ACLED
Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project

Welcome to the August 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 this issue, we profile the sharp escalation of conflict in **South Sudan** and **Uganda**, alongside the on-going crisis in **Somalia**. Meanwhile, **Mozambique** has seen a reduction in hostilities, while **Cameroon** saw a fall in violence in the short-term in July, but its stability in the future is under threat from the expansion of Boko Haram activities into the country as a regional security force is announced to tackle the group.

Elsewhere on the continent, violence levels increased dramatically in **Libya**, while it fell in **Central African Republic**. Conflict continues in **Nigeria**, with the release of footage this week by Amnesty International that the organisation claims is evidence of war crimes committed by the military and aligned militia group, the Civilian JTF.

Decreasing
Warning
Ongoing
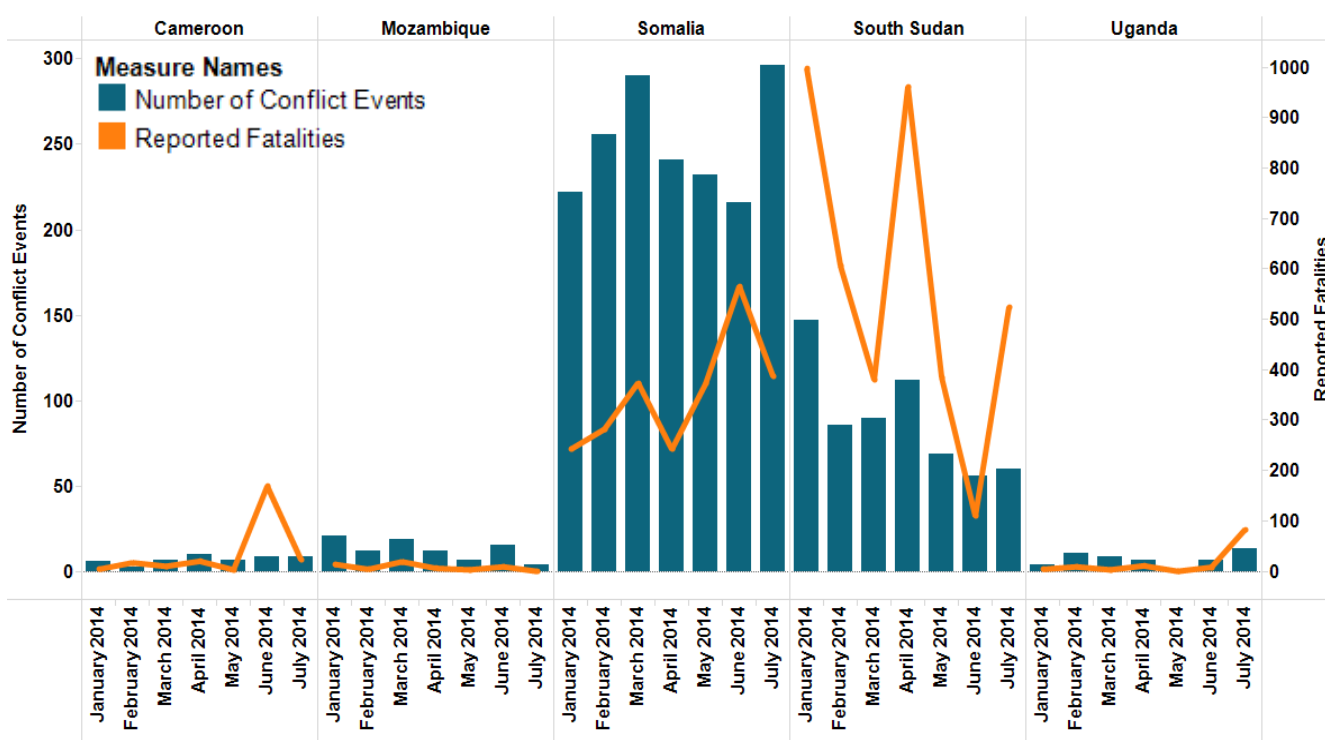Escalating

Conflict Trajectory, July 2014

Figure 1: Conflict Events and Reported Fatalities, by Country, January - July 2014.

1

Cameroon

Violent conflict has increased dramatically in Cameroon in 2014 to date over previous months (*see* Figure 2), with over 25% of these events, and 40% of reported fatalities, attributed to the cross-border activity of the Nigerian Islamist group known as Boko Haram. On the 27th of July, Boko Haram carried out its most aggressive attack to date in Cameroon. At least 100 heavily armed fighters attacked Kolofata and kidnapped at least 17 people, including high-profile victims such as the wife of the country's Deputy Prime Minister and the Sultan of Kolofata and his family, among others. In the end, at least 16 people had been killed, although some those initially kidnapped, including the wife of the Deputy Prime Minister, were freed (*CameroonWeb*, July 28, 2014; *This Day*, July 29, 2014).

This attack represents both a dramatic example of Boko Haram's growing confidence in undertaking operations on Cameroonian territory, as well as a set-back for the Cameroonian military in their efforts to diminish the group's operational capacity in-country. However, this is only the most notable in a string of attacks which Boko Haram has been carrying out against Cameroonian targets, which have included low-intensity clashes with the military, cross-border raids, prison breaks, and kidnappings.

Cross-border activity by Boko Haram is almost exclusively a phenomenon associated with the past seven months: in 2012 and 2013, approximately 99% of Boko Haram activity and reported fatalities occurred within Nigeria itself. In 2014, this rate has fallen to 88% of reported activity, and 95% of reported fatalities attributed to the group. With the intensification of the Nigerian military and aligned militia groups' campaign against Boko Haram in north-eastern Nigeria, the group appears to have moved into Cameroon initially for logistical purposes and to evade capture, although the growing intensity of their violence against both the military forces and civilians there suggests a more profound expansion of their campaign of violence.

