

CONFLICT TRENDS (NO.3):

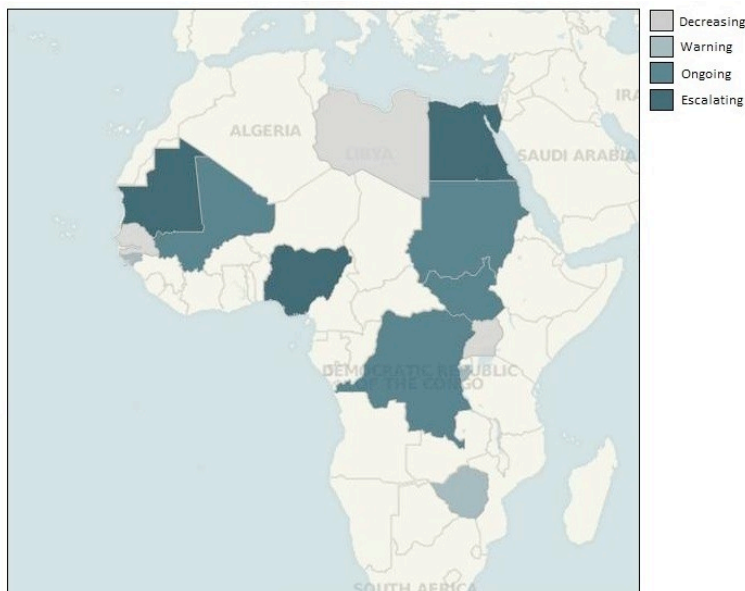
REAL-TIME ANALYSIS OF AFRICAN POLITICAL VIOLENCE, JUNE 2012

This conflict trend report from ACLED is the third of our monthly reports that focus on regional conflict trends within Africa. We concentrate our analysis on recent political violence in **DR-Congo, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania, Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan & South Sudan, Zimbabwe**, and **North African states** including **Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia**.

Analysis is focused on the month of May 2012, with reference to violence patterns over the course of the last three months. Present conflict patterns are compared with recent violent with new trends, actors and locations highlighted.

ACLED data is disaggregated by violence type, group and location. Recent additions to the dataset include interaction terms for different actor types, and fatalities. These different factors are analysed to provide a multi-faceted understanding of conflict in Africa. May saw the highest levels of violence in Somalia, Nigeria and across North African states respectively, although the highest fatalities by far were recorded in DR-Congo, while Mauritania witnessed a very sharp proportional increase in violence over previous months.

Elections in Egypt and protests in Mauritana saw conflict events increase in those countries, while



Conflict trajectory, May 2012

violence has continued to escalate in Nigeria. Conflict was ongoing at similar levels to April in DR-Congo, Mali and Sudan & South Sudan, while developments in Zimbabwe, Guinea Bissau and Burundi constituted warning signals of possible escalations. Meanwhile, conflict levels have fallen in Uganda, Senegal and Libya since the start of the year.

