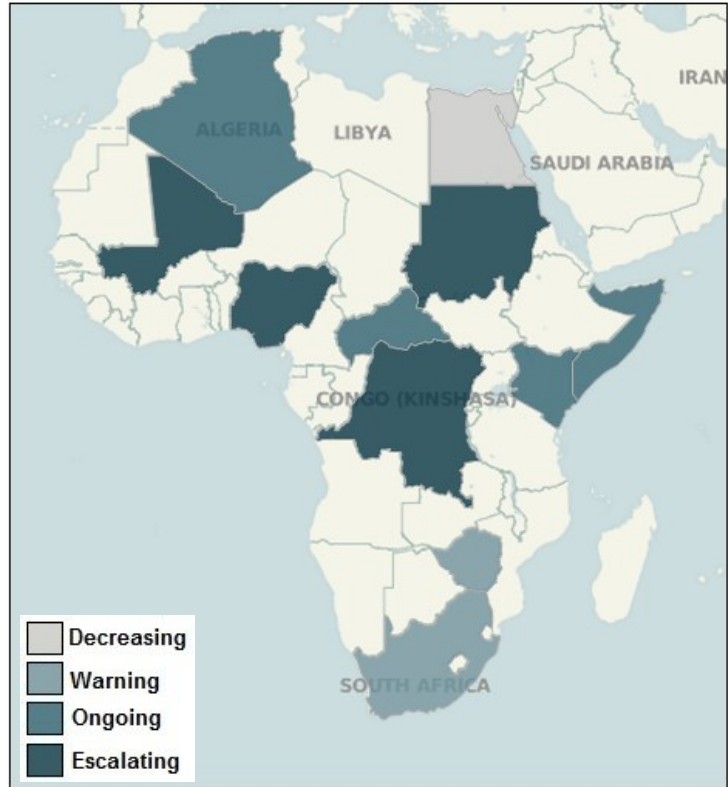


Welcome to the June issue of the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project’s (ACLED) *Conflict Trends* report. Each month, ACLED researchers gather, analyse and publish data on political violence in Africa in realtime. Monthly updates to realtime conflict event data are published through our research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

In May, ACLED launches a pilot of weekly data updates for select Sub-Saharan African states. Check online for weekly data updates, or sign up for email alerts via our website to receive files directly.

In this issue, we profile on-going unrest in the Central African Republic and South Sudan; alongside the most recent in a long line of attempted peace agreements in Mali. In Malawi, the elections proved a test for the country’s political elite and its democratic institutions; while Senegal has been rocked by a wave of student protests. While the intensification of Boko Haram violence continues apace in Nigeria, Kenya also witnessed a high-intensity bombing attack in May, the context and impact of which we consider.



Conflict Trajectory, May 2014

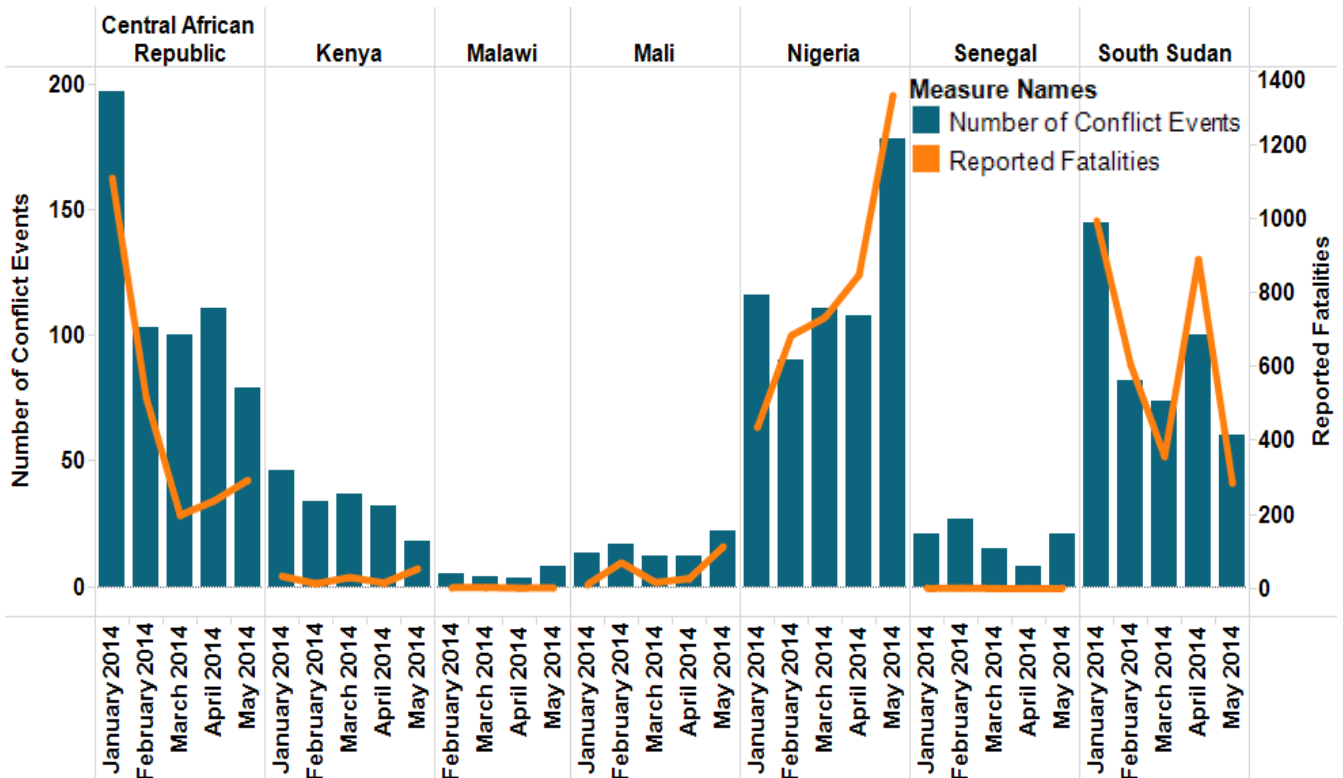


Figure 1: Conflict Events and Reported Fatalities, Select Countries, January - May 2014.

Central African Republic

Conflict levels fell in CAR in May (see Figure 2), and several changes to the conflict in CAR represent the beginning of a new phase: first, the government continues to have little to no role in what is occurring within the state, or indeed - as the attacks in Bangui last week attest - government forces have little to no control in the capital. While the government was hand wringing about moving Muslims out of the city, the main armed groups returned to their origin points and prepared their combatants.

Second, Séléka has re-grouped, and is now led by Joseph Zindeko, a resident from the North-east region and one of the original leaders of the *Union des forces démocratiques pour le rassemblement* (UFDR)- a group that emerged in 2006 and signed an empty peace agreement in 2008 for DDR that never arrived. There is still little to report about the aims of the group and its leaders, fragments or plans, but alternative reports cite the group as ‘uncontrolled’ to ‘having established an alternative to the state’ in and around Bambari, their new reported headquarters.

