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Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project

Welcome to the April issue of the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project's (ACLED) *Conflict Trends* report. Each month, ACLED researchers gather, analyse and publish data on political violence in Africa in realtime. Monthly updates to realtime conflict event data are published through our research partners at Climate Change and African Political Stability (CCAPS) and also on the ACLED website.

This month, we profile conflict in Central Africa and the Great Lakes Region twenty years after the genocide in Rwanda; rising conflict levels in Madagascar; on-going tensions in South Sudan; and escalation in neighbouring Sudan

Elsewhere on the continent, violence levels increased in Somalia and Algeria, while civil unrest is growing in Namibia. There are also warning signs of a return to heightened levels of violence in Egypt and in Burundi, with attacks on opposition forces and regime opponents in both countries. While conflict in DR-Congo has fallen slightly in the past month, it remains a centre of regional unrest, as this month's profile will highlight.
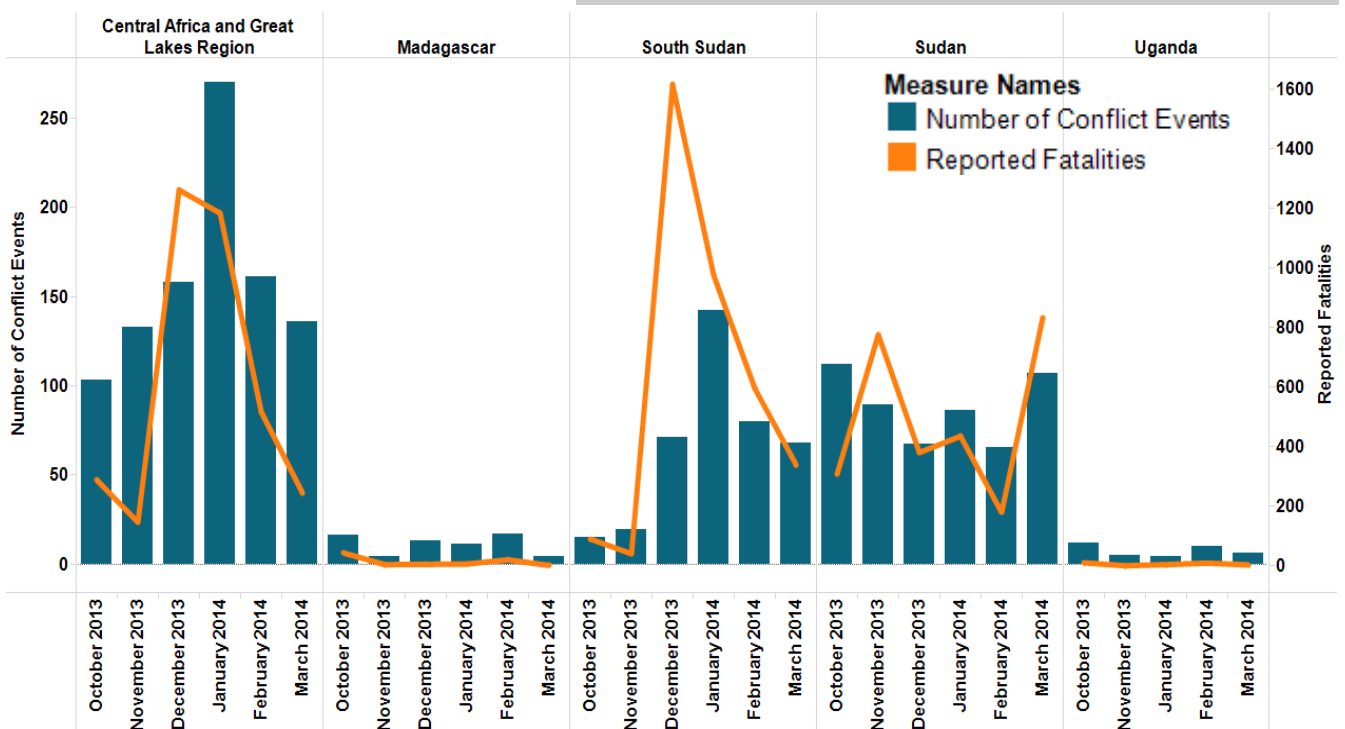

Legend:
- Decreasing
- Warning
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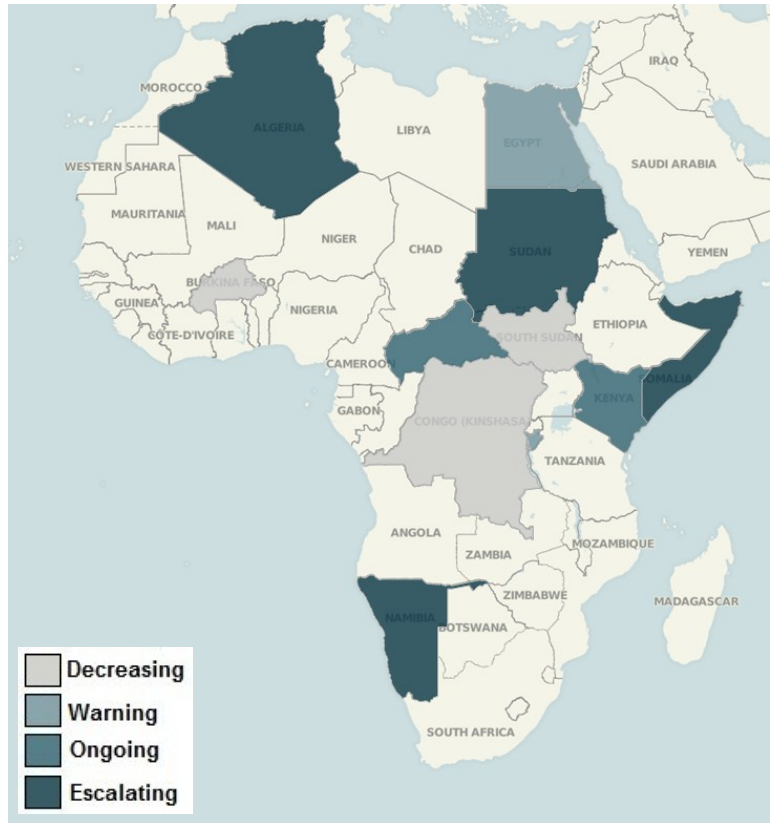
Conflict Trajectory, March 2014

Figure 1: Conflict Events and Reported Fatalities, CAR, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia, October 2013 - March 2014.   1

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Central Africa and the Great Lakes Region: Twenty Years On

Twenty years after the horrific genocide in Rwanda that killed twenty percent of the population, we reflect on the consequences of that time and the legacy within Central Africa.

Since April 1994, Rwanda has drastically changed its social and economic circumstances. Now considered a development success, the small state actually still occupies a relatively low place in the Human Development Index (in 2012, Rwanda was ranked 167, while Central African Republic was 180). Despite the challenges still ahead, the Rwandan government is considered to have turned the country around, instilling an order and direction from the ruins of a civil war and devastating implosion. It has come at a price: conflict levels remain low within Rwanda, but that is largely because it has pushed and nurtured its problems within DR-Congo. Indeed, the rates of violence across Central Africa support the notion that DR-Congo is the epicenter of the region's problems (*see* Figure 2) but the problems of the last twenty or so years are found throughout the region (*see* Figure 3).

The cold peace in Rwanda is not likely to be permanent, as Kagame's government has dealt with political issues in two ways: deny or destroy the opposition (in the most brutal terms, as assassinations of Rwandan dissidents in South Africa can confirm), and ferment and support armed groups to engage long-standing enemies (mainly, the FDLR- Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda - in DR-Congo).

