ACLED
Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project

Welcome to the October 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's issue focuses on protest dynamics in **Egypt**, and the wider **North African** region in comparative perspective; the issue of service delivery protests in **South Africa;** cross-border violence by Boko Haram in **Cameroon**, the complex issue of ongoing unrest in **South Sudan**, and the changing nature of political violence and civilian targeting in **Zimbabwe**. A special focus feature explores the interrelationship of conflict and the spread of Ebola in **West Africa**.

Elsewhere on the continent, violence levels are persistent in in **Kenya** and **Somalia**, overall levels dropped in the past month in **Sudan**, **Central African Republic**, and **Democratic Republic of Congo**. By contrast, violence escalated in **Libya** while the intensity of violent conflict increased in **Nigeria**.

Decreasing
Warning
Ongoing
Escalating
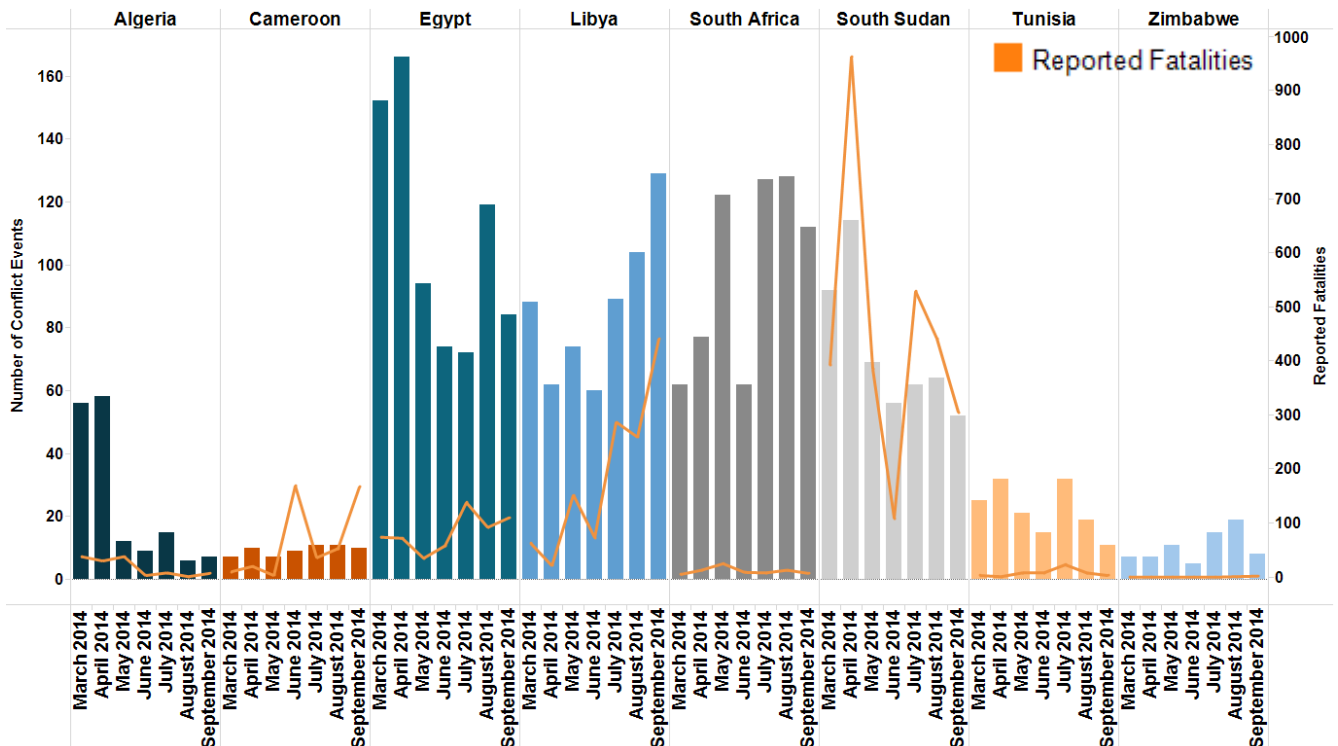
Conflict Trajectory, September 2014

Figure 1: Conflict Events and Reported Fatalities by Country, from 1st March - 27th September 2014

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Cameroon

Since the beginning of 2014, violent events in Cameroon have steadily increased, peaking in August (see Figure 2). These events have largely been clustered in Cameroon's Far North region (see Figure 3) and have been dominated by violence involving Boko Haram. But despite the rising number of violent events, fatality levels have been much less stable, with a dramatic jumps in fatalities recorded in June and September.

However, these surges in fatalities can obscure the true picture. In both cases, the totals are skewed by pairs of events in which more than 150 Boko Haram fighters were killed by Cameroonian military forces with few reported casualties of their own.

Rather than indicating increasing instability or failings by the Cameroonian military, the high fatality figures in both June and September can be seen to represent the response (in terms of casualties inflicted) of Cameroon's military to multiple Boko Haram incursions, which have worryingly increased since the first half of 2014 (see Figure 4).

But although the number of Boko Haram attacks has increased, the lower casualty figures resulting from these attacks show that the deployment of Cameroonian forces to the Far North (**BBC News, May 27, 2014**) has had a serious impact on Boko Haram's operational effectiveness.

A notable example of the impact of Cameroon's deployment to the Far North includes their thwarting of numerous attempted incursions by Boko Haram fighters near Fotokol. Fotokol lies just across the border from Gamboru in Nigeria which was captured by Boko Haram fighters after a lengthy battle with Nigerian forces, leading to the widely publicized retreat of 500 Nigerian soldiers into Cameroon in late August (**Reuters, August 26, 2014**). Clashes around the town of Fotokol were responsible for more than 90% of all casualties between August-September (see Figure 4), although similar fighting also occurred further south in response to attempts by Boko Haram fighters to take control of border villages.

Another important aspect of the analysis of fatalities in Cameroon is the division between battle deaths (occurring
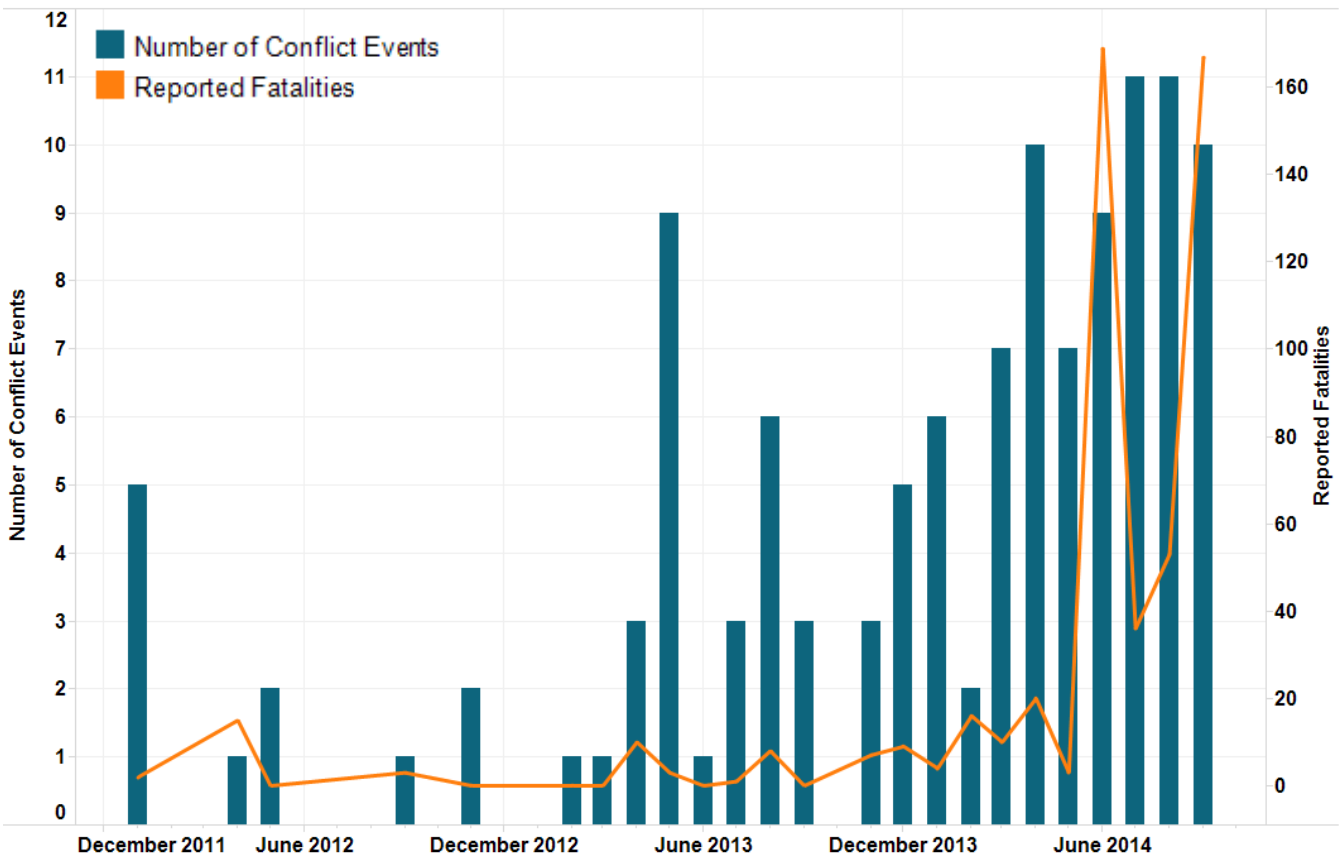

Figure 2: Conflict Events and Fatalities in Cameroon, from December 2011 -September 2014

Cameroon

mainly between the Cameroonian security forces and Boko Haram) and deaths of civilians. Civilian deaths have risen since June, with Boko Haram's attack on Kolofata in July (Camer.be, August 12, 2014) and a more recent attack in Tourou in September (Camer.be, September 24, 2014) being notable examples of violence against civilians. Nevertheless, reports indicate that the vast majority of reported battle deaths are those of Boko Haram fighters. This suggests the increasing capacity of the Cameroonian military responding to this threat.

