

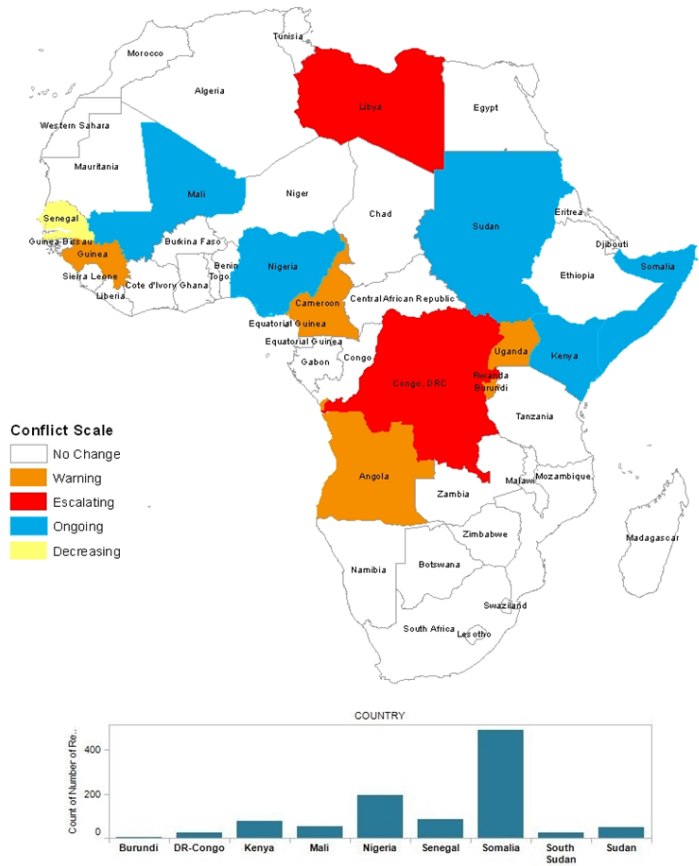
CONFLICT TRENDS (NO.1):

REAL-TIME ANALYSIS OF AFRICAN POLITICAL VIOLENCE, APRIL 2012

This conflict trend report from ACLED is the first of our monthly reports that focus on regional conflict trends within Africa. We concentrate our analysis on recent political violence emanating from the Sahel belt and East Africa, due to the rise in instability there. Focus countries include **Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, South Sudan, Sudan, and Somalia**. A brief summary of conflict activity elsewhere on the continent is provided for **Burundi, DR-Congo and Niger**. Real-time data on select Sahelian and Central African cases is available for review, and will be expanded to the entire continent.

In addition to a focus on conflict events of the last three months, baseline analysis highlights the conflict patterns across several countries of interest over a longer period. We compare present conflict outbreaks with the recent past, highlight new conflict actors and locations within states, and suggest explanations for the conflict processes.

Analysis is carried out on levels of violence, fatality rates, actors involved and locations of conflict. These factors combine to create distinct conflict profiles. For example, analysis suggests that Somalia and Nigeria have experienced the highest number of conflict events in recent months, while Sudan and South Sudan have experienced relatively low event levels during this time period. However, the lower overall number of violent events in Sudan and South Sudan have proved extremely fatal. In February 2012, violent events concentrated in border areas of the two states had an average fatality level of 40.8 people per event. This contrasts with 3.4 fatalities per event in Nigeria, where violent event levels have been higher, but generally less fatal.



Conflict events and country status, January-March 2012

Over the course of 2012, a large portion of political violence has been between small ethnic militias. The number of violent events involving ethnic militias has increased each year since 2010. Data for 2012 covers only three months of the year, but events involving ethnic militias have already surpassed the level of reports for 2011 and 2010. These have primarily been events involving inter-ethnic militia violence. To date in 2012, a smaller number of events involving ethnic militias and civilians have been recorded than in previous years.

Many ethnic militias are consistently most active in the last and first quarters of each year, following raiding patterns that increase at the beginning of each rainy season and fall off sharply from mid-to late-season. Ethnic clashes continued in the new year in Kenya where disputes in Isiolo have raged since late 2011. Although the Isiolo area has a long-standing tradition of cattle raids and reprisals, new reports indicate a larger political operation to cause a rift between a newly formed Meru and Turkana northern alliance ahead of the 2012 elections (ARB 19167).

Ethnically motivated violence in Kenya is also extremely intense: the number of reported fatalities in the country is generally out of line with the recorded number of events outside of the Nairobi

Kenya

Reviewing conflict records for the 2010-2012 period, it is clear that 2011 was an extremely violent year in Kenya’s recent past. However, data from only three months of the year to date indicates that 2012 is likely to also be extremely violent.

There are dozens of politically violent actors in Kenya, but the nature of violent conflict is highly localised, with combatants engaging with other sub-national actors, with local civilians, and in some cases against police. A very large proportion of Kenyan political violence is perpetrated by small militia groups – either ethnic or political. Of the top 10 non-civilian actors in Kenya (2010-2012), four are ethnic militias.