Rwanda is not responsible for all of DR-Congo's problems (see ACLED reports on DR-Congo) but it is responsible for the 'primary' cleavages within the state:

The genocide's immediate consequences in the form of refugee flows and overflowing conflict sparked the first Congo war in 1996. Rwandan Hutu militants during this time included the Interahamwe, Impuzamugambi, RDR and former Rwandan armed forces. The Rwandan government supported the AFDL and installed Kabila senior as President, and subsequently fought in the second Congo war against him after claiming his position against the former genocidaries (now coalescing into what would become the FDLR) was not strong enough. That conflict is characterized by direct Rwandan intervention through troops and indirect support for the RCD rebel group (alongside Ugandan support) fighting the Kabila regime.
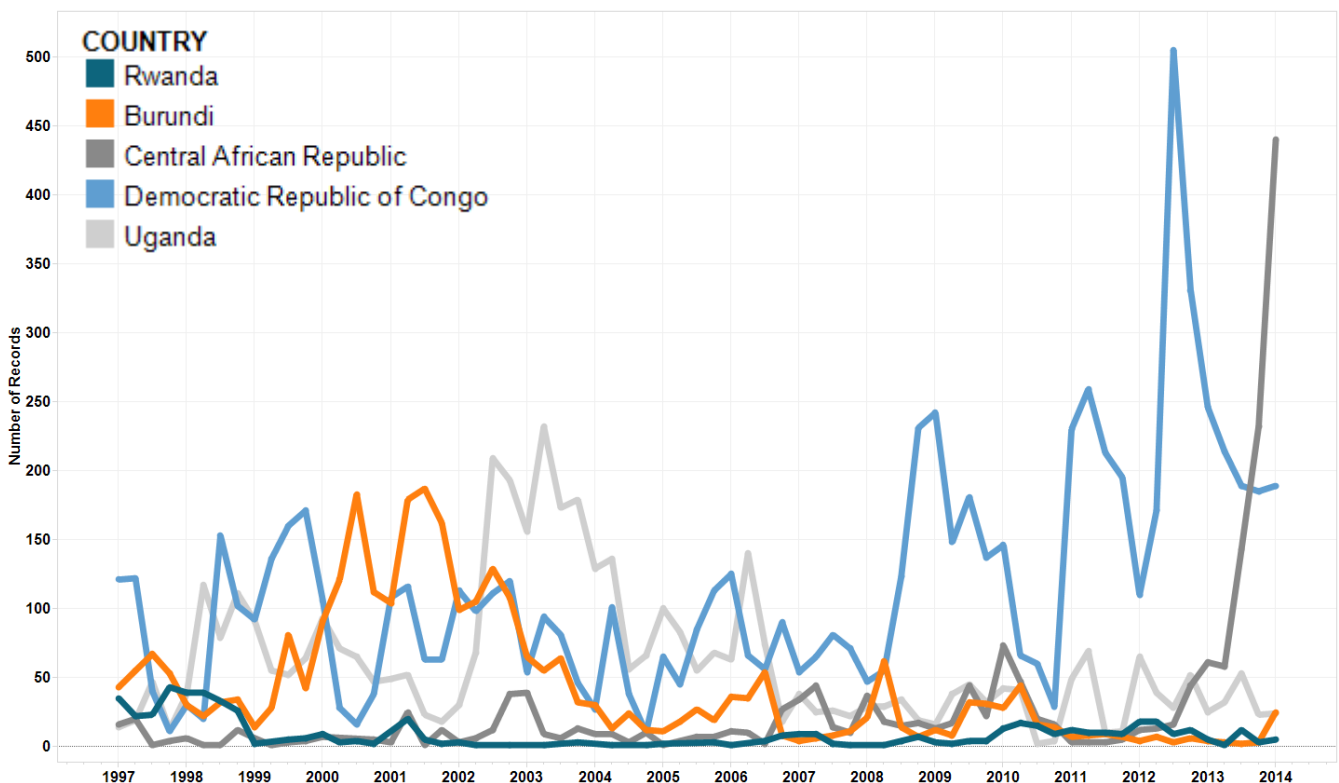

Figure 2: Conflict Events by Country, Central African and Great Lakes Region, by Quarter, January 1997 - March 2014.

Central Africa and the Great Lakes Region: Twenty Years On

This conflict is often reported as having caused 3-7million deaths, although that total is largely disputed; in reports by the Human Security Report, the direct and indirect fatality total is far fewer. Despite this, the fatalities experienced in DR-Congo, and the instability that allowed for dozens of armed groups to emerge within, has had devastating consequents for the region (the latest example be-

ing the haven provided for the LRA in the North-East), the security vacuums that have emerged through the Kivus and the security dilemma that reinforces the cycles of violence within the East. The Hutu militants organized during this time into ALIR and subsequently FDLR (*see* Figure 4 for a breakdown of Hutu-aligned militants since 1997).
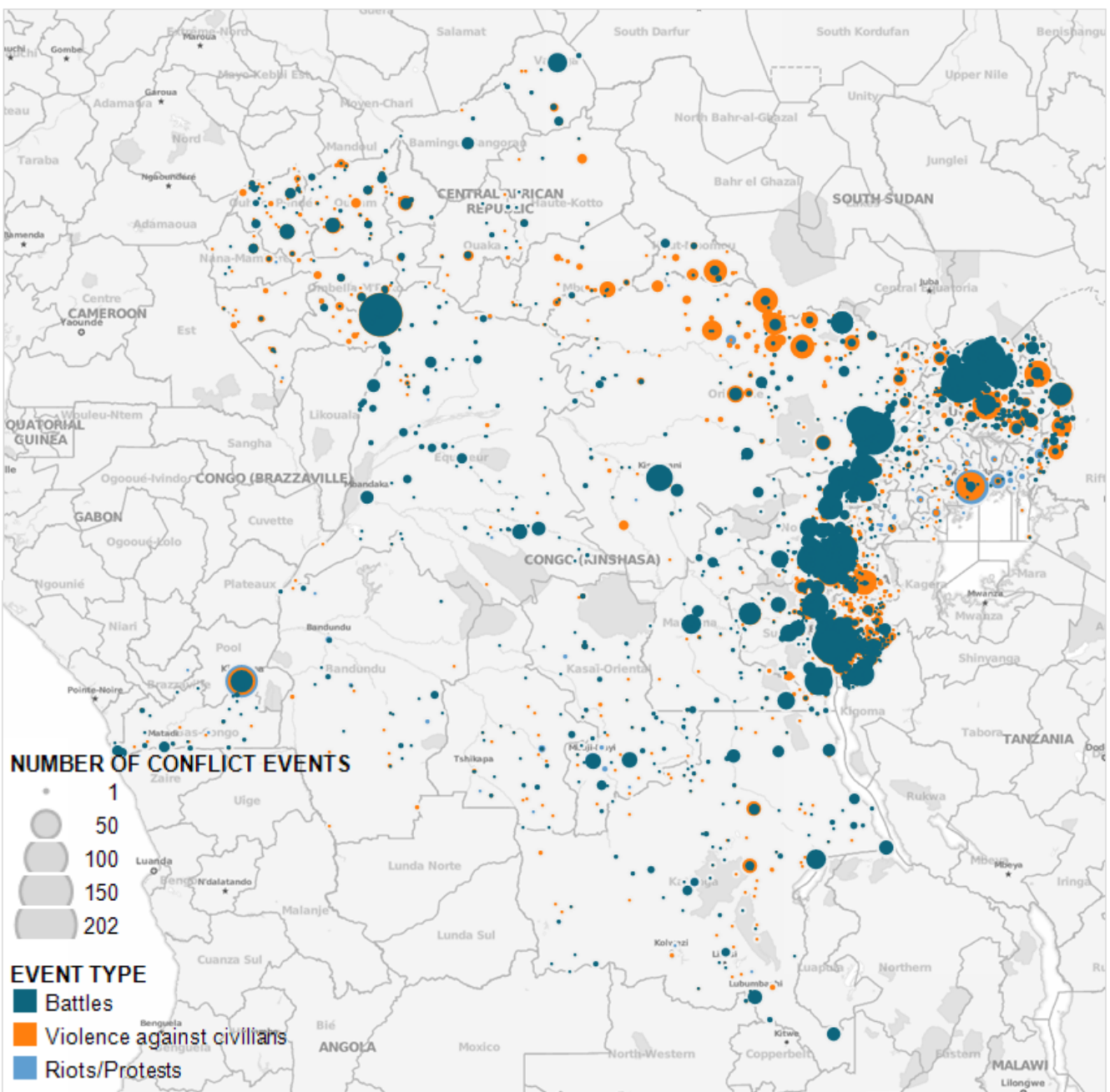

Figure 3: Map of Conflict Events by Type, Central Africa and Great Lakes Region, January 1997 - March 2014.

Central Africa and the Great Lakes Region: Twenty Years On

Since the peace agreement in 2003/4, the conflict has continued, albeit in a drastically different form. The political relationship between the second President Kabila and Kagame is notoriously flawed: Rwanda accuses the FARDC of supporting FDLR militants within the East, and DR-Congo accuses Rwanda of supporting groups against the government. Examples of these groups include the CNDP and the M23.