An increase in Boko Haram violence in Cameroon, and the Cameroonian military's response to it, can be seen as far back as March 2014. These attacks have been primarily clustered in the Far North region which neighbours Nigeria's Borno state (*see* Figure 3) where Boko Haram has been most active.
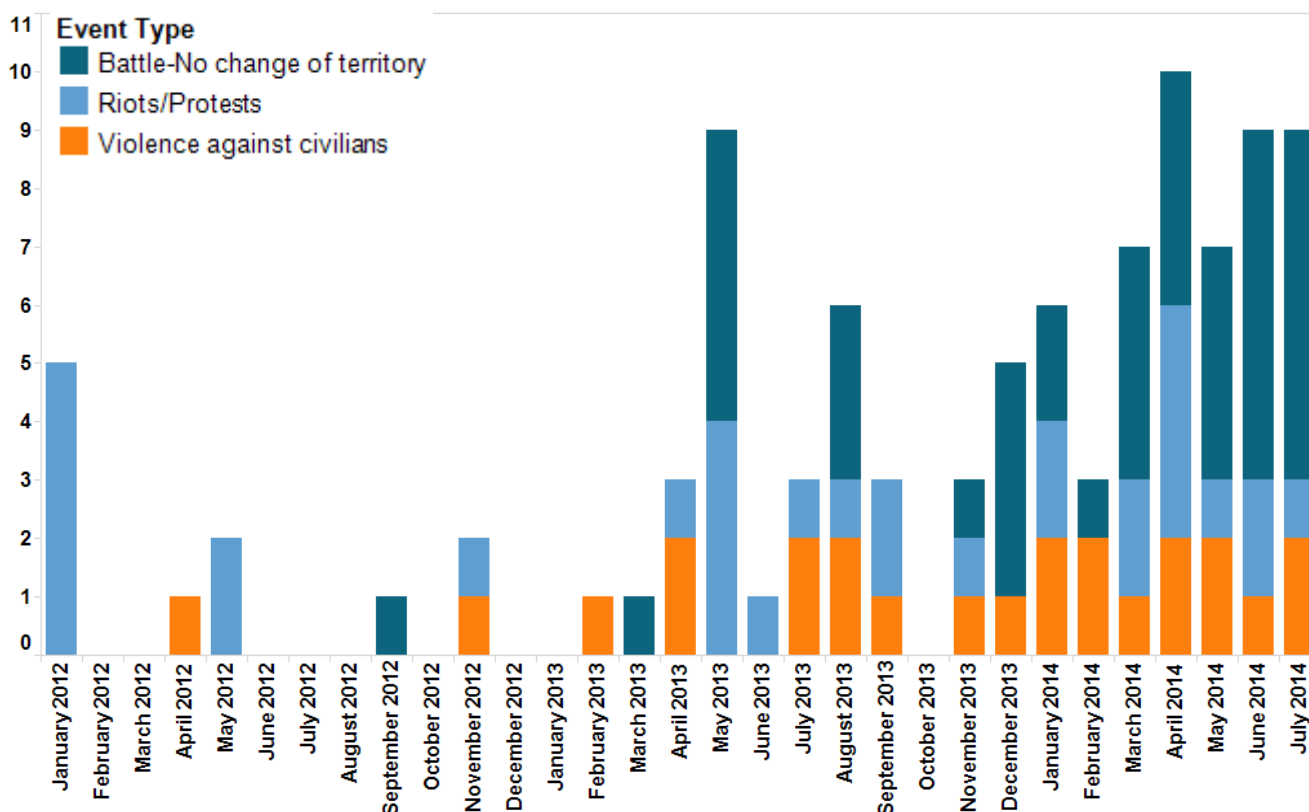

Figure 2: Conflict Events by Type, Cameroon, January 2012 - July 2014.

Cameroon

Boko Haram's attacks have elicited a strong response from the Cameroonian military, with thousands of soldiers deployed to the Far North to bolster the military's capacity to meet this growing threat (*Reuters,* **May 27, 2014**), including additional deployments since the attack on Kolofata (*AllAfrica,* **July 28, 2014**). In spite of the increased troop presence however, the number, as well as intensity, of violent events involving Boko Haram has continued to rise since May when the additional deployments started (*see* Figure 4). For instance, June saw the Cameroonian military inflict heavy casualties on Boko Haram fighters who crossed into their territory, mostly involving ambushes, as well as capturing large numbers of alleged Boko Haram members and supporters (*Voice of America,* **June 24, 2014**). But these developments do not appear to have diminished Boko Haram's willingness to operate on Cameroonian territory, with attacks rising in July and continuing into August (*Reuters,* **August 7, 2014**).

Despite this negative outlook, positive signs for the future have emerged. Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, and Chad recently announced the decision to create a regional defence force made up of 700 soldiers from each country which would have greater flexibility in pursuing Boko Haram across state boundaries, with support pledged by the UK and France (*BBC News,* **July 24, 2014**; *The Nation,* **August 1, 2014**). This force, and the cooperation it represents, could be pivotal in diminishing Boko Haram's ability to carry out attacks in Cameroon going forward, as well as its cross-border operational capacity in the region generally.
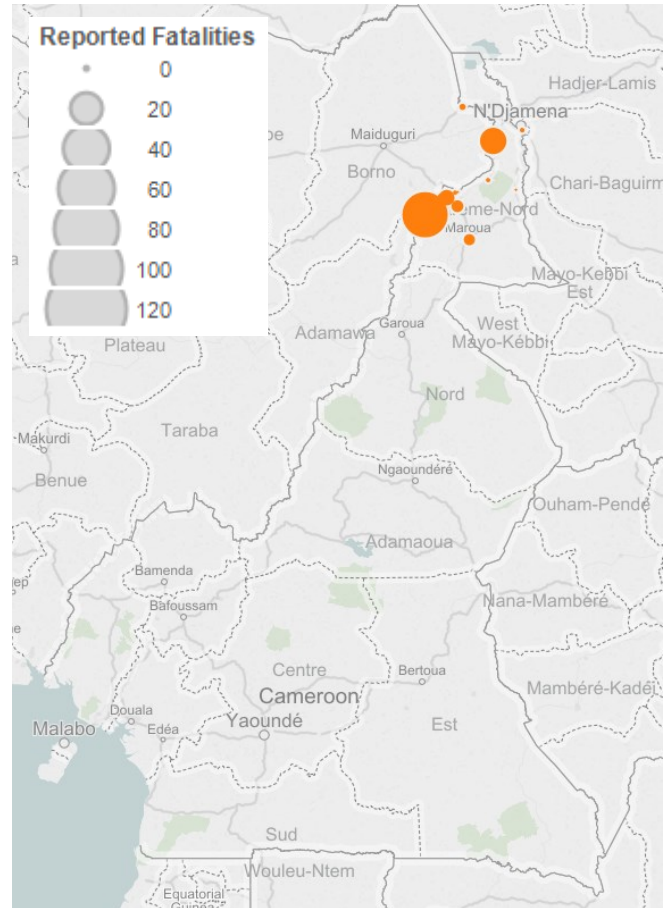
Figure 3: Locations of Boko Haram Activity and Reported Fatalities, Cameroon, January - July 2014.
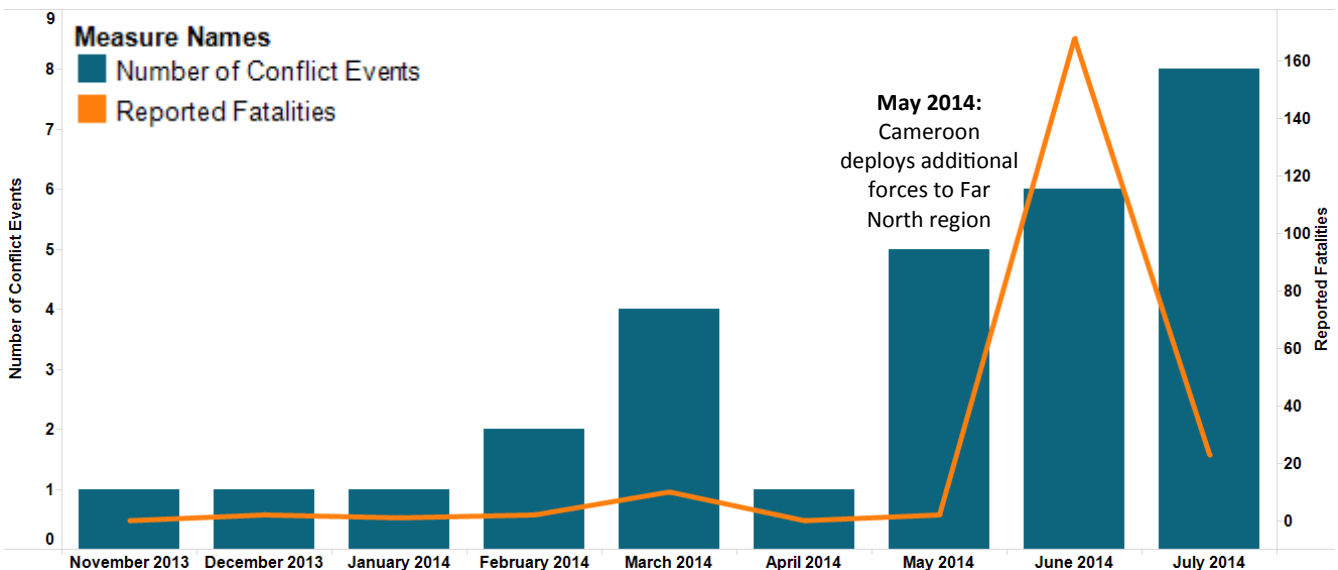
Figure 4: Boko Haram Conflict Events and Reported Fatalities, Cameroon, November 2013 - July 2014.