CONFLICT TRENDS (NO.1):

REAL-TIME ANALYSIS OF AFRICAN POLITICAL VIOLENCE, APRIL 2012

area. In the capital, there are a large number of violent events, but these are broadly in line with the number of fatalities associated with them. In other areas of relatively high violence – particularly in the north – there are fewer recorded events, but these prove to be much more deadly. These violent events are primarily between small ethnic militias, which account for death rates almost matching those of Nairobi at times, though in much more sparsely populated locations (Graph 1).

Of the top 10 non-civilian actors in Kenya, four are ethnic militias.

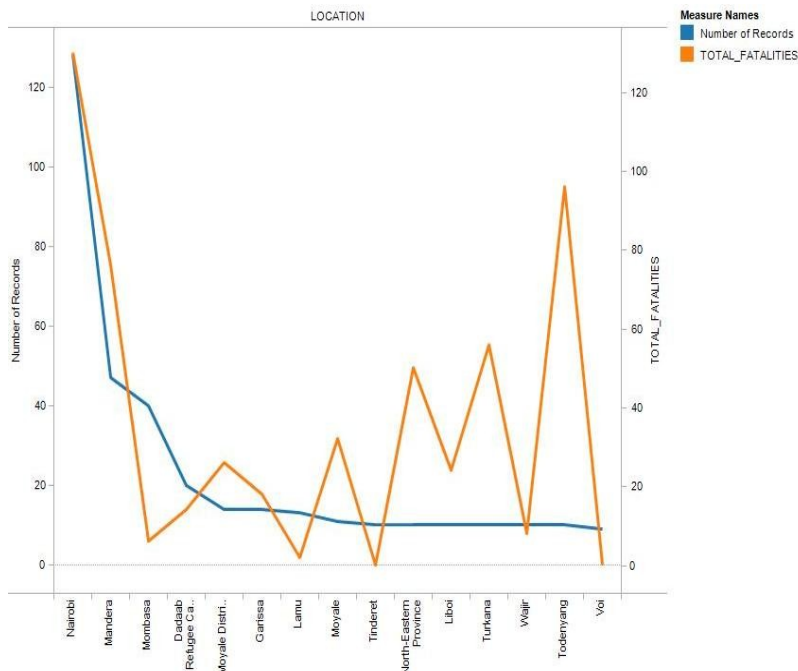
account for death rates almost matching those of Nairobi at times, though in much more sparsely populated locations (Graph 1).

Three of the top 10 non-civilian groups active in Kenya since 2010 are imported from neighbouring countries such as Somalia and Ethiopia. These include Al-Shabaab, unidentified Somali militant groups, and the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF). Reports of Al-Shabaab activity increased significantly in 2011 from the previous year. The group has consistently primarily engaged in Battles against other armed forces. Between 2011 and 2012, we see a fairly consistent pattern of relatively low levels of Violence against Civilians compared to Battles.

Geographically, conflict over 2010-2012 has expanded to new locations. In 2010, violent events were heavily concentrated in Nairobi and Mombasa. In 2011, Mandera and Dadaab were also notable areas of conflict, while 2012 to date has witnessed considerable violence in Moyale, Muhoroni, Aldai and Tinderet.

Mali

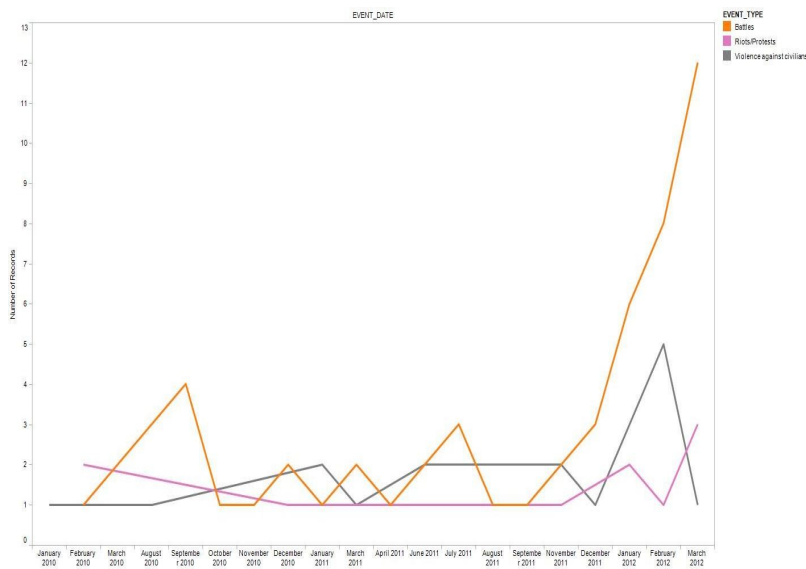
Perhaps the most surprising conflict news of March was the coup in Bamako led by Captain Amadou Sanogo in one of Africa’s solid democracies on March 21st. At present, Mali is being run by Comite national pour le redressment de la democratie et la restauration de l’etat (National Committee for the Review of Democracy and the Restoration of the State). In addition to the growing and successful rebellion in the North by the MNLA (Movement Nationale pour le liberation de l’Azawad) contributing to the success of the coup, the corruption of the Toure government is believed to be responsible for the poor state of equipment and preparedness in the Northern garrisons recently



Graph 1: Conflict events and fatalities by location, Kenya 2010-2012

over-run by the Taureg rebels (Af Con 53/7). The poor state of defence proved weak under an onslaught of newly returned (now unemployed) Taureg militants from Libya. The new leaders are facing some opposition in the capital from a pro-Toure government militia as of March 25th.