There are two interpretations of what has happened to the recent M23 movement: some reports suggest the group is recruiting in Rwanda and Uganda after a sound beating by the FIB international forces while also 'assisting' in South Sudan; another is the group has disbanded and no longer poses a threat within DR-Congo.

The issue comes back to what is to come of the FDLR. Rwanda has been promised that the FIB will turn to the FDLR now that the M23 and some additional threats have been eradicated. The possibly 8,000-10,000 FDLR are deeply ingrained into the conflict environment of Eastern Congo: they are now composed of as many Congolese as former Rwandan citizens; they have married into Congolese families and garner significant funds in the form of resource extraction. The threat of being usurped by other violent groups found the FDLR allying with local communal militants, a Hunde militia and its splinter faction RUD-URUNANA, and increasing support in Masisi, Lubero and Walikale regions. However, they remain too small and scattered to affect Rwandan security, and mainly serve to justify Rwandan intervention.

The FDLR often announces 'ceasefires' which now largely go unnoticed by international observers and national forces. Previous UN reports suggest that Burundi serves as a rear base, FDLR recruits in the Rwandan refugee camps in Uganda and recruitment is constantly underway within Rwanda. All of this serves to emphasize that the problems of Central Africa, emanating from Rwanda and centered in DR-Congo, are not over.
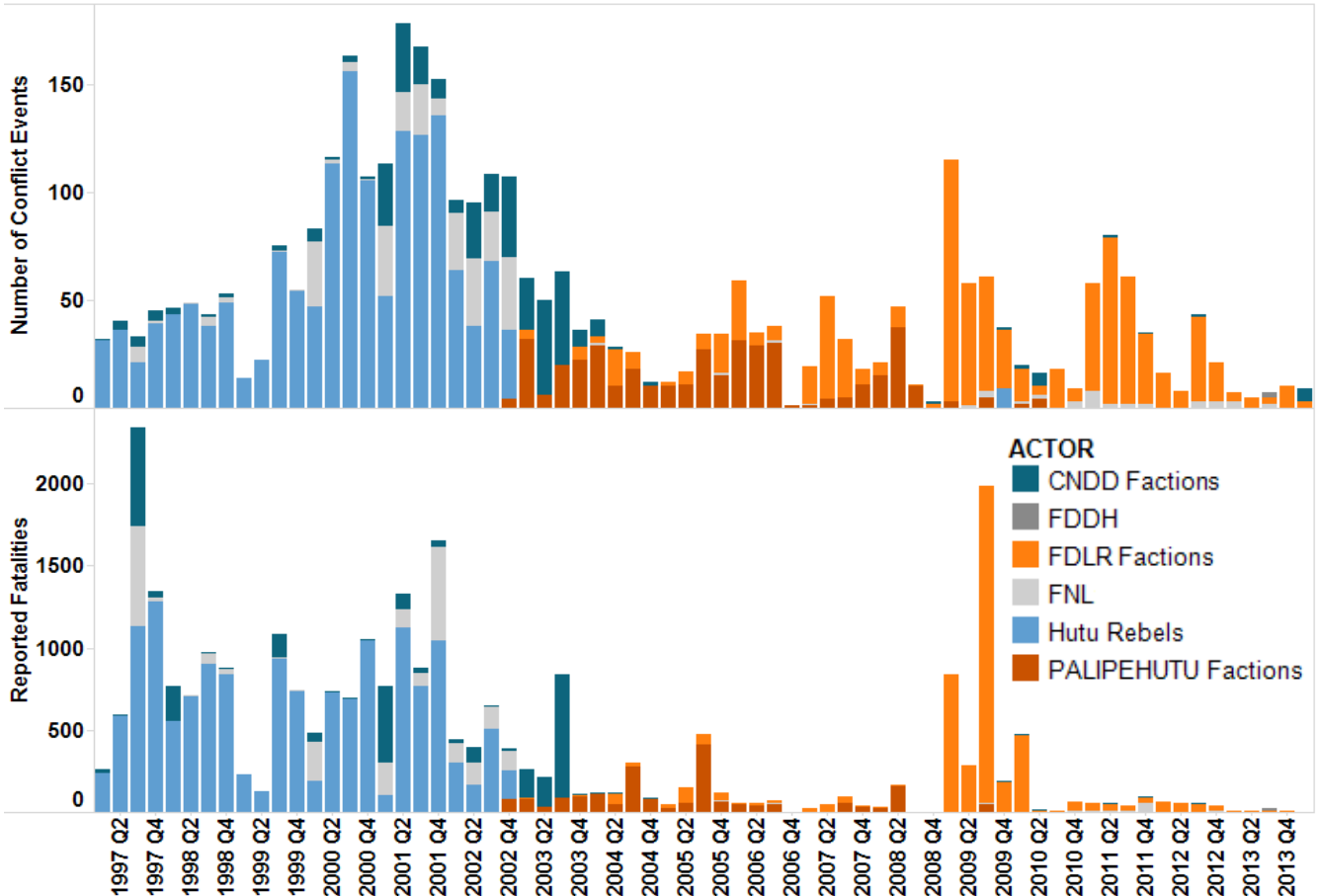

Figure 4: Conflict Events and Reported Fatalities, Hutu-Identified Actors, Central Africa and Great Lakes, 1997 - 2014.

Madagascar

Madagascar has experienced intermittent instability since the March 2009 coup in which Andry Rajoelina ousted president Marc Ravalomanana (*see* Figure 5). Madagascar's first post-coup elections were held in late 2013, the result of a transitional process supported by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) (US Department of State, 2014). Hery Rajaonarimampianina, who was supported by Rajoelina, was declared president in January 2014. International observers endorsed the elections, despite claims of vote rigging and violence (*Africa Confidential*, 24 January 2014). However, political tensions and associated violence persist. On the day of Rajaonarimampianina's inauguration in January 2014, a grenade exploded near the stadium at which the event took place.

Conflict events decreased significantly after the 2009 coup, and levels remained relatively low until mid-2012, when a political crisis, associated with the attempted return of ousted president Marc Ravalomanana was accompanied by a sharp spike in riots and protests. Conflict

events have increased gradually since then, particularly in late 2013 and early 2014. Reported fatalities exhibit a more volatile pattern, generally associated with violence involving political militia groups and violence against civilians by security forces responding to cattle theft.

Between 2009 and mid-2012, riots or protests accounted for most conflict events. Since late 2012, however, the proportion of violence involving battles has shown marked volatility since the coup, with sharp spikes and reductions in clashes between armed groups. Meanwhile, the proportion of violence against civilians has increased (*see* Figure 6) quite steadily, in particular since late-2013 .

