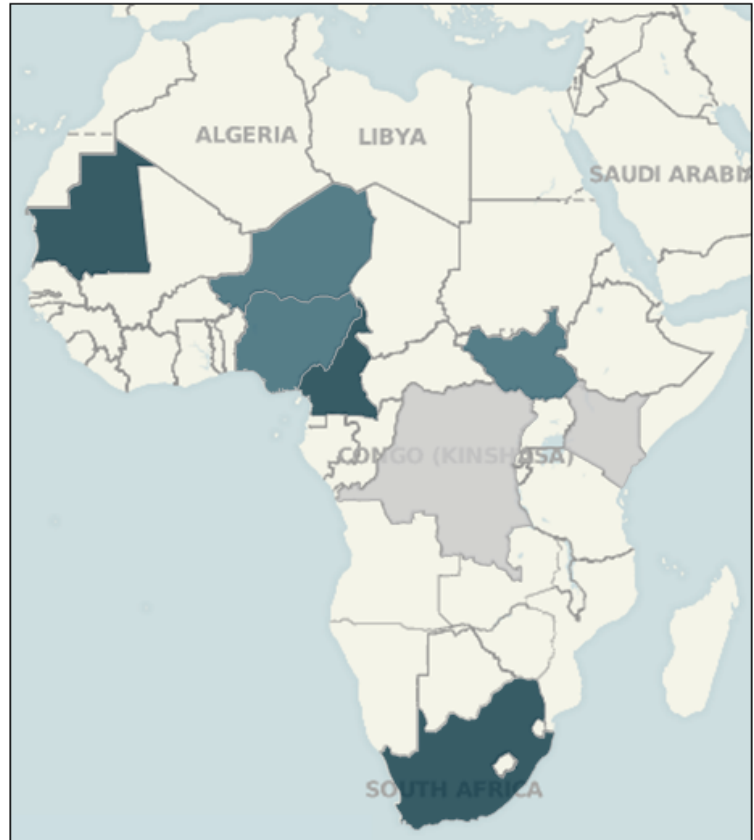


CONFLICT TRENDS (NO. 15):

REAL-TIME ANALYSIS OF AFRICAN POLITICAL VIOLENCE, JUNE 2013

Welcome to the June edition of the Armed Conflict Location & Event Dataset (ACLED) *Conflict Trends*. Each month, realtime conflict event data is collected, published through our research partners at [Climate Change and African Political Stability \(CCAPS\)](#), and presented in a report which contrasts continental, regional, national and sub-national data on political violence in contemporary and historical perspective. Data from 1997 to 2012 is available at [acleddata.com](#), along with previous *Conflict Trends* reports, country profiles for key conflict-affected states, thematic special features, and information on the data collection and publication process.

This month's report looks at the ongoing conflict in **Nigeria**, which intensified this month with the declaration of a state of emergency in the north-east of the country and a renewed commitment on the part of the federal government to oust the northern Islamist militant group, Boko Haram. Conflict events fell slightly in **DR-Congo**, which is also profiled, although high fatality levels - both in terms of contemporary, historical and continental trends - mean the conflict is still very much ongoing in spite of talks of a potential settlement between the government and the M23 on the horizon. Political violence in **Niger**, **Senegal** and **South Africa** is also detailed.



Decreasing Ongoing Escalating

Conflict trajectory, May 2013

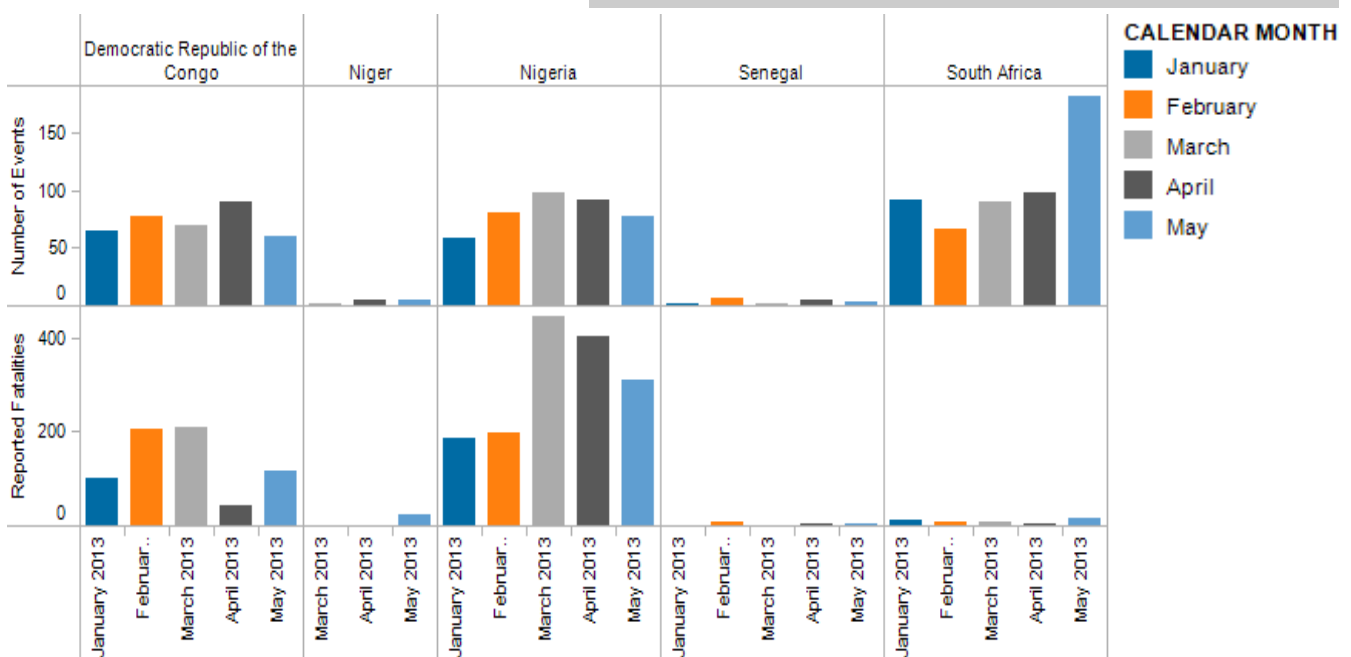


Figure 1: Conflict Events and Reported Fatalities, January - May 2013.