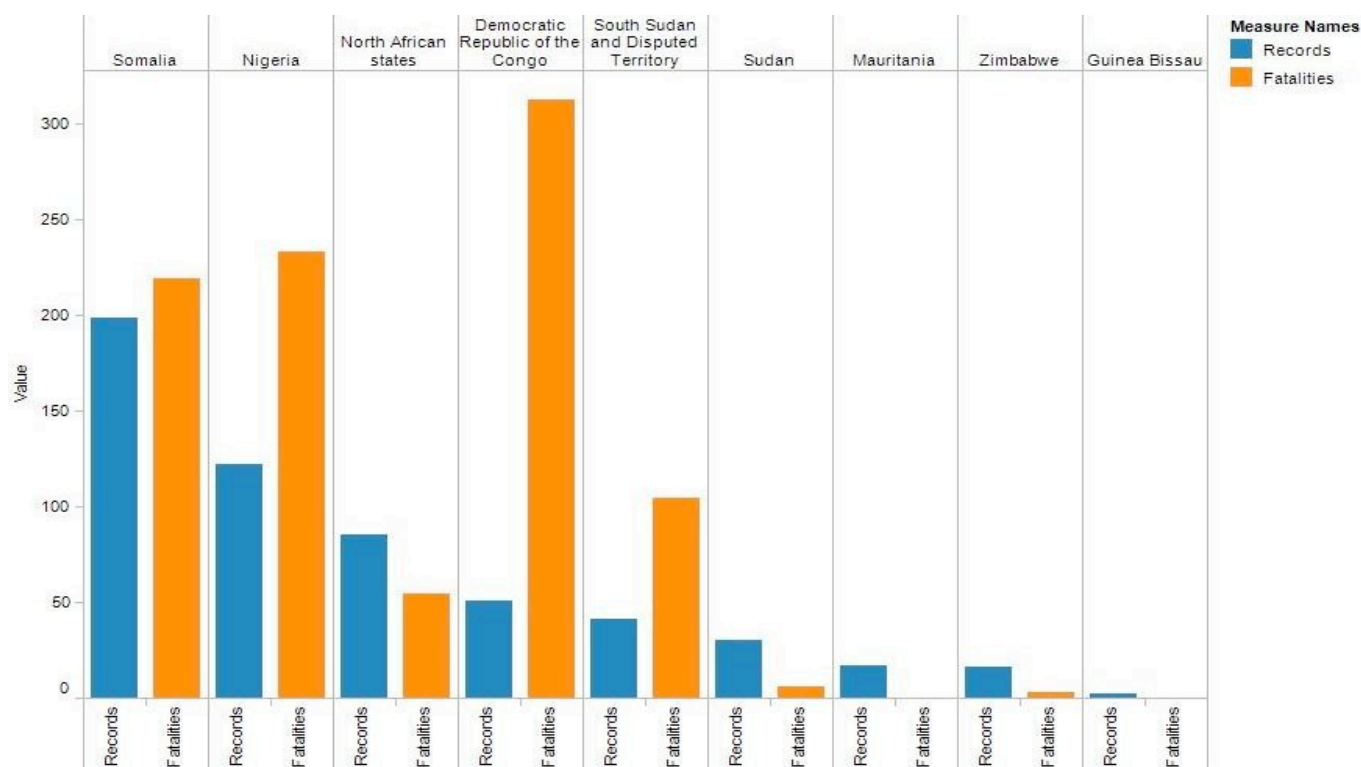


Figure 1: Conflict events and fatalities by country, May 2012

CONFLICT TRENDS (NO.3):

REAL-TIME ANALYSIS OF AFRICAN POLITICAL VIOLENCE, JUNE 2012

DR-Congo

While event numbers fell slightly in DR-Congo in the month of May, fatality levels rose, largely due to a small number of highly fatal attacks in the east of the country over the course of the month. The first two weeks of May witnessed a series of attacks by the Rwandan rebel group, the FDLR, in South Kivu, which claimed the lives of up to 50 civilians, allegedly in retaliation for civilian populations' support of Raia Mutomboki forces in the area (*Le Potentiel*, 13 May 2012). Though reduced, the highest interactions in May were between government forces and political militias, as in April; while conflict between government and communal militia forces persisted at comparable levels (See Figure 3).

Meanwhile in North Kivu, fighting between former CNDP rebels, reconstituted under the banner of the March 23 Movement, resulted in heavy losses, as did M23 attacks on civilians. Analysts have posited that the formation of the M23 movement is driven by a desire on the one hand, to reassert CNDP dominance in the east of the country, while on the other, combatants seek to distance themselves from General Jean-Bosco Ntaganda, whose arrest was called for by President Kabila in April (*AfCon*, 25 May 2012). If this is the case, any distancing would appear to be a matter of form rather than function, if reports of an attack on civilians resulting in over 100 deaths in late May, attributed to the M23 movement in Masisi, are to be believed.

Guinea Bissau

May witnessed the deployment of the first ECOWAS peacekeeping forces in the volatile West African country, following a military coup which derailed presidential elections in April. Among the coup leaders' demands were the withdrawal from Guinea Bissau of the Angolan military forces, present in the country since October 2011, who were involved in a military