Third, Séléka has always been a mix of fragmented, and competing, opposition interests, and the choice of new leader may be one reason for the new ‘break-away’ group reportedly intending itself to be its replacement. A new group - the Organization of Cen-

tral Muslim Resistance - established in late March 2014, claims to have 5000 armed men, gleaned from former President Djotodia’s former rebel group Union of Democratic Forces for Unity, Movement of Freedom Fighters of Central Africa for Justice and the Islamic Youth Organization. The first was a member of the Séléka Union while Djotodia ran the group, the recent histories of the second and third organizations are not known. The OCMR, if it actually exists to anyone besides its leader (Djotodia’s former Tourist minister) Abakar Sabone, has not actually been involved in any reported acts of violence.

But perhaps the further ‘Islamification’ of this dispute is exactly what is required to get the international community involved in what has been over 18 months of quite brutal, unrestrained and intense violence in a state without a functioning government. 25% of the population is believed to have moved in response to the violence, and Muslims in the capital and elsewhere in the South are hunted or have moved on. The religious communities were a last hope of peace and care in CAR, but the attacks last week on IDP camps in church areas suggests that there really are no more rules left. Given the reluctance of the international community to become involved, this conflict may be on the brink of getting much worse in future months.

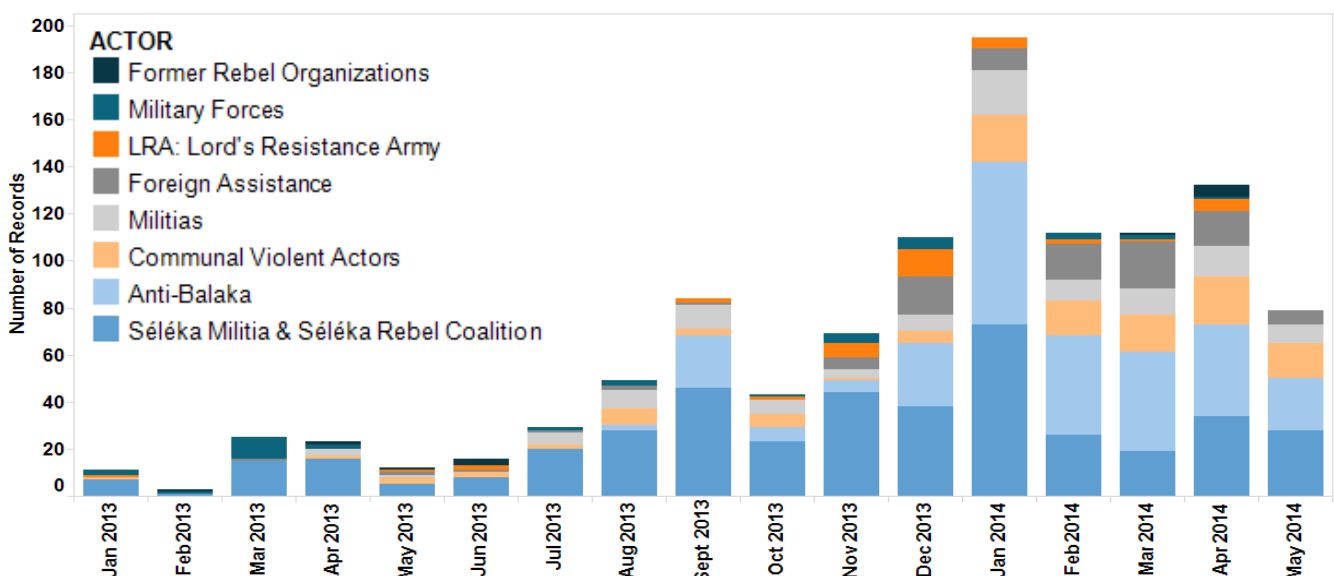


Figure 2: Conflict Events by Actor, by Month, Central African Republic, January 2013 - May 2014.

Kenya

Conflict event levels actually fell in Kenya in May (see Figure 1), in spite of the high profile attacks which drew international attention, while reported fatalities increased, pointing to the intensification of violence in the country.

In recent years, violent conflict in Kenya has increased in specific geographic locations: Nairobi, and the former Coast and North-Eastern provinces. While each of these regions has unique local conflict dynamics at play, they also share a recent intensifica-

tion of terrorist attacks. The bombing of Gikomba market was only the most recent and high-profile in a series of bombings and grenade attacks which have occurred with growing frequency since 2011.

Figure 3 charts the rate and number of events involving these kinds of weapons: there is a clear increase in Nairobi and North-Eastern regions, while the coastal region, and Mombasa in particular, has a history of intense attacks of this nature.

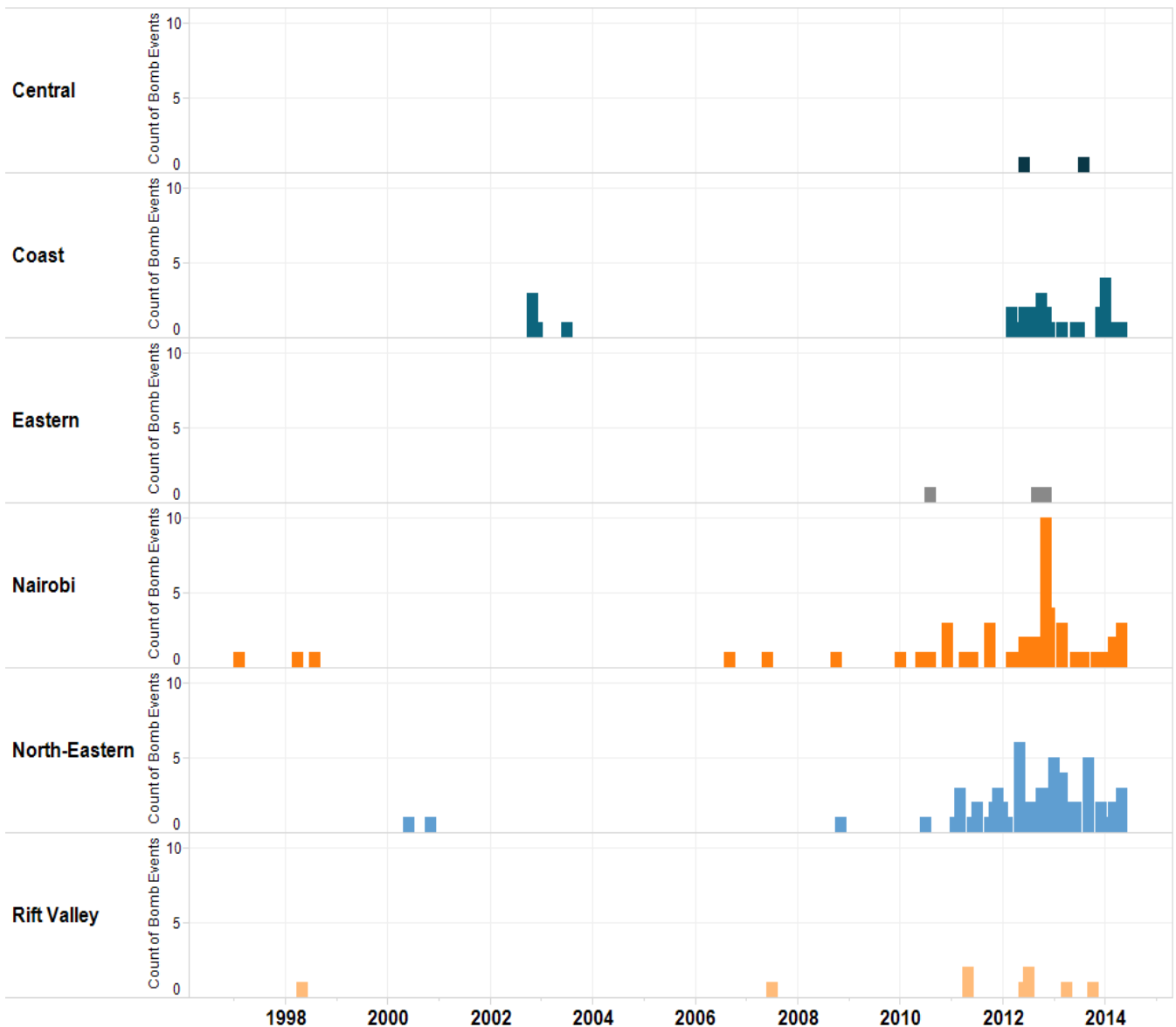


Figure 3: Conflict Events involving Bombings or Grenades, by Month, Kenya, January 1997 - May 2014.