Activity involving political militias has increased since early-to-mid 2013 (*see* Figure 7). The *dahalo*, groups of cattle raiders, are the most active of identified militia groups. Activity by political militias and unidentified armed groups likely reflect increasing tensions between Madagascar's political elites. Geographically, between 2009 and mid-2012, conflict events in Madagascar were largely concen-
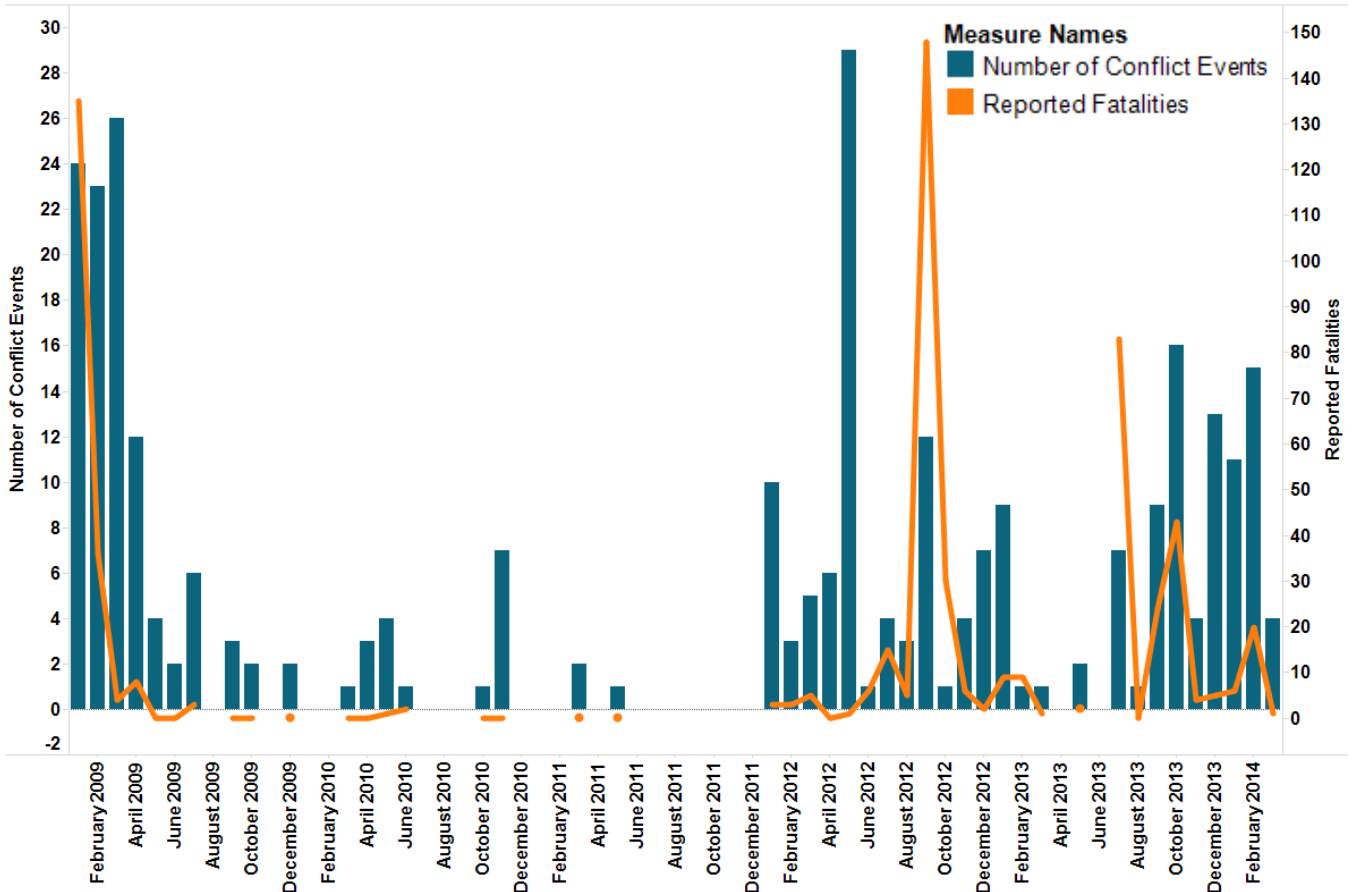

Figure 5: Conflict Events and Reported Fatalities, Madagascar, January 2009 - March 2014.
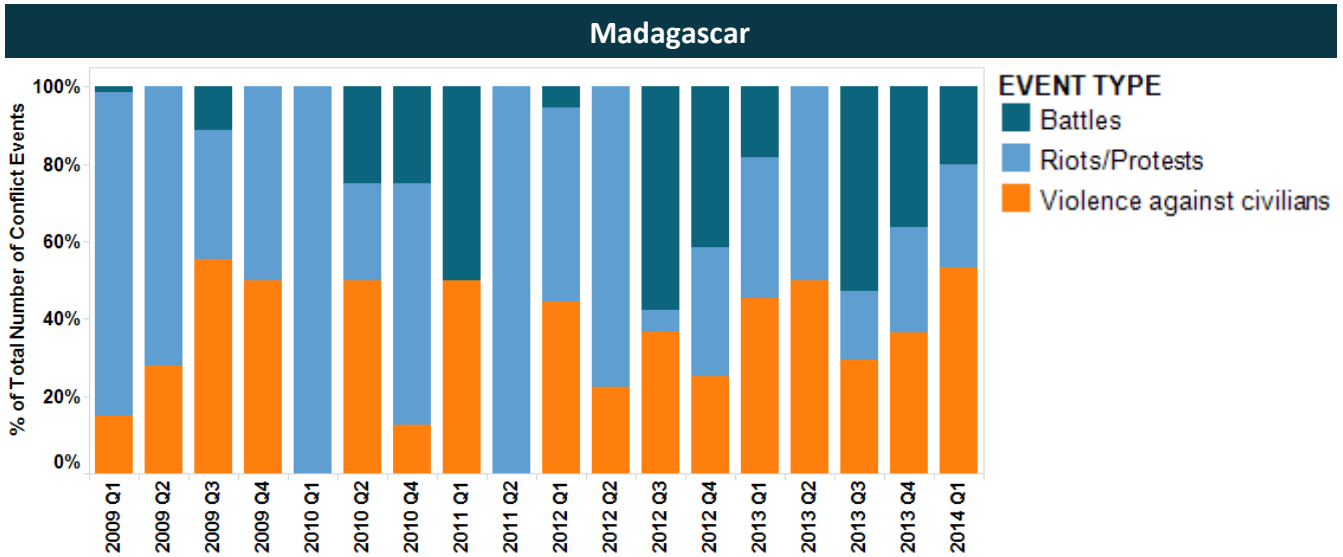
Madagascar

Figure 6: Proportion of Conflict Events by Type, by Quarter, Madagascar, January 2009 - March 2014.

trated, with nearly all events taking place in Antananarivo province. Since 2012, conflict events have been more spatially diffuse, taking place across Madagascar, primarily in the southern provinces of Toliary and Fianarantsoa, and the northern province of Antsiranana.

Madagascar appears to be gaining some political stability. This has reassured international stakeholders, including the African Union, who lifted Madagascar's suspension in January 2014 (African Union, 27 January 2014). The Malagasy Reconciliation Council, established in 2011, continues

efforts to resolve the political crisis. While these are promising developments, reports have focused primarily on Madagascar's political and economic development. Attention ought to be paid to emerging conflict trends, including patterns of violence against civilians and activity among political militias and other armed groups, contributing to insecurity in multiple provinces, particularly since 2013.

These trends ought to be considered as part of national and international political and reconciliation efforts.
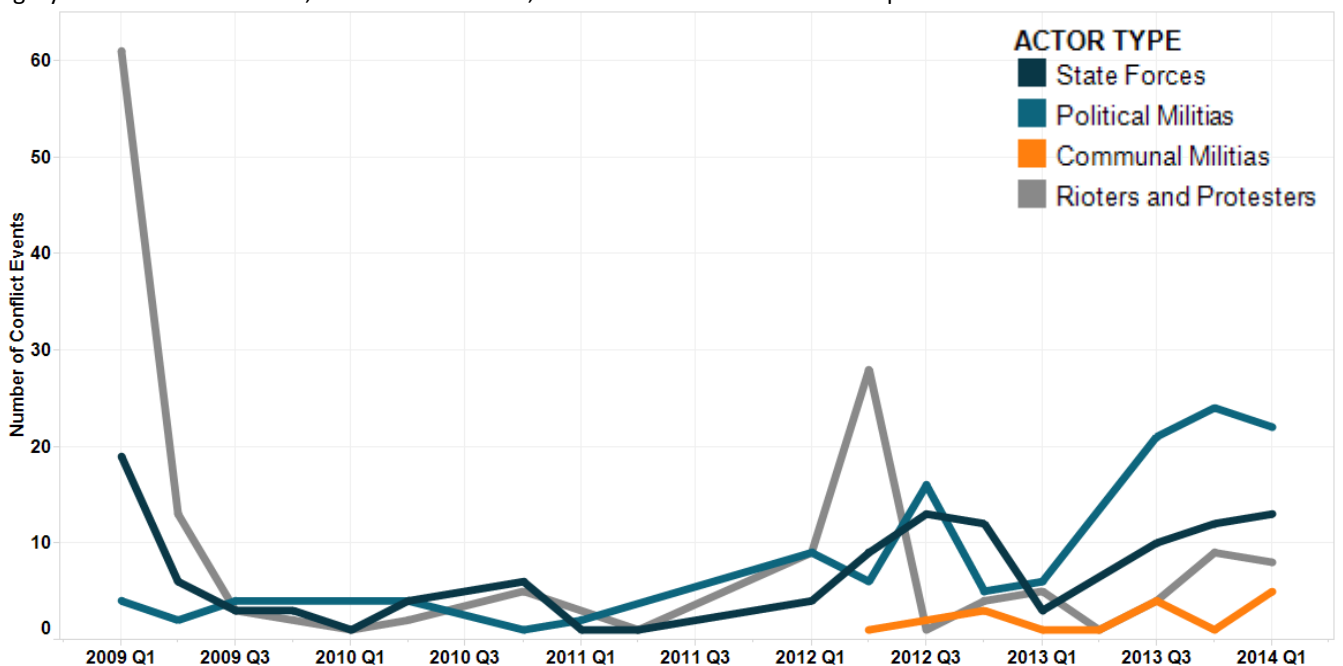

Figure 7: Conflict Events by Actor Type, by Quarter, Madagascar, January 2009 - March 2014.