Since the coup, the MNLA have had a series of successes over one week-end taking Gao, Kidal and as of early April, Timbuktu. Yet, the MNLA rebels are suffering the perils of success (Af Con 53/4 & 53/7). In particular, a splinter from MNLA led by Iyad ag Ghali led to the creation of Ansar Al-Din (Supporters of the Religion). This group is believed to be gathering former Gaddafi combatants and consorting with AQIM (Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb). The AQIM operates across the Sahel and



Graph 2: Event types, Mali 2010-2012

CONFLICT TRENDS (NO.1):

REAL-TIME ANALYSIS OF AFRICAN POLITICAL VIOLENCE, APRIL 2012

the MNLA have strenuously avoided association with this openly jihadist group. Sources indicate the AQIM is attempting to coordinate jihadi movements under an umbrella group (ARB 19153) however; the MNLA is pushing south to take advantage of the disarray in the capital. Local groups are believed to be emerging to defend the settled people of the North (ARB 19169). The MNLA and AQIM are also distinguished by their differing conflict profiles. MNLA has engaged almost exclusively in Battles against other armed combatants (the Military Forces of Mali). By contrast, AQIM has a larger number of recorded events of Violence against Civilians.

With regards to fatalities, trend lines suggest that Nigeria has a relatively stable fatalities trend, although these have been increasing overall since 2006.

Trend lines indicate that Nigeria has a relatively stable fatalities trend, although these have been increasing overall since 2006.

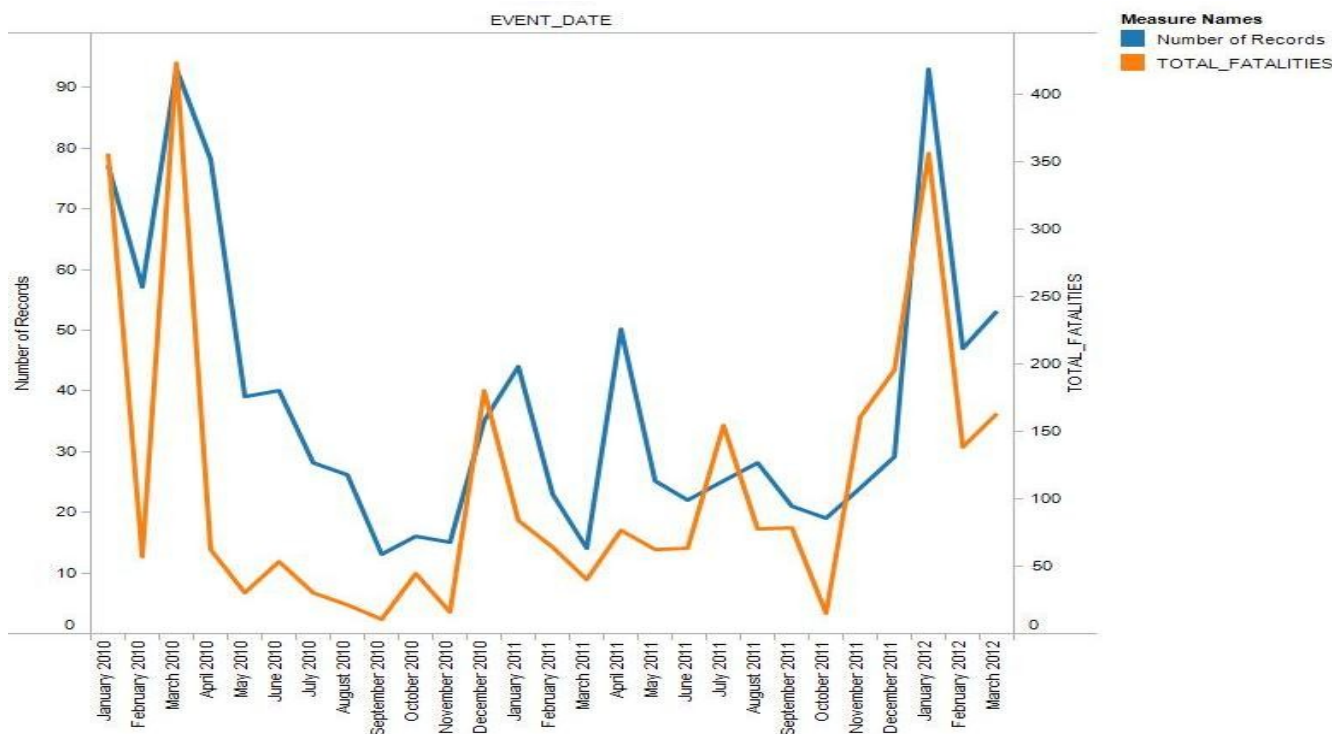
In 2012, conflict events in Nigeria have been concentrated in the locations of Kano, Maiduguri and Lagos. Kano and Maiduguri in the North have witnessed high levels of both Battles between armed actors, and Violence against Civilians, while Lagos has witnessed large numbers