DR-Congo

Conflict events fell this month in the DR-Congo, although fatalities increased on last month. The country has one of the most intractable and long-running conflicts on the continent, and it is illuminating to consider its experience of violence in comparative perspective. Doing so, several characteristics become clear: first, while conflict levels are gradually falling from their peak in late-2012, early-2013, they remain well above the monthly country mean for DR-Congo since 2000 (see Figure 2).

The same figure compares DR-Congo monthly mean and median event data with other countries on the continent: witnessing an average of 34.9 violent events per month, and a median of 26, the DR-Congo's conflict levels are significantly higher than Rwanda (mean = 2.99), Uganda (mean = 19.7) and Nigeria (mean = 24) for the same period; while they remain well below the levels witnessed in Somalia (mean = 56.8).

While events have been significantly higher than the monthly average in DR-Congo, associated fatality levels have remained largely within the typical range for this

period, a profile which is marked by dramatic spikes (see Figure 3).

On the sub-national level, as in previous periods, events and fatalities were highest in North Kivu, Eastern DR-Congo. However, levels of violence have increased markedly in Katanga in recent months (see Figure 4). In this south-eastern province, various Mayi Mayi formations have been involved in a range of attacks on both military and civilian targets. Earlier in the year, British Ambassador, Neil Wigan, attributed the growing violence in Katanga to the failure of disarmament after the 1998 – 2003 conflict in the country (*AfCon*, 1 March 2013).

Local defence units, which were encouraged under the former president, are present throughout the country, and while many have been involved in targeted attacks on civilians, many more frame their existence in terms of a genuine security crisis in which the state's military cannot protect populations. In Katanga, Mayi Mayi units appear to have a more overt political agenda, being supportive of Katangese independence (*AfCon*, 29 March 2013).

While conflict levels in DR-Congo are gradually falling from their recent peak in late-2012, they remain well above the monthly mean for the country since 2000, and higher than comparable means in Nigeria and Uganda for that period.

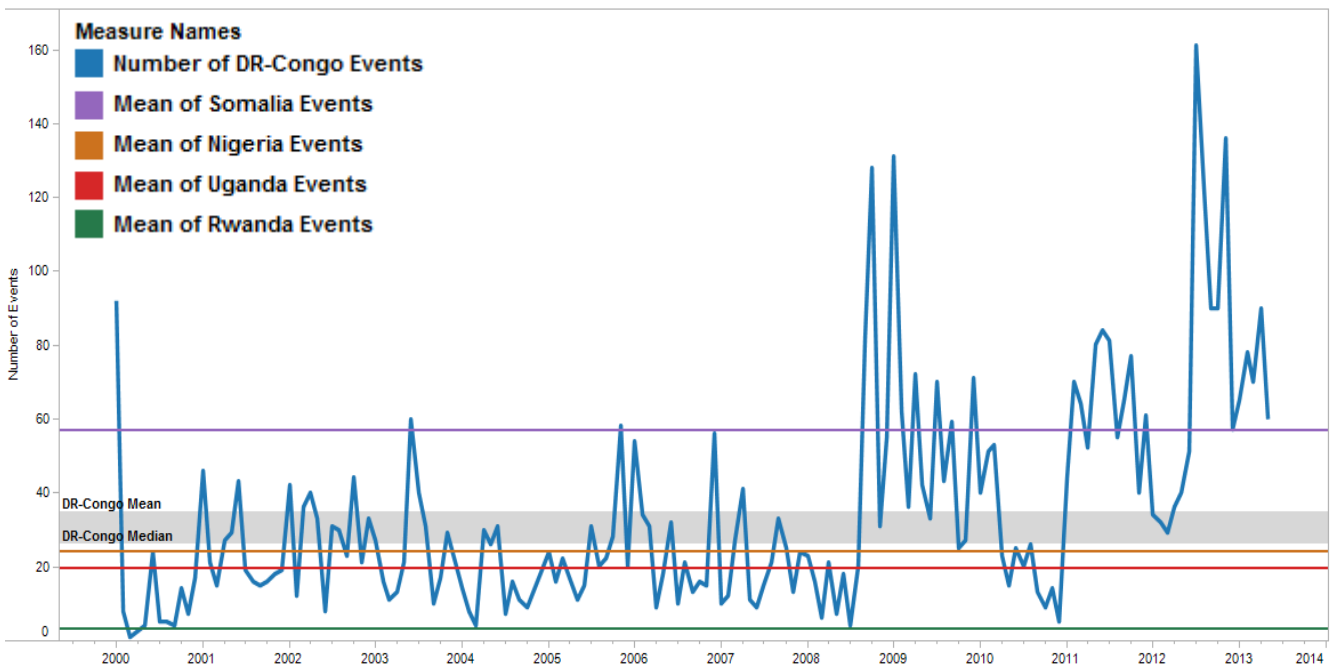


Figure 2: Conflict Events, Mean and Median, DR-Congo, 2000 - May 2013, with Reference Lines.

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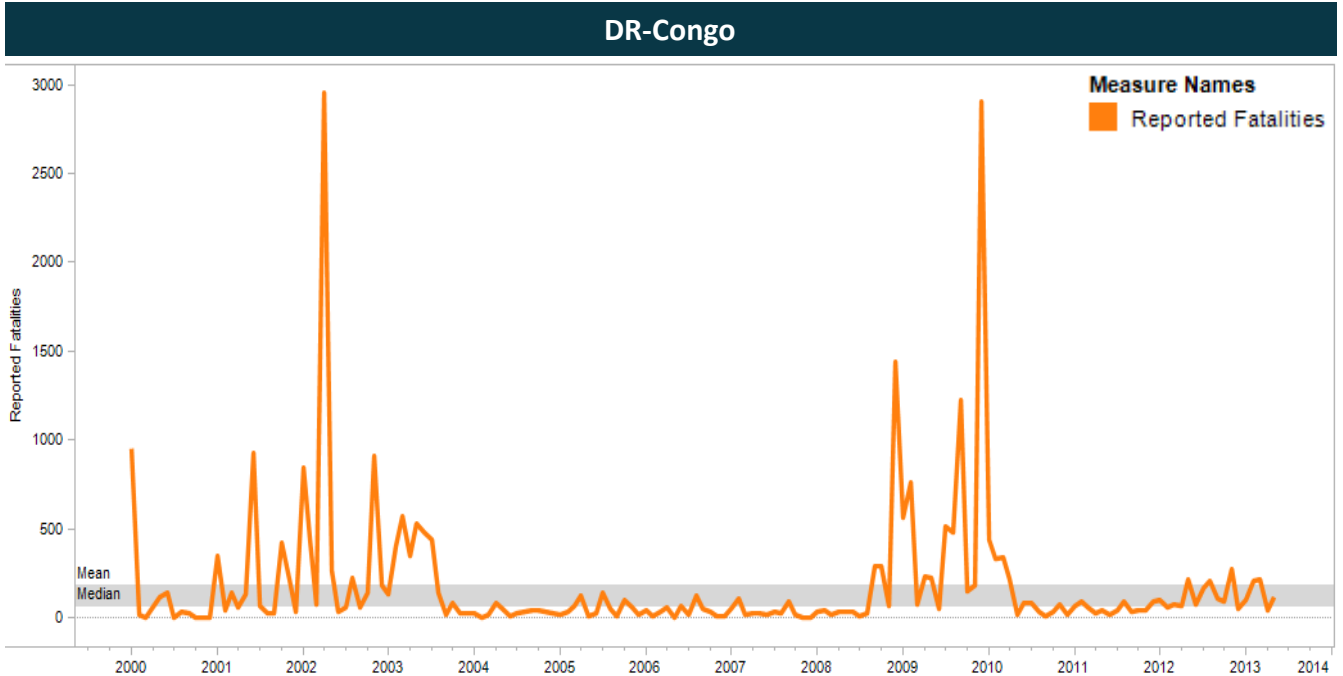