Malawi

Although May witnessed a number of protests and demonstrations across the country (see Figures 4 and 5), Malawi had a peaceful, if disgruntled, transition to power this week as Peter Mutharika, leader of the Democratic Peace Party, won the presidential election with 36% of the vote, according to the Malawi Electoral Commission.

The party leaders in 2nd and 3rd place (Chakwera and Former President Banda, respectively) called for a recount, as the election is believed to be marred with several irregularities. President Banda went so far as to try and annul the results before a recount; this objection was rejected by the Supreme Court and Banda's overall reputation suffers as a result.

65 of the 4445 polling stations reported 'serious' irregularities of more actual votes than registered voters, but no word yet as to where these stations are and who benefitted from these extra votes.

Some protests were reported in several cities, and a protester from Banda's People Party was killed in Mangochi, a southern town. Malawi must be praised for setting an example of electoral transition; opposition parties claiming electoral victory is still not a widespread phenomena across Africa.

During 1990-2012, the opposition won in approximately 23% of elections (between one-in-four and one-in-five elections). This had occurred only three times only (or 10.3%) during the previous thirty years (Carbone, [CAI](#), 26 February 2014).

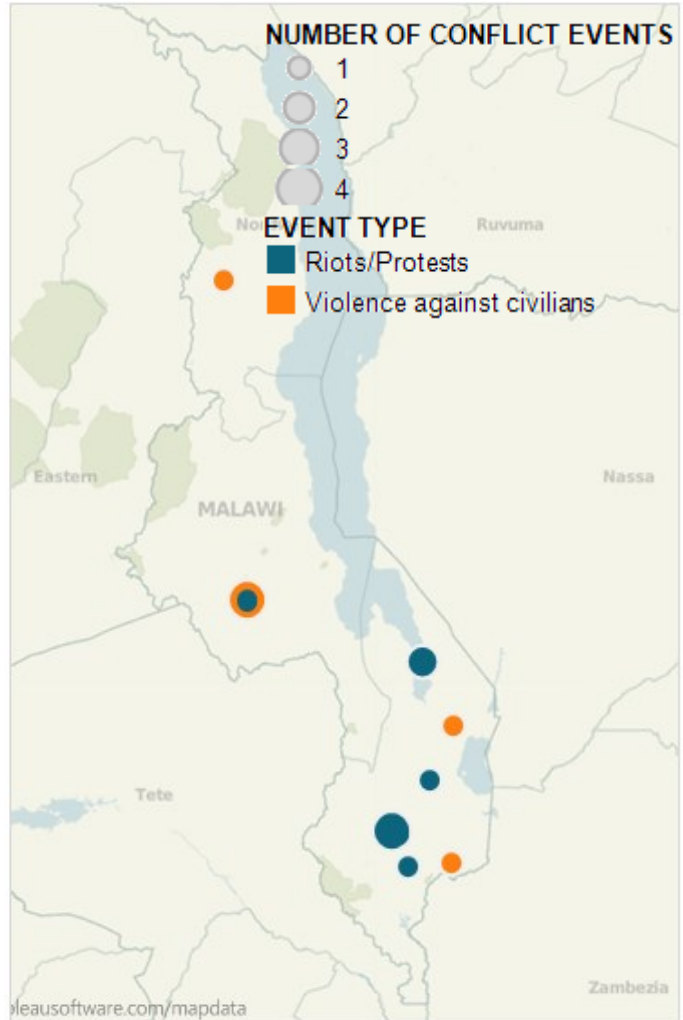


Figure 4: Violent Conflict Events, by Event Type and Location, Malawi, January - May 2014.

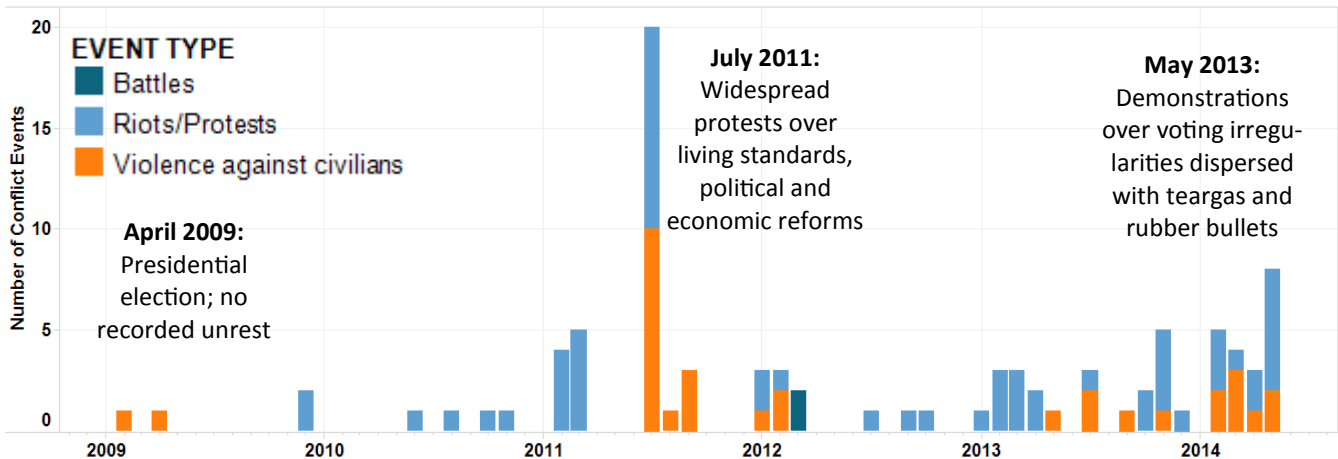


Figure 5: Violent Conflict Events and Reported Fatalities, by Event Type, by Month, Malawi, January 2009 - May 2014.

CONFLICT TRENDS (NO. 27)

REAL-TIME ANALYSIS OF AFRICAN POLITICAL VIOLENCE, JUNE 2014

Mali

Did hurt feelings in Mali lead to a humiliating defeat? On May 21st in Kidal, the Malian army suffered a major defeat at the hands of the (previously) fragmented Tuareg rebels. This has had major political consequences, including bolstering Tuareg forces, allowing them to take over several towns in the North, and underscoring the level of chaos in Bamako. To make matters worse, the reason for this ill advised attack by state forces was due to the hurt feeling of the new Prime Minister Mara. From not understanding the relative weakness of his troops and to not properly interpreting the threat in Kidal, Mara reacted badly to trouble in Kidal and Gao. In re-

sponse, he childishly blamed the French for instability and returned to Bamako; a few days later, 1500 troops were ordered to Kidal without French or UN knowledge.