In addition to the impact of the Cameroonian military directly, Boko Haram is also facing increased pressure from the Nigerian military in Borno State (which neighbours Cameroon's Far North) where gains have recently been made against Boko Haram following setbacks over the past few months (CNN World, September 25, 2014). While the group's activities in Nigeria in the past few months have been heavily dominated by violence against civilians, September saw a marked reversal of this trend, with over half of all events attributed to Boko Haram involving engagement with the military (compared to just under one-third between January and August). Combined, the two-fronted pressure on the group may have a significant effect in coming weeks.
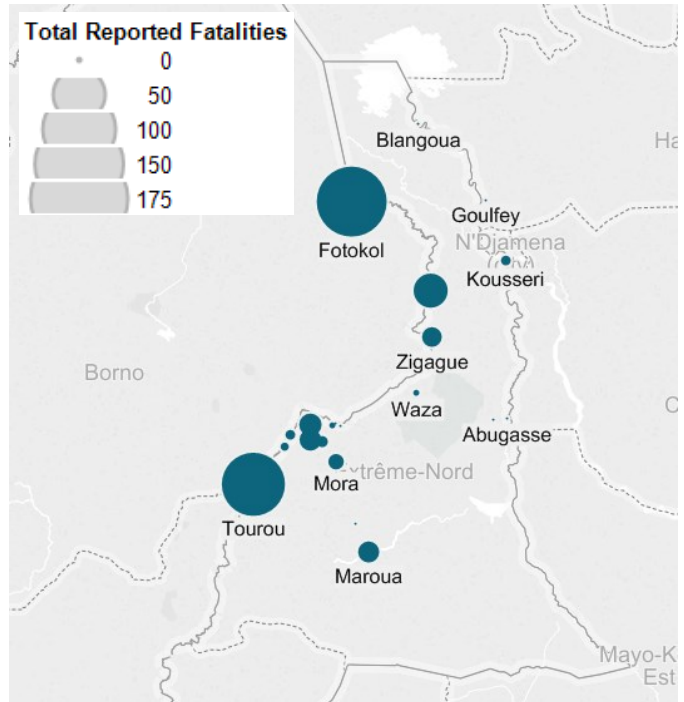

Figure 3: Map of Reported Fatalities by Location in Far North Cameroon, from January to September 2014
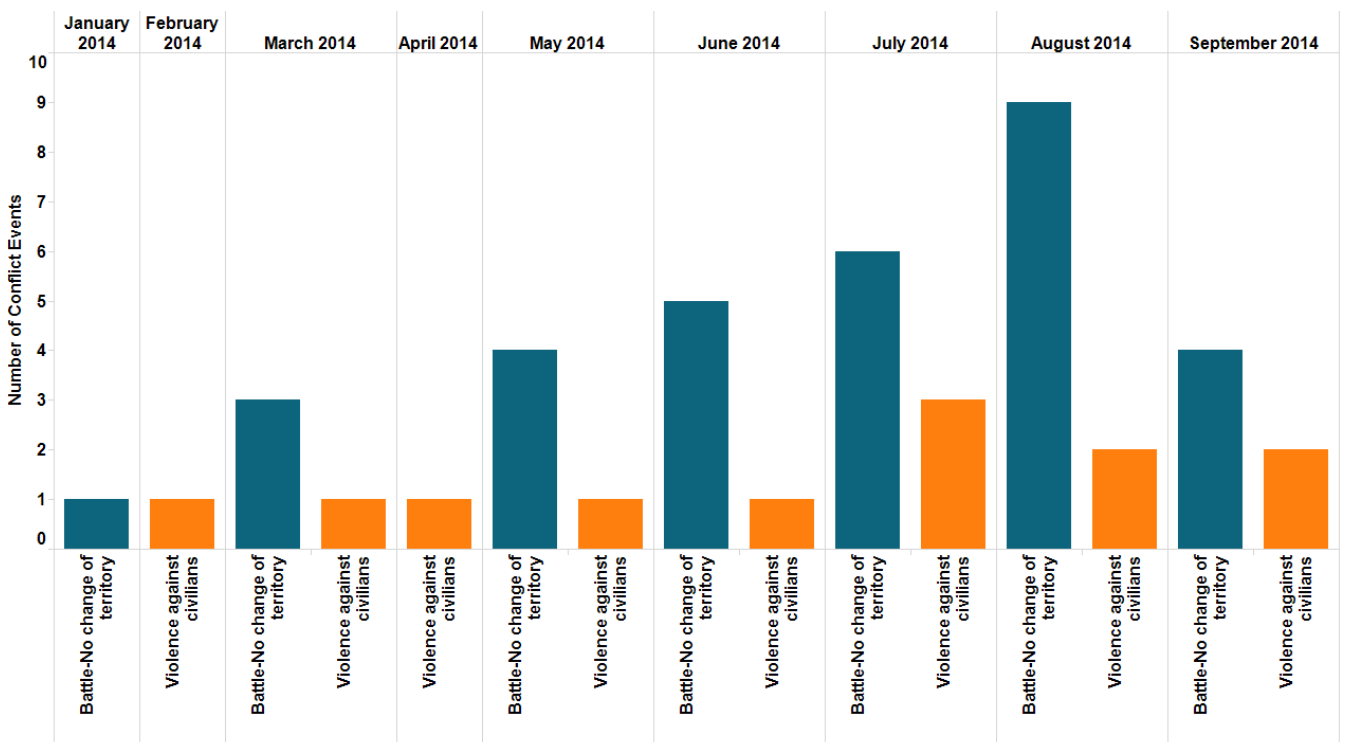

Figure 4: Conflict Events Attributed to Boko Haram in Cameroon, January—September 2014

Egypt

After a spike in riots and protest events in Egypt in July 2013, both the frequency and intensity has gradually declined over the succeeding year, and continued to fall last month (see Figure 5). One explanation for this drop is the increasing barriers to collective action and the organisation of social movements since the Muslim Brotherhood was designated a 'terrorist organisation' by the Egyptian government in December 2013. This has led to police forces conducting routine drag-net arrests and detaining Muslim Brotherhood members, while heavy prison sentences have been given to political activists who have violated its terms. This has applied pressure to the coordination of collective action nationwide with a decline in the frequency of demonstrations.

Despite this decline in absolute incidence of riots and protests, they still comprised almost 60% of all political conflict events in Egypt in Q3 of 2014, indicating that non-state actors continue to express grievances articulated through either peaceful or low-level social movements as opposed to concerted armed efforts. This is in stark contrast to other regional players in North Africa, for example in Libya, where the most common mode of collective ac-

tion since 2011 has entailed the mobilisation of coercive force in battles (see Figure 6).

Although a 74% decrease in the overall number of riots/protests from Q3 of 2013 to Q3 of 2014 suggests that the introduction of key state policies may have had significant implications for the coordination or endurance of demonstrations and social protest, they have not set in motion a significant shift in tactics by actors. This could be because of a lack of political cohesion and direction with which to channel more violent responses, or it may suggest that the government's concessionary governance technique, that allow for limited political participation, prevent further instability from escalating.

An exception to this, however, is the dynamics of the Muslim Brotherhood. Peaceful protests involving the Muslim Brotherhood decreased from 2013 to 2014. Violent forms of Muslim Brotherhood collective action also initially fell from 2013 to 2014 but riots saw a slight resurgence in Q3 of 2014 (see Figure 7). This could indicate that group members felt less empowered with a lesser degree of agency in affecting social change. The fact that there were marginally more riots involving the Muslim Brotherhood
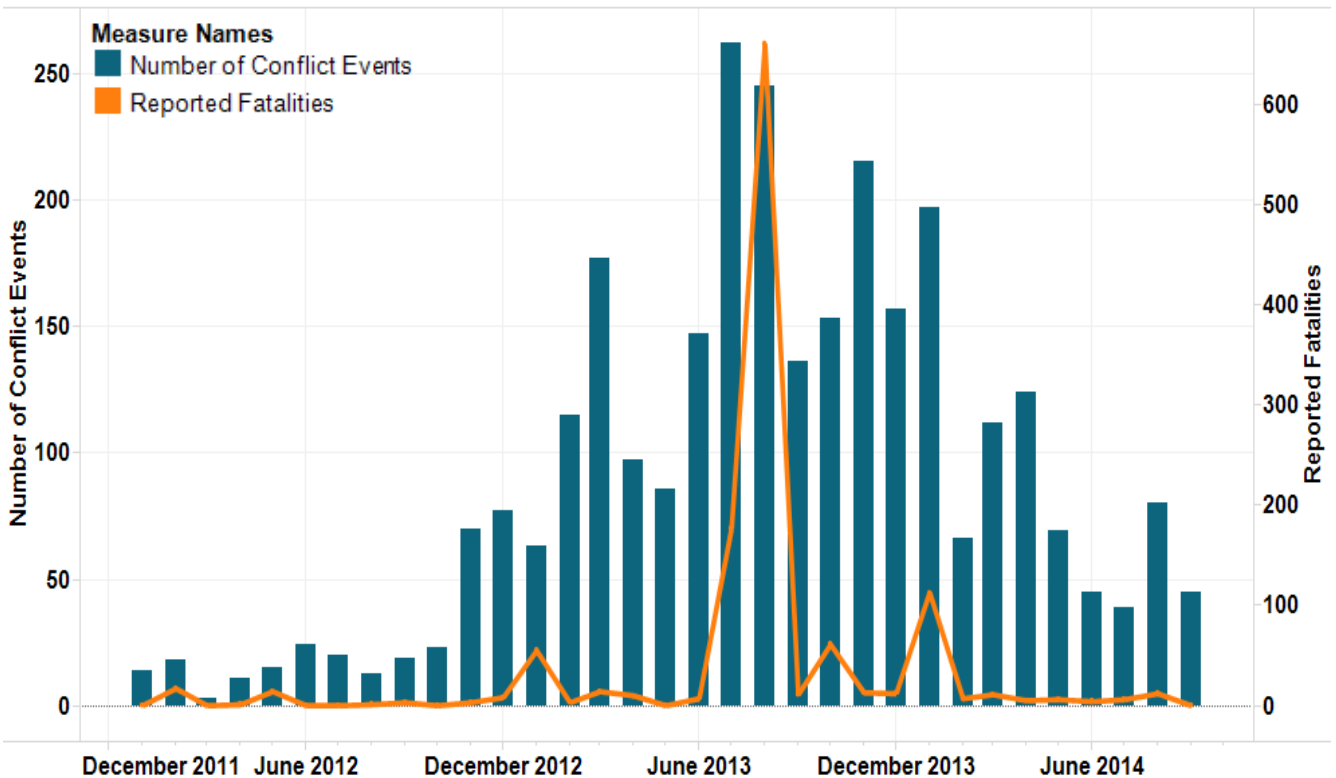