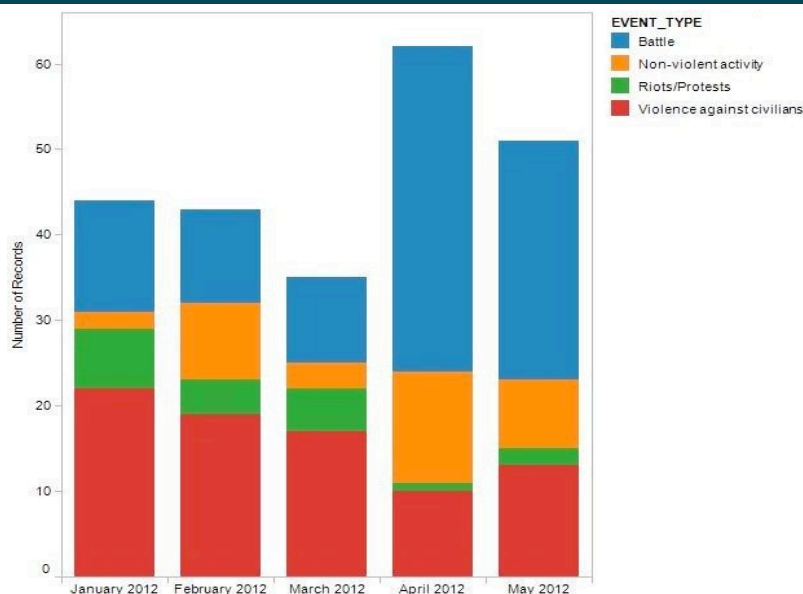


Figure 2: Conflict event type, DR-Congo, January - May 2012.

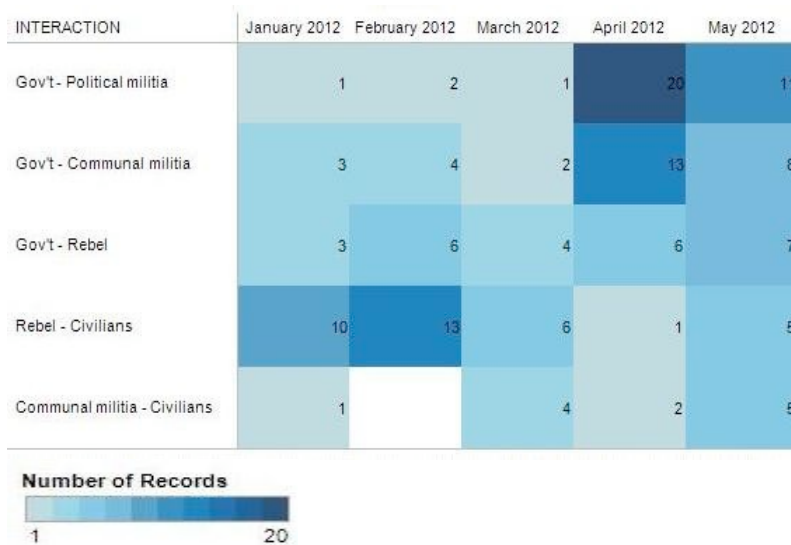


Figure 3: Interaction types, DR-Congo, January - May 2012.

reform programme, with coup members alleging the Angolan military sought to 'destroy' Guinea Bissau's armed forces (*ARB*, April 2012). May also witnessed the reported handover to civilian rule, although it appears that the military retains considerable control as the Defence Ministry is now headed by one of the coup's leaders.

The coup and the post-coup period to date have progressed very much along the lines of a classic bid for power by security forces engaged in lucrative trafficking activity (with a long history of military involvement in narcotics trafficking in the country), resistant to reform and resentful of civilian oversight.

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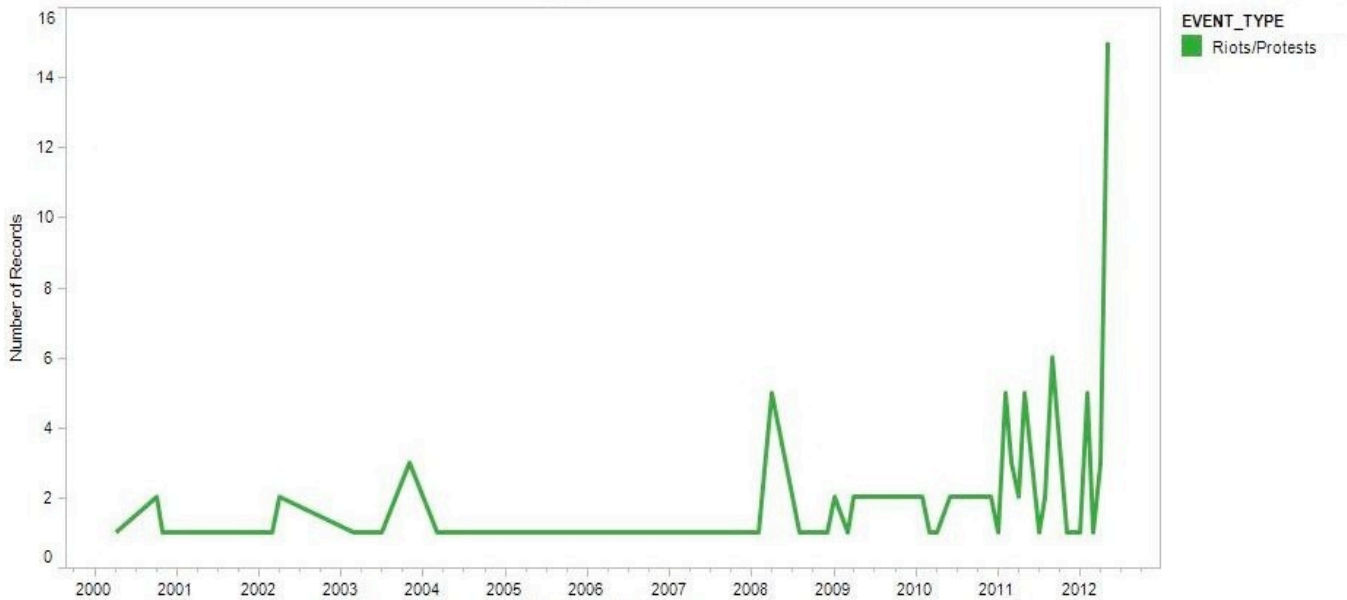