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South Sudan

South Sudan's security situation improved slightly in the month of March, with both event levels and reported fatalities falling for the third month in a row. Nevertheless, these aggregate trends at a national level mask marked variation in the dynamics and direction of violence in several key areas.

While overall event levels and fatalities have fallen (*see* Figure 8) the share of violence which has directly targeted civilians since December 2013 in South Sudan is extremely high in absolute terms, and contributes to a situation of considerable mass displacement and humanitarian suffering. Fighting in Malakal, Fashoda, Leer and Duk continue to obstruct humanitarian aid there. Displaced populations are also particularly vulnerable to security threats, with reports of militias in Maban attacking camps in competition over resources. The upcoming rainy season may exacerbate already difficult IDP conditions, and may be accompanied by displacement into Sudan.

Actors:

There has been a marked increase of activity by communal militias, largely to safeguard their territories in Greater Upper Nile State, indicating increasing insecurity and a lack of rule of law as communities opt to arm themselves. In Jonglei, the Duk youth militia continues to request support from the government as well as fend off opposition forces.

Confidence in the UN is dwindling after the government seized a shipment of munitions being transported to UN-MISS Ghanaian forces. The seizure sparked anti-UN protests in Wau, Juba, Yambio and Rumbek. In response, the government restricted UN shipments which includes humanitarian supplies. This gives rise to legitimizing potential attacks against civilian aid workers.
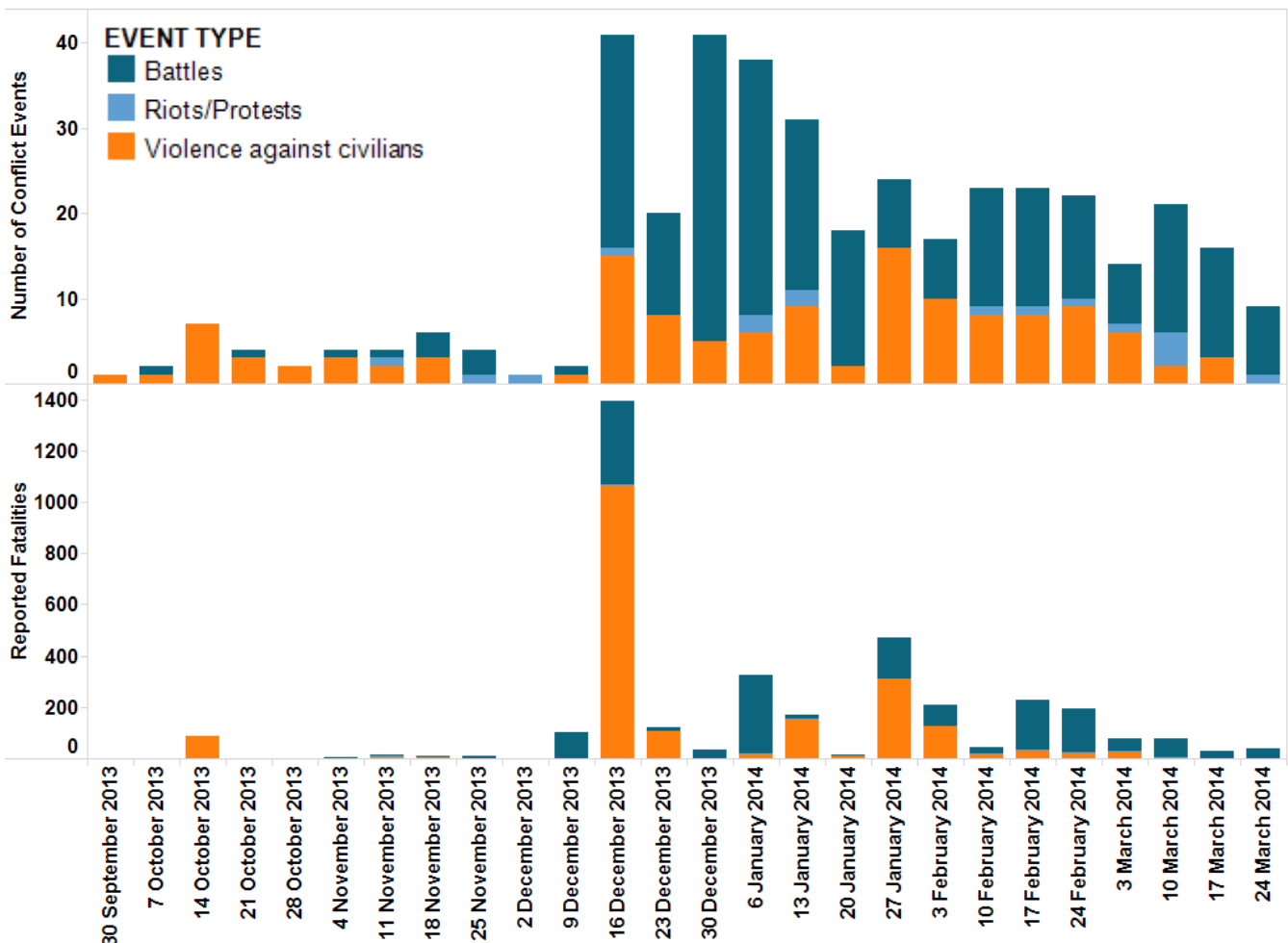

Figure 8: Conflict Events and Reported Fatalities by Event Type, South Sudan, by Week, January - March 2014.
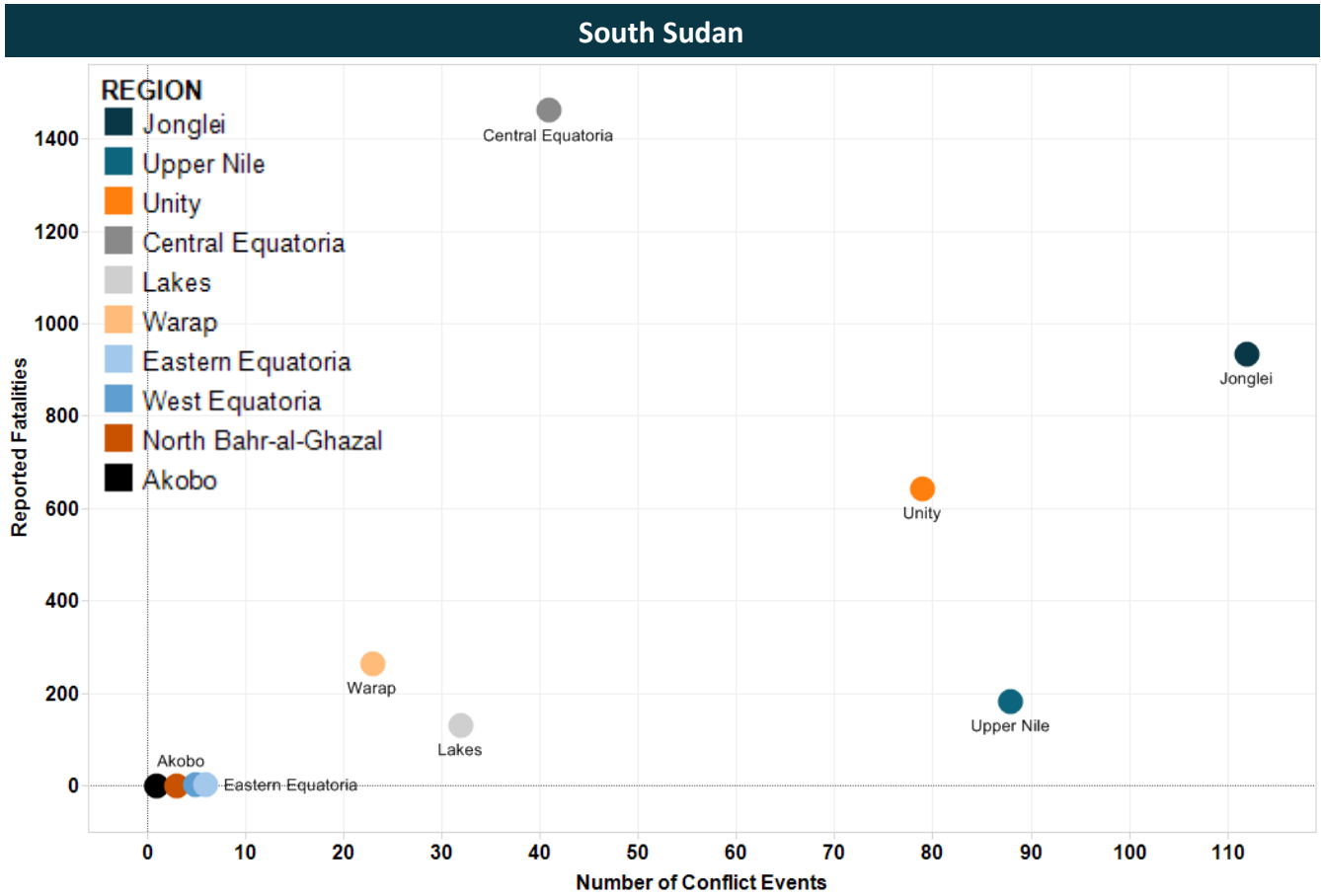
South Sudan

Figure 9: Conflict Events and Reported Fatalities, by State, October 2013 - March 2014.