Figure 5: Riots and Protest Events and Associated Reported Fatalities by in Egypt from 2011-September 2014
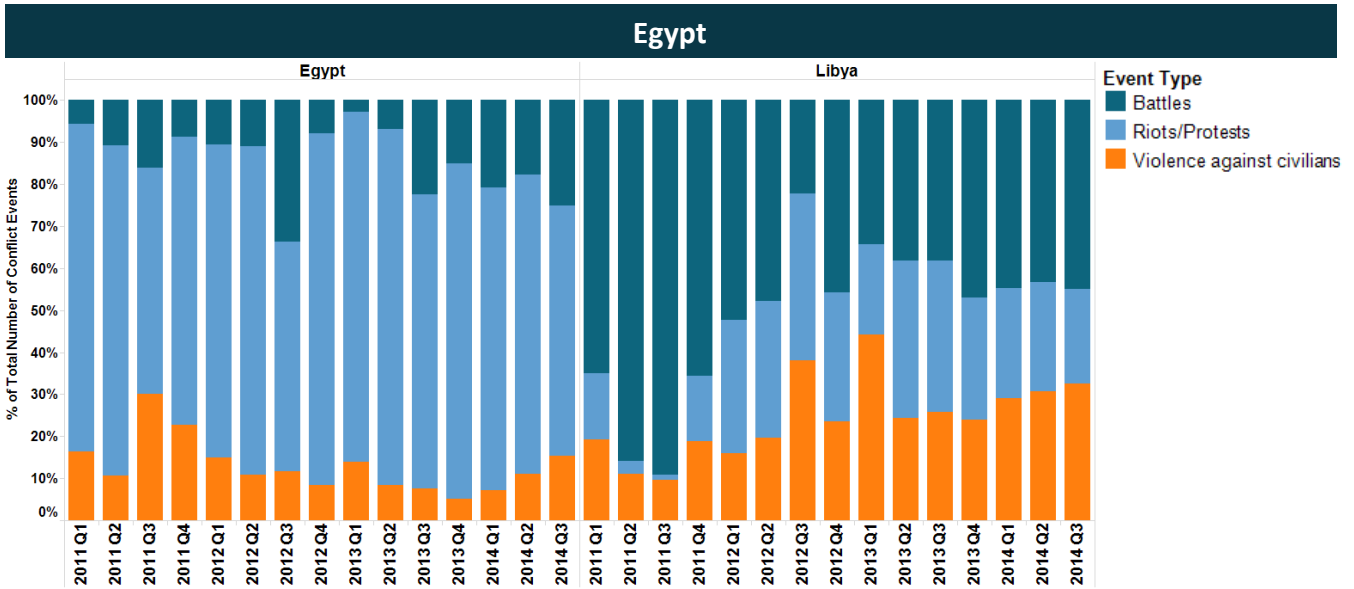
Egypt

Figure 6: Percentage of Conflict Events by Type, by Quarter in Egypt & Libya, from 2011-2014

compared to peaceful protest events in 2014 and that state force engagement remained relatively constant would suggest that restrictions on demonstrations and assembly may also have catalysed greater violent action by demonstrators themselves as a sign of growing frustration at state control. This makes for an interesting case when assessing the actions of the Egyptian government in

designating the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist group in December 2013. An analysis of the data suggests that in 2013 there were fewer rioters than protesters affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood, and by reducing the scope of civic action groups, the Egyptian government may have spurred more uncoordinated violent acts of civil disobedience.
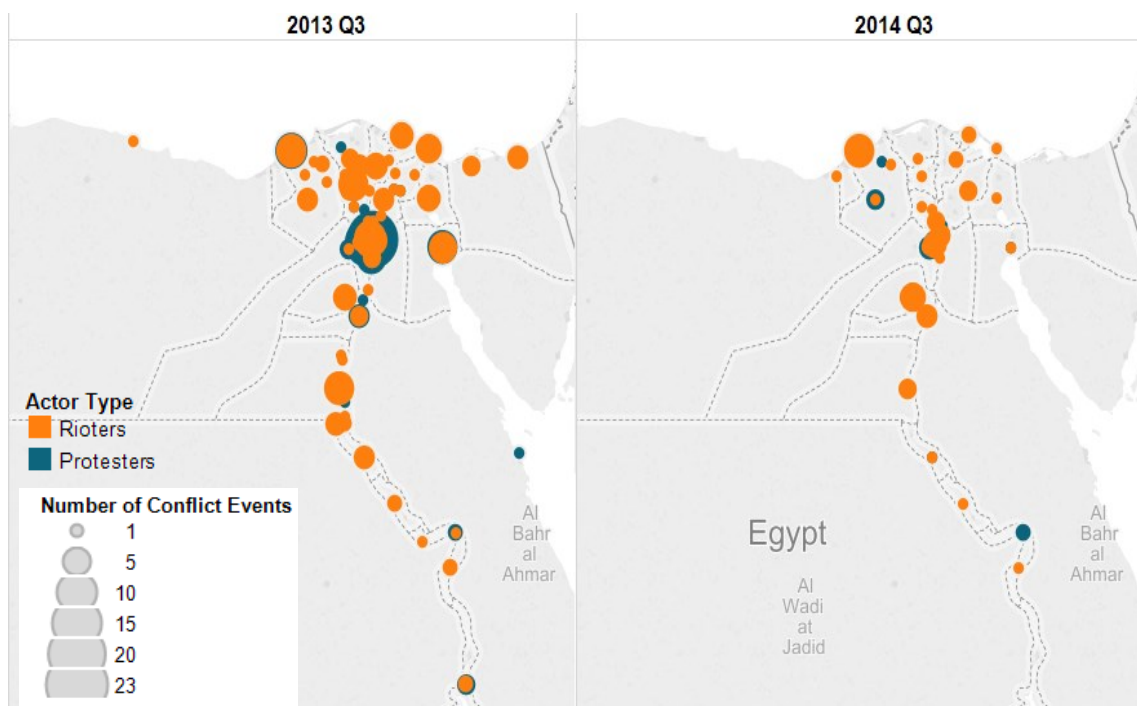

Figure 7: Conflict Events by Rioters or Protesters, by Quarter, by Location, in Egypt, 2013-2014

North Africa

In 2014 to date, North Africa was the third most active region for battle-related events and fatalities on the African continent accounting for 711 recorded battles and roughly 2295 related casualties (see Figure 9). Battles increased across North Africa by 146% from 2012 to 2014, with overall numbers of battles higher than in 2011 which saw NATO intervention in Libya.

As would be expected from recent instability in the two countries, Egypt and Libya host the majority of clashes between armed groups in 2014, with Tunisia the third most violent after grappling with a remote and violent Islamist insurgency in the Chaambi mountains area of Kasserine. Despite Algeria accounting for fewer overall battles than Tunisia, the intensity of engagements was much higher with over double the amount of battle-related deaths in 2014 (see Figure 8).

Across the region, political and communal militia activity has been rising since 2008, and is currently at significantly higher levels than during the tumultuous 2011 Arab Spring period (see Figure 10).

This is largely due to the complex web of power-seeking militias in Libya that have been able to emerge through porous national borders and the proliferation of weapons in the fallout of the Gaddafi regime that continue to edge Libya closer to civil war. However, attacks targeting military bodies have continued to plague the security concerns of Algeria, Egypt, Libya and Tunisia.