Figure 3: Reported Fatalities, DR-Congo, 2000 - May 2013, with Reference Lines.

This orientation presents problems for the government in addressing them: sympathisers might draw comparisons between local militant units and the M23 further north, with whom it is likely the government will come to a negotiated settlement recognising many of the rebels' demands.

Failure to accommodate Katangese militants in the same way may further underscore local calls for separation, although the government will be extremely eager to avoid

any perception that greater autonomy for the Kivus sets a precedent for the country at large.

Many analysts in the policy, academic and political communities are prone to seeing eastern DR-Congo as marked by Kivu exceptionalism, thereby contending that any settlements or agreements reached in that region cannot and should not be more broadly applied: whether Kabila can sell this to disgruntled populations elsewhere in the vast country, remains to be seen.

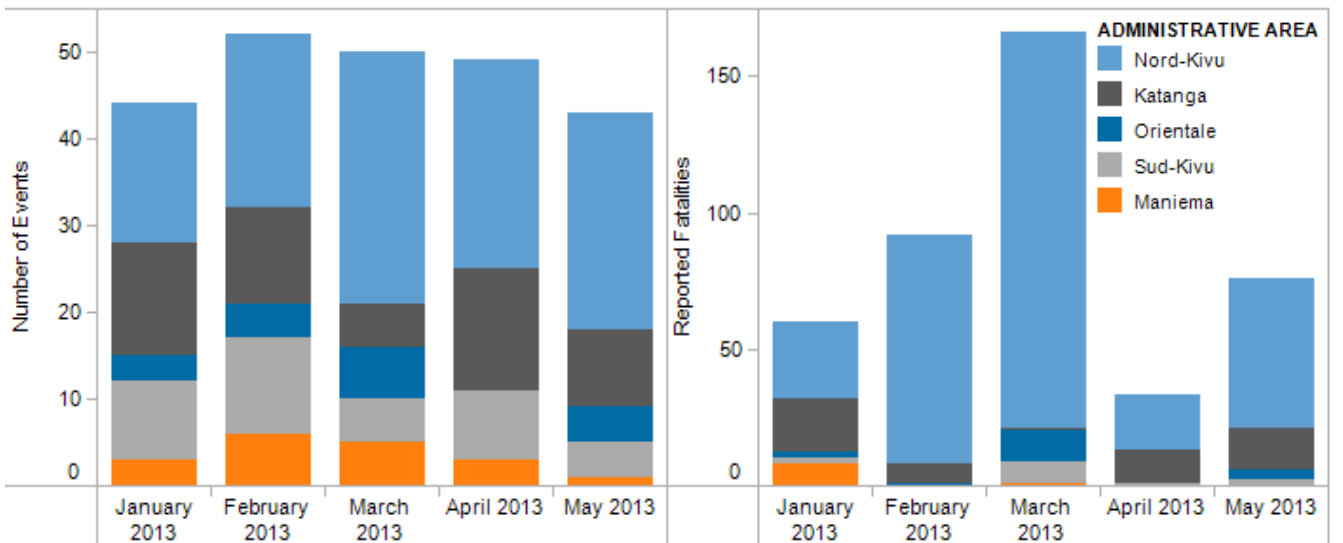


Figure 4: Conflict Events and Reported Fatalities, by Top Five Administrative Areas, DR-Congo, Jan - May 2013.

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Niger

The recent upsurge of Sahelian political violence has largely spared Niger (see Figure 5). However three violent episodes - an attack on the Arlit mine and nearby military base in Agadez on May 23rd, and a coordinated prison break in Niamey on June 2nd, signals that Niger's peace is to be short-lived. All events were perpetrated or involved various elements of the region's mobile Islamist groups-specifically MUJAO (Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa) and the 'Signed in Blood Battalion' (SIBB) – a group created and potentially still headed by Moktar Belmoktar, who organized an attack in In Amenas, Algeria earlier this year.

The Central Niger May attacks were suicide bombings occurring inside a military base in Agadez, and the remote Arlit area which houses a French owned uranium mine. MUJAO claimed both attacks were in response to Nigerian support for the French led military operation in Mali. Over twenty casualties are reported.

The group (along with the Signed in Blood Battalion) promised further attacks. A week later, a jailbreak in the capital was facilitated by external assistance, leading to twenty-two inmates escaping and over three dead. Those

who escaped are reported to have been members of a number of Islamist groups (e.g. MUJAO, Boko Haram etc).

Both MUJAO and SIBB claimed responsibility for assisting prisoners by providing weapons to instigate the attack. However, several US news organizations attributed this attack to Boko Haram, although most African and Niger based sources reported MUJAO's claim of responsibility.

Niger is now a new frontline of this highly mobile, dynamic form of Islamist terrorist attacks. The warnings for a regional expansion of MUJAO activities were made in January, by MUJAO spokesman Adnan Abu Walid Sahraoui,

who also claimed attacks were planned in Bamako, Ouagadougou, and Niamey, and threats to Dakar.