Figure 4: Incidents of riots and protests, Mauritania, 2000 - 2012.

Mauritania

Mauritania witnessed an increase in violence in May, in an intensification of anti-government protests which have been ongoing in the country, albeit sporadically, since 2011. Mauritania’s ‘Spring’ has, as in neighbouring countries, a strong youth component, and has integrated elements of the country’s anti-slavery activism into its call for broad political and social reforms. In general, it has been a relatively slow-burning attempt to oust the current President, Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz.

The narrative of violence in the country, however, calls for a longer-term perspective, which situates the current ongoing protest movements in a broader pattern of volatility with origins in unrest in 2008 linked to food riots, and opposition to the concurrent coup which brought the current president to power.

Current unrest in Mauritania should be situated in a broader pattern of volatility, with origins in unrest in 2008 linked to food riots, and opposition to the concurrent coup which brought the current president to power.

Nigeria

Violent events increased for the fourth month in a row in Nigeria, reaching a 2012 peak in the month of May, although fatalities fell from last month and are approximately two-thirds their January level. Boko Haram operatives continued assaults on police and civilian targets across northern Nigeria, while security forces persisted in raids on suspected militant hide-outs and bases. In this environment, violence appears to breed violence, as angry crowds protested the slow response of the security forces to a deadly attack on a market place in Potiskum, Yobe State, which itself led to violence as the crowd rioting, burning a church and school, and police responded with tear gas.

Fulani ethnic violence also increased in Nigeria in May, after falling off in April. While the number of events is limited, and the incidence of attacks by the group appears sporadic, the events associated with this group are significant in that they are highly fatal, with an average rate of 12.4 fatalities per event in 2012. This compares with 4.9 fatalities per event associated with Boko Haram over the course of the year, and 1.7 for unidentified armed groups.

Unidentified armed group attacks on security forces and civilians continue to be a dominant feature of the conflict landscape in Nigeria. Although these groups are not restricted to areas in which Boko Haram

CONFLICT TRENDS (NO.3):

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is active, it is possible that the fragmented nature of Boko Haram leadership may facilitate Boko Haram operatives or cells acting relatively independent of the central command, therefore not claiming responsibility for lower-level attacks. With reports suggesting that Boko Haram leadership and organisation is fracturing further still under the command of Abubakar Shekau (ARB, May 2012), alongside the reported arrest of one of Shekau’s top aides in Kano on the 29th of May (Leadership, 30 May 2012), we may see an increase in unattributed attacks on traditional Boko Haram targets in the coming months.

North Africa

May witnessed an increase in violent activity across North Africa, with the exception of Libya where events fell from the 2012 high seen in April. Both Algeria and Egypt held elections in the month of May.

In Egypt, presidential elections were held on the 23rd and 24th of May, in which the Muslim Brotherhood’s Freedom and Justice Party candidate, Mohamed Morsi received the largest share of the vote, followed by former Prime Minister Ahmed Shafiq. A run-off will be held in June, but the results were viewed by some analysts as an indictment of the North African Spring and associated movements’ ability to usher in real change across the region (The Guardian, 25 May 2012; The Economist, 2 Jun 2012). The election itself was characterised by a sharp increase in violence events, dominated by riots and protests, followed by clashes between rival political factions in which civilians and police officers were injured or killed. Violence events were more clustered in May than in previous months, however, with over 70% of recorded events taking place in and around Cairo. January through April witnessed greater diffusion, with Alexandria and Sinai witnessing repeated incidents.

