

CONFLICT RISK BRIEFING

Which Country Is Most Likely to Go to War Next?

Why the data points to Ethiopia, and what five conflict trackers are watching next.

Cross-referencing ACLED's Conflict Index, the International Crisis Group's 2026 watchlist, the Global Peace Index, the Fragile States Index, and ViEWS machine-learning forecasts.



What's inside the full report

The complete report runs several pages and draws on eighteen primary sources. Here's the structure, plus the summary table it opens with.

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The top pick, and why
Ethiopia's fast-moving Tigray fighting and the Eritrea border buildup, explained in full, with the political context behind it.
- 2

How the ranking works
What ACLED, the Global Peace Index, the Fragile States Index, and ViEWS each actually measure, and where they agree.
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The complete six-country watch list
Sudan, DR Congo & Rwanda, Mali & the Sahel, Venezuela, and India & Pakistan, each with sourced figures and current status.
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Also worth watching
Nine further flashpoints, including Taiwan, Myanmar, and the Gaza ceasefire, and why they're a different category of risk.
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The caveat that matters most
What the 2026 Global Peace Index says about the state of the world, and the limits of any forecast.

NO.	SITUATION	RISK TIER	WHY IT'S ON THE LIST
1	Ethiopia	Critical	Active fighting in western Tigray since Aug 1, 2026; troops massed on the Eritrean border.
2	Sudan	Critical	Fourth year of civil war; 1,000+ civilians killed by drone strikes in five months.
3	DR Congo & Rwanda	Serious	2025 peace deal hasn't stopped M23; 5.7 million+ displaced.
4	Mali & the Sahel	Serious	JNIM fuel blockade squeezing the capital since late 2025.
5	Venezuela	Warning	Maduro captured Jan 2026; risk now internal, not invasion.
6	India & Pakistan	Warning	Ceasefire holding since 2025 but fragile; no peace talks.

The full report also includes an interactive dashboard version of this table, with the underlying Global Peace Index, Fragile States Index, and ViEWS figures for each country, filterable and kept current as situations develop.

EXCERPT FROM THE FULL REPORT

The top pick: Ethiopia

Every major organization that tracks armed conflict for a living publishes some version of a watchlist: ACLED's Conflict Index, the International Crisis Group's annual list of conflicts to watch, the Global Peace Index, the Fragile States Index, and the machine-learning forecasts produced by ViEWS at PRIO and Uppsala University. Cross-referencing all five for 2026, one country stands out for the risk of a fresh, widening war in the months ahead: Ethiopia.

Ethiopia stands out from the rest of this list for one reason the others don't share: it's the clearest case of a conflict tipping from risk into reality in real time. On August 1 and 2, 2026, heavy fighting broke out in western Tigray, near Shererina and the Sudanese border, between the Ethiopian National Defence Force and forces aligned with the Tigray People's Liberation Front. Regional reporting has called it the most serious escalation since Ethiopia's 2020 to 2022 civil war formally ended. Both sides used artillery and drones, and hundreds of civilians fled across the border into Sudan.

What turns this from a localized flare-up into something bigger is Eritrea. Ethiopia and Eritrea have both been massing troops on their shared border for months, and independent analysts, including the Atlantic Council and RANE, Stratfor's risk consultancy, have separately concluded that the risk of a genuine interstate war is real and rising. Addis Ababa accuses Asmara of arming and coordinating with anti-government factions; Eritrea denies it. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, freshly consolidating power after his party's landslide win in Ethiopia's June 2026 election

Continues in the full report, alongside Sudan, DR Congo, Mali, Venezuela, and India & Pakistan

GET THE FULL REPORT

This is a short taste of the complete briefing.

The full report covers all six watch-list countries in depth, nine more flashpoints, the complete methodology, eighteen cited sources, and comes with a live interactive dashboard you can embed or share. Get in touch and we'll send it over, or talk to us about custom, continuously updated conflict-risk data for your own sector or region.

THE FULL PACKAGE INCLUDES

- The complete written report (Word and PDF)
- The interactive risk dashboard, filterable by country
- Full source list with 18 primary citations
- Custom data or refresh schedule, on request

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This preview reflects public reporting available as of August 2026 and is a risk synthesis, not a prediction of certainty. Sources include ACLED, the International Crisis Group, the Institute for Economics & Peace, the Fund for Peace, VIEWS, UN OHCHR, and Human Rights Watch. Full citations are in the complete report.