As opposed to South Sudan, where rising militia group fighting has been coupled with a reduction in government forces involvement (ACLED Crisis Blog, 26 September 2014), contestation in Libya between different ethnic militia factions has not served to dampen fighting between state forces and political militias. Militia attacks often employ crude tactics including home-made bombings, IEDs,
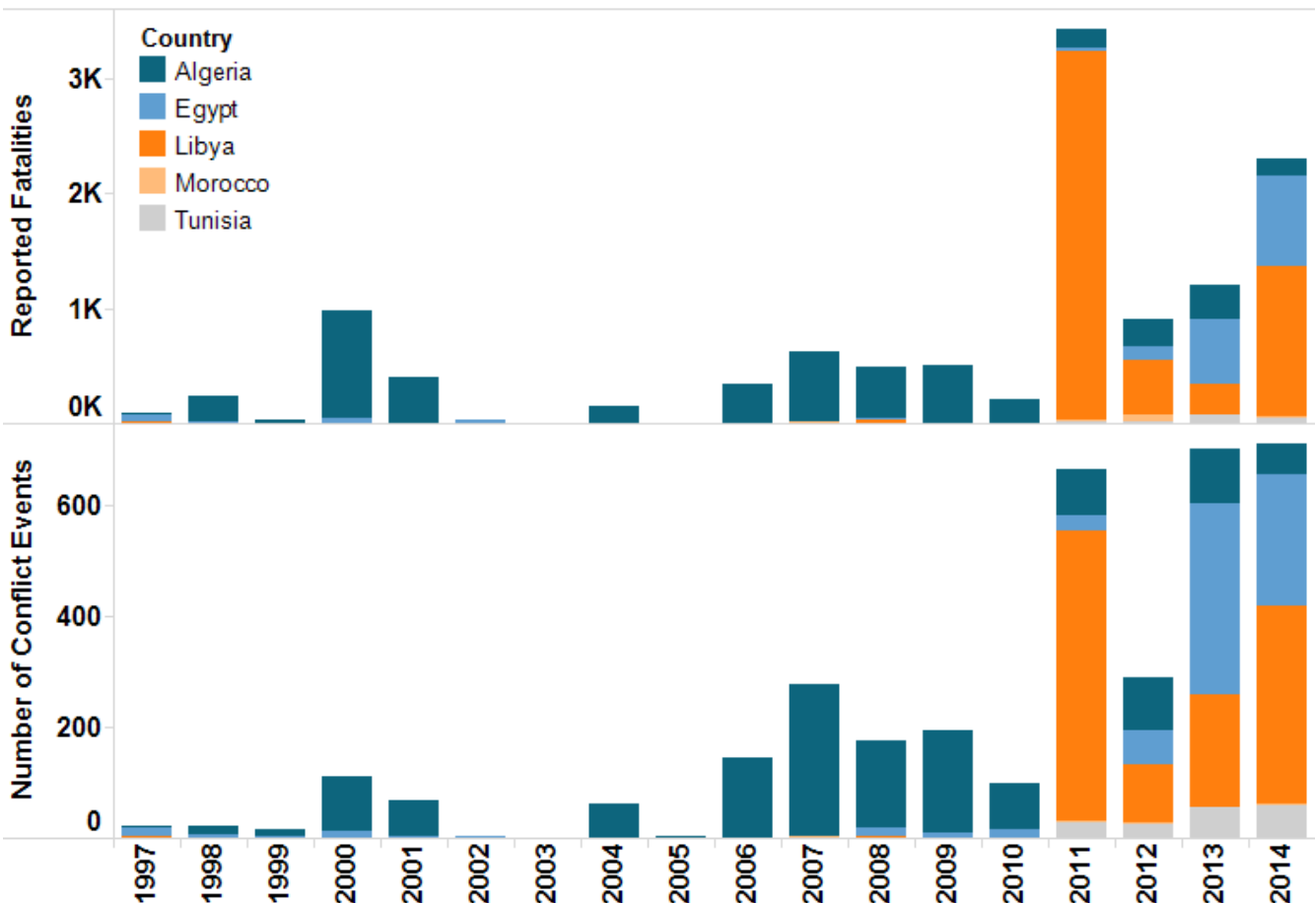

Figure 8: Number of Battles and Reported Fatalities in North Africa, 1997-September 2014

North Africa

targeting of military vehicles and sporadic ambushes. Over the past two weeks in Benghazi, an unprecedented wave of assassinations of security officers was dubbed 'Benghazi's bloody Friday' (**Libya Herald, 20 September 2014**).

Even in Tunisia, which adopted a progressive constitution in January 2014 and "has few of the tribal or religious cleavages of its neighbours" (**New York Times, 25 September 2014**) incendiary attacks against national forces are the dominant tactic by non-state actors.

As Tunisia's October 26 elections grow closer, government response to growing militancy could have interesting outcomes towards democratic reform. After Prime Minister Mehdi Jomma ordered the suspension of 157 non-governmental religious groups, on indictments of 'terrorism' links (**Daily Star, 30 September 2014**) reactionary police force in civil society could restrict civil liberties, thus a delicate response is required.
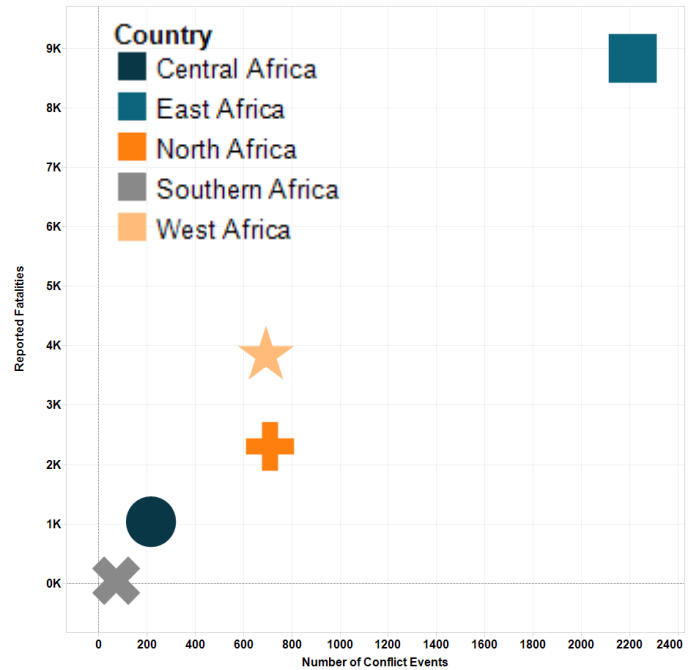

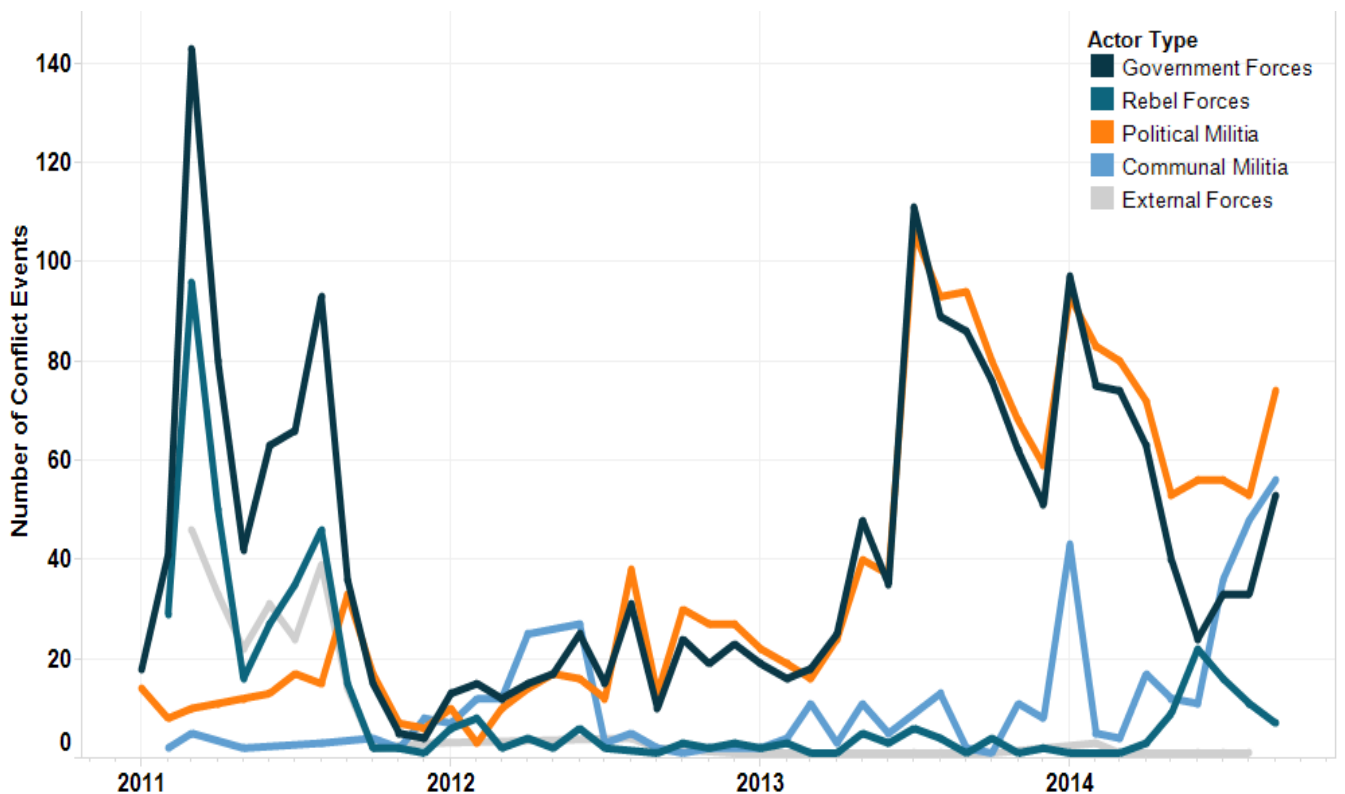**Figure 9: Number of Battle Events and Reported Fatalities by Region, 2010-September 2014**

Figure 10: Conflict Events by Actor Type in North Africa, from January 2011 - September 2014

South Africa

Figure 11 shows that South Africa has witnessed a steady drop in the total number of events since mid-2014 with the total number of conflict events and reported fatalities at their lowest levels since Spring.

In spite of this short-term reduction in violence, the South African Police Service (SAPS) is currently trying to expand its budget in public order policing due to ongoing issue of service delivery protests (**Hartley, 4 September 2014**). These demonstrations are organised by residents to protests against what is seen as the insufficient provision of basic necessities such as electricity or water by the authorities. Figure 12 shows that service delivery protests are not new in themselves and have been a prominent cause of demonstrations since the beginning of 2012.