This is not the army of 2012, but the better knowledge of the area and advantages by Tuareg forces always puts southern forces at a disadvantage. A ceasefire is now in place that may hold off the strengthened Tuareg, who have been warned by the French that capturing smaller towns is fine, but leave the larger towns alone.

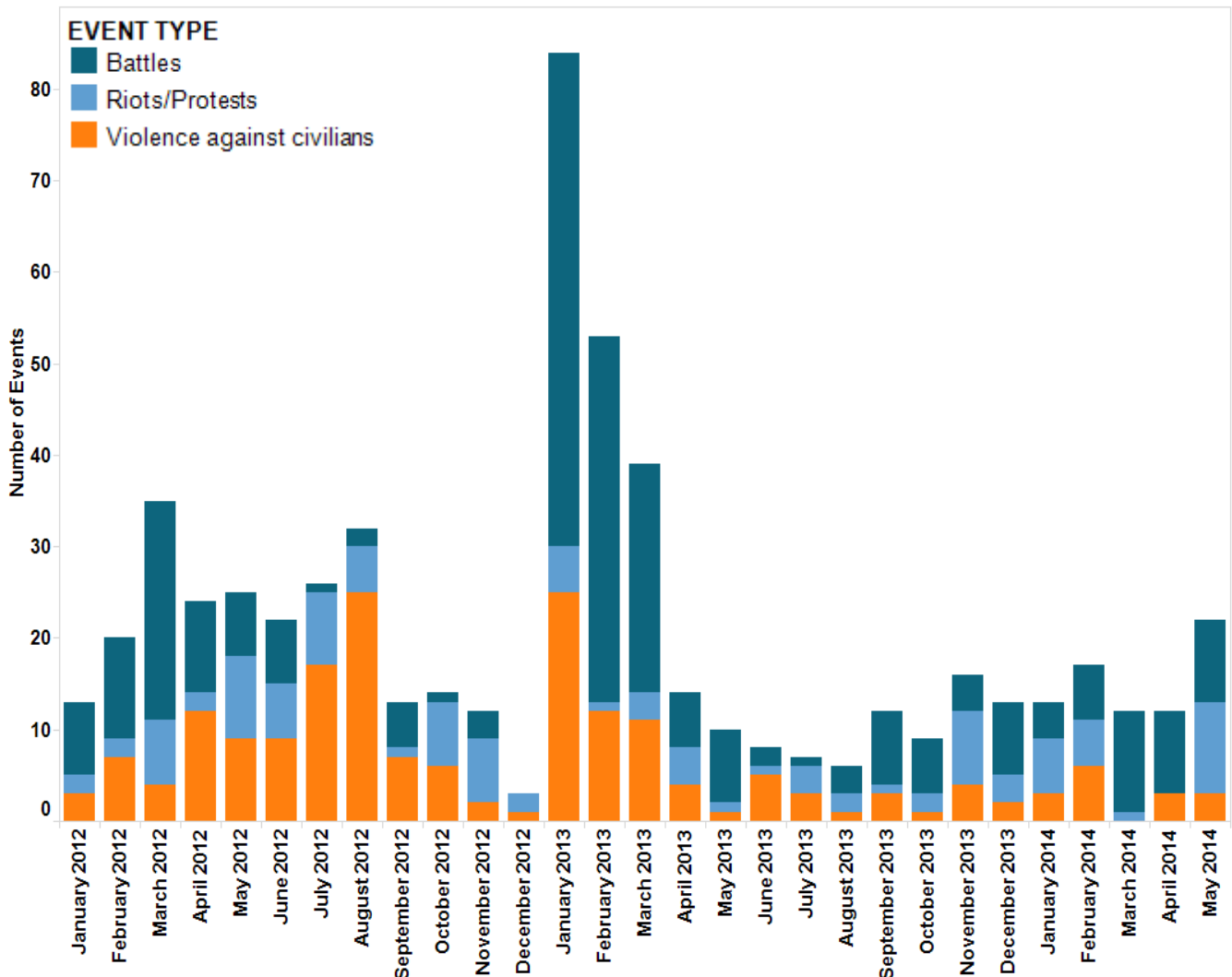


Figure 6: Violent Conflict Events by Type, by Month, Mali, January 2012 - May 2014.

Nigeria

Both conflict events and reported fatalities increased dramatically in Nigeria in May (see Figure 1), with ongoing attention on the case of the abducted schoolgirls who were taken from their school in Chibok, the government's (mis-)handling of the insecurity in the north-east of the country, and international expertise being deployed in the country to support the search efforts. May also witnessed a devastating bomb blast in the Middle Belt city of Jos, in Plateau state, attributed to Boko Haram.

In this volatile context, discussions of a singular Boko Haram threat can be misleading. A number of analysts have argued that Boko Haram is a diffuse movement, rather than a single, centralised organisation (for example, *Council on Foreign Relations*, 5 May 2014), while previous statements attributed to Boko

Haram themselves have warned against individuals falsely presenting themselves as spokespeople of the group (for example, *Daily Post*, 23 August 2012), pointing to splits and fissures within the organisation.

Multiple features of the events attributed to Boko Haram also support this characterisation of a diffuse, and diverse, threat. One pattern which offers support for this characterisation is that attacks attributed to the group across Nigeria and – recently – in neighbouring countries, involve a diverse range of tactics: these include high-intensity attacks on civilians, government and security personnel, destruction of telecommunications equipment, and relatively low-intensity ambushes and targeted (individual) kidnappings. Boko Haram spokespeople claim re-

