

DR-Congo

When looking at violence against civilians in DR-Congo from 2009-2014, rebel groups have been responsible for the majority of fatalities in these violent events. ACLED regards ‘rebels’ as armed agents in opposition to the established government with aims to overthrow the regime, or establish a separate state; in short, these groups have national political aims. While rebel groups have been the actors responsible for the highest number of deaths in violent attacks against civilians in the last five years by far, other groups – including military, police, political, and communal militias – commit significant violence against civilians in DR-Congo.

Yet, critically, while rebel groups continue to operate in DR-Congo and create instability in the region, the Congolese government does not face a significant rebel threat in the east. Instead DR-Congo continues to serve primarily as the strategic chessboard for the region’s problems. Though domestic insurgents are less of a problem in Congo, local problems and armed agents abound, and the lack of a unified adversary makes it difficult for government and allied forces to overcome continued instability.

Given the dynamic nature of conflict in DR-Congo, rebel groups vary in their level of involvement in violent events, specifically violence against civilians, with different groups ‘taking the lead’ in perpetrating these attacks over time.

Figure 2 shows the involvement in violence against civilians of the primary four rebel groups in DR-Congo during this time period – the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), and the March 23 Movement (M23) – while Figure 3 maps their activity. Relative to that experienced in 2009-2012, violence against civilians at the hands of rebel groups has become less prevalent in the most recent past; though DR-Congo remains a dangerous place for civilians, as evidenced by the recent spike in attacks seen this month.

Below is a review of the rebel grounds – all created in, or supported by, neighboring states – and their actions towards civilians.

The **Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA)** is a Ugandan rebel group, made up of Ugandan combatants as well as recruits forcefully abducted from DR-Congo, South Sudan, and the Central African Republic ([MONUSCO, 2014](#)). DR-Congo became the group’s primary activity area as of 2006-7; with activity centered largely in Orientale province. The group gained global notoriety for extremely brutal attacks on civilians and for the conscription of child soldiers. Since 2009, the group has been the deadliest rebel group in terms of violence against civilians in DR-Congo by far, and is responsible for the largest proportion

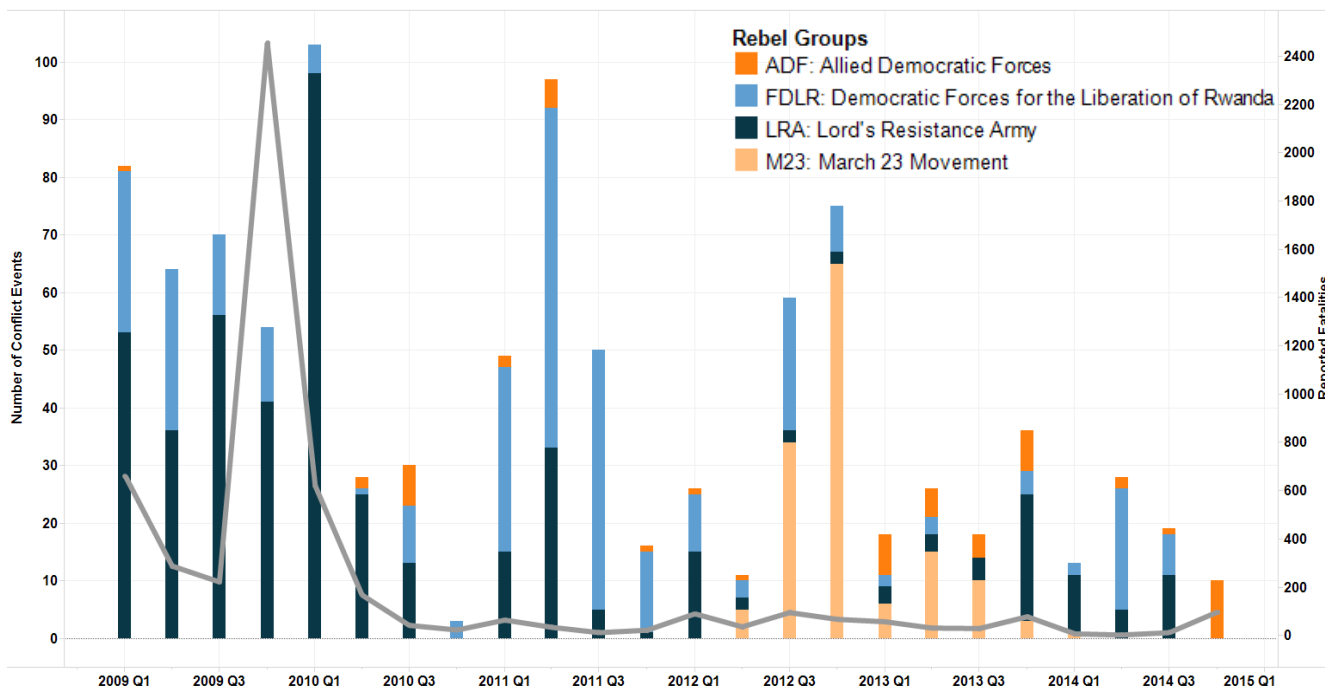


Figure 2: Violence Against Civilians by Rebel Groups, by Quarter in DR-Congo, from 2009-2014