What has changed is the number of service delivery demonstrations that have included violence. Figure 13 shows that while the number of demonstrations involving peaceful protesters has remained relatively static since 2013, the number of demonstrations involving rioters has experienced dramatic spikes and has generally outstripped the number of peaceful protests month-on-month.
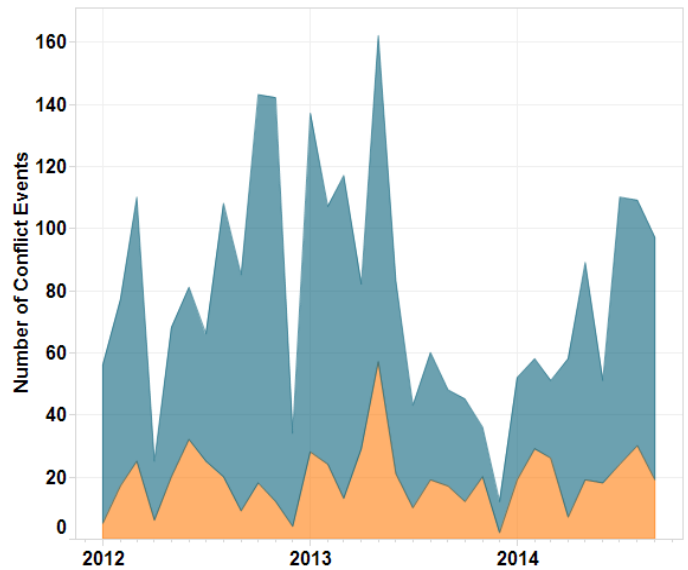

Figure 12: Riots and Protests by Reported Cause in South Africa, from January 2010-September 2014
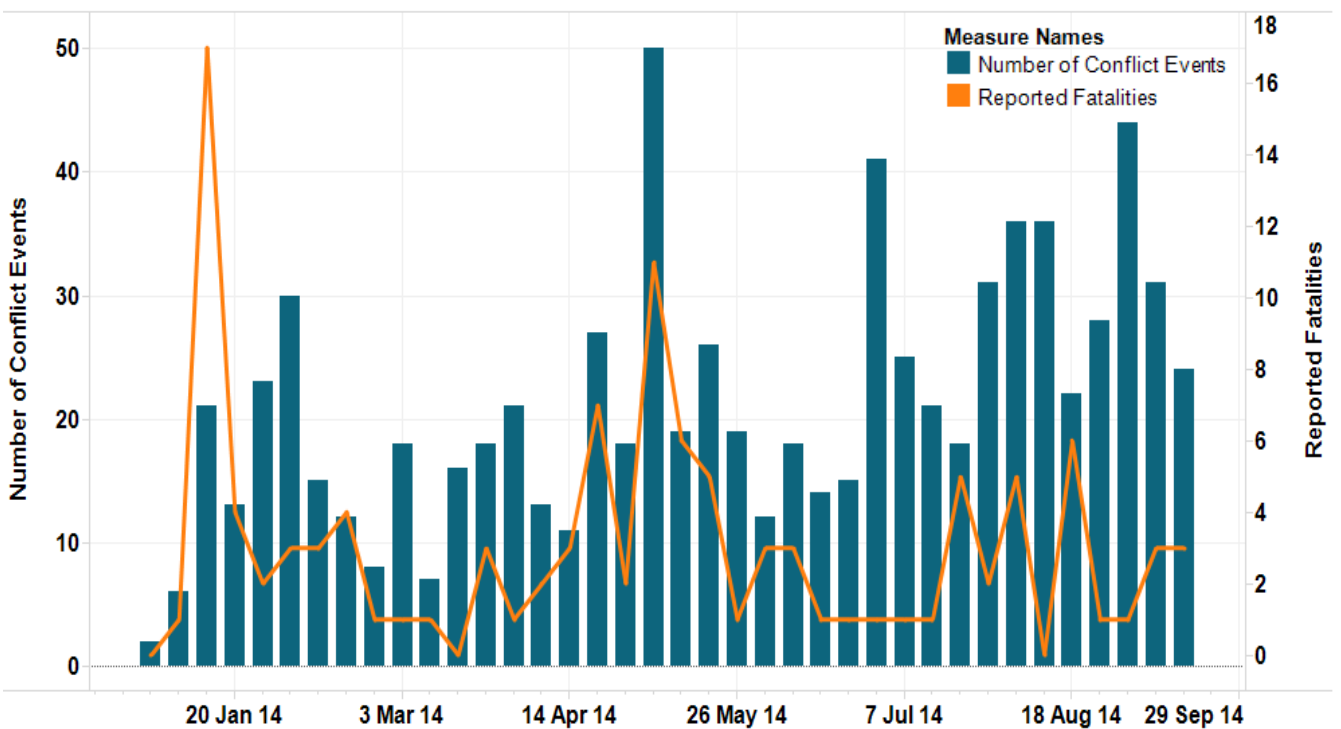

Figure 11: Number of Conflict Events and Reported Fatalities in South Africa, from 1st January 2014-27 September 2014

South Africa

This rise in violent demonstrations has resulted in rioters becoming an increasing danger to South African civilians. Figure 14 shows that rioters have gone from being responsible for 1.45% of events involving violence against civilians in 2012 to perpetrating 20.42% of all violence against civilians to date this year.

There have been concerns about the 'remilitarisation' of the SAPS with the service now employing live rounds and more direct tactics when facing demonstrators (**Bruce, 2012**). The deadly use of force by the police against the Marikana strikers is perhaps the most notorious example of the SAPS' tactics of imposing order. Nevertheless, the both the absolute and relative levels of state forces' violence against civilians has decreased steadily since 2012. This may be in part due to the negative focus the Marikana violence placed on the ANC and SAPS both domestically and internationally.

Interestingly, protests and riots which are publically attributed to grievances over service delivery may in fact be driven by other factors. The number of dwellings with sanitation, electricity and water has steadily increased in tandem with the number of violent 'service delivery' demonstrations (**Dodds, 7 September 2014**). One interpretation is that political interests purposely stoke discontent. Protests and riots can force resignations by local politicians, thus opening the way for by-elections for new

councillors and providing the opportunity for protest organisers to be absorbed into a position of power (Von Holdt, 2013). This theory will be put to the test in the run up to the 2016 municipal elections.
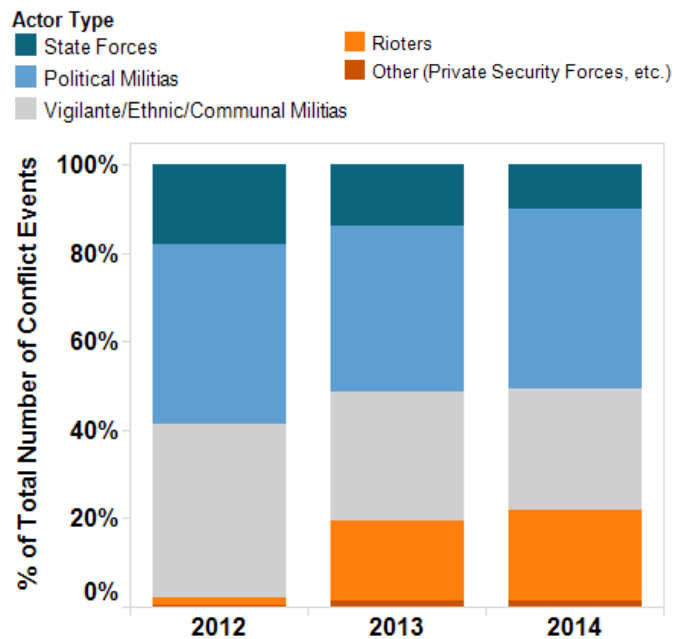

Figure 14: Violence against Civilians by Actor in South Africa, from 2012-2014
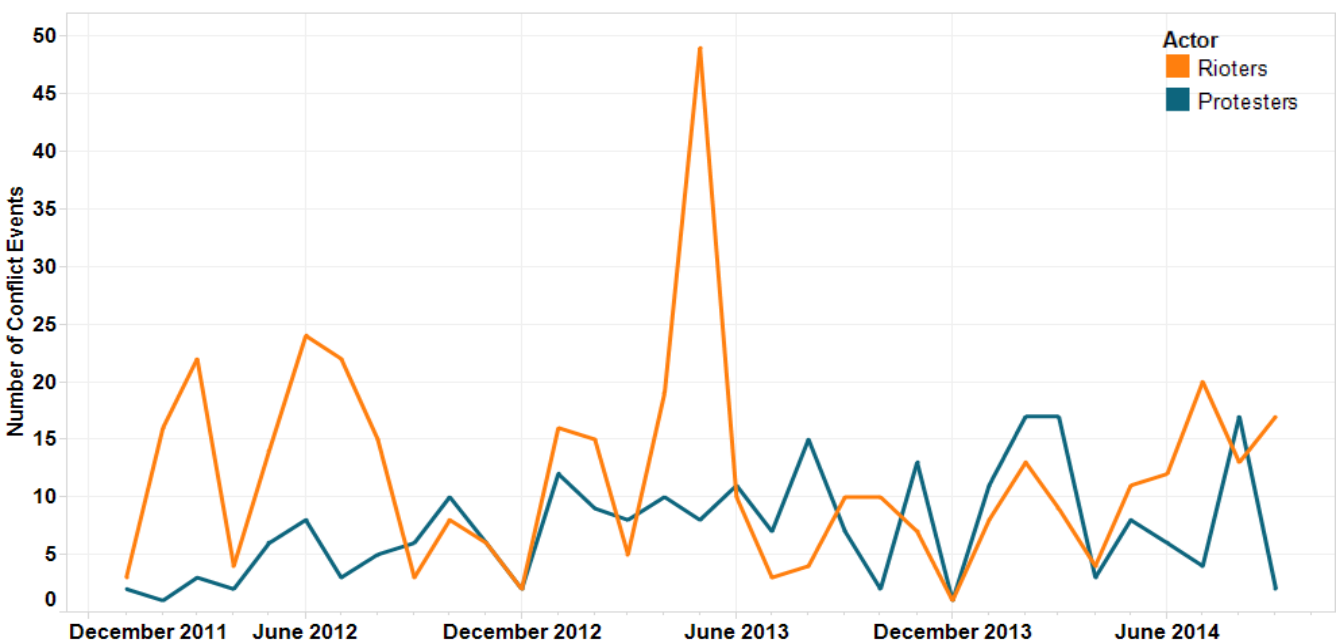

Figure 13: Demonstrations by Actor in South Africa, from January 2010-September 2014

South Sudan

Despite the current sixth round of peace talks between president Salva Kiir and SPLA/M-In Opposition leader and former vice-president Riek Machar, conflict in South Sudan continues. Since the ceasefire agreement between the two in May, the number of conflict events involving the government and the SPLA/M-IO has not significantly decreased. Furthermore, the total number of fatalities resulting from these battles spiked in July and August (see Figure 15).