Algeria held elections on the 10th of May. As

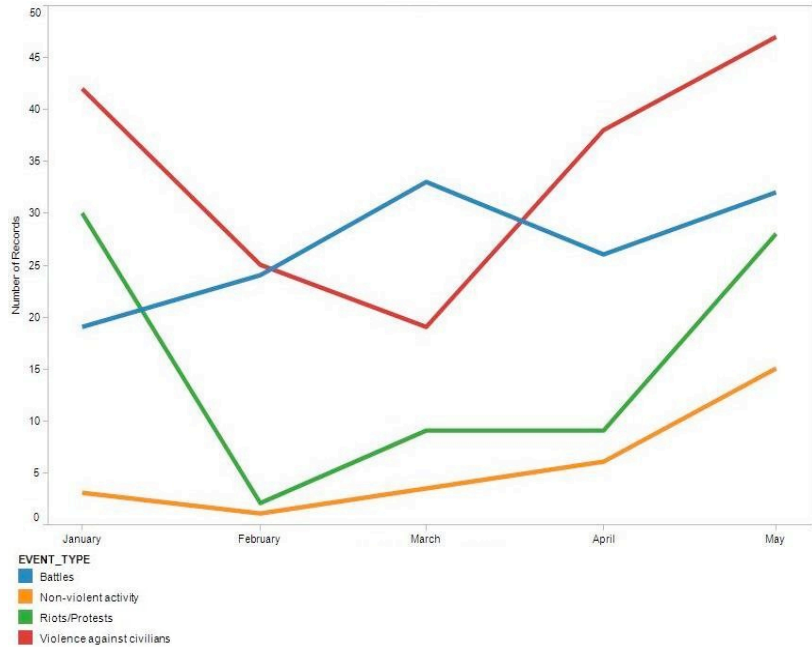


Figure 5: Violence by type, Nigeria, January - May 2012.

expected, the FLN and RND parties won the largest share of the votes with a reported turnout of 42.9% (BBC News, 10 May 2012). There was some unrest surrounding the elections, as polling stations were attacked in some locations, although in general, demonstrations and riots were limited in number. Algeria’s main security threat remains militant groups associated and acting in collaboration with AQIM, evidenced by the highest level of conflict events reported in Bourmedes Province, where AQIM has been active. In addition, insecurity along Algeria’s borders with restive Mali and, to a lesser extent, Libya, continue to pose challenges for the state.

Elections were held in Morocco in November 2011, in which the moderate Islamist PJD party won the largest share of the votes. The election was accompanied by protests by the 20 February movement, initially calling for a boycott of elections and maintaining that reforms made by the king were insufficient. More recently, protests have taken place alongside organised hunger strikes by incarcerated Islamists, drawing further attention to some of the fissures apparent in Moroccan politics.

Tunisia was the first country to emerge from the ‘Arab Spring’ and hold a constituent assembly election in October 2011. The moderate Islamist Ennahda party won the largest share of the vote. Tunisia’s uprising was characterised by a sudden and very sharp spike in violence in January 2011, but fell off dramatically in February and thereafter. In spite of an initial flair-up in violence immediately following the election which provoked the imposition of a curfew in Sidi Bouzid, unrest was largely contained.

CONFLICT TRENDS (NO.3):

REAL-TIME ANALYSIS OF AFRICAN POLITICAL VIOLENCE, JUNE 2012

Somalia

Violence events in Somalia increased significantly in the month of May, reaching a 2012 high, following a relative lull in April. Fatalities also increased during this time, although the ratio of events to fatalities in the month dropped from 1.7 in April, to 1.1 in May. Al Shabaab activities increased in number following a relative drop between March and April, although the group has constituted a fairly consistent proportion of overall violence in the country since the beginning of the year.

While the conflict in Central and Southern Somalia understandably commands centre stage in discussions of security in the country, violent events in the northern territories of Somaliland and Puntland represent a fairly consistent and not insignificant proportion of overall violence in Somalia. Piracy presents a pronounced security threat in the northern regions, although more explicitly political violence is compared here with levels across different countries in Africa. We separate Central/Southern Somalia, from the northern regions of Puntland and Somaliland over the course of 2012 and note that the northern zones have similar levels of events, which are comparable to those reported in Senegal and Tanzania to date this year. Kenya has witnessed over 2.5 times the level of violence of Puntland and Somaliland, while Nigeria has seen over 8.5 times, and Somalia has witnessed over 14 times the violence rates. Rwanda and Cameroon, by contrast, have each experienced less than a quarter of the violence levels of Puntland and Somaliland.