of Riots/Protests. Violence against Civilians in the capital has been associated with attacks on civilians engaging in protests against the removal of a fuel price subsidy over this period. Conflict events in the north of the country are associated with Boko Haram violence, and the military and police response to these incidents, although overall, incidents have fallen from their peak in February 2012. The conflict between the military forces and Boko Haram is mainly centred in the group’s home base of Maiduguri, although 2012 has witnessed an increase in activities in nearby Kano and Potiskum.

Boko Haram is now believed to be a front militia for a cabal of former military officers from the Abacha junta (Af Con 53/6). The tension in the North is still high, and the attacks against Christian Igbos continue. Boko Haram has generally peaked in activity at roughly six-month intervals over this period – November 2010, May 2011 and January 2012. Nigeria also has a relatively high level of political violence perpetrated by actors who remain unidentified.

Nigeria

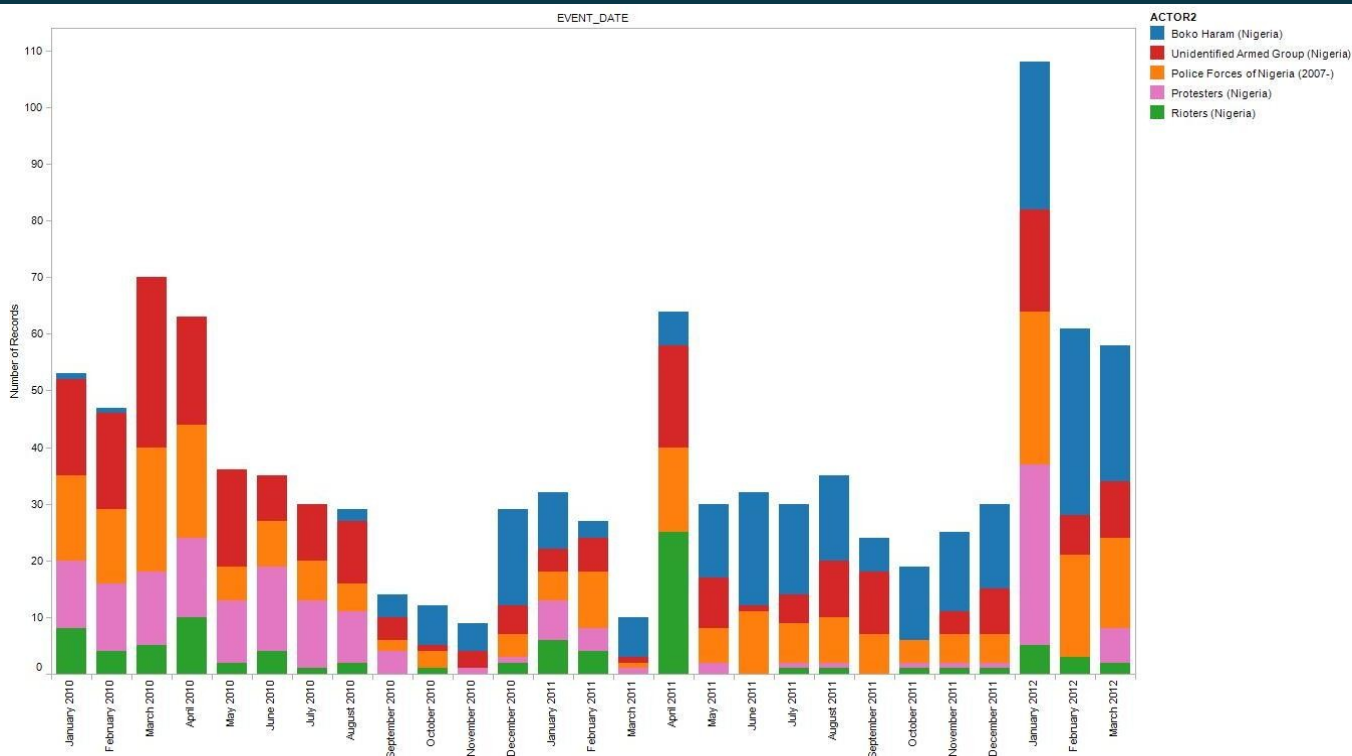
In the past few months, Nigeria’s violence has drastically increased following relatively low levels of violence in the country since mid-2010. This high level of violence in early 2010, however, reflects a sharp spike towards the end of 2009 which resulted in a drastic deviation from Nigeria’s baseline levels, which are typically quite stable. This violence was associated with Unidentified Armed Groups, as well as violence connected to Muslim-Christian militia clashes in and around the city of Jos.