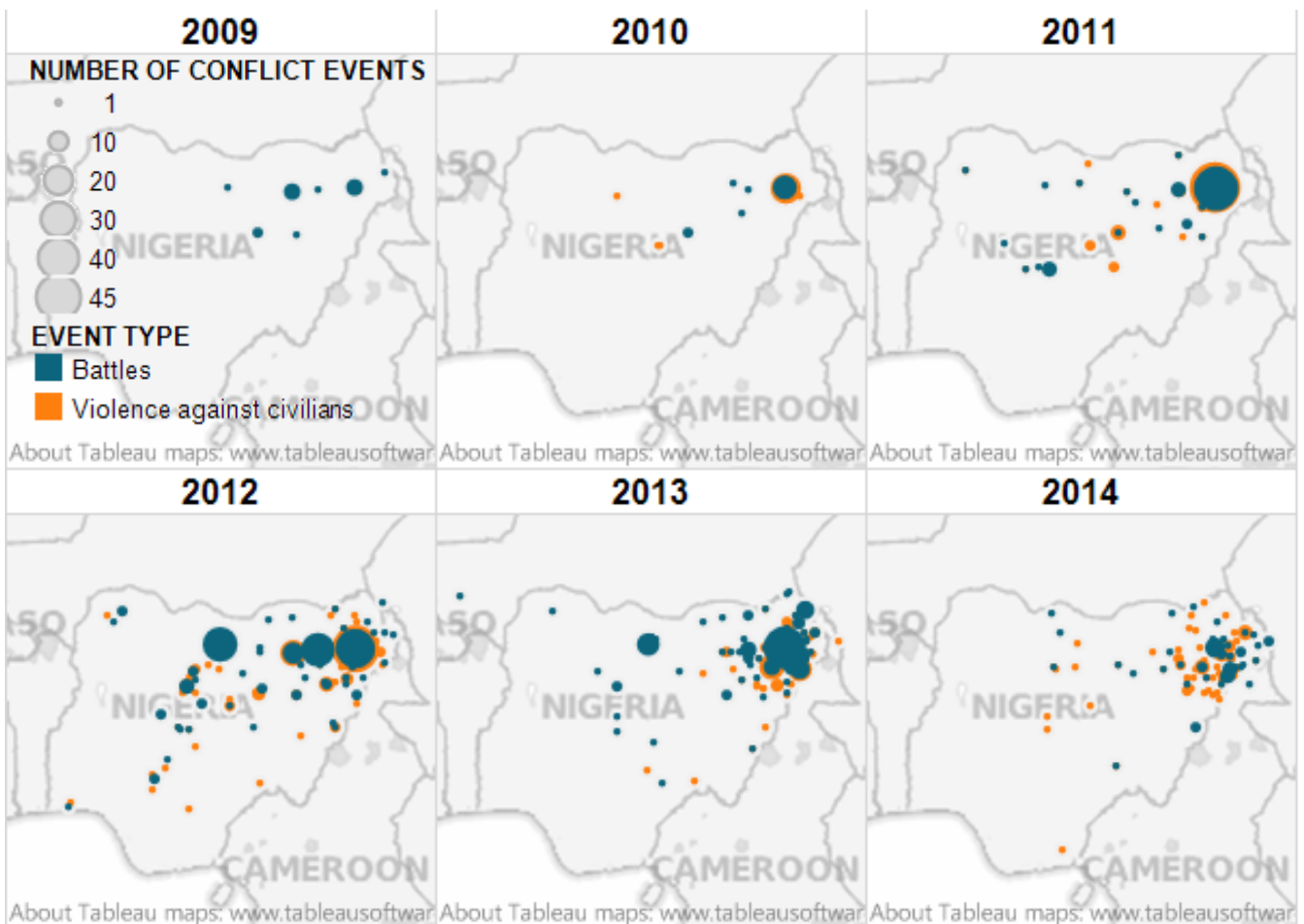


Figure 7: Conflict Events Attributed to Boko Haram, January 2009 - May 2014.



Nigeria

sponsibility directly for only a small proportion of these total incidents.

These different tactics point to a number of possible scenarios: one, is that different Boko Haram units operate in a decentralised way with relative independence from central command; two, is that unaffiliated militants operate under the guise of Boko Haram in order to carry out attacks for criminal or other objectives, under the nominal cover of the more prominent group.

In an attempt to determine which attacks fall under central control and which do not, generally speaking, the more sophisticated an attack is – in terms of cost, planning, and weapons technology involved – the more likely it is to be coordinated and sanctioned by a central command which has access to financial and other resources. In this case, some of the incidents of high-intensity bombings, kidnappings and cross-border activity that have been attributed to Boko Haram in recent months are more likely to be part of a centrally commanded agenda, than the lower-intensity ambushes and attacks which may have been perpetrated by regional units, or by unaffiliated militants using the Boko Haram name as a cover.

By this logic, a more illustrative map of Boko Haram strength and operational territory might be found in filtering out low-intensity attacks, and concentrating on those with higher fatalities. If it is the case that there is limited central control over regional units, and other small militant groups have operated under the cover of the more prominent organisation, this would allow us to concentrate to a greater degree on those attacks which can likely be linked to central organisational commands. In Figure 8, only those events which resulted in 10 or more reported fatalities in the last three years are included.

This second map differs from Figure 7 in several important ways. First, high-fatality events are concentrated to an even greater extent in Borno, in the far north-east of the country, than they were in 2012, when most high-fatality attacks took place outside of the state. There is also, however, a noticeable clus-

tering around the north-central region, where a small number of high-intensity attacks took place in Abuja, Kaduna and Plateau states, and further south in Taraba, which were attributed to the group. This may suggest that one of the tactics Boko Haram is employing in resisting the government's most recent campaign is to expand its high-intensity campaigns to the volatile north-central region of Nigeria, where religious tensions have erupted in full-scale violence in the past. Boko Haram may be hoping to capitalise on these tensions and spark religious tensions in an attempt to create an even more unmanageable security crisis for the Federal Government beyond its north-eastern stronghold.

The second notable feature is the increasing prevalence of high-fatality incidents violence against civilians. In addition to more discrete events targeting civilians which have been attributed to Boko Haram – as illustrated in Figure 7 – there have also been more high-fatality events targeting civilians attributed to the group. Such events are almost entirely absent from the 2010 data, suggesting that 2011 marked an important turning point in the development of the group and its strategic and deliberate use of violence against civilians. This is particularly noticeable in 2012, when high-intensity attacks on non-combatants outweighed clashes with security forces.

Together, these observations may point to some preliminary conclusions: the first is that Boko Haram's central command is strongest in the north-east of the country, where it engages not only in the highest number of events, but also the highest number of high-fatality events. Nevertheless, it continues to have some limited operational capacity outside the north-east, as evidenced by the strategic and sporadic use of high-intensity violence in the north-central states. Thirdly, the use of anti-civilian violence, and high-intensity anti-civilian violence in particular, appears to be a strategic decision with a clear temporal pattern. Unpacking the conditions in 2012, and again in 2014, which led to the widespread adoption of this tactic may help identify conditions in which civilians are most vulnerable.

CONFLICT TRENDS (NO. 27)