DR-Congo

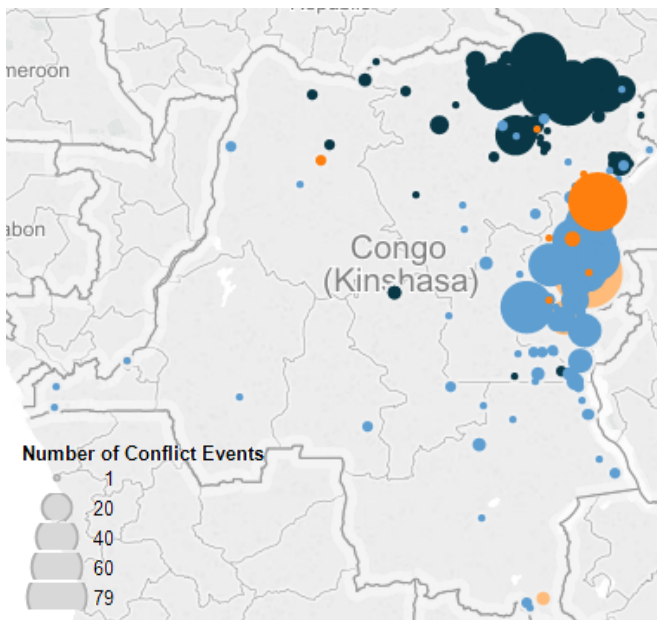
of these events (Figure 4); it was the ‘deadliest’ group for civilians in both 2009 and 2010. After a ‘hiatus’ in the frequency to which they were committing these attacks – likely due to the limited size of the group, believed to be between 300-500 active agents – they have again begun participating in attacks against civilians this year and primarily in the peripheral areas of Orientale, though to a much lesser degree than their operations at the height of their activity.

The **Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR)** is the largest rebel group currently operating in DR-Congo ([MONUSCO, 2014](#)), and has consistently active in committing violence against civilians over time. Though the UN reports a growing number of Congolese among their ranks, the group’s identity is primarily Rwandan ([MONUSCO, 2014](#)). They are mainly active in Eastern DR-Congo since 1994, and have expanded over time into Orientale and Katanga provinces. Their participation in violence against civilians peaked in 2011 and after a brief decrease in their participation in these activities in 2012 and 2013, they have again turned to violence against civilians this year, becoming the ‘leader’ in the perpetration of these events. Their activity continues to be centered in the Kivu region, though they have been responsible for violent events against civilians in both Orientale and Katanga provinces this year.

The influence of Rwanda is again demonstrated by the **March 23 Movement (M23)**, a rebel group founded in early 2012, with documented military and financial links to Rwanda. The group surrendered at the end of 2013, announcing the end of their rebellion and that they would pursue their goals “through purely political means” thereafter ([AFP, November 5, 2013](#)). When active, it operated almost exclusively in the Kivu region, and was designed to counter the FDLR presence. The M23 was responsible for the majority of violence against civilians by rebel groups in 2012 and early 2013. Since then, the only violence against civilians that the group has been responsible for has been when an abandoned bomb exploded in January of this year in Rutshuru, killing five.

The **Allied Democratic Forces (ADF)** is a Ugandan rebel group, with presumed links to Sudan, though over half of its members are now Congolese ([Al Jazeera, July 27, 2013](#)). A large number of its members claim an Islamic affiliation, and the group is often categorized as an Islam-

Since 2009, the LRA has been the deadliest rebel group in terms of violence against civilians, responsible for 46.19% of events.



Rebel Groups
 ADF: Allied Democratic Forces
 FDLR: Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda
 LRA: Lord's Resistance Army
 M23: March 23 Movement

Figure 3: Violence Against Civilians by Rebel Groups, by Location in DR-Congo, from 2009-2014

ist movement ([MONUSCO, 2014](#)). However, given that the group has embedded itself into its surrounding community in DR-Congo and worked towards becoming more self-sustaining, wherein their funding support is no longer primarily from various external Islamic national and regional actors. As a result, the group’s identity is increasing complicated, and cannot be categorized solely as an Islamist movement ([Al Jazeera, July 27, 2013](#)). The group has merged with remnants of other Ugandan rebel groups in DR-Congo, including the National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU), and operates primarily in eastern DR-Congo spanning into Orientale and Equateur provinces. The group has not been responsible for a significant number of civilian casualties until recently; however, they are currently the sole rebel group responsible for violence against civilians.