In Jonglei, Eritreans have received threats from the population. Accusations of the country supplying weapons to the SPLA-In Opposition have led to intimidation of Eritrean nationals. A rising xenophobic sentiment against East Africans in South Sudan needs to be noted. During the fighting at the military barracks, East African civilians were targeted and killed.

Geography:

In the past six months, conflict events have been highest in Jonglei, although Central Equatoria witnessed the highest rates of fatalities (*see* Figure 9). Upper Nile has also seen particularly high rates of conflict, while in Abyei, tensions between Sudan and South Sudan over Abyei have escalated. Increased violence between Misseriya and Dinka Ngok has resulted in dozens of fatalities there.

The Misseriya have accused the SPLA of supporting the Dink Ngok. Likewise, the Misseriya have also accused the UN of taking the side of South Sudan in the Abyei conflict. In response to both sides increasing troops in Abyei illegally, Sudan and South Sudan have agreed on the reacti-

vation of joint forces in Abyei (Radio Miraya, 20 March).

Mobilisation and Prospects for the Future:

There are also reasons to be skeptical about the sustainability of the current drop in conflict levels. In Nasir, there are reports that the White Army is mobilizing. Recruitment in Ethiopian refugee camps is reportedly on-going, including by forces such as the White Army (*The Guardian*, 24 March). In Ethiopia, it is reported that over 500 South Sudanese youth have shown an interest in returning to the country. Among the reasons given by those deciding to return to fight have, the desire to stand against the government and fight for the Nuer cause is listed (VOA News, 10 March 2014).

In addition, Yau Yau supporters have demanded a new state for the Murle tribe within Jonglei, just a month after the government negotiated the integration of David Yau Yau's forces.

As South Sudan remains in crisis, ethnic faultlines may become even more entrenched.
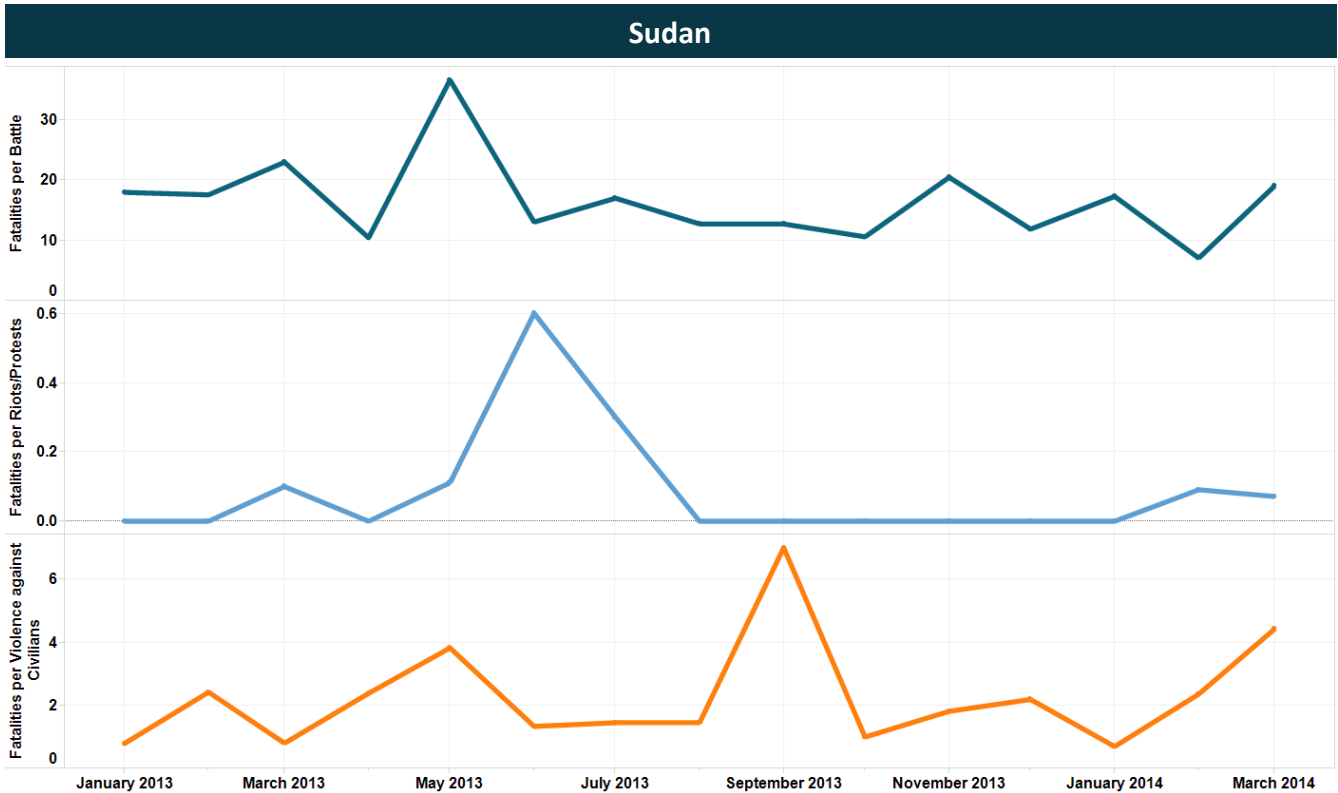
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Sudan

Figure 10: Average Fatalities per Event, by Event Type, Sudan, January 2013 - March 2014.

Conflict events increased significantly in Sudan in March over previous months (*see* Figure 1), representing the rates of conflict the country has witnessed this quarter. There as an even sharper spike in fatality rates, from 179 in February to 834 last month. In terms of the intensity of this violence, the ratio of average fatalities per event has increased most dramatically in battles (which witnessed an almost three-fold increase in average fatality rates over last month), followed by violence against civilians (which increased from an average of 2.3 fatalities per event to 4.4 in the space of a single month) (*see* Figure 10).

Geographically, the Darfur region experienced the highest monthly amount of conflict recorded in the region over the course of the entire dataset (from 1997 – March 2014). This has led to almost 200,000 displaced within the month of March and an increase in fatalities (Radio Dabanga, 6 April 2014). Peace negotiations continue to make no headway and Sudan has publically informed rebel groups that the government intends to continue bombing during negotiations. Of further concern in Darfur is not only the escalation of violence but the denial of UN-AMID into affected Darfur areas throughout March.

The conflicts in March can be attributed to two main parties: the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Darfur Joint

Resistance Forces. Of note is the increased violence against civilians by such political militias in Darfur in March. RSF forces, led by commander Mohamed 'Hemeti' Hamdan, have been actively targeting civilians, and battling opposition in Darfur. RSF have been accused of beating and torturing civilians. In Al Salam camp, RSF abducted young men as they exited the camp. In 2013 and 2014, RSF committed abuses against civilians after campaigns in South and North Kordofan.

In response to the increased violence in Darfur, the Darfur Joint Resistance Forces have aligned. The group consists of: Sudan Liberation Movement led by Abdel Wahid El Nur (SLM-AW), the SLM led by Minni Minawi (SLM-MM), and the Liberation Movement for Justice led by Taher Hajar (LMJ-TH). This is different from the Sudan Revolutionary Front which excludes smaller rebel groups in Darfur. JEM and SLM-MM have made public statements calling for an end to the violence in Darfur.

At this critical moment when South Sudan is in conflict, the Abyei conflict is heating up, and SPLA-N members have been tried, the activities of government aided forces in Darfur should not be ignored. The denial of UNAMID into affected areas is cause for serious concern since the area will lack observers they have to document abuses.