While the recent upsurge of Sahelian political violence has largely spared Niger, coordinated attacks in late-May and in the first week of June signal that Niger's relative peace is to be short-lived.

The country is a new frontline of the highly mobile, dynamic form of Islamist terrorist attack.

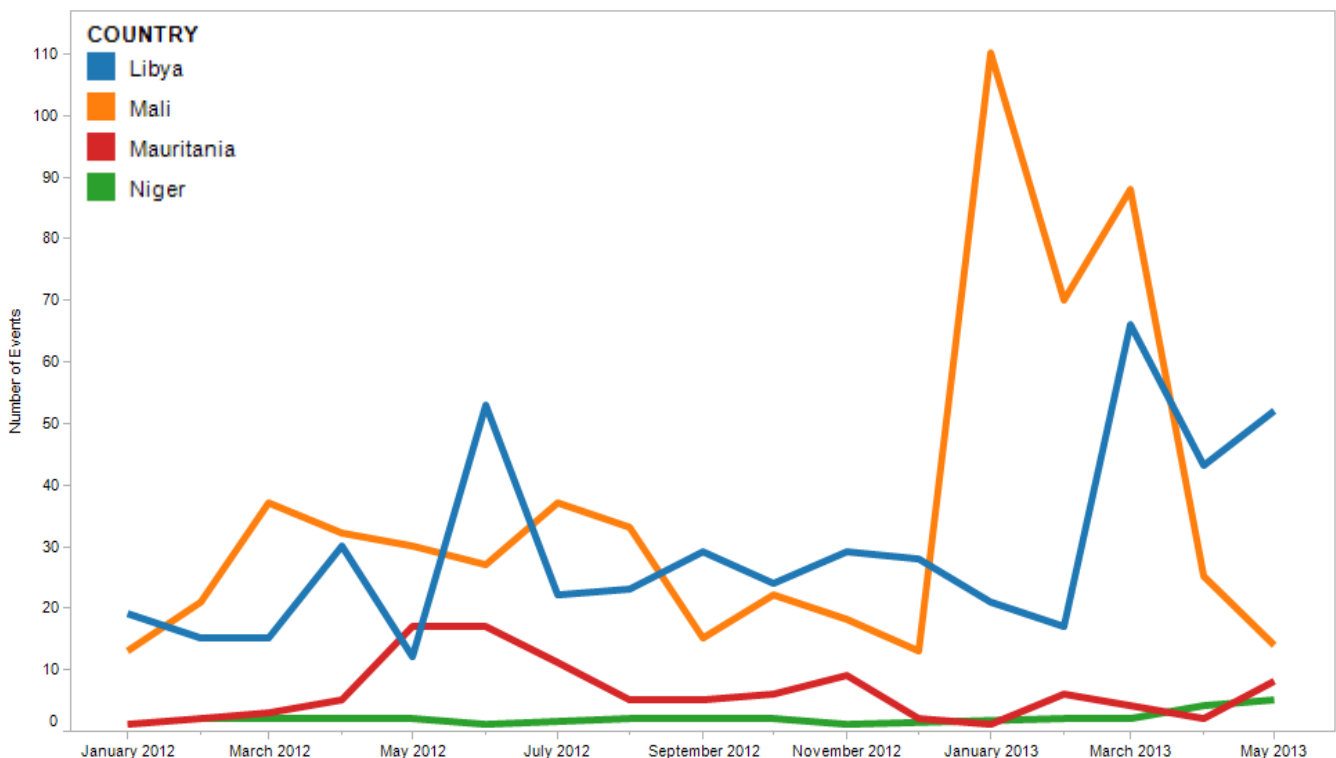


Figure 5: Conflict Events, Sahel Region, January 2012 - May 2013.

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Niger

The presumed agents of the Niger attacks highlight interesting dynamics. MUJAO has become more active in recent months, although remains less active than AQIM (al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb) or Ansar Dine, both of which are most active within their home states (Algeria and Mali, respectively). In contrast, MUJAO is very mobile by design (see Figure 7).

Further, MUJAO is a significant threat in both northern Mali and Niger as they advocate violence against secular Tuaregs, who populate both regions. The composition of MUJAO operating in Niger is unknown, although both this group and AQIM resolved to use local power brokers in Mali. Foreign leaders of both groups tend to keep low profiles and advocate local leaders to take a more prominent role. Niger has been spared much of the Islamist fer-

our that is affecting its neighbors, so the potential for local recruitment is unknown.

The other group - SIBB - appears to operate as Islamist mercenaries. Bel Moktar split from AQIM in 2012 and quickly formed a new Islamist militant group known by various names including the the Khaled Abu al-Abbas Brigade; Signed-in-Blood Battalion; and the Masked Men Brigade.

He was recently reported to have been killed in Chad, although reports from these recent operations suggest that reports of his death may be exaggerated. This group often engages in high profile kidnapping and foreign attacks, but do not have stated political ambitions outside of their association with other Islamist groups.