Graph 3: Number of events and fatalities, Nigeria 2010-2012

CONFLICT TRENDS (NO.1):

REAL-TIME ANALYSIS OF AFRICAN POLITICAL VIOLENCE, APRIL 2012



Graph 4: Number of events by Actor, Nigeria 2010-2012

Sudan & South Sudan

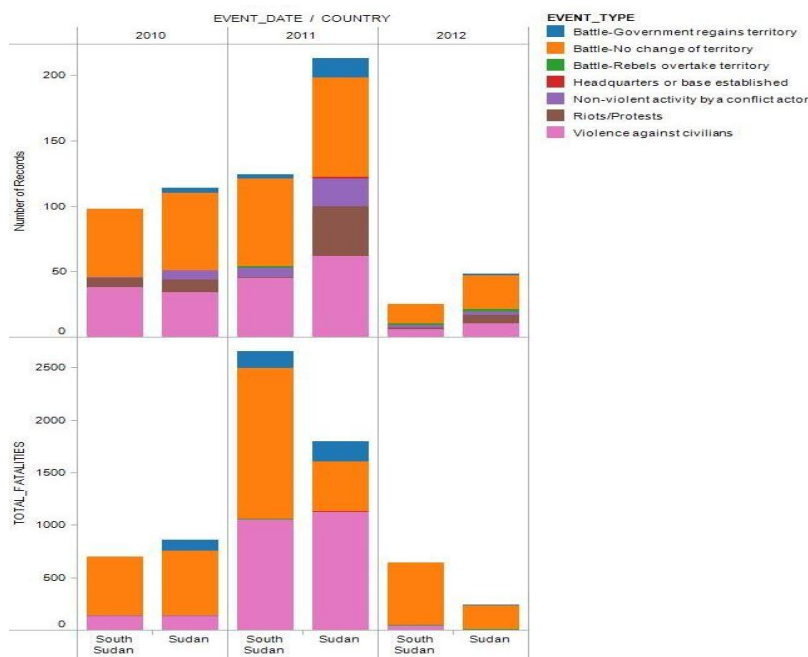
In both Sudan and South Sudan, political violence patterns – shaped by actors, events and locations – are still very much in flux. There are multiple actors, operating on several scales, fighting both amongst themselves and with national actors in the form off the Military Forces of Sudan and the SPLM/A.

Graph 5 summarises the types of events over the recent past in both Sudan and South Sudan. It should be noted that both countries have largely similar violence profiles with regards to the two most prevalent conflict types – Battles and Violence against Civilians. However, they differ in several important aspects. First, there is a much higher rate of rioting in Sudan. There also appears to be a higher rate of government regaining territory through battles, although rebels have also overtaken an equal amount of territory to that which the government reclaimed.

With regards to fatalities, it is clear that civilians bore the brunt of violence in 2011, where there was a marked increase in non-combatant casualties over other years. In general, South Sudan has a much higher rate of fatalities than Sudan.

In the former, battles result in an average of 19 fatalities per event; while attacks on civilians result in an average of 14 fatalities per event. In Sudan, we find an average rate of 9 fatalities per battle, and 12 fatalities on average per attack on civilians.

In 2011, the number of actors increased from 24 to 44 over the previous year. In Sudan, this number of actors remained almost stable. This



Graph 5: Events and Fatalities, Sudan and South Sudan 2010-2012

CONFLICT TRENDS (NO.1):

