gap between policy and practice.

### 3.3.2. Case Study 2: KNU/KNLA, Burma/Myanmar

Formed in 1947, the Karen National Union (KNU) is a political organization drawn from Myanmar’s second-largest ethnic group. In 1949, it created the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) to fight for the rights of the Karen people. The conflict between the Myanmar government and the KNU/KNLA continued for decades until both parties declared a bilateral ceasefire in 2012. This was followed, in October 2015, by the signing of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) by the Government on one side and the KNU and seven other armed non-State actors (ANSAs) active in Myanmar on the other.
The KNU acknowledges that in the first forty years of its armed struggle the KNLA readily accepted children in its ranks and used them in military and support roles. While many children volunteered to serve in the army, a quota system was also applied to villages under KNU control, at least until the early 1990s. Families with several sons were reportedly obliged to provide at least one of them to the KNLA. Although the KNU took in early 2000 a number of internal measures to prohibit the recruitment of persons under 18 years, children were still found in the army. Indeed, the KNLA has been listed in the annual reports of the UN Secretary General on children in armed conflict since 2005 among the parties that recruits and uses children in hostilities.

Geneva Call’s engagement with the KNU/KNLA began in 2006, initially focused - in line with its limited programmatic focus at the time – only on the promotion of a ban on anti-personnel mines. In 2010, Geneva Call expanded its programmes to include the protection of children in armed conflict. It built on previous advocacy work undertaken by Human Rights Watch and UNICEF and collaborated with a local organization, Human Rights Education Institute of Burma (HREIB). In 2013, after several rounds of dialogue and training workshops, the KNU signed Geneva Call’s Deed of Commitment for the Protection of Children from the Effects of Armed Conflict.

While it asserted there were no children in the KNLA ranks, the KNU did admit that older children sometimes voluntarily associated with the KNLA in non-military roles or stayed in its camps. The KNU identified that a lack of ground-level awareness of its rules had been a significant obstacle in the past, and it acknowledged that it faced challenges training its forces dispersed over a large area, mainly in remote locations and often with poor communication facilities. Geneva Call provided trainings on international law targeting brigade-level KNLA officers, with the expectation that those trained would go on to conduct trainings in their operational areas. In addition Geneva Call partnered with Karen Women’s Organization (KWO) - a community-based organization with a wide reach across KNU areas – to undertake community level awareness of the Deed of Commitment signed by the KNU.

To ease community and KNLA understanding of international standards, Geneva Call distributed in Karen areas more than two thousand Burmese and Karen language child protection booklets as well as weatherproof posters. Positively, the KNLA ‘Army Act’ was amended to specify that only those over 18 were eligible for recruitment. Despite facing competing pressures, the KNU has maintained regular and responsive communications with Geneva Call. This has proven instrumental in dealing with allegations of violations that have arisen since the 2012 signing of the Deed of Commitment.

Over time, the KNU leadership has dramatically adjusted its attitudes and made considerable strides to improve its practices with respect to child protection. From estimates that hundreds of boys under 18 openly served in the KNLA in the 1990s, KNLA’s use and recruitment of children has declined to a level where alleged cases are isolated incidents. It would seem that outside intervention was a significant contributory factor in
the shift towards compliance. Early engagement by Human Rights Watch, UNICEF and HREIB likely helped expose KNU leadership to international norms.

Despite its efforts, the KNU still faces considerable challenges to ensure there is zero – or as close to zero as possible – chance that a child could be recruited into its armed forces. Prevention and sanction mechanisms should be made more robust. The KNU should finish its policy revision, institute clear age verification procedures, and clearly articulate these so they may be quickly disseminated to all KNLA officers to allow for immediate implementation. With its military forces spread over wide geographic areas, separated from central command by rough jungle terrain and equipped with inadequate communications mechanisms, the KNU leadership faces difficulties in ensuring all commanders receive, let alone understand or implement, their orders. Remote commanders operate with considerable autonomy, largely out of sight of the central KNU leadership. Ensuring they comply with child protection policies will require continuous efforts.

3.3.3. Case Study 3: YPG/YPJ, Syria

The People’s Protection Units (YPG) were originally created after the Qamishli uprising in 2004, but only officially emerged when the unrest erupted in Syria in 2011. Together with its female branch, the Women’s Protection Units (YPJ), the YPG are now the dominant military forces in the Kurdish-populated areas since the withdrawal of most government forces in 2012. They have been mainly fighting against Islamist groups, especially the Islamic State group, since.

YPG has been listed in the annual reports of the UN Secretary General on children in armed conflict since 2013 among the parties that recruits and uses children in hostilities. In most cases, children have been used to man checkpoints and transfer information and military supplies, but they have also served in combat roles. Many join the armed forces to defend their communities or to seek protection from domestic violence and forced marriage.