3

Mozambique

Conflict events fell in Mozambique in July after an initial spike in activity in June (*see* Figure 5), and a longer-term trend of increase since late-2013. From October 2013 to mid-2014 Mozambique experienced a marked escalation in violent conflict.

The increase in violent events was primarily driven by the increased activity of the Mozambican Resistance Movement (RENAMO). RENAMO had been implicated in a number of violent events in early 2013 and after a government raid on a RENAMO base the movement announced an annulment of the 1992 peace accord that ended the Mozambican Civil War.

The announcement raised fears of a renewed civil war as the declaration pitted RENAMO against its old rival, the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO), which monopolised political power after independence and has dominated the government since the end of the civil war. Since the announcement, activity by RENAMO and the Mozam-

bican state forces has dramatically increased (*see* Figure 7).

However such fears of renewed civil war may be abated as July 2014 saw the lowest levels of violence since September 2013 with just three conflict events. This sudden decrease in violence is surprising given that RENAMO had recently suspended a ceasefire with the government and was involved in 17 different violent events in June which led to nine deaths (*Business Day Live*, **6 June 2014**).

Currently both sides have a vested interest in ending the conflict. FRELIMO has an interest in securing a lasting peace deal because it will prevent RENAMO from causing further damage to the Mozambican economy. RENAMO has concentrated its attacks in Sofala, a province which links the resource-rich north to Maputo in the south (*see* Figure 6), and has targeted drivers and convoys along the main North-South road. This activity has impeded the coal exports and scared away foreign investment (**Beck, 30 July**
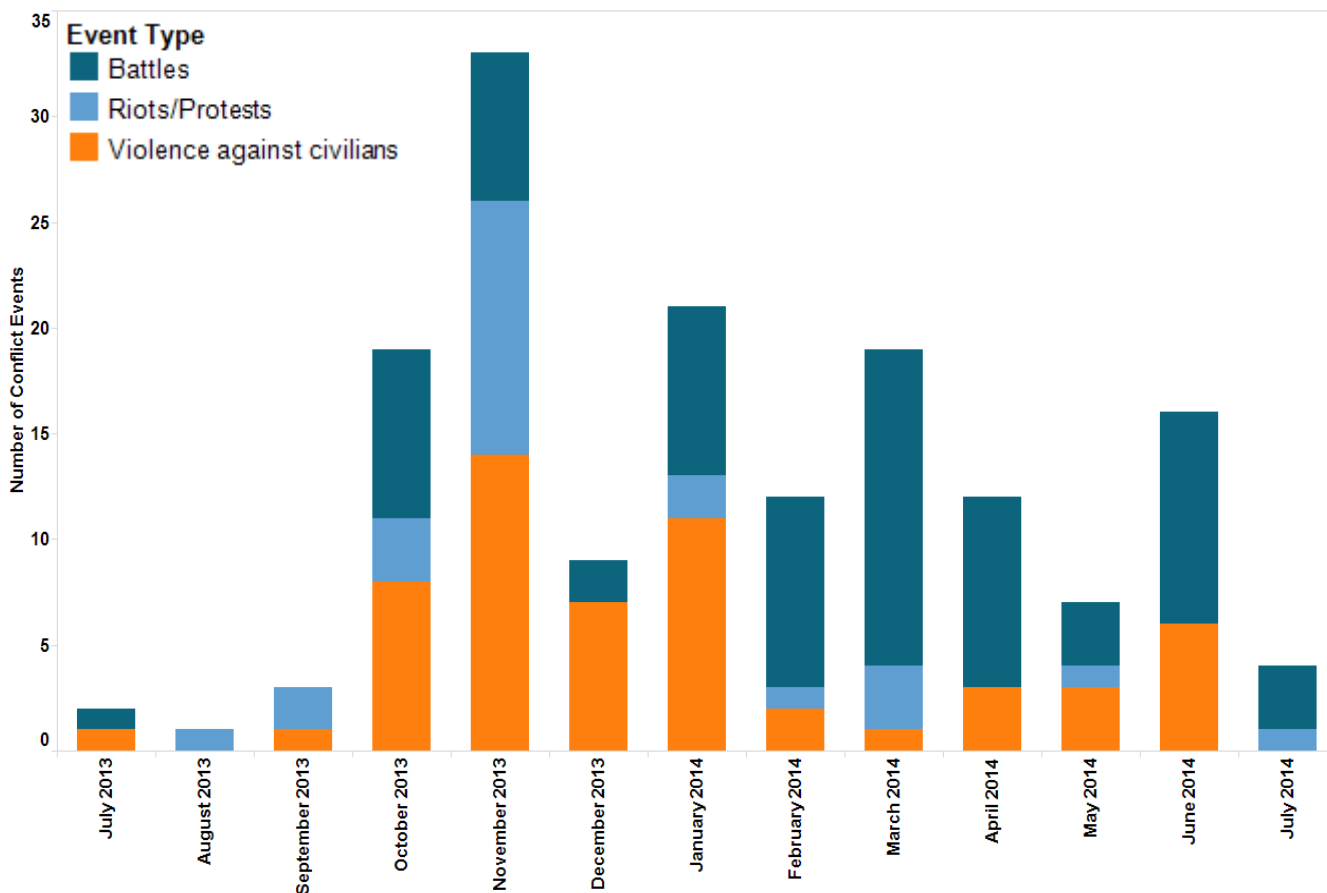

Figure 5: Conflict Events by Type, Mozambique, July 2013 - July 2014.

Mozambique

2014).

Similarly the leader of RENAMO, Afonso Dhlakama, has registered to run for president in the October 2014 elections (**Beck, 30 July 2014**). In order to campaign he will need to leave his base in Gorongosa National Park and routinely enter territory which is controlled by the government. RENAMO has also suffered from forsaking political engagement for military action. The Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM) made huge gains the 2013 elections in RENAMO's absence (**Mucari, 4 December 2013**).

RENAMO and FRELIMO are currently working together on drafting a new peace deal and given these incentives, conflict between the two parties will likely decrease until the election (**Beck, 30 July 2014**). However, violence could increase if RENAMO fail to get a result they deem credible and may return to military engagement if political engagement procures no substantial returns.