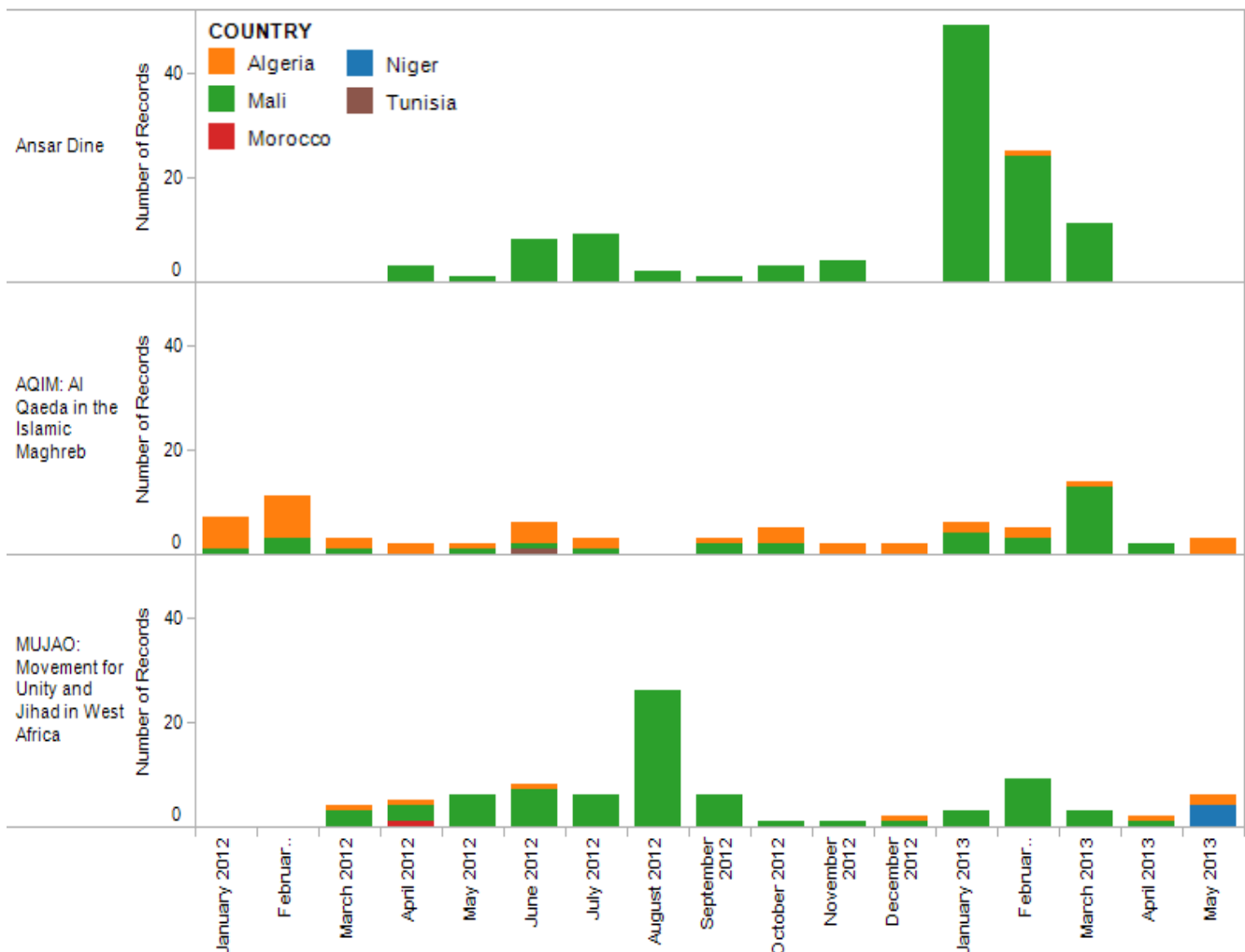


Figure 7: Conflict Events, Ansar Dine, AQIM, and MUJAO, Sahel and North Africa, 2012 - May 2013.

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Nigeria

Violence in Nigeria drew international attention in May, with the intensification of a military and political campaign against Boko Haram. Figure 8 shows the locations of battles involving Boko Haram since the beginning of 2013. Over the period since its emergence in 2009, the group's conflict profile is almost exactly evenly split between events involving other armed actors, and violence targeting civilians. 2010 witnessed the highest proportional level of civilian targeting (in terms of both overall events, and associated fatality levels), while in 2013 to date, 60% of Boko Haram activity (and over 74% of associated fatalities) have involved other armed actors, while 40% has involved unarmed civilians.

In spite of this intensification, overall levels of violent events, and of fatalities, actually fell in Nigeria over the course of the month from April and 2013's peak in March.

This pattern reveals two characteristics of conflict in Nigeria: the first is that conflict in Nigeria is multi-dimensional, geographically discrete and involves a diverse range of actors pursuing distinct goals.

While Boko Haram is the most high-profile among these, violence in the Niger Delta, and by a wide range of less established and dynamic militia units across the country contributes enormously to the vulnerability of civilians and the experience of violence in the country.

The second characteristic highlighted by this trend is that conflict in the North of the country has been ongoing and building up to a peak over time – the most recent few months' violence should be seen in the context of ongoing, persistent, elevated levels of violent conflict over time.