In this latest round of peace talks focused on mapping out details of the Transitional Government on National Unity (TGONU) and drafting a permanent constitution (**VOA News, 22 September 2014**), the mediator (the Intergovernmental Authority on Development [IGAD]) has moved away from its previous position in which it had endorsed president Kiir as the head of state and of the TGONU, as this is rejected by all stakeholders other than the government. IGAD now allows the two main parties (along with some other stakeholders) to negotiate a power-sharing formula between the president and prime minister.

The SPLA/M-IO wants the prime minister to be their nominee and to become the head of government and security without having to seek approval from president Kiir, and also to be eligible to run for public office in elections. The parties are continuing discussions (**Sudan Tribune, 24 September**

tember 2014), having agreed to a 45-day deadline to set up a transitional government last month (the deadline would take them into the beginning of October) (**VOA News, 22 September 2014**), though peace talks have seen delays resulting from both disagreements over the format of talks (**Sudan Tribune, 18 September 2014**), as well as continued fighting in Upper Nile state (**Nuba Reports, 20 September 2014**).

Since the cease-fire in late May, fighting between the government and SPLA/M-IO has, in large part, continued to take place in Jonglei, Unity, and Upper Nile states; however, fighting is exclusive to Upper Nile state as of September (Figure 16). Upper Nile state has approximately 80% of South Sudan's oil production, and fighting between the two groups continues to take place around oil fields such as Paloch (**Nuba Reports, 20 September 2014**). The SPLA/M-IO "threaten government control of the Upper Nile oil fields, which would leave the Government of the Republic of South Sudan (GRSS) with little revenue to pay its beleaguered army" (**Human Security Baseline, 28 April 2014**). Meanwhile, citizens of towns such as Renk (situated near oil fields, including Paloch) are fleeing their homes in order to escape fighting (**VOA News, 22 September 2014**).

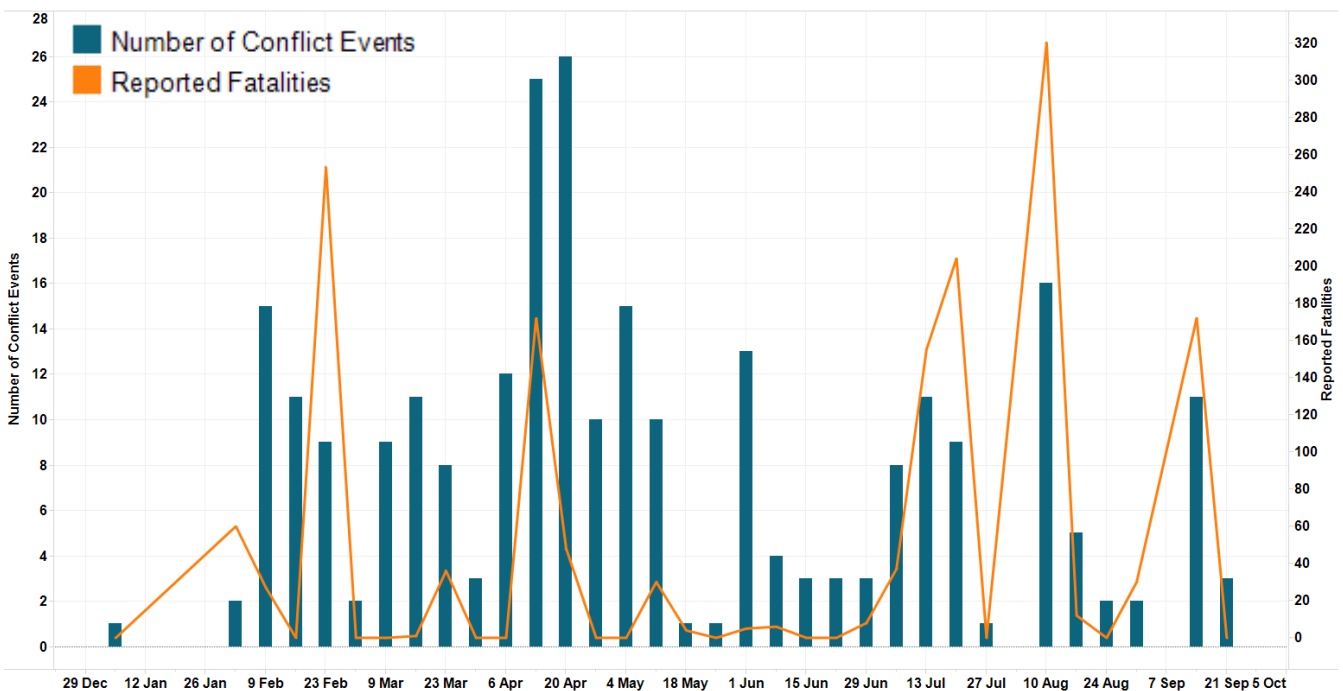Despite reports from media sources, conflict in South Sudan is not comprised solely of fighting between government

Figure 15: Number of Conflict Events and Reported Fatalities by Government Forces vs SPLA/M-IO in South Sudan, from January 2014-September 2014

South Sudan

and rebel (SPLA/M-IO) forces. Conflict between the main two parties has made up the majority of battles in South Sudan, yet about half of the recent battles involve communal and ethnic militias. Furthermore, most of the reported violence against civilians occurs at the hands of these militias.

While fighting involving these militias is present across the country, it is concentrated almost exclusively in Lakes state in September. Lakes state is experiencing the highest rate of conflict in 2014, where the majority of the violence centers on common cattle-raiding: "cattle herders in peaceful areas are buying guns amid fears that the conflict will spread to their homes. Others are exploiting the insecurity to settle old scores and steal millions of dollars of cows. Promises by the government to deliver justice are not being honoured. Consequently, some herders may take matters into their own hands," (**The Guardian, 11 March 2014**).

The majority of conflict stemming from cattle (both cattle-raiding as well as revenge for raids) occurs at the hands of ethnic militias; this figure is higher than it was during this

time last year, suggesting that the presence of other conflict in the region may be creating local political and security vacuums and resultant competition.

Across the state, communal/ethnic militias have continued high rates of violent activity in recent months, yet conflict is intermittent and sporadic. Only the Pakam communal militia and the Rup Dinka ethnic militia have participated in reported violent events during more than one calendar month since June 2014.

During these last four months, political militias have also sustained their campaigns of violence. While unidentified armed groups perpetrate most violence by this type of actor, the Mabanese Defense Forces are also active, targeting defecting Nuer soldiers as well as ethnic Nuer civilians (**Reliefweb, 6 August 2014**). Though earlier this year battles between government forces and communal/ethnic militias, as well the SPLA/M-IO and communal/ ethnic militias were common, their occurrence has decreased in recent months. Intra-ethnic militia conflict is on the rise since August; these conflicts are comprised of localized killings and cattle-raiding.
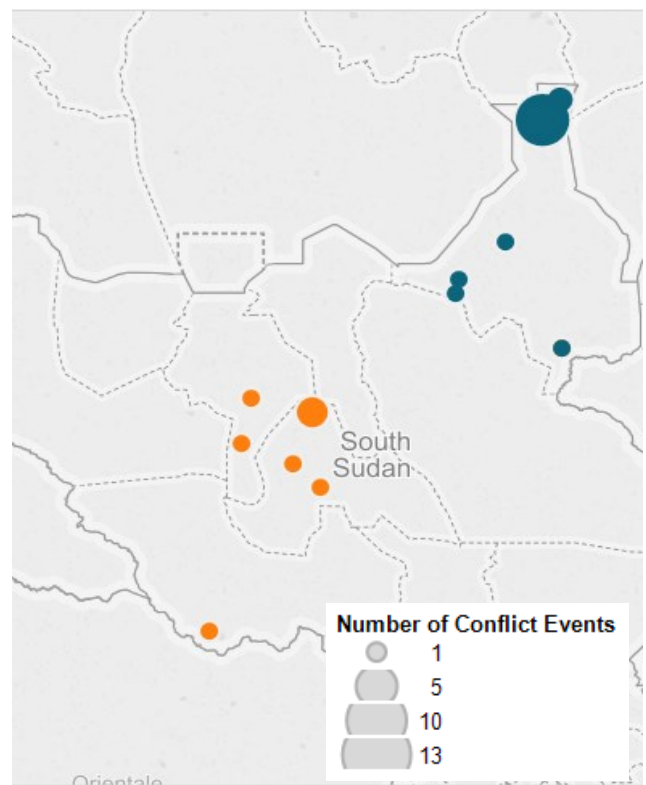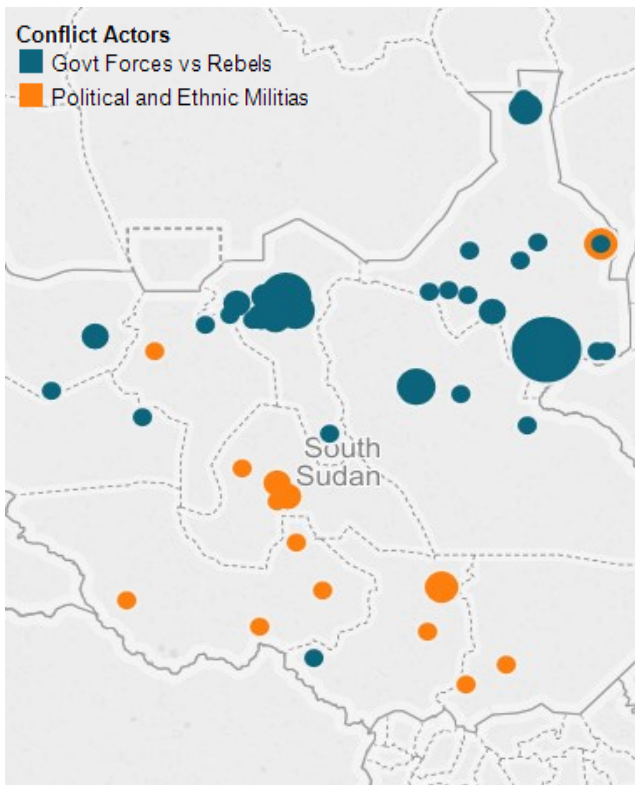

Figure 16: Battles between Government Forces vs SPLA/M-IO and those Involving Political and Ethnic Militias in South Sudan, from June 2014 to September 2014 (Left) and September 2014 Alone (Right)

Zimbabwe

The number of conflict events in Zimbabwe decreased in the past month and overall conflict has remained low since 2009 (see Figure 17). Since early 2010, no single month has witnessed more than 5 reported fatalities or 50 discrete conflict events.