REAL-TIME ANALYSIS OF AFRICAN POLITICAL VIOLENCE, JUNE 2014

Nigeria

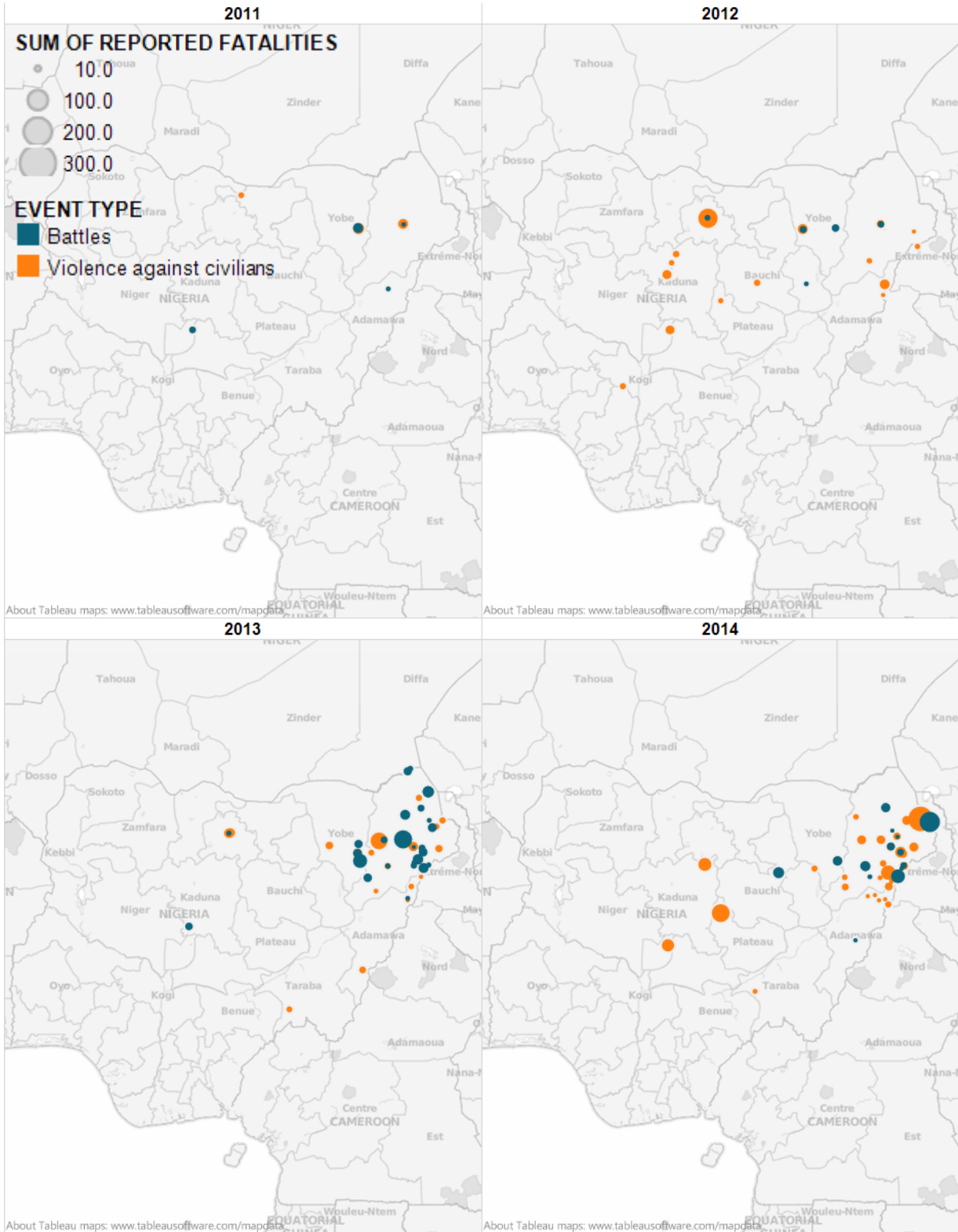


Figure 8: Reported Fatalities Attributed to Boko Haram, by Event Type, January 2011 - May 2014.

Senegal

Since the beginning of 2014, Senegal has seen a dramatic increase in student protest events. As of the end of May, Senegal has seen as many of these type of events in 2014 as the entire period between 2010-2013, which itself contained an upward trend (see Figure 7).

The increase in student unrest in 2014 has primarily been motivated by students seeking to bring attention to their demands that the government pay student grants, which have now been delayed for nine months, and for access to masters courses for all first-degree graduates, in opposition to the government-announced selection system. Other issues specific to individual universities and a general attitude of frustration with the government have also played a role in the growing student discontent ([University World News](#), 30 May 2014).

However, following a number of peaceful protest events in February and March, an unprecedented spike in violent student events was witnessed in

May, with increased engagement between rioters and police forces (see Figure 9).

These events took place on the campuses of two of Senegal's major universities, those of Cheikh Anta Diop University (UCAD) in Dakar, and Gaston Berger University (UGB) in Saint-Louis, with the majority of cases involving direct clashes between students and security services. Demonstrations involving students and student groups have been widespread across the country in 2014, however, suggesting that this wave of unrest is far from an isolated phenomenon on individual campuses.

In the worst instance of violence, demonstrations on the UCAD campus on the 21st of May led to rioting across the university, including the ransacking of the Centre for Academic Works Dakar (COUD) which experienced looting and the destruction of administrative documents. The security services were deployed to disperse student protesters who had blocked an avenue outside the university and began burning

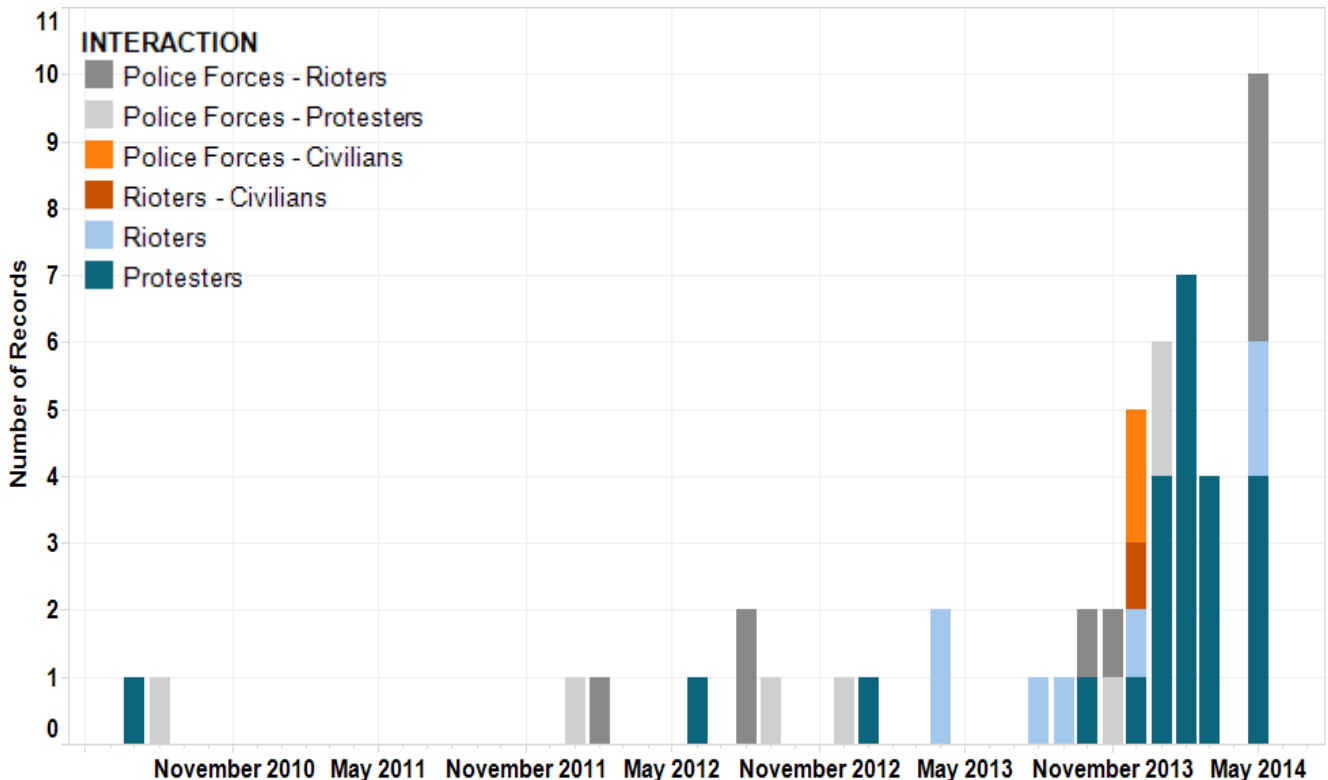


Figure 9: Conflict Events Involving Students, by Interaction, Senegal, January 2010 - May 2014.