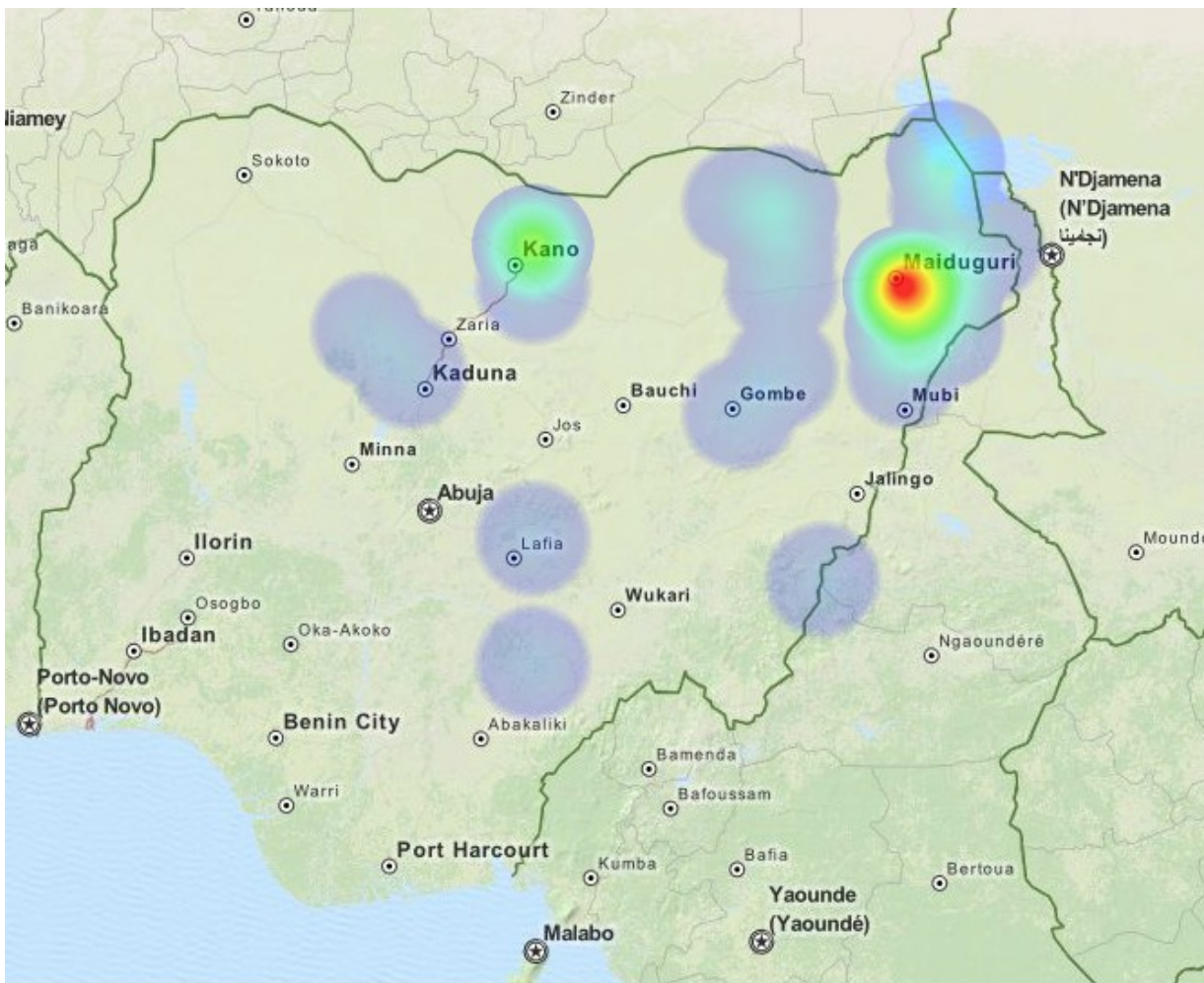


Figure 8: Battle Events, Boko Haram, January - May 2013. .

Senegal

With one of the lowest level of violence in Western Africa, Senegal stands out as a regional exception (US Department of State, Human Rights Report, 2013) (see Figure 9). Compared to neighbours, Senegal has had a steady low number of reported violent events since 1997, while Mauritania experienced a sharp rise in 2012, and Guinea is inconsistently unstable.

Yet despite its low count, the persistent nature of Senegal’s violence makes it more violent than Guinea in terms of event counts (battles, riots, protests and violence against civilians). The main difference is that this violence has been less lethal in Senegal with half the number of fatalities compared to Guinea (see Figure 10).

The main protracted source of tensions and violence in Senegal is the Casamance conflict. With the creation of the separatist group -‘Movement of Democratic Forces of the Casamance’ (MFDC) - the southern part of Senegal has experienced violence since the 1980’s. Despite a peace

agreement signed in late 2004, a low-intensity campaign of occasional violence targeting military forces has continued. However, compared to other African separatist groups, the MFDC has been much less active in terms of both violent events recorded and fatalities since the late-1990s, and a peak of their activity in 2001.

Battles against the national military forces represent the majority of MFDC events, while violence against civilians constitutes a smaller share of the events compared to other separatists. Finally MFDC violent events are highly clustered in the Casamance region itself (see Figure 11)

Due to a rejection of the peace agreement by the Southern branch of the MFDC, the movement has continued to engage in violence against civilians (CODESRIA, 2004). Demining activities have been put on hold after 12 workers were taken hostage by the MFDC (IRIN, 24 May 2013). The episodes of violence between

With one of the lowest levels of violence in West Africa, Senegal stands out as a regional exception in a troubled part of the continent. Yet despite its low event count, the country experiences persistent, low-level conflict in several forms.

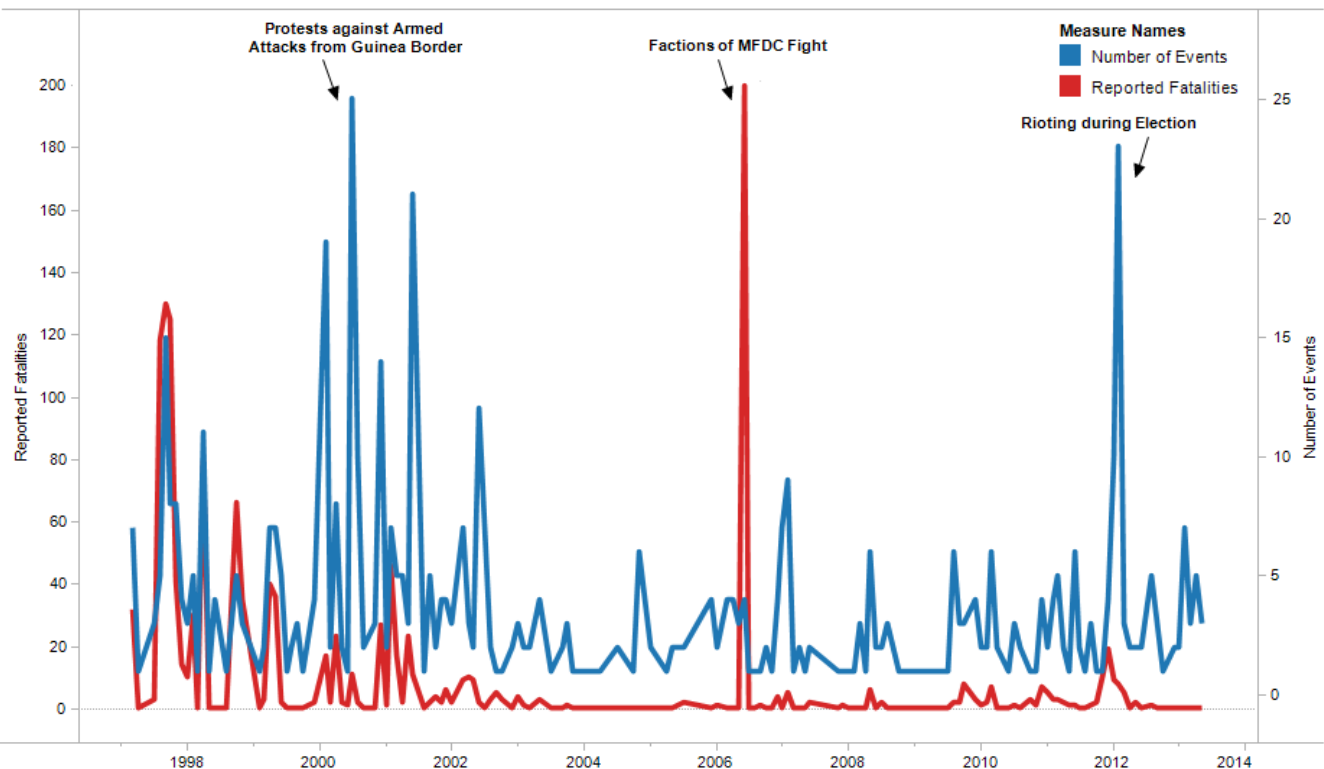


Figure 9: Conflict Events and Reported Fatalities, Senegal, 1997 - May 2013.