In Southern Somalia, there have been some shifts the locations of conflict in the past month. Incidents of violence have persisted in Baidoa and the wider Bay region, an administrative and logistical hub of Al Shabaab. Among the reported incidents are attacks on Ethiopian and TFG security forces battling for the control of the region, alongside several attacks on

attacks on civilians by suspected Al Shabaab operatives and unidentified armed groups. Most of the reports of attacks on civilians revolve around allegations of spying for TFG and allied forces, indicating that Al Shabaab is either directly taking action to discipline civilians in this contested area, or is contracting out this role to unidentified operatives in order to avoid being associated with these actions.

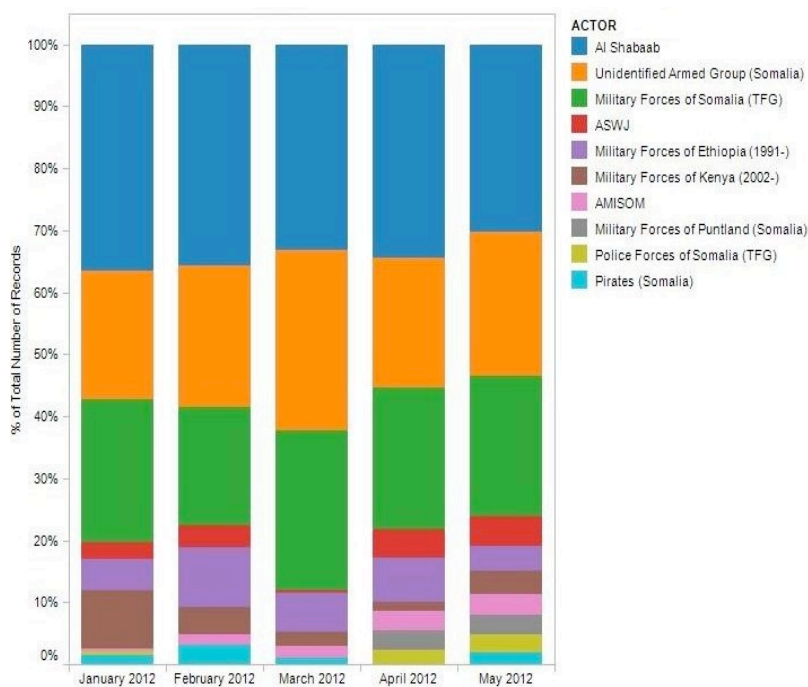


Figure 6: Violence actors by percentage, Somalia, January—May 2012.

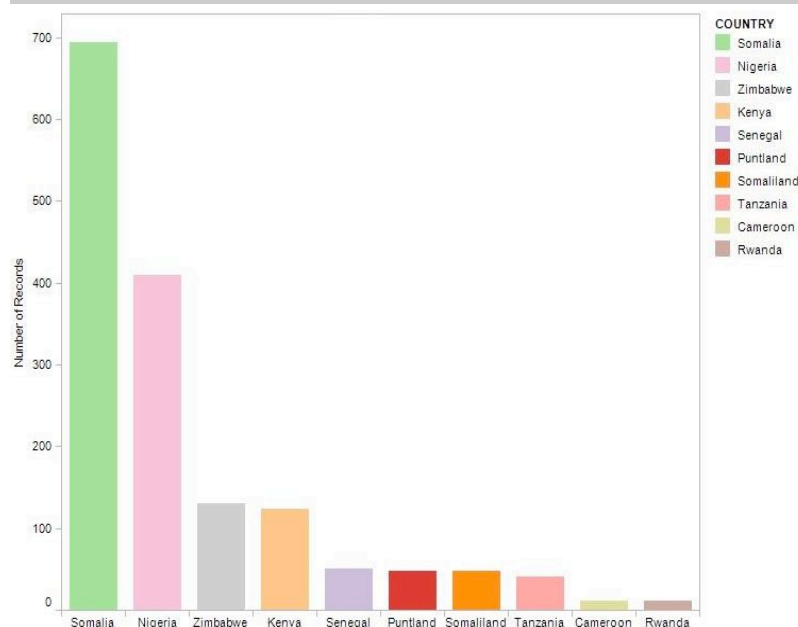


Figure 7: Comparison of violence in Somalia regions, 2012.

CONFLICT TRENDS (NO.3):

REAL-TIME ANALYSIS OF AFRICAN POLITICAL VIOLENCE, JUNE 2012

Sudan & South Sudan

May witnessed an increase overall in violent events in the two countries, although this masks a drop in violence in South Sudan and the border territories, and a marked increase in violence within Sudan itself (See Figure 8). The cross-border violence has received the lion’s share of international attention over the course of the month: South Sudan continued to report of aerial bombardment by Sudan in violation of a UN Security Council resolution up to middle of May, while the end of the month witnessed the confirmation of the withdrawal of troops from Abyei, and discussions in Ethiopia between the two warring sides.