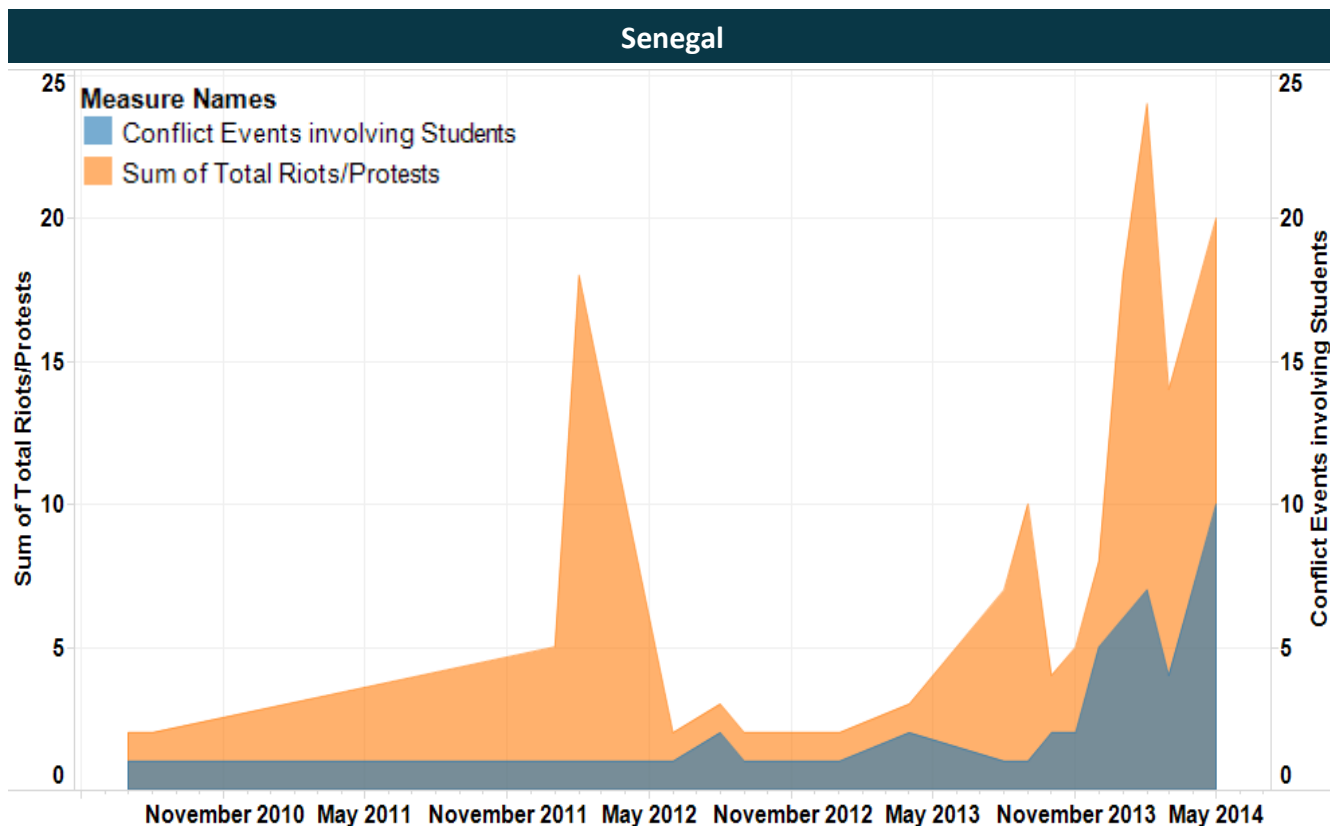


Figure 10: Total Riots/Protests Events, and Total Events Involving Students, Senegal, January 2010 - May 2014.

tires. During the clashes, stones and other debris were thrown by both sides, and tear gas was fired into the university by the police. Following the violence, many injuries were reported, and at least 22 students were arrested.

The students involved in these specific incidents have since been acquitted and released due to lack of evidence. However, the core demands of the student protesters have not yet been met, and an indefinite strike has been announced among UCAD students and across other campuses, which continues at the time of writing.

Although currently both the UCAD and UGB campuses have seen some students returning home as disruptions to studies have continued, the shift from mainly peaceful protests to student rioting and confrontations with police shows that the situation is likely to grow more volatile.

As Figure 10 shows, student demonstrations have become an increasingly substantial share of the

overall number of riots and protests in the country. With a few notable exceptions, including the February 2012 presidential elections, which were accompanied by widespread protests, student movements demonstrations have grown alongside wider protest movements in the country.

The youth movement, Y'en a Marre, was also a significant social force in the unrest surrounding the most recent elections, pointing to the agency and political mobilisation of young people in Senegal from a range of social and educational backgrounds.

Based on these trends, and the lack of an adequate resolution of the concerns which motivated the recent rioting, it seems likely that more violent student events are on the horizon. Other factors, such as the return of former President Abdoulaye Wade to Senegal in late April ([Reuters](#), Apr.25, 2014), also suggest that these protests may have wider implications for Senegal's political scene, and potential future unrest outside the universities as well.

South Sudan

South Sudan - a ceasefire prompted by goodwill or the impending rainy season? A ceasefire was agreed between President Salva Kiir and rebel leader Riek Machar in Ethiopia in late May. There are promises of delaying elections supposed to be held next year; yet as the structure of central state institutions is a major issue in this conflict, that decision is likely to be difficult to accept. Readers might be forgiven for holding little hope for this ceasefire- an earlier version at the beginning of the year preceded increased, rather than decreased, violence. However, the violence did go down somewhat in May and it is possible to cynically suggest that the ceasefire was more about the impending (or ongoing) rainy season than any attempt for the two main players to make peace.

April did see a drastic increase in violence and fatalities, and the rise of 'other' groups which are loosely allied to either government or opposition forces. As reported by *Africa Confidential* (Vol 55, No. 9), the government forces and SPLA-In Opposition attempted to capture and hold towns and roads before the rainy season, which makes the war slow down due to poor infrastructure. The conflict remains stubbornly focused on three states (Unity, Jonglei, and Upper Nile) and their respective cities.

When the opposition forces took Bentiu in early April, the rebels committed massive atrocities on an

epic scale largely against non-Nuer people and Darfuri refugees. The massacre led to hundreds of civilians deaths, even inside 'safe zones' like hospitals, churches and mosques. This massacre led to another tragic scene in Bor, when a young mob attempted to retaliate against Nuer in the nearby UN camp. 40 people were killed before the UPDF stabilized the scene. Both forces have employed local communal groups to supplement their violence. These forces include the government's 'cattle camp youth' and the White Army on Machar's side. As shown by Figure 12, a large number of small groups continue to operate in South Sudan, some allied, some loosely affiliated, others operating in a security vacuum.

The opposition is fragmented throughout the three main hotspots, which works to its advantage as it tries to secure local allies through speaking about local problems (as opposed to bolstering a central state). In Upper Nile, SPLA-IO is well organized and there are rumours that it is working the Sudan to allow bases in South Kordofan from which to attack SPLA forces across the border. The targets in Upper Nile remain oil fields and Renk town, both of which are vulnerable from both sides. Sudan is wary of getting directly involved, but does want to send a message to Kiir that the use of JEM and any other Sudanese threat will be punished.