There has also been a reduction in the number of riots and protests in 2014 compared to late 2013 (*see* Figure 5). Although protests in Mozambique sporadically erupt over issues regarding political graft, poor treatment by foreign businesses and development, no month in 2014 to date has experienced more than three separate incidents. However, the high number of protests and riots in November 2013, the month of the municipal elections, serves as a potential warning for the unrest that may follow the October presidential elections.
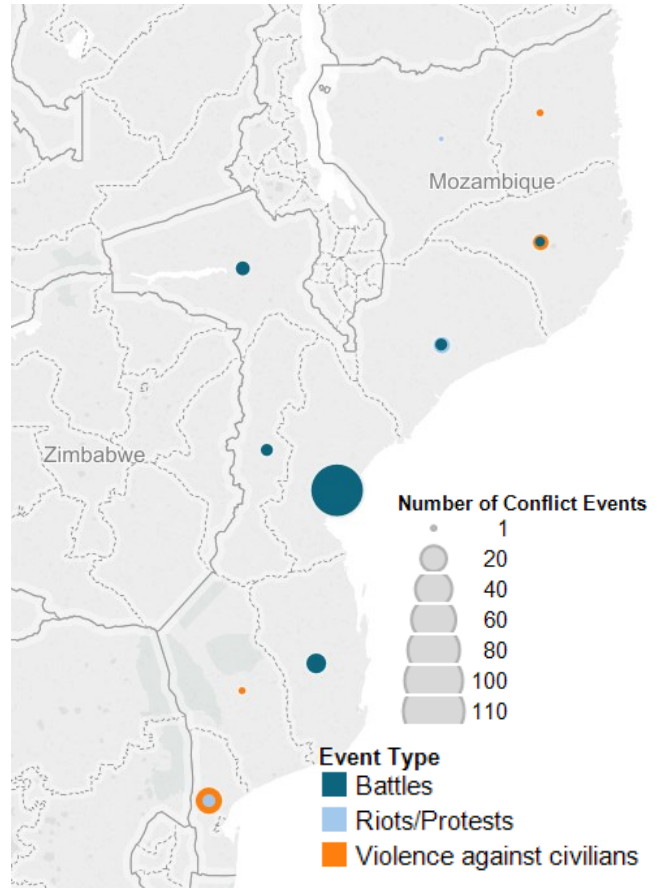

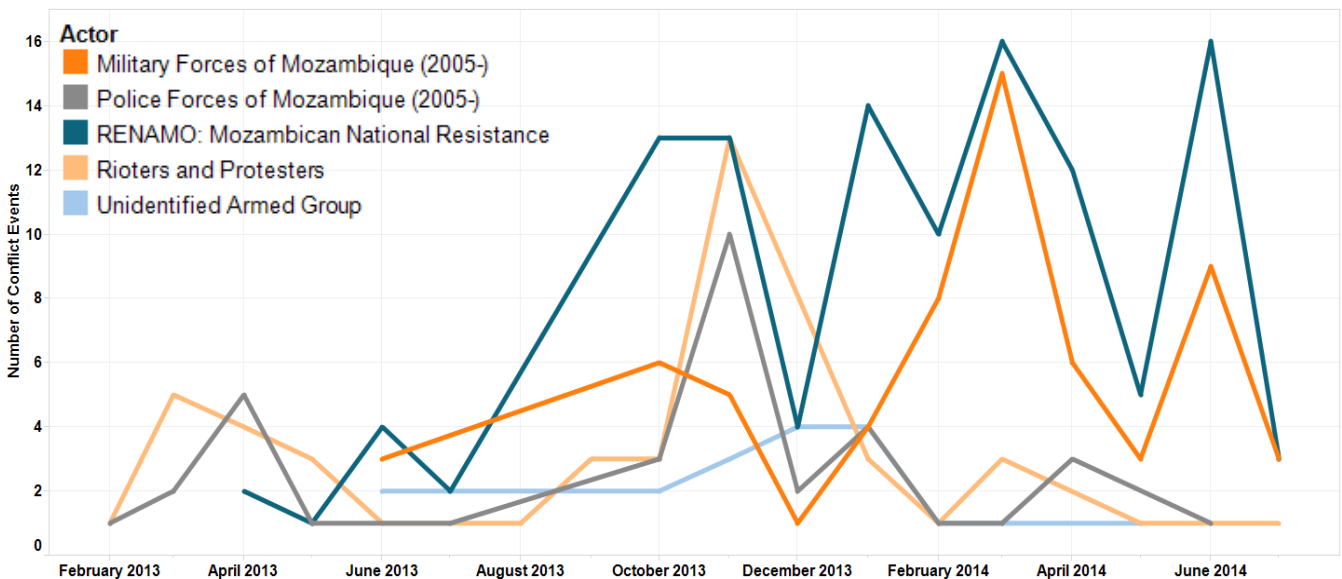**Figure 6: RENAMO Conflict Events by Location and Type, Mozambique, October 2013 - July 2014.**

Figure 7: Conflict Events by Top Five Actors, Mozambique, January 2013 - July 2014.

Somalia

Conflict event levels increased in Somalia in July, although reported fatalities fell from their 2014 high in June, suggesting a slight decrease in the intensity of violence (*see* Figure 8).

The month also witnessed a significant shift in the direction of territorial transfer. In June, most of the incidents involving territorial gain saw Al Shabaab taking control of territory; while in July, government and aligned forces regained some of the momentum of their March and April efforts and took control of territory in Gedo and Bay, although heavy fighting in Lower Juba saw the back and forth exchange of territory there over the course of the month.

The politics of territorial acquisition in Somalia point to two discrete dynamics: the first is that Al Shabaab is far from neutralised. The Islamist group's conflict activity increased significantly in July over the previous month, with a noticeable increase in battles in which no side gained territory. In spite of the substantial territorial acquisitions made by the government and aligned forces since late-2011, the Islamist group remains a viable threat and one whose capacity to inflict fatalities has not abated significantly over this period of time.