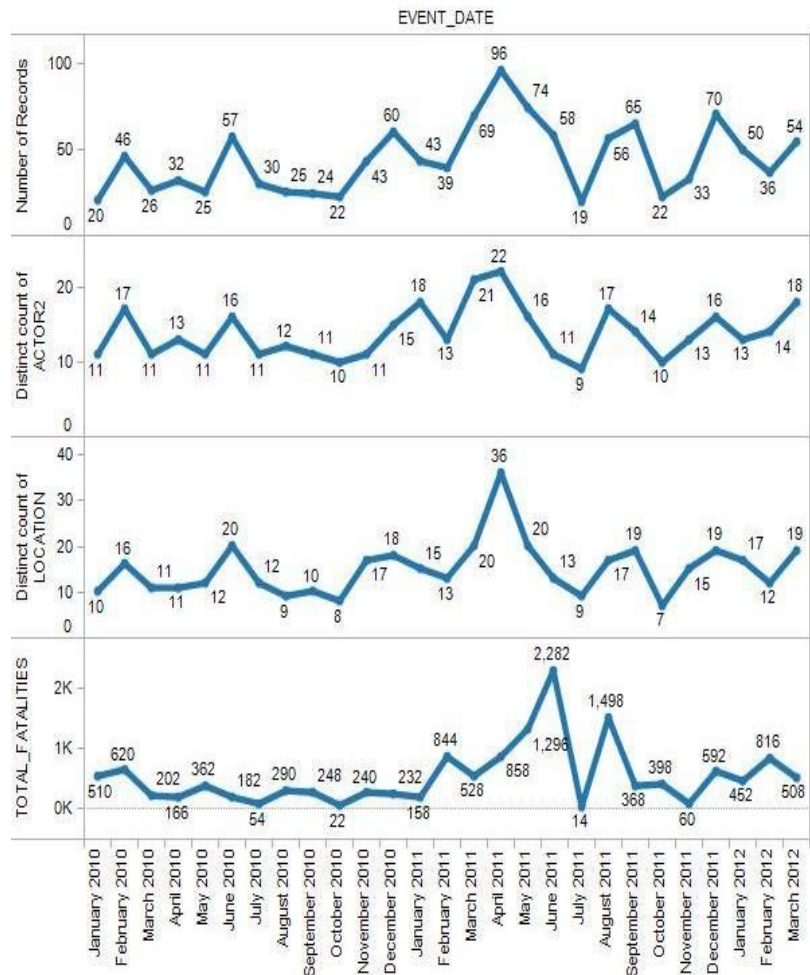
REAL-TIME ANALYSIS OF AFRICAN POLITICAL VIOLENCE, APRIL 2012

suggests that the number of fissures around which violent political conflict occurs is relatively stable in Sudan, while it remains in flux in South Sudan. It should be noted that not all actors are active at once. In 2012, there have so far been fewer actors present than in the previous year. This suggests that certain actors may be active at particular times of the year. There is a fairly consistent lull in violence activities across East African states in the middle of the year, which may be linked to raiding patterns in livestock-dependent livelihood groups, which are tied to rainfall patterns, migration routes and seasonal changes.

Graph 6 provides an overview of violence patterns in both countries since January 2010, displaying the overall number of records, the distinct count of actors present, the count of distinct locations in which political violence was recorded, and the total number of fatalities in a given month. It shows that the number of records, the count of distinct actors, and the count of distinct locations are all relatively well matched, suggesting that violent events typically increase alongside an expansion in the range of actors and arenas of conflict. This might be distinguished from countries with conflict profiles in which conflict events increase with an intensification of activity by a particular conflict actor in a specific contested location. Fatality records are not clearly matched to the other three patterns, however, as they display an apparent lag, particularly in mid-2011.

Since 2010, the areas which have experienced the highest number of fatalities have experienced different types of violence. South Kordofan, the location with the highest number of fatalities, has experienced a considerable number of acts of violence against civilians, relative to Jonglei, the location with the second highest number of fatalities. In the latter, battles between the SPLM/A and George Athor Rebel Group constitute the majority of conflict events, alongside a number of conflict events between ethnic militias. In Jonglei, the violent interactions on-going since last year between Nuer and Murle people

In both Sudan and South Sudan, political violence patterns — shaped by actors, events and locations — are still very much in flux. There are multiple actors, operating on several scales, fighting both amongst themselves and with national actors.



Graph 6: Events and Fatalities, Sudan and South Sudan 2010-2012

in Jonglei state continued into January 2012, but have lessened in recent months. Reports indicate that over 1,000 died in these cattle raiding and reprisal acts (ARB 19137). Fatalities in South Kordofan are on average approximately 2.5 times higher than in Jonglei, although the overall number of events is not dramatically higher.

The conflict profiles are similar when we compare the locations with the two highest records of events (Abyei and South Kordofan). In Abyei, Battles constitute the largest proportion of overall events, while Violence against Civilians constitutes approximately half of all events in South Kordofan. A considerably higher proportion of events in Abyei have been carried out by ethnic actors, than in South Kordofan, suggesting the salience of localised, sub-national fissures in this location. New locations of conflict in 2012 include Blue Nile, Unity State, al Abyad and Talawdi. In 2012, these new spaces have primarily hosted Battles between armed actors, and not necessarily large numbers of acts of Violence against Civilians.

CONFLICT TRENDS (NO.1):

REAL-TIME ANALYSIS OF AFRICAN POLITICAL VIOLENCE, APRIL 2012

Somalia

Somalia’s conflict profile is characterised by a vast number of politically violent actors, among which are a large number of highly fractured, politically violent ethnic militias. Among the most active conflict actors are Al-Shabaab, the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), Ethiopian and Kenyan Military Forces, and a large number of highly active Unidentified Armed Groups.

Al-Shabaab is fighting on many fronts against the TFG, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), regional forces, and pro-government militias. Al-Shabaab lost hold of much of Mogadishu and several surrounding areas in recent months, with a major offensive in August 2011 by the TFG and allied forces. This significant territorial transfer was followed by a relative lull in violence in September-October 2011, as Al-Shabaab appeared to re-group following losses.

2012 witnessed an increase in Al-Shabaab activity following this relative drop, alongside a strategic shift in military tactics. The militant group has increasingly resorted to guerrilla style tactics, characterised by a large number of hit-and-run attacks on armed targets.