CONFLICT TRENDS (NO. 14):

REAL-TIME ANALYSIS OF AFRICAN POLITICAL VIOLENCE, MAY 2013

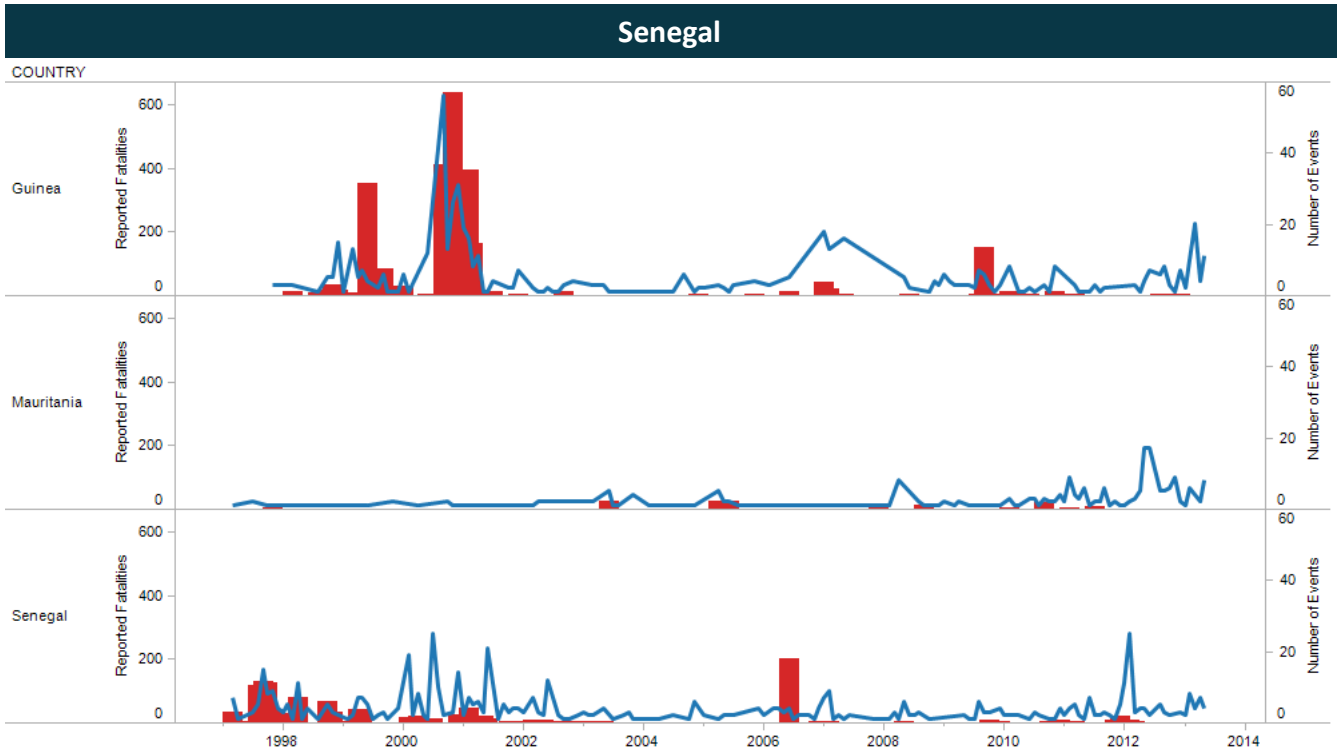


Figure 10: Conflict Events and Reported Fatalities, Guinea, Mauritania and Senegal, 1997 - May 2013.

the Military Forces of Senegal and the MFDC have caused massive displacement, with estimates of IDPs ranging between 10,000 and 40,000 in Casamance (IDMC, Report on Casamance, June 2010). Most IDPs flee to Ziguinchor, the largest city of Casamance, stretching the host communities' resources (IRIN, 19 October 2009).

Senegal has experienced periodic explosions of violence mostly around years of presidential elections. Indeed, the election of Abdoulaye Wade in 2000 and his defeat in 2012 against the opposition leader Maky Sall, have been sources of tensions. Other threats to Senegalese stability include the radicalisation of the Islamist discourses in urban areas, and the fragmentation within the Sufi brotherhoods, and the porous nature of the border with Mali (CEDEAO, May 2013).

Yet no Islamist militant groups have been involved in any violent event in Senegal at present. In Senegalese political life, there is a critical role for religion and religious orders (indeed, the Committee for the Reform of the Senegalese Family Code (CIRCOFS) intends to reform the family code of 1974 to align it with the Islamic law, Assessing Risks to Stability, June 2011). Former President Wade had always refused this increasing role, and so Sall's strategy towards an increasingly religious state is unknown.

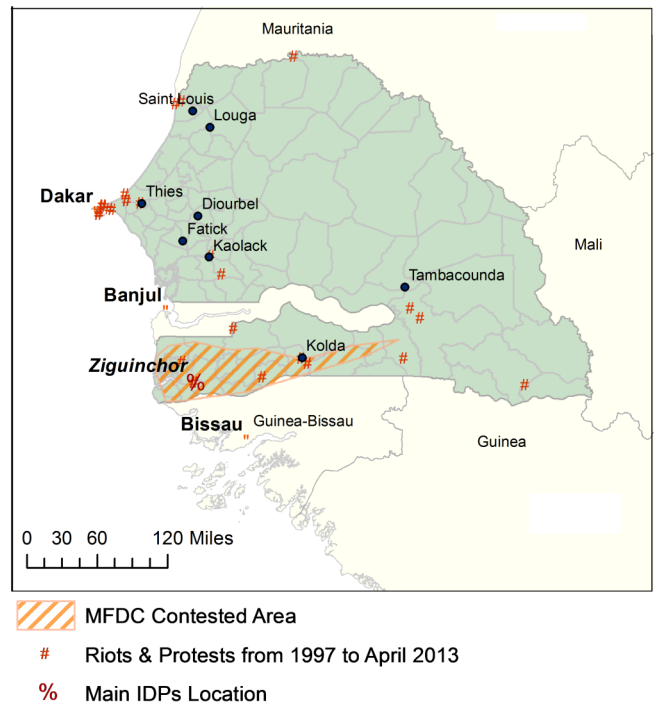


Figure 13: Spatial Distribution of Conflict, Senegal, 1997 - April 2013.