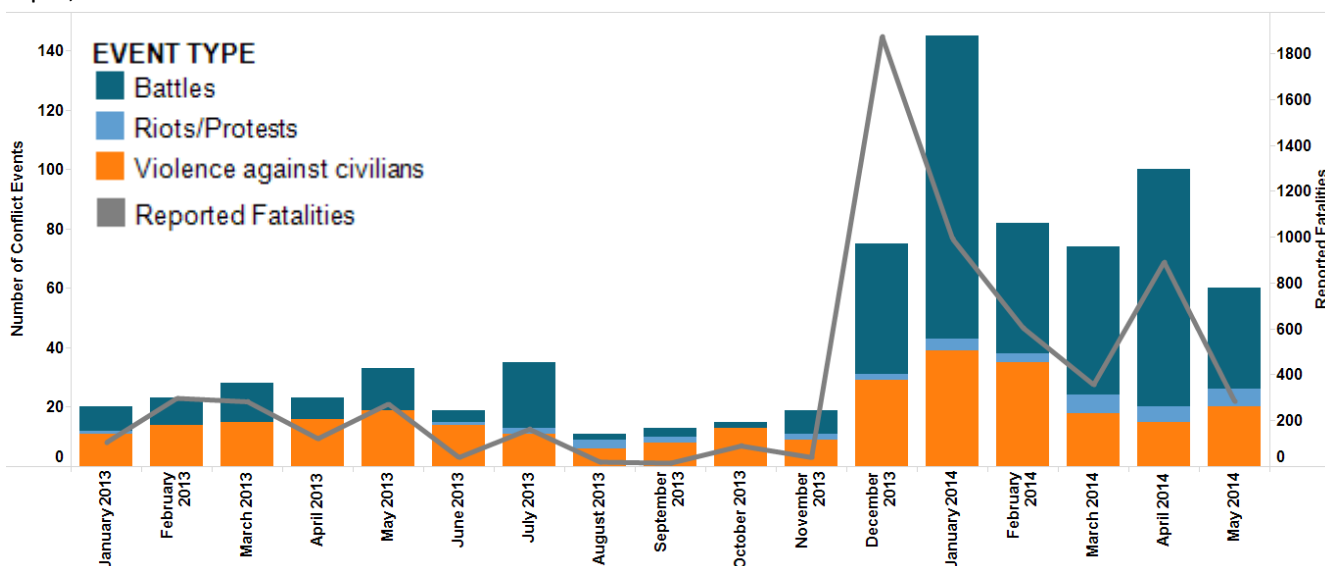


Figure 11: Conflict Events by Type, and Reported Fatalities, by Month, South Sudan, January 2013 - May 2014.

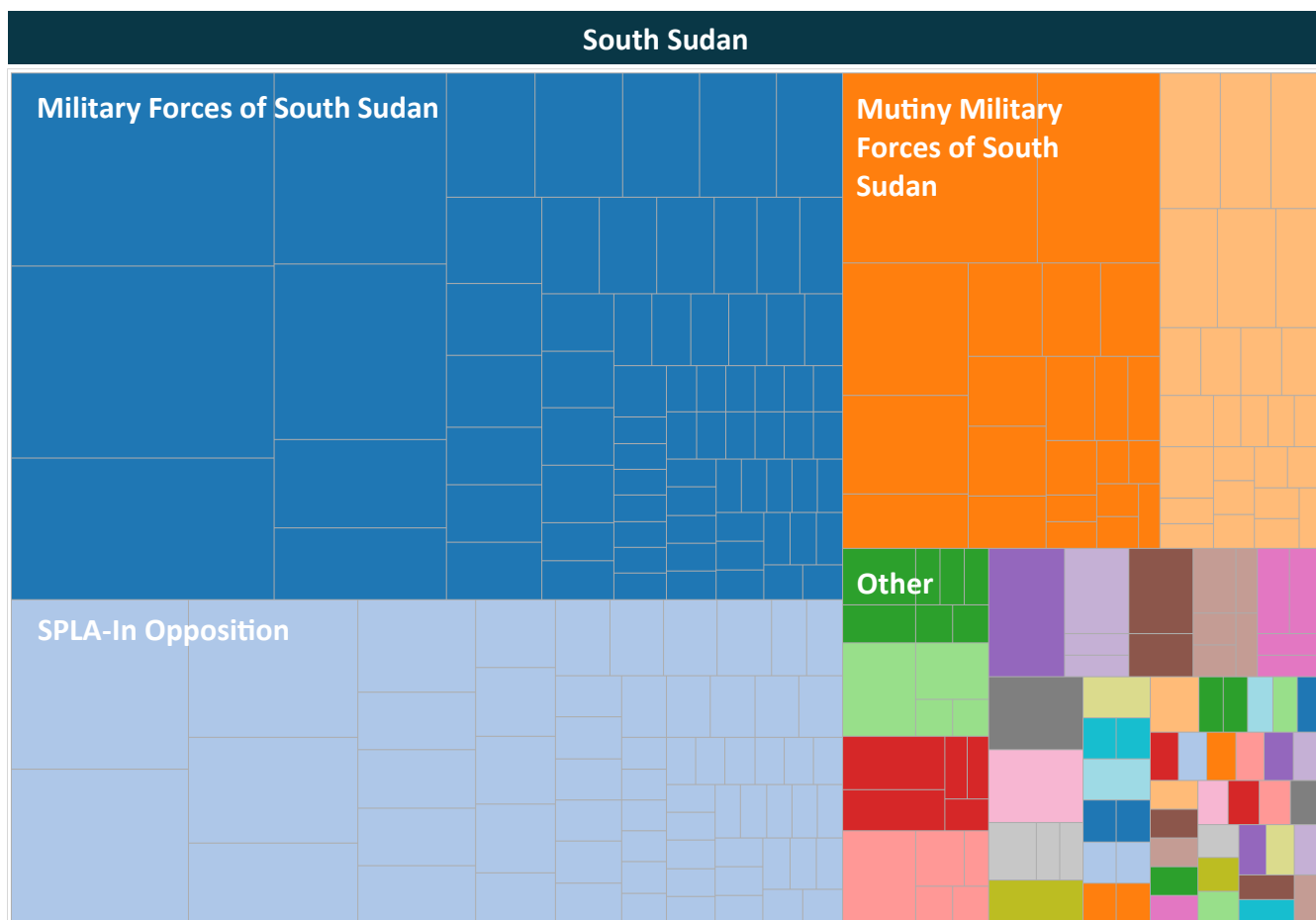


Figure 12: Count of the Discrete Number of Violent Groups by Location, by Month, South Sudan, Jan- May 2014.

Figure 12 displays the number of unique locations and proportion of events that discrete groups are responsible for. Far from being a conflict between the government and the main rebel group, dozens of groups are operating within this conflict space, albeit with a local and limited focus.

Weekly Data Updates

In May, ACLED launched a pilot of weekly data updates for select Sub-Saharan African states. Conflict data is circulated and published online each week to provide our most comprehensive and realtime information on African political violence to date.

A full list of the countries which will be covered each week is available online at <http://www.acleddata.com/data/realtime-data-2014/>

Check online for weekly data updates, or sign up for email alerts via our website to receive files directly.

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Sources

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