In May, the United Nations Security Council condemned cross-border violence between the two states, but Human Rights Watch has sought to draw attention to what it describes as indiscriminate bombing in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile States, north of the border with neighbouring South Sudan (HRW, 4 May 2012). The military continued to engage with the SPLA-North in these areas, and reported regaining control of territory in the Angasana Mountains from the South-aligned rebels. Pressure is slowly growing on the Sudanese government in relation to its campaign in these territories, particularly following the discovery and publicising of unexploded cluster munitions in Southern Kordofan reportedly dropped in the area in April (The Independent, 24 May 2012). Nevertheless, in response to the UN Security Council’s demand that the Sudanese government negotiate with the SPLM-N, President Omer Hassan al-Bashir reportedly announced “We only do the things we want to do. And no security council or the whole world for the matter can force us to act otherwise.” (Sudan Tribune, 12 May 2012).

Elsewhere in Sudan, rebel groups in the west appeared to take advantage of the government’s focus on its border territories to briefly

seize control of territory in South Darfur at the beginning of the month. The SLA-Minnawi faction was reportedly working in conjunction with the SLA-Nur faction, and although the Sudanese armed forces regained control of the town relatively quickly, the act reflects the growing internal pressures on the Sudanese government, at a time of heightened external pressures.

Within South Sudan, an attempted disarmament campaign in response to inter-ethnic violence earlier in the year has been marred by its own complications: civilians and human rights groups have alleged mistreatment at the hands of the security forces conducting the campaign, with reports of rape, torture and killing surfacing (AP, 25 May 2012). Moreover, the government has further been obliged to deploy security forces in a bid to protect disarmed groups following continued attacks in the region.

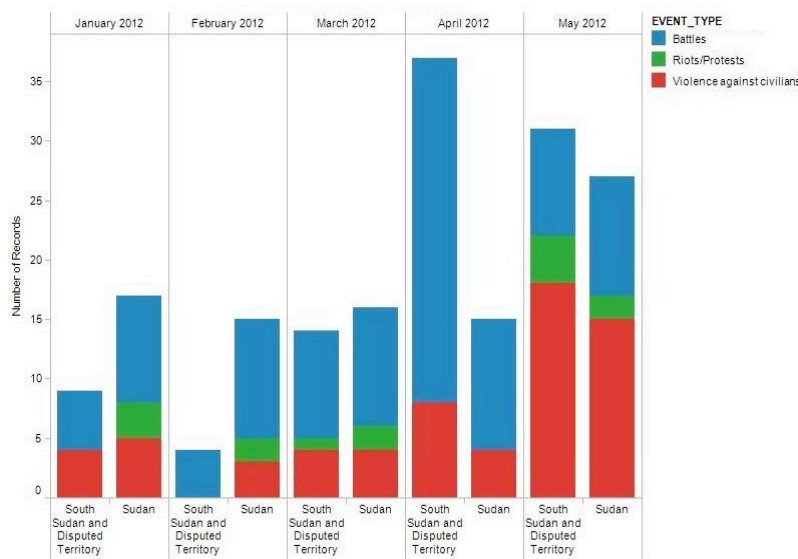


Figure 8: Conflict events by type, Sudan, South Sudan and Disputed

Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe witnessed an increase in violence in May related to infighting within the ruling ZANU-PF party. Irregularities in the holding of District Coordinating Committee elections led to clashes between party supporters and riot police in Masvingo at the beginning of the month, spreading to Manicaland, and escalating into what the Harare Gazette (11 May 2012) and Zimbabwe Mail (7 May 2012) referred to as “Mugabe’s Waterloo” and ZANU-PF’s “implosion” respectively. Factions within the fractured party, led Defence Minister Emmerson Mnangagwa and Vice-President Joice Mujuru, battled for control of the provincial party structures through the attempted imposition of candidates, as rivals seek to carve out support in the event of Mugabe’s withdrawal

CONFLICT TRENDS (NO.3):