CONFLICT TRENDS (NO. 14):

REAL-TIME ANALYSIS OF AFRICAN POLITICAL VIOLENCE, MAY 2013

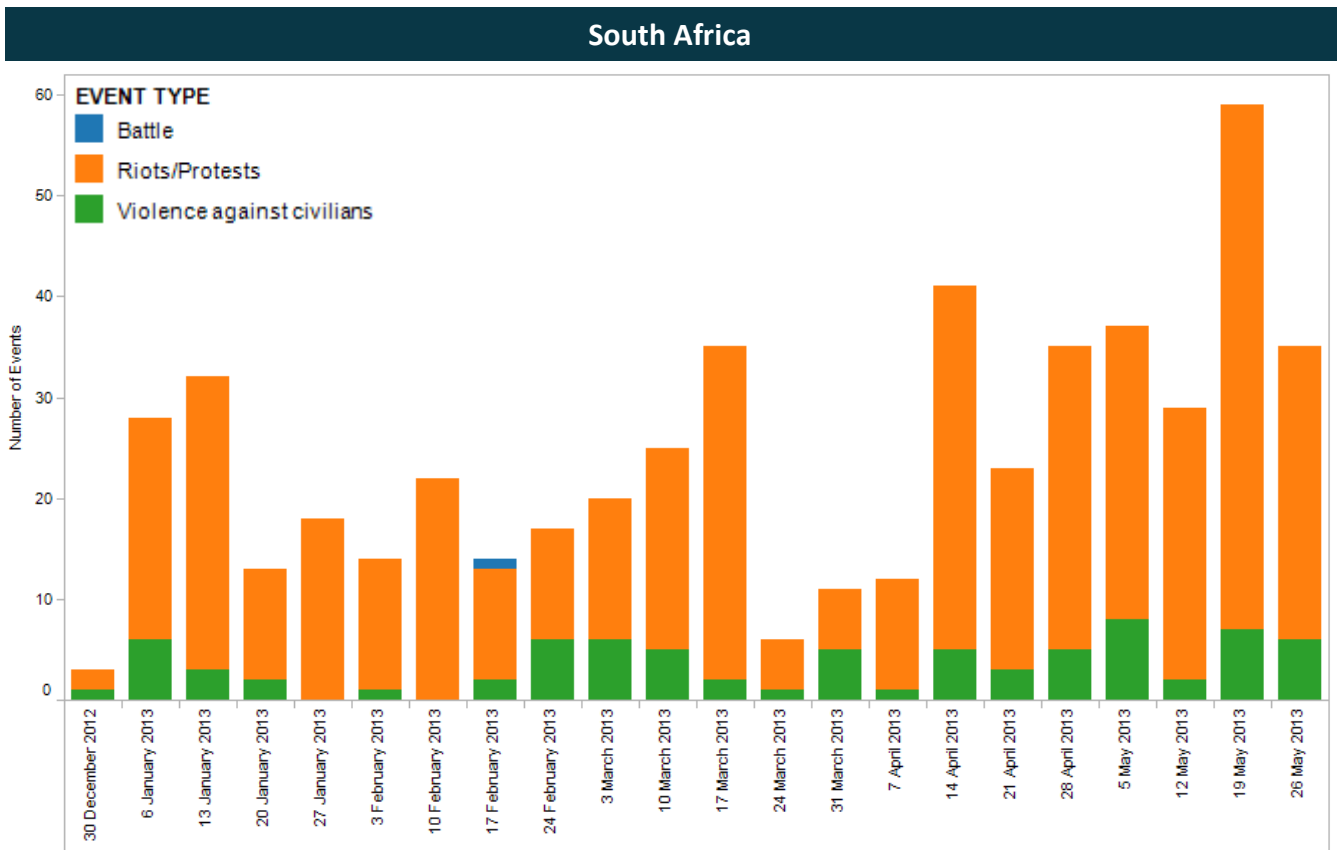


Figure 13: Conflict Events by Type, South Africa, Jan - May 2013.

May witnessed an increase in levels of violence this month in South Africa (see Figure 13) – a reminder that the country experiences one of the highest levels of conflict events in the ACLED dataset, though this is largely made up of riot and protest events. As a consequence, associated fatalities are typically extremely low (see Figure 14).

The notable exception is the spike in conflict-related fatalities which occurred in August 2012, when 44 people were killed during strike action in the Marikana area. The incident is a reminder of the extremely volatile nature of workers’ disputes and its explosive potential in the country.

In general, causes of riots and demonstrations are extremely diverse: there is no single-issue driver of protests and demonstrations, although a large share of events are concerned with various work and industry-related strikes and stoppages. Most violence against civilians incidents are also typically linked to demonstrations and riots, either through participants in demonstrations targeting nearby, unarmed civilians, or police forces engaging protesters.

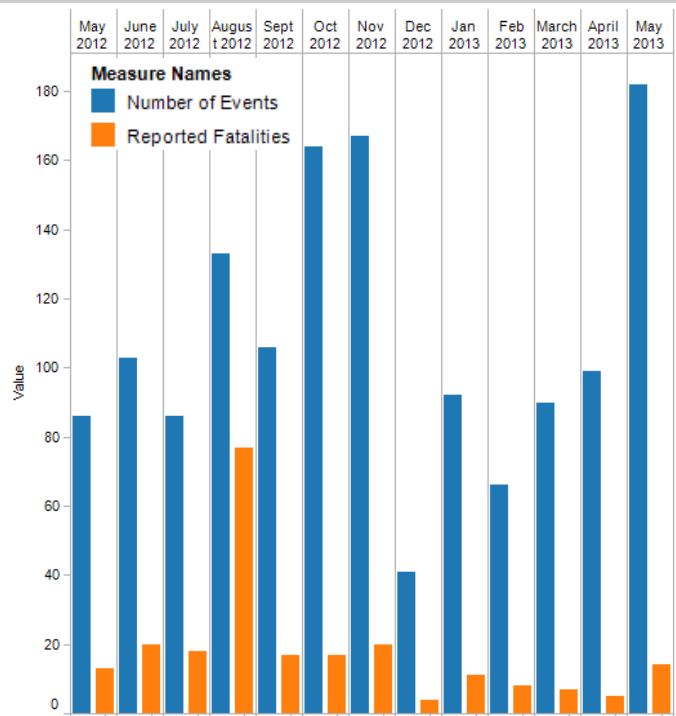


Figure 14: Conflict Events, South Africa, May '12-May '13.