How Conflict Spreads

Trace how nongovernmental actors fuel or prolong conflict.

SS24.CWI.7a "Investigate and explain how individuals and non-governmental groups may cause or perpetuate conflict, citing specific cases."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one action by a nongovernmental actor in each case. Circle a phrase that shows how the action fueled or prolonged conflict, then mark each action and its effect with the same number.

Actions That Changed Conflicts

1. In 1994, extremist leaders in Rwanda organized a genocide against Tutsi people and Hutu people who opposed the killings. Government officials played major roles, but nongovernmental actors also helped drive the violence. The privately owned radio station RTLM, closely linked to powerful officials, spread claims that Tutsi people were dangerous and urged listeners to attack them. Members of the Interahamwe, a militia connected to the ruling party, set up roadblocks and killed people. The broadcasts encouraged participation, while the roadblocks made escape harder. Together, these actions helped turn organized hatred into widespread killing over roughly 100 days.

2. In 1991, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), an armed rebel group, entered Sierra Leone from Liberia and began fighting the government. Its leaders sought political power, but control of diamond-producing areas also helped the group continue its war. RUF fighters seized mines and traded diamonds for weapons and other supplies. They also attacked villages and abducted children, forcing some to serve as fighters. Those attacks terrorized civilians and weakened communities that might resist the rebels. Diamonds did not explain every cause of the war, but revenue from them helped sustain the RUF's campaign for years.

3. The Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA), a nongovernmental armed group, sought to end British rule in Northern Ireland and unite Ireland. On July 21, 1972, it set off 22 bombs across Belfast; nine people died. The attacks did not create the long-running dispute over Northern Ireland's future. They did deepen fear and mistrust, making compromise harder. The IRA was not the only source of violence: loyalist paramilitary groups also killed civilians. This case shows why explaining a conflict requires more than naming a group. Ask what it did, what it sought, and how its actions changed the conflict.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did RTLM and the Interahamwe each help drive the violence in Rwanda?

2. How did control of diamond-producing areas help the RUF prolong the war in Sierra Leone?

3. Why does the passage describe the IRA's Belfast bombings as deepening a conflict rather than starting it?

4. Compare one way the RUF and the IRA harmed civilians. How could each action make conflict harder to resolve?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose one case from the passage. In three sentences, explain how a nongovernmental actor fueled conflict, propose a different action a community group could take to weaken that effect, and explain both a likely benefit and a limit of your proposal.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · SS24.CWI.7a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one action by a nongovernmental actor in each case. Circle a phrase that shows how the action fueled or prolonged conflict, then mark each action and its effect with the same number. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did RTLM and the Interahamwe each help drive the violence in Rwanda?	**RTLM urged listeners to attack Tutsi people, encouraging participation. Interahamwe members set up roadblocks and killed people, making escape harder.**
2	How did control of diamond-producing areas help the RUF prolong the war in Sierra Leone?	**The RUF seized mines and traded diamonds for weapons and supplies, helping sustain its campaign.**
3	Why does the passage describe the IRA's Belfast bombings as deepening a conflict rather than starting it?	**The dispute over Northern Ireland's future already existed. The bombings increased fear and mistrust, making compromise harder.**
4	Compare one way the RUF and the IRA harmed civilians. How could each action make conflict harder to resolve?	**RUF attacks terrorized civilians and weakened communities that might resist the rebels. IRA bombings killed people and increased mistrust, making compromise harder.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The IRA's Belfast bombings increased fear and mistrust during an existing dispute. A local interfaith group could bring residents from different neighborhoods together to share their experiences and publicly reject attacks on civilians. These meetings might reduce mistrust, but a community group alone could not stop armed organizations.

Accept explanations that connect a specific action in the passage to its effect on conflict. For Part 3, the proposed action should be distinct from the actor's harmful action and include a plausible benefit and limit.