Preface

The Elgar Handbook of Civil War and Fragile States brings together contributions of a multidisciplinary group of internationally renowned scholars with the aim of providing the state of the art on such important issues as the causes of violent conflicts and state fragility, the challenges of conflict resolution and mediation, and the obstacles to post-conflict reconstruction and durable peacebuilding. This Handbook should be an extremely useful resource for both scholars and students of violent conflict and fragile states, and can give practitioners and policy makers some useful guidance and direction through the academic jungle of the latest research on these issues. While other companion volumes exist, this volume brings together a wider range of disciplinary perspectives, including development economists, quantitative and qualitative political scientists, sociologists and anthropologists, as well as peace practitioners. All contributions are written in a non-specialist way, however, and should be accessible to all readers.

While the compilation of the Handbook has been a thoroughly rewarding project, it was with great sadness that we learned of the death of one of our best respected contributors, Professor Jacob Bercovitch, on 10 June 2011. He was one of the leading experts in the field of conflict resolution, international negotiation and mediation. During his impressive career, Prof. Bercovitch not only contributed numerous publications to this field and established the widely used International Conflict Management dataset, but he was instrumental in shaping the field and directing the research into areas of great international importance. Many contributors in this Handbook will have been influenced and inspired by his work in one way or another. This is definitely the case for both of us.