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Uganda

For the past year, and indeed since the last election, Uganda's Museveni has made his priorities clear by his actions: he is eager to ensure his son is his successor (if he does not run again after 2016); he wants to 'divide and conquer' the political opposition and its public supporters; and he is determined to get rid of internal NRM Party 'rebels'.

The problems of the rest of the state are kept at bay or at least in neighboring states. In addition to dealing with internal governance problems, Museveni has been actively involved in South Sudan's conflict (supporting the Kiir government with Ugandan troops and supplying some old M23 hands to help); Somalia (Museveni still has approximately 6500 troops in Somalia as of writing); and taking a hand in settling the DR-Congo problems, although some might say contributing to them. The LRA is down in numbers and far enough away in North East DR-Congo's Kafia Kingi enclave; Garamba National Park, and South Eastern

> Uganda's 'peaceful' nature can no longer be attributed to a benign dictator, but an active one. If corruption scandals continue, military support in neighbouring states may not be enough to placate the donor community.

Central African Republic; smaller rebel groups continue to sprout across the DR-Congo border, but Museveni shows no weakness there.

The domestic (read Kampala) issues are escalating: to prevent the opposition from organizing, the NRM passed a number of draconian measures that disallows political meetings of more than three people. The police now engage in very questionable actions including 'preventative detentions', typically against former opposition leader Besiye. Gregory Muntu now heads the MDC opposition, although the various opposition groups are failing to unite.

Riot and protest rates are consistent within the state (despite the new law on political organization passed in August 2013) and mainly concern oil prices, government legislation and support for opposition. These actions have overtaken more intense forms of conflict that plagued the state in the recent
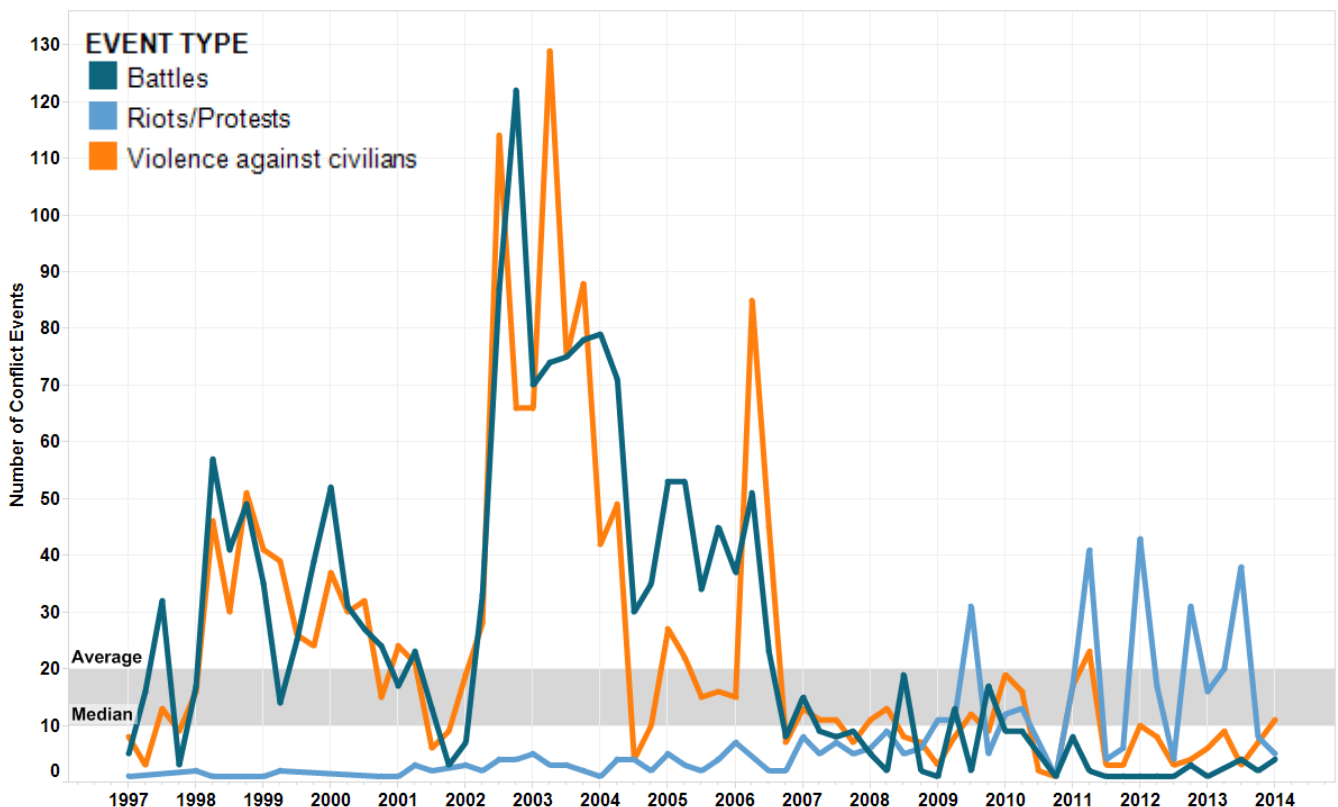

Figure 11: Conflict Events by Type, by Quarter, Uganda, January 1997 - March 2013.
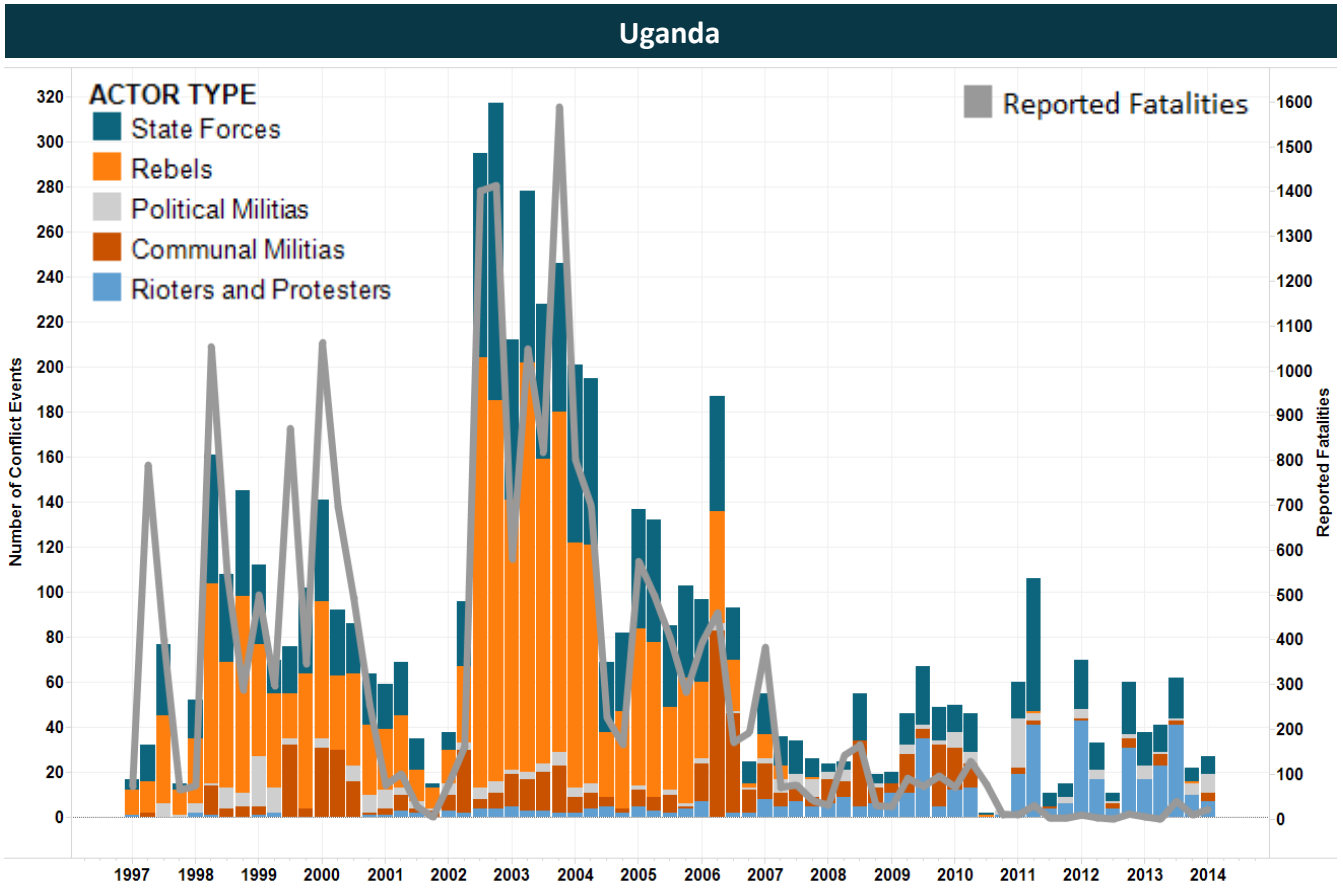
Uganda