This capacity is particularly noticeable in places such as Mogadishu, and other areas which the government supposedly controls, with several high-profile attacks on political leaders and civilians within these territories. This
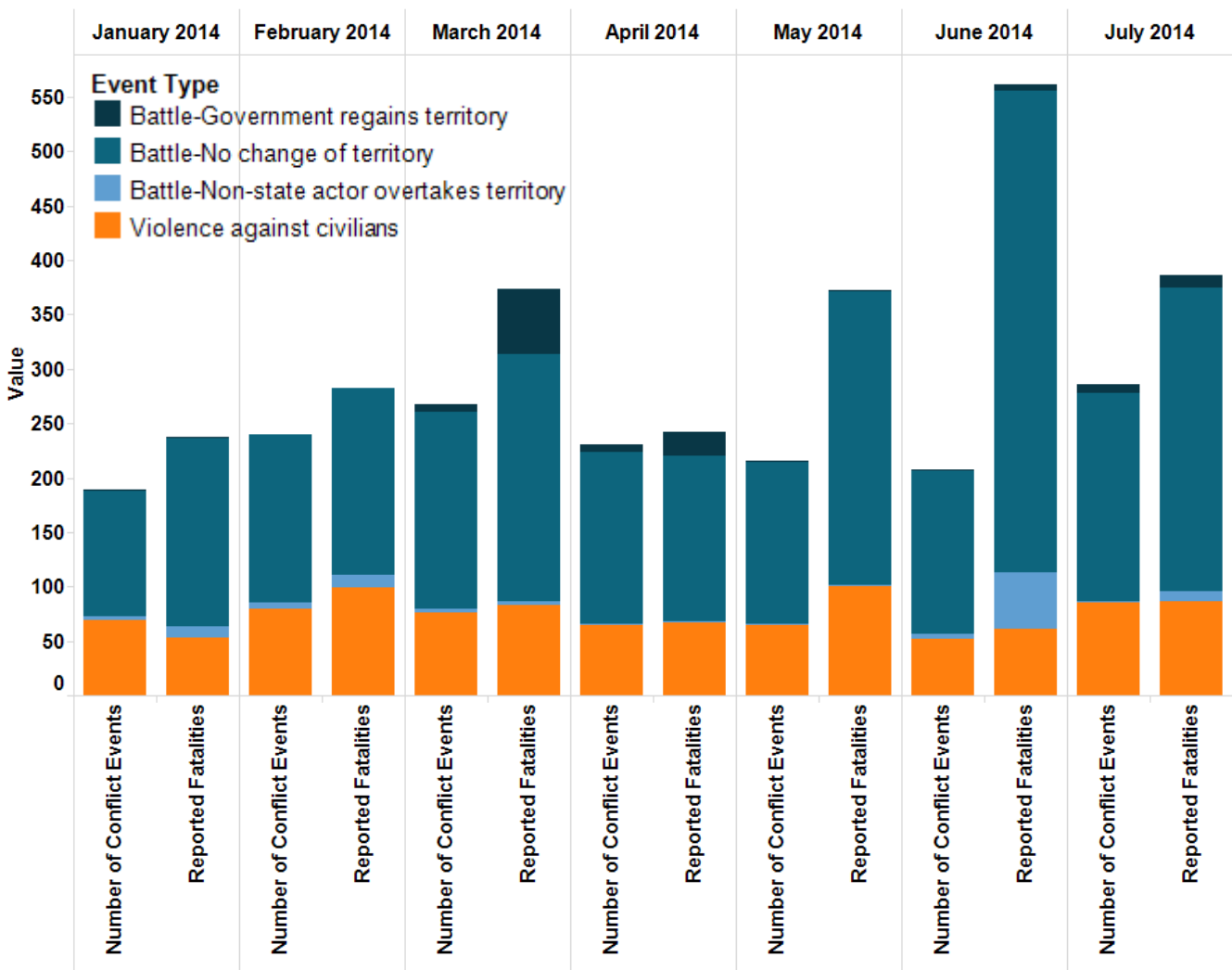

Figure 8: Conflict Events and Reported Fatalities by Type, January - July 2014.
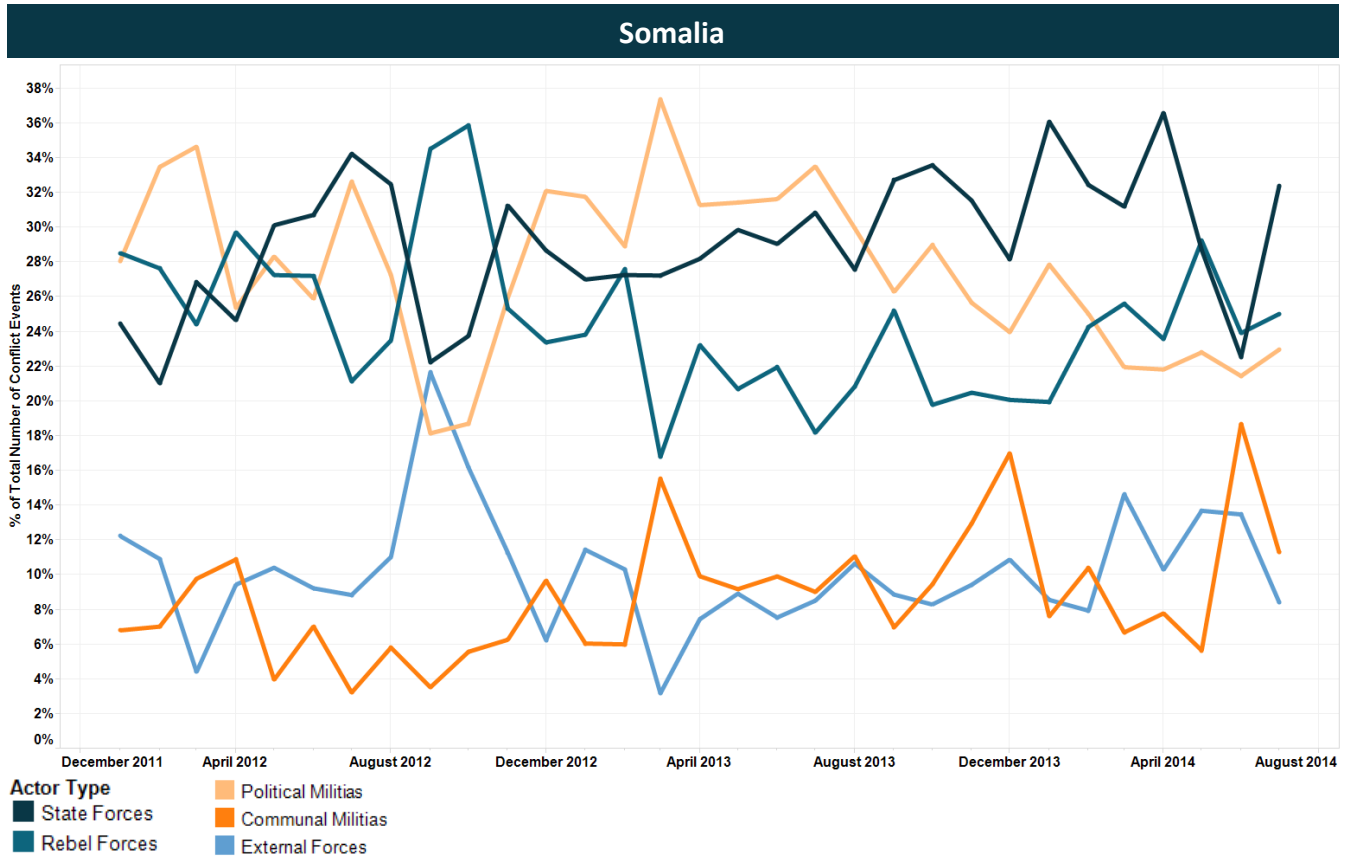
Somalia

Actor Type
- State Forces
- Rebel Forces
- Political Militias
- Communal Militias
- External Forces

Figure 9: Percentage of Conflict Events by Actor Type, Somalia, January 2012 - July 2014.

violence points to gaps in the government's ability to secure territory and protect civilians within it. A focus on territorial gains over and above the state of security within these areas obscures the persistent vulnerability of civilian populations to attacks even after the government has nominally seized control.

The second implication of a focus on territorial gains is that it can obscure the other conflict dynamics in the volatile country. As Figure 9 shows, while rebel force activity (Al Shabaab) remains the second highest type of violence in Somalia after state forces, the proportion of violence perpetrated by communal militias has been gradually increasing since 2012, albeit with noticeable spikes and declines over this period. In July 2014, communal militia violence, primarily involving clan militias, made up 11.3% of all violent conflict events, down from a high of 18.7% in June of this year, but significantly above the two-and-a-half-year average (8.7%), and the rate at the beginning of 2012 (6.8%).