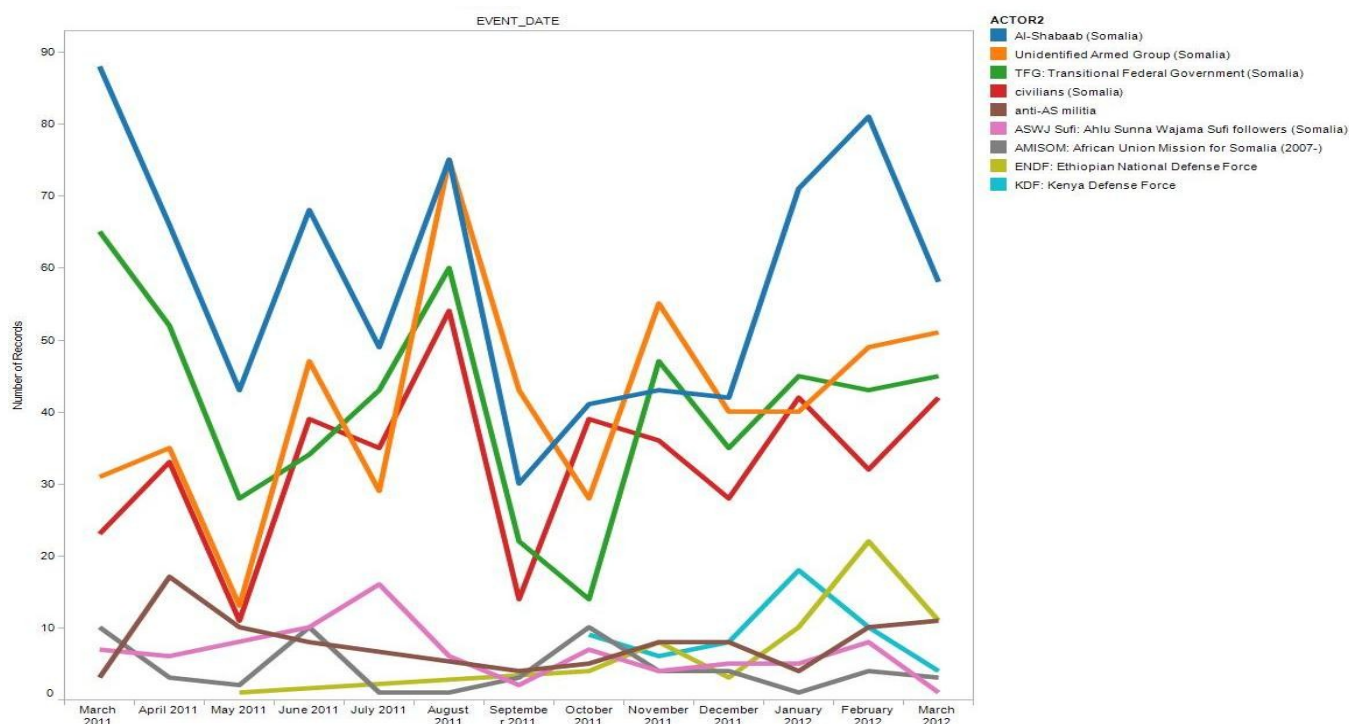
Al-Shabaab has increasingly resorted to guerrilla style tactics, characterised by a large number of hit-and-run attacks on armed targets.

The group’s geographic focus is also changing: with the loss of ground of Mogadishu in late 2011 and Baidoa in February 2012, Al-Shabaab has reportedly retreated to rural areas to build up support with sub-clans (Af Con 53/5). Ethiopian, Kenyan and Uganda troops, as well as TFG-aligned militias – including Ahlu Sunna Wal Jamaa (ASWJ) – are assisting in taking

and holding key, former Al-Shabaab towns, such as Dhusmareb and Hudur in late March. The Kenyan and Ethiopian forces in particular have been successful in gaining control over territory during the Linda Nchi operation (ARB 19150). Al-Shabaab’s recently declared open alliance with Al-Qaeda suggests that it is now focusing on its regional role in instability (ARB 19150).

Conflict activity in Somalia is primarily characterised by Battles between armed combatants. Rates of Violence against Civilians show some volatility over the past 12 months, but this conflict type has consistently constituted a relatively small proportion of overall events.