Figure 12: Conflict Events by Actor Type and Reported Fatalities, by Quarter, January 1997 - March 2013.

past (*see* Figure 11) but political violence since 2011 can be found throughout the state, and demonstrate the variation in small, but consistent threats, that affect Uganda: communal violence and cross border contests with Kenya, cross-border incursions and nascent, small rebels active in the DR-Congo border area, riots in the capital, and protests throughout the state (*see* Figure 12)

Within the party, Museveni is dealing with a home grown opposition that grows fiercer in the face of Uganda's corruption charges, dictatorial rules on homosexuality and political organization. The few NRM rebel's are playing a dangerous game, especially as a 2012 assassination of a 'NRM rebel' is blamed on the government. Yet, 100 billion USD was recently 'diverted'/siphoned from crisis management programs, and a donor strike in 2012 placed the considerable aid funding in peril (no definitive word on what the reaction to the homosexuality law is likely to be in practice).

Museveni must feel quite secure within the international community to be engaging in such blatantly anti-democratic actions, including shutting down newspapers

and radio stations. As testament to this, Museveni has promoted his son Muhoozi to Brigadier. Muhoozi is the head of the special, large and well-equipped forces that control key military installations and armories. In order to ensure ongoing UPDF compliance in the face of defections and complaints, new young military blood were also promoted to serve under him in the UPDF (older NRA hands were not in support of the shifts). Controlling garrisons could be designed to prevent an insurgency like that which brought Museveni to government: in the 1970s and 1980s, garrisons were home to mutinies that formed rebel organizations.

Uganda's 'peaceful' nature can no longer be attributed to a benign dictator, but an active one. If corruption scandals continue, Museveni's military interventions in neighbouring states may not be enough to placate the donor community and meddling in the near abroad may result in unintended consequences for him, the UPDF and border communities. He should also be wary: his control over the state is not directly transferable to his son, no matter how many obstacles are removed to assure the lineage continues.

11

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Report

The IPCC report (at http://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/wg2/) is the result of years of painstaking work by dedicated scientists both in publishing material regarding the present and future impacts of climate change, and in discerning the convergence and divergence of results across those studies. This report is the first to include a chapter on 'Human Security' and the comments in this discussion will concern the findings from that chapter (no. 12), the 'Africa' chapter (no. 18) and the 'Emergent Risks and Key Vulnerability' chapter (no. 19). There are five elements to this commentary:

1) **The first is how well the Human Security chapter navigated the difficult terrain linking climate changes to conflict across the developing world.**

Chapter 12 (p. 3) notes that "some of the factors that increase the risk of conflict within states are sensitive to climate change"; "people living in places affected by violent conflict are particularly vulnerable to climate change" and "climate changes will lead to new challenges to states and will increasing shape both conditions of security and national security policies".

This stands in sharp contrast to section 19.4.2.2 in chapter 19, p. 3 that states "In numerous statistical studies, the influence of climate variability on violent conflict is large in magnitude". Both chapters go to great pains to emphasize that the theoretical foundations and explanations for any direct effects (and increasingly indirect conjecture) are largely missing from the literature.

What does this mean for conflict scholars, governments, and policy makers? How does this research help interpret violent conflict in the developing world? The main concern of conflict scholars is the risk that elements of the report will contribute to a 'simplification' of conflict causes; often conflict (and in particular African conflict) is reported and conceived in one-dimensional terms.

Climate is certainly a 'cause de jour' and by virtue of the way in which research is produced in large, cross-country year studies, the results either support an a-political interpretation of violent conflict, or empirical results come with the caveat that 'political and economic factors exert far more influence on the likelihood of violence than environmental factors'. But which political and economic factors? And how do they work to create environments that are susceptible to climate-related conflict (or not)? These studies contribute to a conjecture based understanding of the potential links.

Clarity on the presence or absence of a link is essential as misdiagnosis is a risky business and, as detailed in chapter 12, adaptation and mitigation create their own likelihood of livelihood change and volatility, and may indeed lead to violent contest.

2) **What is difficult for the people who produce the IPCC and those engaged in conflict studies is how to capture the changes happening across the developing world that are concurrent (and possibly interactive) with high rates of environmental change.**

From the perspective of governments in severely underdeveloped places, climate change is one of several threats that must be actively addressed. Recent research has confirmed that some governments are not addressing vulnerable populations in a way that support livelihoods, but rather directing funds towards economically lucrative areas of their states.

> **While the narrative of 'scarcity' is constantly invoked in reference to African conflict, land grabs, resource extractions, etc. are ongoing within the same 'scarce' states.**
> **How can both narratives be true?**

Further, while the narrative of 'scarcity' is constantly invoked in reference to African conflict, land grabs, resource extractions etc. are ongoing within these same states. How can both narratives be true and for who are they true? Both examples serve to underscore how governments are actively seeking to use economic development as their priority while 'climate change' is the rhetoric used to side-step blame for the effects of underdevelopment on marginal populations. The increases and/or depth of vulnerability across populations within these contexts can be interpreted as a policy success rather than a failure. Governments are taking advantage of this crisis quite effectively.

Governments are now engaging in low-level conflict over governance contests (Kenya's Tana River violence is an example), movement (e.g. displacement in Uganda) and the interpretations of climate change 'risks' (particularly in reference to how pastoralists or subsistence farmers are

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Report

actively being re-settled for 'adaptation' in Ethiopia).

One then unfortunate reality is that dealing with vulnerability should be captured as an economic development problem, and solutions should be designed that places a primacy on economic development while ushering vulnerability reduction as a side benefit.

3)   The conflict patterns we are seeing across Africa appear to be caused by governments' inability or limited capacity to provide public goods and security in a consistent manner.

In addition, the economic changes underway (in line with land grabs, cash cropping) and political shifts (decentralization, devolution) etc. often create new socio-economic realities, and those changes alter the ability of groups to collectively organize, who is targeted and what those goals are.

These efforts to contest change can become violent because of how limited the alternatives to address societal shifts are.

4)   As noted in a small footnote in chapter 19, the interpretation and hierarchies of risk is quite important to appreciate in this context.

Africans are expert risk managers, but in light of what was

learned from the HIV/aids crisis, too many related risks can reduce efficacy, and perceptions of efficacy. Climate change (on the ground) suffers from this too: food security, crop failure, market failure, political turmoil, health concerns, are concurrent and interactive so it is particularly difficult to know where to start to mitigate and adapt.

5)   Some ways forward to determining whether or how a link between climate change and political violence are related include the following:

Those most vulnerable are not being attending to by their governments;

The very vulnerable are not the most likely to create large-scale violence, but smaller acts of consistent and cyclical conflict;

Economic developments and related political power contests are leading to a significant increase in conflict between elites;

The losers in contests for power on the national level over economics are the vulnerable, as public goods, security, long and short term improvements are not delivered or pursued in those environments. In short, dealing with climate change requires extensive planning, and what are the potentials for negative effects of climate when there is no 'social contract' between the governments and their populations.

Recent Reports by ACLED: North Africa, Kenya, DR-Congo

ACLED researchers have recently compiled a number of country and region-specific reports, profiling dynamics of conflict at the sub-national and national levels across a range of countries of interest.

The *Regional Report on North Africa* (April 2014) highlights the sometimes contradictory dynamics of state weakness and strength in Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia; while also looking at civil unrest in the form of riots and protests; and growing Islamist militancy in the region. The *Country Report on Kenya* and *DR-Congo* (both December 2013) profile internal dynamics of unrest in two high-violence states with multiple, discrete and at times overlapping conflict crises including communal violence, political militias and nascent rebel threats.

Previous reports on Somalia, Nigeria, Chad and Central African Republic are also available online. Regional and country reports, alongside previous *Conflict Trends* reports are all available online at

http://www.acleddata.com/research-and-publications/

Sources

Conflict Trends reports are compiled from ACLED data and draw on news sources, civil society reports, and academic and policy analyses. Full details of sources and coding processes are available online at acleddata.com.