Communal violence is a significant factor in the conflict equation in Somalia not only because of its clear implications for the security and vulnerability of populations

affected by violent conflict, but also because it interacts with both local and international interests in Somalia. Clan violence is related in part to the establishment of numerous - and in some cases mutually exclusive - federal member states since early 2012.

The resulting fragmentation has implications for politics at every level in Somalia: in the local context, factionalism exacerbates issues such as inter-clan rivalry and accompanying insecurity, and control of access to territory (with implications for humanitarian access and efficacy at a time of **high alert**). At the national level, there are implications for the legitimacy of the competing, aspiring member states, as well as for the stability and capacity of the central federal structure under the strain of centrifugal forces (**Balthasar, 2014**). Finally, there are regional implications: where federal member state formation appears to favour the regional interests of Kenya and Ethiopia *Africa Confidential*, 11th of July 2014), there are both immediate issues about the opportunities this gives the government's opponents to capitalise on resentment of (in particular) Ethiopian interference in Somalia, and longer-term concerns about the viability of these units.

South Sudan

Since late May's ceasefire agreement between president Salva Kiir and SPLA/M-In Opposition (IO) leader Riek Machar, conflict South Sudan does not appear to have decreased substantially (*see* Figure 10). Although conflict levels dropped briefly in late May and late June, mid-July saw spikes in violence and fatalities. This includes battles between government and rebel forces for control of Nasir in Upper Nile, and clashes between government and defected droops in North Bahr al Ghazal. Battles for control of key towns and areas, such as Nasir, continue with few apparent concessions to ceasefires.

According to the last agreement mediated by the Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), parties agreed to finalise details of a transitional government by 10 August. Talks were adjourned in late-June. Multi-stakeholder negotiations resumed in Addis Ababa on 4 August, only to stall on 5 August, with the SPLA/M-IO calling for direct negotiations only with the government and rejecting a multi-stakeholder approach (*Radio Tamazuj, 6 August 2014*).

SPLA/M-IO previously called for greater inclusion of civil society and political parties in peace talks, but state that they should play a "consultative" role. While government and rebels appear to be concerned primarily with the format, rather than content, of negotiations, the actual "inclusiveness" of the process is questionable.

The focus on a transitional government echoes the 2005 peace agreement, which did not effectively address tensions between various SPLM/A factions or underlying dynamics of power and exclusion within South Sudan. A new transitional government controlled by Kiir and Machar would arguably reproduce previous government power structures. However, some have stated that any arrangement excluding the two would be unsustainable (*Sudd Institute, 3 August 2014*). Machar has called for the creation of a federal system and legislative, judiciary, and security sector transformation. Kiir has not indicated any willingness to accept such change.
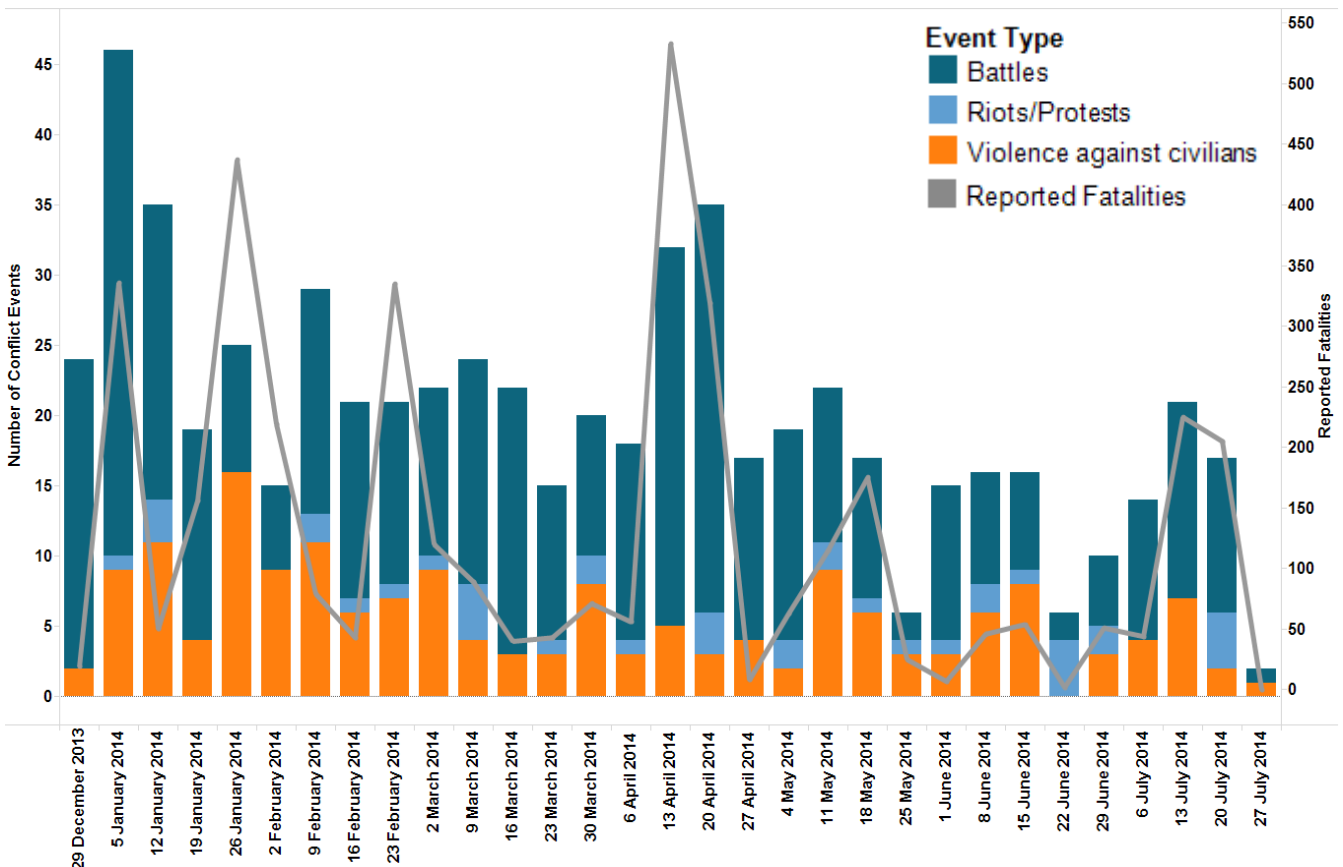

Figure 10: Conflict Events by Type and Reported Fatalities, South Sudan, Week of 29 December - 27 July 2014.

South Sudan

IGAD, the African Union, and UN Security Council are reportedly discussing sanctions in the event of failed negotiations. In May and July 2014, the United States and European Union sanctioned leaders accused of violating ceasefire agreements, including SPLA/M-IO leader Peter Gadet and Presidential Guard head Marial Chanuong.