This is especially surprising given that the run up to the July 2013 general election saw the ruling Zimbabwean African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) use combative and charged rhetoric. Threats by senior figures, such as Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veteran's leader Jabulani Sibanda who warned that those who defy ZANU-PF should 'prepare for death,' stoked fears that there could be a repeat of the violence that accompanied the 2008 elections (Booysen, 2014). Nevertheless, Figure 17 shows that there was not a noticeable increase any type of conflict event in July 2013.

This decline is due in part to the reduced role of ZANU-PF militias and cadres in violent attacks on civilians. Figure 18 shows that in 2008, factions and organisations affiliated with ZANU-PF were responsible for over 80% of violent events carried out against civilians, whereas in 2014 the proportion is 15.4%.

Conversely, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) is now the most active single, identified perpetrator of violence against civilians. This shift is tempered by the fact that the aggregate level of violence by political militias has decreased drastically, from 716 individual events in 2008 to just 26 events in 2014 thus far. Even though the MDC is responsible for a much higher percentage of violent attacks on civilians, the number of individual incidents has not risen significantly.

This dramatic shift could be due to the fact that ZANU-PF no longer feels threatened by the opposition and no long feels compelled to use violence as a coercive tool to retain power. Though fraud and intimidation by ZANU-PF was acknowledged to have occurred during the 2013 elections, ZANU-PF's dramatic win in traditional MDC strongholds such as Masvingo and Matebeleland was partly due to the disillusionment many felt with the MDC (Booysen, 2014; **Gumbo, 8 August 2013**).

In contrast, the MDC's position is increasingly precarious. In addition to losing numerous seats to ZANU-PF in the election, the party has been beset by factionalism. Senior MDC figures Tendai Biti and Elton Mangoma attempted to oust Tsvangirai in the aftermath of the MDC's electoral defeat. The resulting fracturing of the party has resulted in MDC cadres attacking the supporters and members of rival factions.

Furthermore, the splitting of the party has opened up vacancies in top positions causing rifts and sometimes vio-
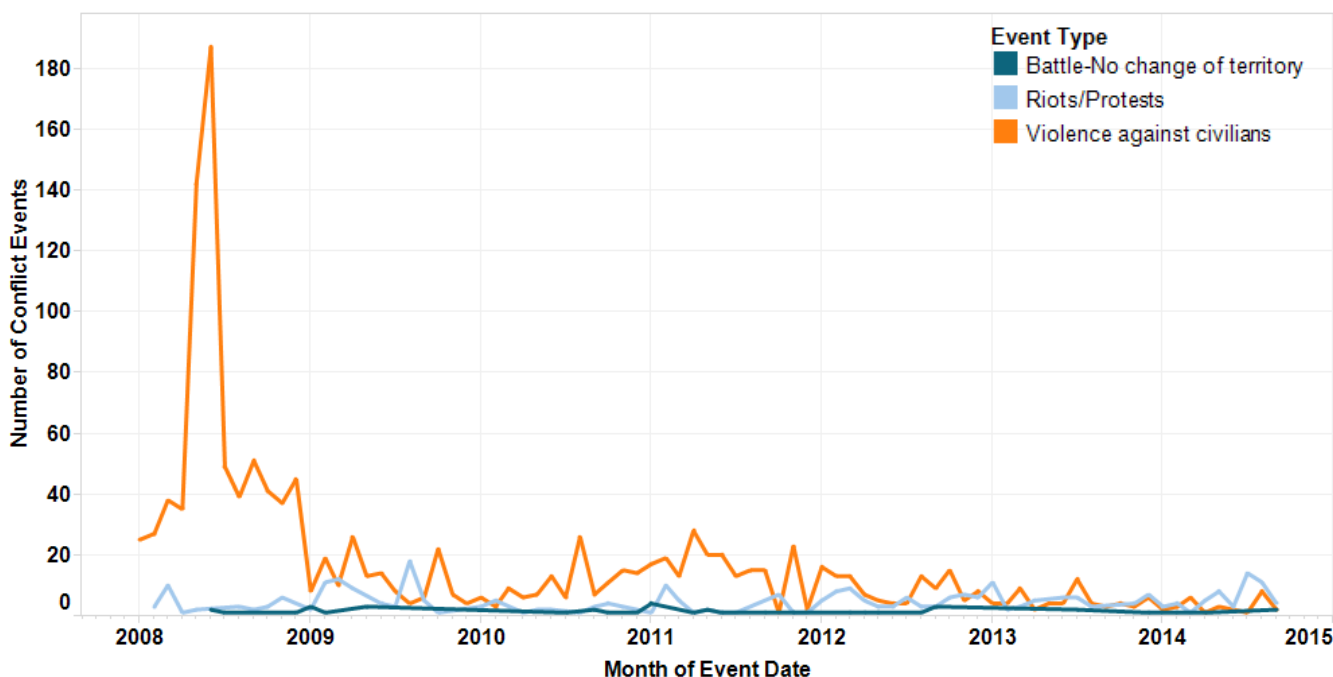

Figure 17: Conflict Events by Type in Zimbabwe, from January 2008-September 2014

Zimbabwe

lence within the factions themselves (**Ncube, 23 September 2014**). In spite of the massive decrease in ZANU-PF violence against political opposition, statistically, as Figure 19 shows, civilians associated with the various factions within the MDC still face the greatest risk of violence.

ZANU-PF is currently suffering from its own issues with factionalism. The question of who will succeed the 90-year-old Mugabe has driven many politicians and members into one of two camps: one backing current Vice President Joyce Mujuru and the other supporting Justice Minister Emmerson Mnangagwa. The supporters of these factions clashed in 2012 but have subsequently been more peaceful (**ACLED Conflict Trends, September 2012; June 2012**).

This is likely due to Mugabe's concerted efforts to stonewall the issue of succession. The President has threatened to evict any member of ZANU-PF found guilty of fostering factionalism (**Africa Confidential, 12 September 2014**). Unlike Tsvangirai, Mugabe's authority over the factions within his party seems to be strong enough to prevent intra-ZANU-PF competition from spilling into violence at present.
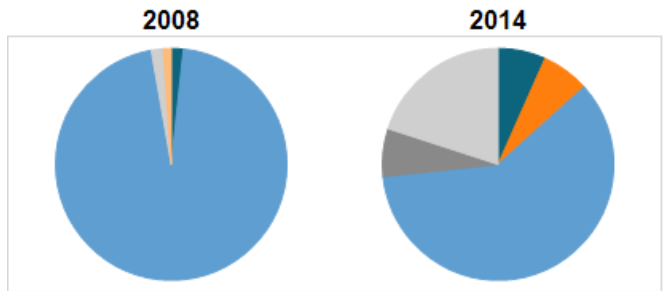

Civilian Affiliation
- Farm Owners (Zimbabwe)
- Journalists (Zimbabwe)
- MDC Factions
- Trade Unions
- ZANU-PF Factions
- Other

Figure 19: Proportion of Violence against Civilians by Civilian Affiliation in Zimbabwe, 2008 / 2014 (Jan - Sept).
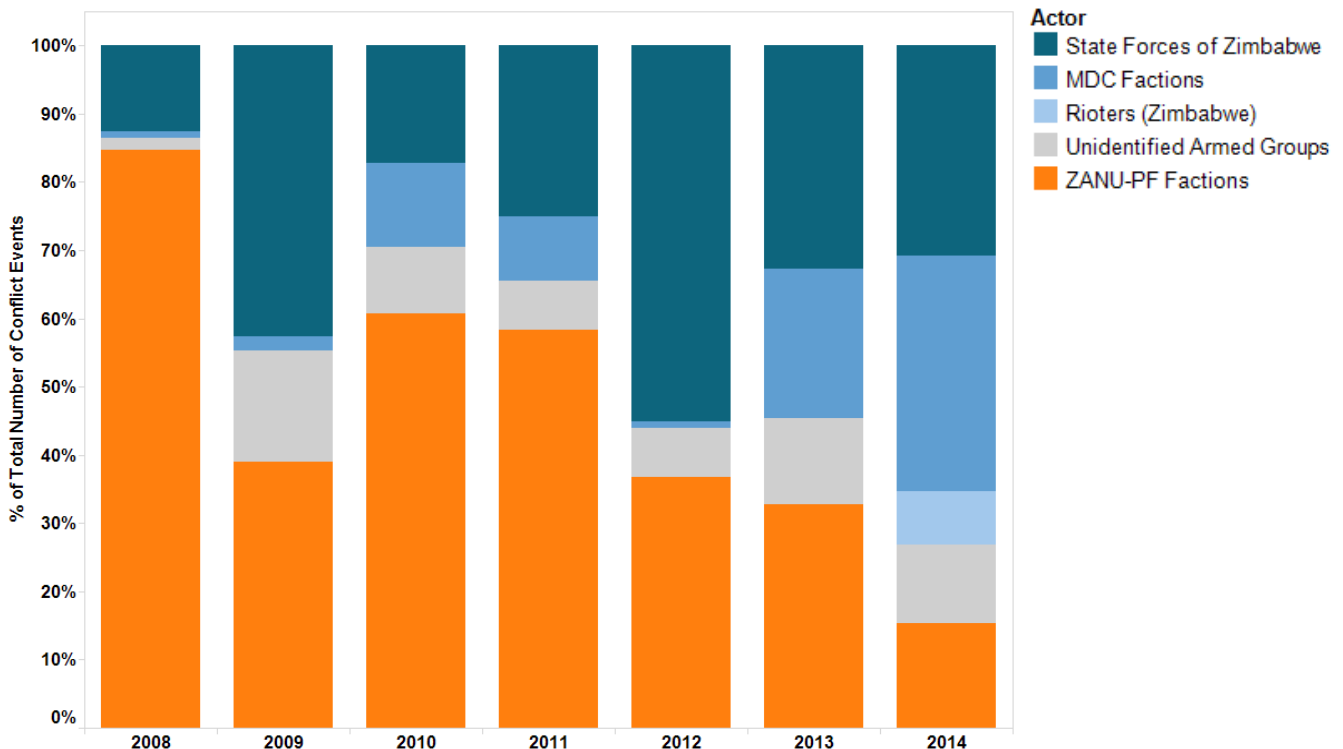