Geneva Call initiated dialogue with YPG/YPJ in October 2013. In response to allegations of child recruitment reported in various sources, YPG/YPJ stated that, under their rules of procedure, only persons above 18 years may become members but admitted that some of their units had breached this rule. They further informed that the General Command had issued a "circular" to all commanders of recruitment centres and heads of battalions and brigades in which it reiterated the strict prohibition to recruit any person under 18. Besides direct engagement with YPG/YPJ, Geneva Call trained local human rights organizations on child protection and launched a public campaign to disseminate international standards.
In July 2014, the YPG/YPJ signed Geneva Call’s Deed of Commitment for the Protection of Children from the Effects of Armed Conflict. Their signature publically formalized their policy to prevent children under 18 from taking part in hostilities and to protect them from the effects of the conflict. Geneva Call agreed to the entering of a reservation to Article 2 to the Deed of Commitment, according to which, “persons who have reached their 16th birthday will be allowed to voluntarily join, or remain in, the YPG/YPJ forces, under a new non-combatant status. Such persons shall not be authorized to participate in hostilities until they are 18 years old.” The same day of the signature, 149 children were demobilized. A number of them returned to their families while the majority joined youth centers established by YPG/YPJ. In 2015, 65 additional children were released. Geneva Call was able to visit the centers and mobilize an international NGO to carry out medical check-ups. It further informed specialized child protection agencies of the need to support the centres, notably in terms of teaching, educational material as well as leisure activities. Unfortunately this did not materialize so Geneva Call decided to support temporarily the center that hosted children under 16 in order to ensure that they received appropriate education.

Geneva Call’s engagement with YPG/YPJ has led to some concrete results, such as the demobilization of more than two hundreds child soldiers. The YPG/YPJ has also established a monitoring committee responsible to inspect military camps, recruitment centres and frontlines, to investigate allegations of violations and to sanction officers responsible for these violations. In addition, hundreds of minors who wanted to join the armed forces have reportedly been sent them back to their families.

YPG/YPJ is sensitive to its reputation and has always reacted to accusations by human rights organizations to show that they take their commitment seriously. While such a “naming and shaming” approach has added pressure on the group, the signing of the Deed of Commitment gave Geneva Call more leverage to promote compliance with the rules they have agreed to live up to.

Yet, despite these measures and efforts, cases of child recruitment and use in hostilities continue to be reported, especially since the intensification of hostilities with the Islamic State group. The conflict dynamics, the militarized environment and the autonomy of local commanders appear to play a key role in explaining the slow change and represent significant challenges for the YPG/YPJ leadership to ensure full compliance across units.
4. References

Aghdam, Mohammad, 2015. Organizational Ideologies and Mobilization Strategies; Mohammad M. Aghdam. Paper prepared for the Fourth Global Conference on Public Policy and Administration in the Middle East, American University in Cairo Egypt, 5-7 December 2015.


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Appendix: Findings illustrated by graphs

Figure 1, 2 and 3 show the victims of one-sided violence distributed across years (1989-2014), regions (Europe, Middle East, Asia, Africa and Americas), and countries. The largest number of victims was recorded in 1994. In terms of regions and countries, the largest number of civilians was recorded in Africa and Burundi, DR Congo and Rwanda.
Figure 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 illustrate the number of victims belonging to ethnic groups that could be identified. Figure 4 displays that most of the victims belonging to clearly identifiable ethnic groups were targeted because of their ethnic identity (according to our sources and coding criteria). The bars show that there were civilian victims belonging to an identifiable ethnic group in all these years, but that there is an extreme peak in the number of victims of ethnic targeting in 1994 and 1995. In 1994, the victims were Tutsis killed by the Hutu-led government of Rwanda in Burundi, the DR Congo (Zaire), and Rwanda. The estimated total number of deaths in the UCDP is a total of 450'000 civilian victims that are coded as having been victims of ethnic targeting. The second most extreme period of ethnic targeting in terms of victim numbers occurred in Europe in Bosnia-Herzegovina by the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and most of the victims were Muslims.
Regarding the regions (see Fig. 5), Africa has the largest number of victims from ethnic targeting, followed by Europe and Asia. No ethnic targeting took place in the Americas according to our threshold, data sources, and coding criteria during the years 1989-2013.
Of all coded countries (see Fig. 6), Rwanda, Burundi, and DR Congo (Zaire) lead the record in terms of the largest number of victims of ethnic targeting (perpetrator: government of Rwanda), followed by Bosnia and Herzegovina (perpetrator: Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Hercegovina, Serbian irregulars), Sudan (Government of Sudan), and Afghanistan (Government of Afghanistan).
In terms of perpetrators (see Fig. 7), both governments and non-state actors targeted civilians because of the latter's ethnic identities. To give an example, and as outlined above, the state actor Serbian republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina committed ethnic targeting against Muslims, while the government of Afghanistan targeted the Hazara, Uzbek, and Tajiks. The non-state actor Islamic State (IS) targeted different ethnic groups such as Kurds, Shia Arabs, Christians, and Turkmens. But the largest ethnic targeting during this period is committed by governments such as the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Hercegovina, the government of Rwanda, the government of Sudan, and the government of Afghanistan.
Figure 8 shows that the largest victim numbers belong to the Tutsi in Rwanda followed by the Hutu in the same country (which, again as outlined above, experienced a genocide in the 1990s that represents a large outlier in terms of victim numbers by any standards). Removing these outliers from the dataset, the victim groups with the largest number of victims are the Bosnia-Herzegovina Muslims during the Bosnian conflict, and the Hazaras in Afghanistan.
Finally, figure 9 shows numbers of non-ethnic victim groups that we identified among those groups subject to collective yet non-ethnic targeting. They are categorized under different groups such as journalists, protestors, migrants etc. The largest number are external Hutu refugees and victims of indiscriminate violence. It should be noted that these codings have not been systematically organized yet and were recorded as a residual category, as the project’s main focus was on ethnic violence.