REAL-TIME ANALYSIS OF AFRICAN POLITICAL VIOLENCE, JUNE 2012

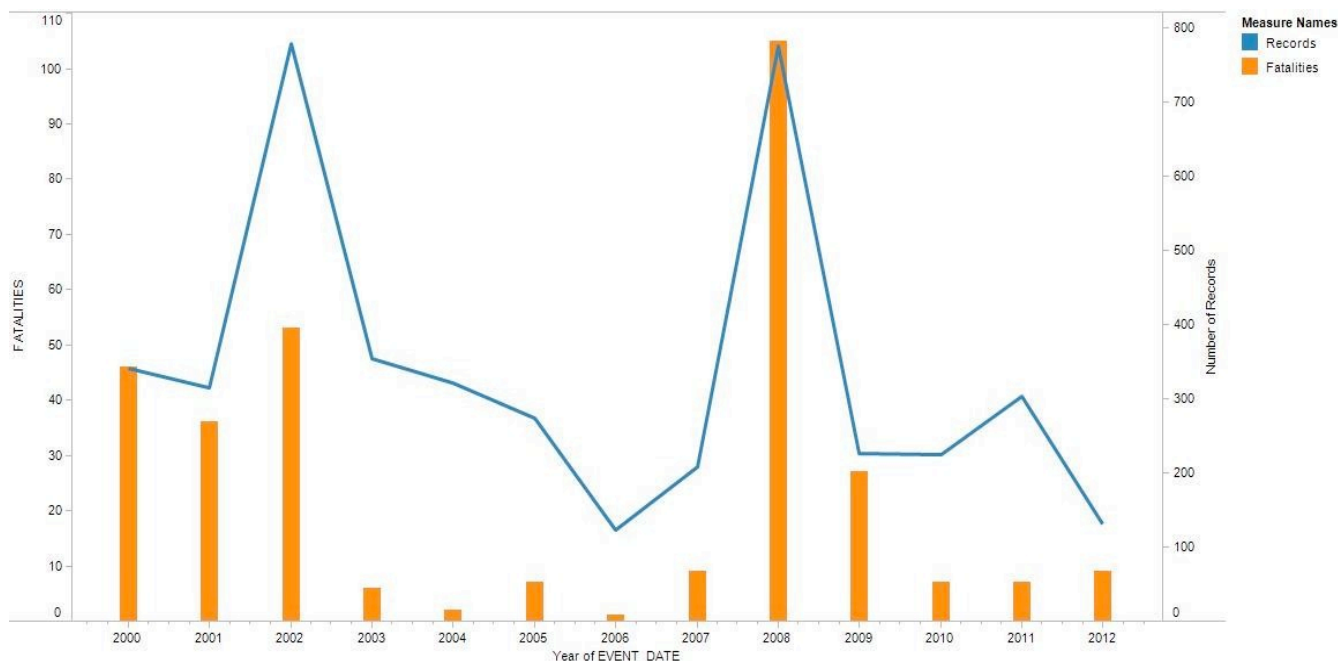


Figure 10: Conflict events and reported fatalities, Zimbabwe, 2000 - 2012.

from politics. The intra-party violence intersects with wider conflicts in the country as reports suggest disgruntled ZANU-PF supporters in Manicaland are defecting to the opposition MDC party (*Financial Gazette*, 4 May 2012).

Incidents involving the Chipangano militia, active in Harare, Mashonaland East and Mashonaland Central, fell in May, following a high in March. Nevertheless, the militant group is reportedly associated with Youth and Indigenisation Minister, Saviour Kasukuwere, (*AfCon*, 25 May 2012), and may therefore significantly influence the outcome of intra-party manoeuvring in the event that infighting boils over into outright aggression.

Zimbabwe’s conflict profile is generally characterised by extremely low levels of fatalities relative to the number of conflict events reported. Nevertheless, several violent events with recorded fatalities have been reported to date this year, and fatality figures look set to surpass those of the past two years (See Figure 9).

Additional Comments

Burundi—Bubanza in Burundi witnessed several reported attacks on civilians by unidentified armed actors in May, while the small central African country was also in the headlines when the government sought to block the distribution of a *Human Rights Watch* report on the subject of political killings in the country (*HRW*, 4 May 2012).

Central African Republic—Ugandan military forces reported the capture of top LRA operative, Caesar Achellam in CAR, where LRA units have been active since 2008. Despite its notoriety, the LRA has been relatively inactive recently, although its capacity to provoke large-scale displacement across Central Africa remains a destabilising factor.

Mali—Protests against the Tuareg rebels were held in northern towns in the newly-declared Azawad territory. As yet unrecognised, but also unchallenged by the Malian state, the government may be anticipating popular opposition to the new Northern regime will win out.

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 Confidential* (Af Con), *Africa Research Bulletin* (ARB), Human Rights Watch (HRW), media outlets, and reports from the NGO Safety Programme (NSP), specifically concerning Somalia. Further information on sources, coding procedures and data can be found online at www.acleddata.com/data.