Figure 18: Proportion of Violence against Civilians by Actor in Zimbabwe, from 2008-2014 (Jan– Sept)

Special Focus Topic: Ebola in West Africa

Despite deployed American troops arriving in Liberia to combat the Ebola outbreak (**VOA News, 23 September 2014**), the disease has been continuing to ravage West Africa. The WHO has reported that over 5,300 people are infected by the disease, and over 2,600 dead; over 700 of those infections were in the last week, suggesting that the pandemic is diffusing quickly. In addition to victims of the disease itself, there have been some instances of violence related to the pandemic. This has led to increased speculation about whether the pandemic can wield an additional harmful effect. Conflicts and pandemics interact, often feeding off of each other to become even more lethal. This phenomenon has long been investigated by academics, policymakers, and practitioners, especially with a focus on how HIV/AIDS could change governance across Africa.

Two possible trajectories exist: (1) A pandemic can fuel conflict through instability; weakening economic capacity through the depletion of resources routed to halt the pandemic; and instilling fear in the population that the disease may spread to them. (2) Conflict can further fuel the spread of the pandemic through the geographic movement of infected individuals, as well as through preventing efforts to thwart the pandemic (**USIP, 2001**). As the Ebola outbreak continues, this interaction of the pandemic fueling conflict can be seen. Violence against civilians was seen as early as April 5 of this year in Guinea where a crowd attacked an Ebola isolation center and threw rocks at aid workers, stemming from fear and misinformation about the disease. Violence against civilians has continued in Guinea. Eight bodies of health workers and journalists were found two weeks ago in Guinea after the group went missing while "doing disinfection and education on prevention methods;" residents attacked the group believing they were trying to bring Ebola to their village (**Huffington Post, 18 September 2014**).

The number of riots and protests related to the outbreak, as well as instances of violence against civilians stemming from the pandemic, has been higher since late July, coinciding with the sudden spike in the number of cases of Ebola diagnosed in July. The fatalities reported in conjunction with the attack on health workers and journalists in Guinea two weeks ago are the first fatalities reported having stemmed from Ebola-related violence. Figure 20 shows how riots and protests relating to Ebola have been occurring weekly in the West African countries of Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone; recent weeks have been seeing fewer riots and protests and more instances of violence against civilians. As the pandemic is reportedly contained in Nigeria and Senegal, given no new reported cases in over a month (**BBC News, 30 September 2014)**, there have been no new Ebola-related riots or protests in Nigeria since late August, and Senegal never reported any Ebola-related violence.
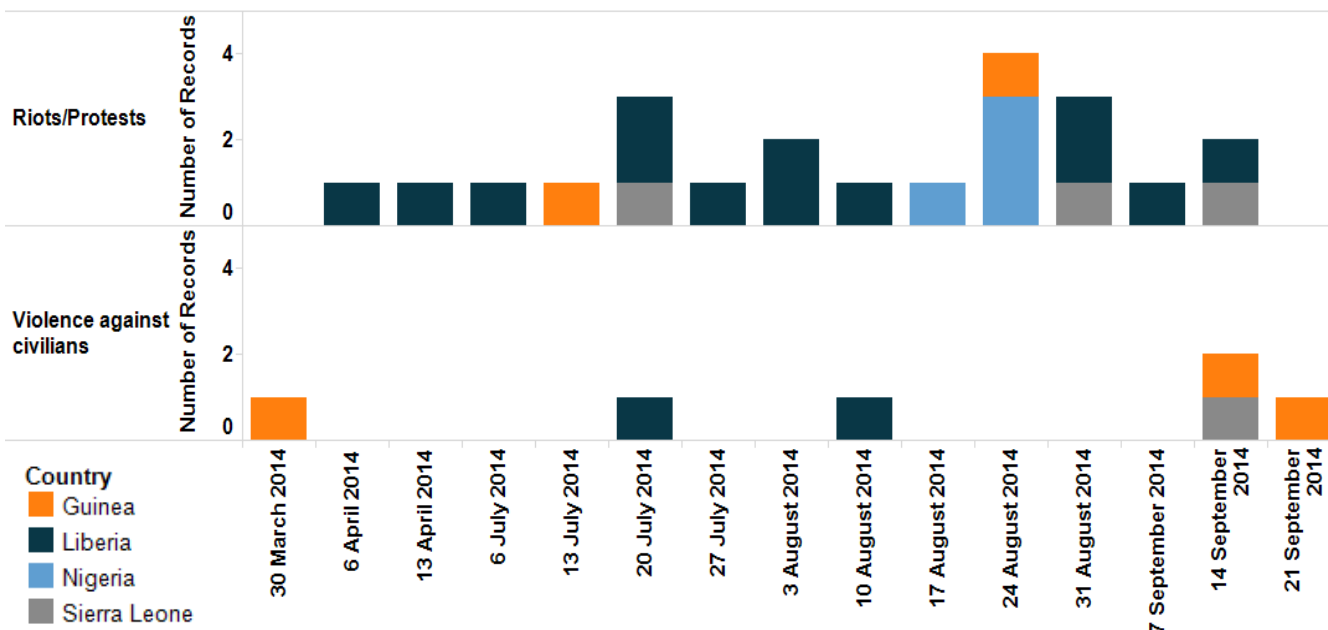

Figure 20: Ebola-Related Conflicts Since Ebola Outbreak by Country and Event Type, from March 2014-September 2014   14

Special Focus Topic: Ebola in West Africa

The bulk of these riots/protests have occurred in Liberia, as this state has been hit hardest by the pandemic. In large part, these riots and protests stem from fear of the disease: people have chased away doctors and/or burial teams; shut out medical workers; barricaded or threatened to burn down hospitals; and protested setting up various quarantine centers. Guinea has experienced the largest number of instances of violence against civilians, and is the only country so far reporting fatalities associated with violence stemming from the pandemic. Conflict events can lead to the further spread of the pandemic. For example, during a riot on August 16, Ebola-infected patients were driven from a treatment center in Liberia, and their whereabouts are now unknown (The Guardian, 17 August 2014). On September 1, hundreds of youth in Liberia protested the perceived secret burial of Ebola victims in their area. They dug up the bodies to move them out of the area, which can expose individuals to a higher chance of infection, as dead bodies are still highly infectious.

On September 17, after attacking aid workers and journalists, villagers in Guinea erected barricades and destroyed a bridge blocking access to their town (as they believed the outsiders were coming to bring Ebola to their village). This has the effect of thwarting future efforts to help quell the pandemic in their area, which can leave individuals at risk. Furthermore, instances of violence against civilians can also have the effect of dissuading future aid workers from wanting to help in the region, which can itself also ultimately lead to further infections.

While resources are being channeled towards combatting the pandemic itself, tackling fears of the disease through information can be beneficial in mitigating some of these conflicts, though as seen in recent attacks, this might not be served best by outsiders. Though there have been a number of riots and protests relating to the outbreak, as well as instances of violence against civilians stemming from the pandemic, Figure 21 shows that the number of Ebola-related events is still small relative to the number of non-Ebola-related riots and protests, as well as instances of violence against civilians occurring in effected countries.
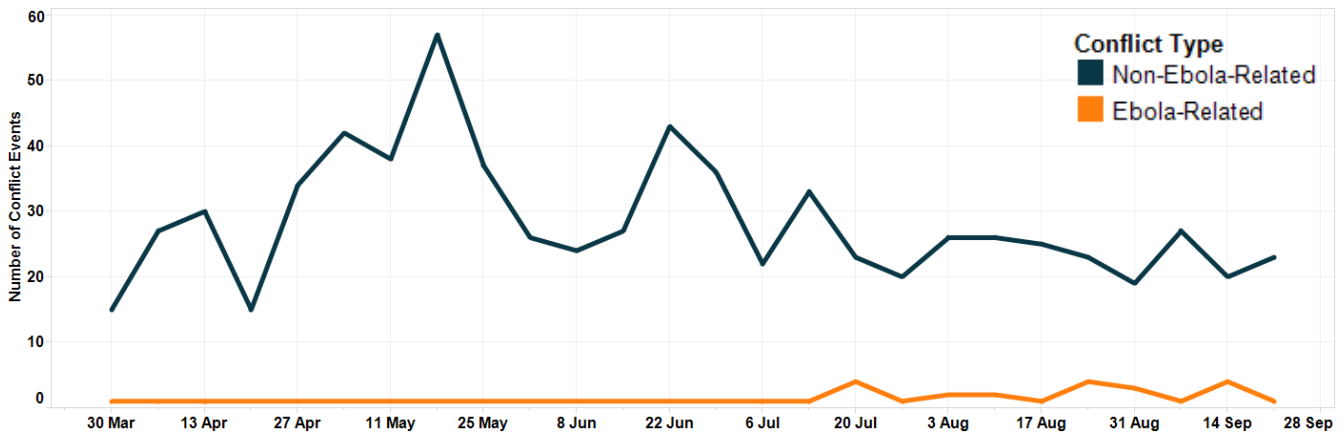

Figure 21: Ebola-Related vs. Non-Ebola-Related Conflict in Affected Countries, from March 2014-September 2014

Weekly Data Updates

In August, ACLED launched weekly data updates for all African states, including North African countries previously available as monthly updates only. Conflict data is circulated and published online each week to provide our most comprehesive 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.

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.