This does not appear to have affected activity by military and SPLA/M-IO forces: since May, SPLA/M-IO activity has constituted over 25% of all conflict events in South Sudan, and almost one-third of reported fatalities. Meanwhile, over half of all battle events have been fought between state forces and rebels since the beginning of the year. Questions about the effectiveness of additional international sanctions or embargos are complicated by diverse international relations with South Sudan. For example, in early July South Sudan reportedly received a massive arms transfer from China (***Amnesty International, 17 July 2014***).

Although peace negotiations have focused predominantly (if not exclusively) on government-SPLA/M-IO conflict, violence between ethnic and communal groups accounts for a relatively significant proportion of South Sudan's conflict (*see* Figure 11), primarily in the centre, south and west of the country, while SPLA/M-IO activity is concentrated in the north and north-east. While many ethnic or communal groups, including youth militia, are aligned with government or rebel forces, inter-ethnic, inter-clan, and associated geographic dynamics are much more complex. These factors should be considered if current peace efforts are to effectively respond to South Sudan's historical and ongoing conflict.
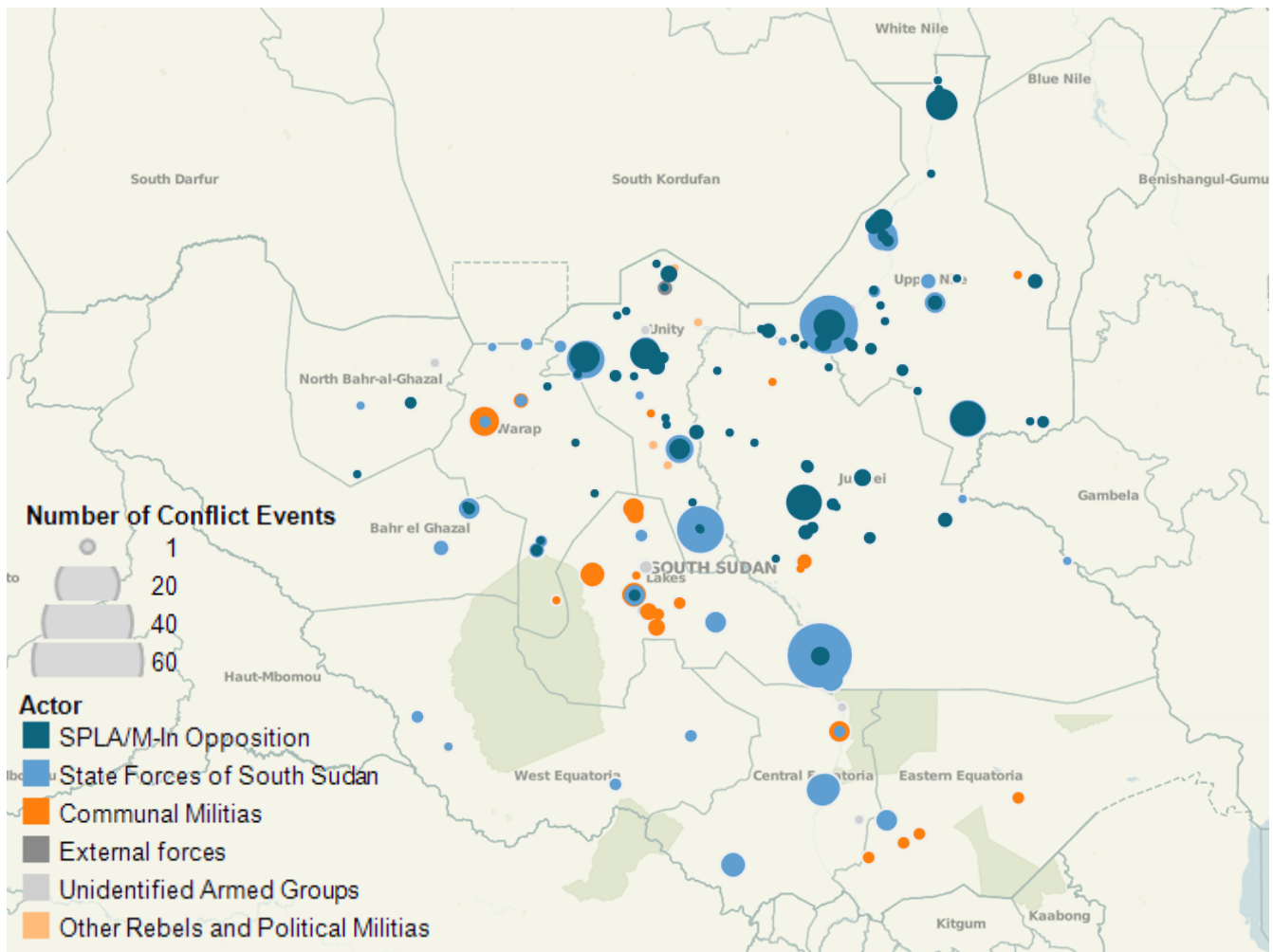

Figure 11: Conflict Events by Actor and Location, South Sudan, January - July 2014.

Uganda

In early July armed attackers reported to be members of the Bakonzo ethnic group attacked police and military positions in Kasese and Bundibugyo districts. The attacks also attacked civilians belonging to other neighbouring groups. These events have made July 2014 the most lethal month in half a decade (*see* Figure 12).

Reports indicate that the violence stems from conflicting claims of sovereignty among Uganda's traditional kingdoms in the east (**Kagenda, 28 July 2014**). However, the violence does not fit the typical profile of endemic inter-group violence, but appears to mirror patterns of insurgency. Although civilians from rival communities were among those killed, the primary targets appear to have been armed state forces. Bakonzo militants were at the centre of the Rwenzururu movement, a secessionist group which fought for independence from Uganda and the recognition of the Kingdom of Rwenzururu. Members of the Bakonzo were also prominent in the membership of the rebel National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU) (**ICG, 2012**).

Given the history of rebellion among some members of the Bakonzo community, and the large scale of the attacks, state forces are worried about the formation of a new insurgency. Amnesty appeals have led to a large number of assailants surrendering, but few weapons have been handed in, leading to concerns that a contingent of the assailants may be regrouping (**Mafaranga, 27 July 2014**).