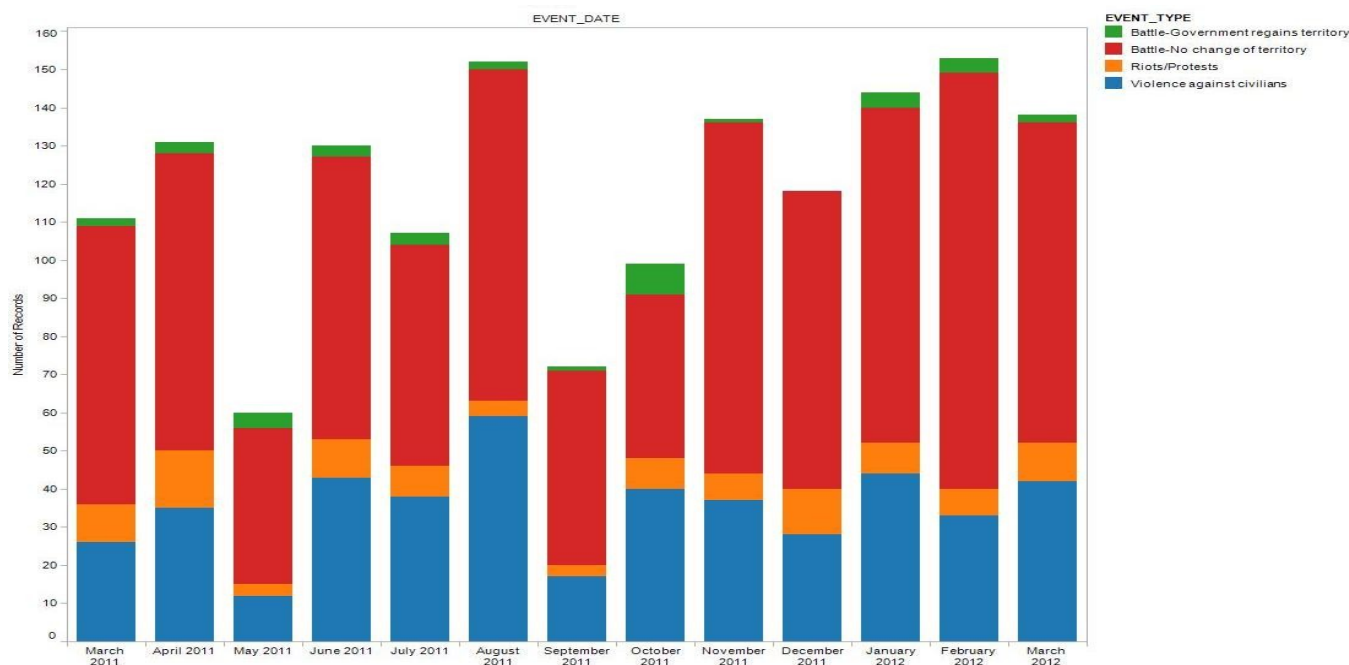
Al-Shabaab appears to concentrate events of Violence against Civilians in and around Mogadishu (in the Banaadir region) and in Lower Shabelle, where the Afgooye Corridor is located. There are comparably few reports of Violence against Civilians by Al-Shabaab in areas over which Al-Shabaab has long-established control. As TFG-aligned forces make territorial gains into Al-Shabaab areas, this conflict profile may evolve in the coming months.



Graph 7: Conflict events by Actor, Somalia March 2011-March 2012

CONFLICT TRENDS (NO.1):

REAL-TIME ANALYSIS OF AFRICAN POLITICAL VIOLENCE, APRIL 2012



Graph 8: Conflict events by Type, Somalia March 2011-March 2012

Additional Comments

Burundi — A new political party Mouvement pour la solidarité et la démocratie (MSD) is facing harassment by the central government. There are mounting claims that the government is facing opposition from partners in the coalition, and that members of several factions are considering armed revolt. Burundi's issues are still tied to its proximity to Kivu, DR-Congo, where opposition groups can organize and strategize without fear of interference by the government.

DR-Congo — Despite widespread concern that the elections held in November returned fraudulent results, the Kabila government continues. A United Nations report has confirmed that government soldiers are responsible for the deaths of over thirty protestors in Kinshasa during that time. DR-Congo is set to become a major oil producer, which is sparking concern over how the government will deal with inevitable issues. The country remains affected by continuing militia instability. There has been an increase in FPRI and Mayi-Mayi factional activity. FPRI activity followed a local mutiny of FARDC forces in Ituri due to poor conditions, although the security vacuum in the area is

leading militias to re-group.

DR-Congo faces a continued LRA threat in the north. Recent reports suggest that the LRA has been moved from Central African Republic and is now occupying parts of Garamba. ACLED data for 2012 records a cluster of LRA activity around this location, close to the border with South Sudan, in addition to activity in the proximity of the Central African Republic border. Reports indicate that the LRA is decreasing the number of civilian attacks in order to reduce the momentum behind the international effort to capture the group. This suggests that the group is in survival mode.

Niger — Niger is under significant pressure as a result of external instability and its knock-on effects. The country has its own Tuareg group to contend with, and refugees from Mali are heightening the focus on the food-insecure North. However, the government is trying to attenuate these pressures through measures including a Tuareg prime minister, a decentralization program, and the continued integration of Tuareg into the armed forces.

Sources

The information in this issue of ACLED *Conflict Trends* was compiled from a variety of sources. Sources include ACLED data, compiled from local, regional, national and continental news reports, NGO reports, and Africa-focused news reports integrated to supplement daily media reporting. Additional sources include *Africa Research Bulletin* (ARB), *Africa Confidential* (Af Con), and reports from the NGO Safety Programme (NSP), specifically for information concerning Somalia. Further information on sources, coding procedures and data can be found online at www.acleddata.com/data.