Violence by rebel groups in Uganda has fallen dramatically in the past ten years. The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebel group was responsible for 64.2% of fatalities in 2004. In 2013, the proportion of conflict-related reported fatalities attributed to rebel groups (in that year, the M23 group engaging in cross-border assaults from DR-Congo) had fallen to 6.78%, and so far in 2014 no deaths have been directly attributed to rebel forces. Ethnic and political militias are now responsible for the majority of political violence-related reported fatalities in Uganda, indicating that the country has transitioned from outright civil war to intermittent low-level violence. However the na-
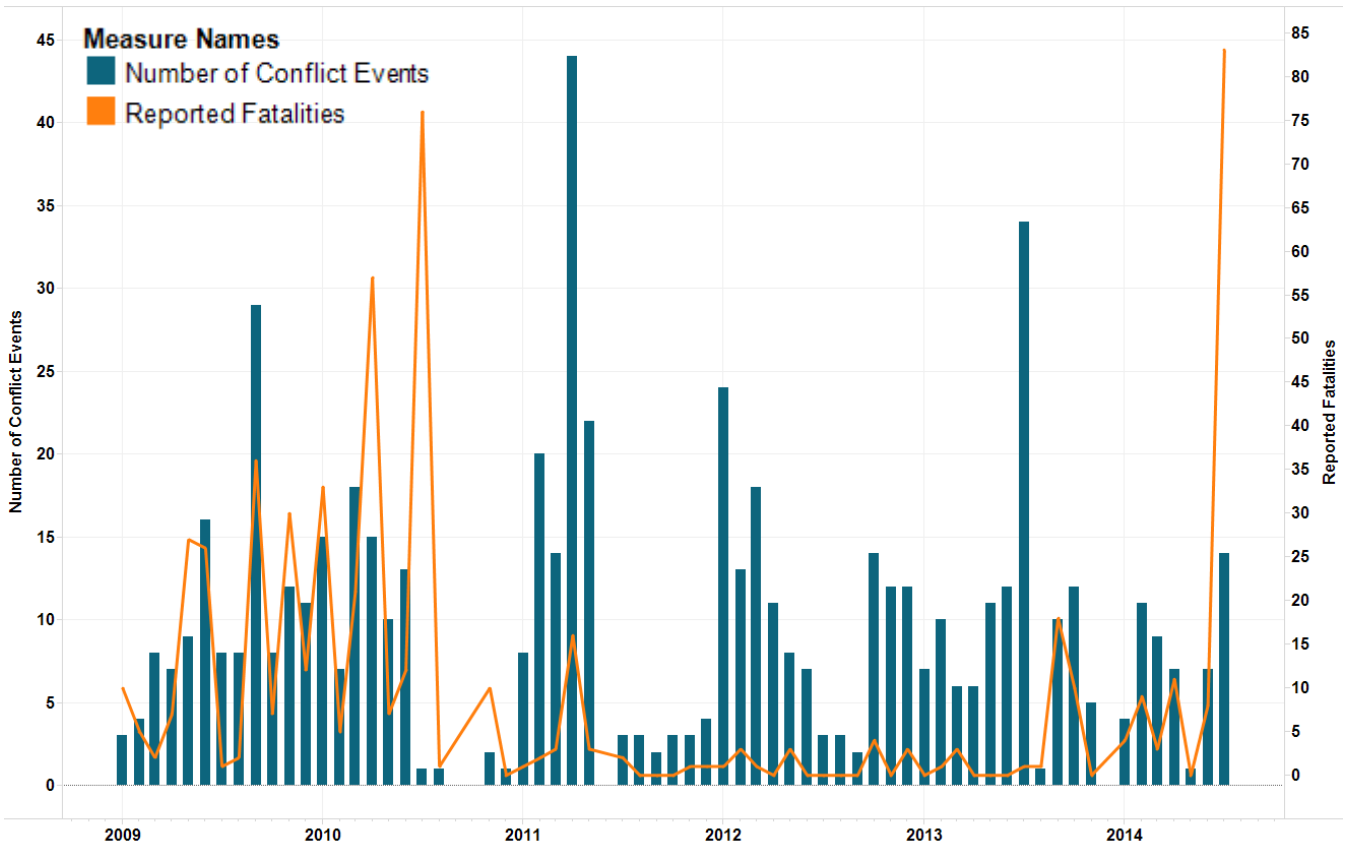

Figure 12: Conflict Events and Reported Fatalities, Uganda, by Month, January 2009 - July 2014.

Uganda

ture of the attacks in Kasese and Bundibugyo raises the possibility that this trend could reverse.

Uganda has also witnessed an increase in lethal violence against civilians over the past two years (*see* Figure 13). Responsibility for this increase does not rest on one type of actor, instead state forces, political militias and ethnic militias are all targeting civilians with more regularity. Half of the violent incidents ascribed to political militias in

2014 have targeted homosexuals, transgender citizens and women who 'dress immoderately'. This suggests that people are interpreting Museveni's culturally conservative policies as an indication that those deemed 'undesirable' can be attacked with impunity. Another possibility is that these attacks are officially sanctioned. The fact that there have been incidences of policemen taking part in the harassment and assault of homosexuals means that this option cannot be ruled out.
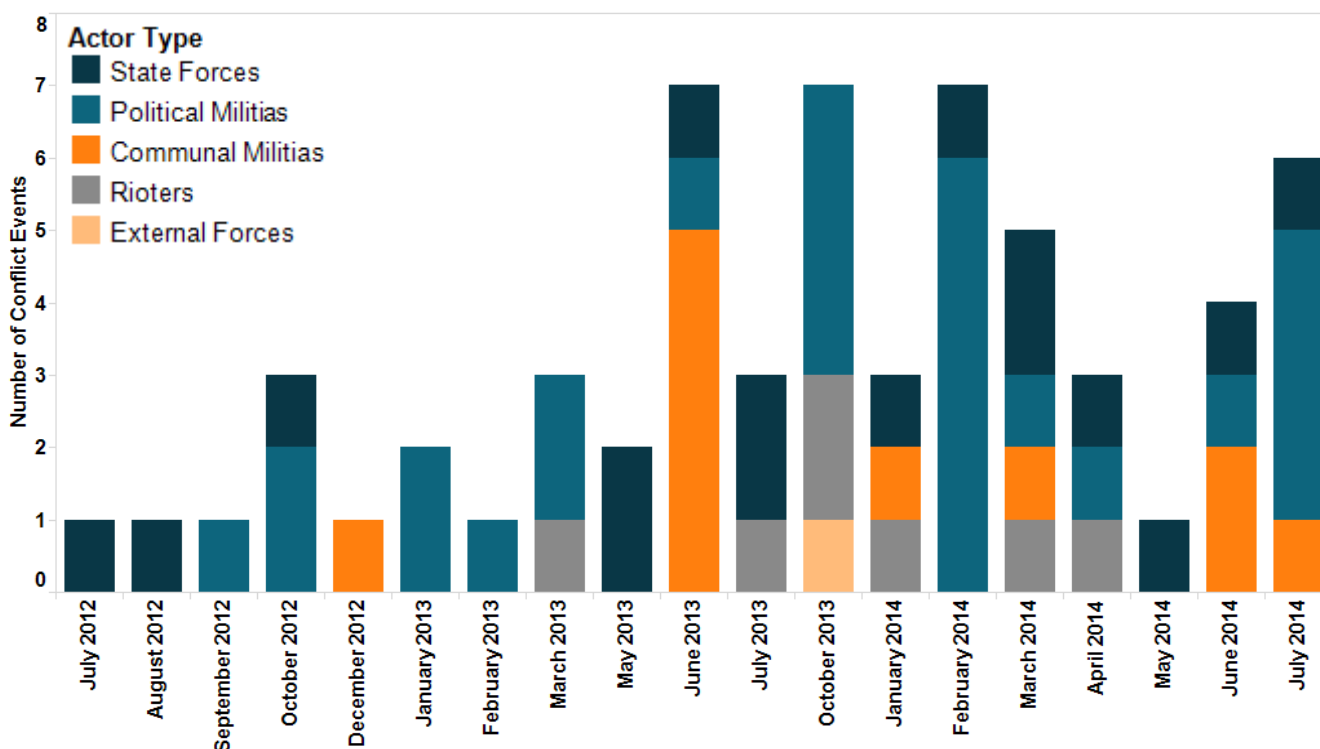

Figure 13: Violence against Civilians by Actor Type, Uganda, July 2012 - July 2014.

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.

Support

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.