These rebel groups are distinct from the political and ethnic militias that also participate in conflict and violence in

DR-Congo

the area. Civilian fatalities at the hands of rebel groups specifically have spiked this year to over 10 times the levels seen previously this year, and are attributed largely to the ADF. These attacks primarily involve the use of knives, machetes, axes, and clubs in killing civilians, and are often coupled with abductions and rapes; homes have also been broken into, looted, and burned ([AFP, October 18, 2014](#)).

Why do foreign agents, or foreign-supported agents, continue to operate in Congo and target Congolese civilians? One reason may be that they are not interested in overthrowing their respective governments and are truly motivated by an overthrowing of the Congolese government. The M23 participated in a relatively large number of battles against government forces in 2012-2013, and in 2014 the ADF is doing the same, especially relative to their participation in violence against civilians.

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Alternatively, the FDLR has participated in relatively fewer battles against government forces since 2012, especially in comparison to their frequent exhibits of violence against civilians. The LRA too has primarily focused its energy on violence against civilians (though in 2014, they too have begun exhibiting more frequent instances of battles against Congolese government forces). The substantial participation of some of these groups in battling government forces, especially relative to their other conflict activity, suggests that at least some of these groups (M23, ADF) do have some goals of harming the Congolese government.

An alternative argument may be that rebel groups use DR-Congo as a place to 'survive' while waiting out an opening in their respective countries, during which time they display what a threat they can be to their respective domestic governments through violent attacks against civilians. This goes against common arguments, however, that violence against civilians is a form of retribution for either government or alternative opposition support.

It is not assumed that civilians support foreign groups. In instances where rebel groups become embedded into their surroundings areas, however – through intermarriage, becoming socially-integrated into wider society, developing business interests, acquiring political influence – they may no longer be as 'foreign' to local civilians, which could serve to make a 'long-term survival strategy' easier and less costly. For example, "the ADF's promises of employment and education opportunities have resonated with [local civilians in the borderlands where the group operates]. In a region confronted with an abundance of former combatants, as well as a lack of formal work opportunities, the ADF's provision of a salary (and a relatively good one at that, namely USD\$100/month), has proven enticing for many" ([Al Jazeera, July 27, 2013](#)).

While Congolese government attention seems to increasingly be focused on local political militia activity, continued rebel activity exhibited in DR-Congo involving groups with links to other regional governments suggests that Congolese conflict is a regional game with players well beyond Kinshasa and the Kivus. With the UN's top human rights official Scott Campbell declared "persona non grata" after a UN report published last month denounced rights violations by the police ([AFP, October 16, 2014](#)), civilians don't seem to have many advocates left on their side.

Rebel Groups

- ADF: Allied Democratic Forces
- FDLR: Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda
- LRA: Lord's Resistance Army
- M23: March 23 Movement



Figure 4: Violence against Civilians by Rebel Groups in DR-Congo, from 2009-2014

Libya

Since June 2014, Libya has been the fourth most volatile country in the ACLED African dataset with 534 reported conflict events. Political violence continued to escalate throughout the month of October (see Figure 5) with September recording the highest fatalities – and over double those reported since the beginning of the renewed post-civil war violence. Compared to other African states, Libya witnessed similar conflict levels as Nigeria and South Africa with an average of just under 107 conflict events per month. In contrast to Nigeria, which experienced a de-escalation of conflict since June 2014, Libya’s conflict trajectory has rapidly escalated through battles between armed groups (54% of all events).

The escalation can be understood from the divisive political landscape created by two competing parliaments – the House of Representatives and General National Congress – and the armed affiliations that this has spurred. The internationally-recognised House of Representatives, backed by the ex-General Khalifa Haftar, has struggled for power with the General National Congress, which is supported by the Libya Dawn coalition. In the most recent development, Haftar’s ‘Operation Dignity’ has come under the

oversight of the Libyan National Army, and is aimed at expelling violent Islamist militias such as Ansar al-Sharia and the February 17th Martyrs Brigade from Benghazi.

The Libyan National Army pushed into Benghazi last week, regaining large parts of the city, driving further battles between insurgents (see Figure 6). Whilst clashes with the Benghazi Revolutionaries Shura Council were originally concentrated near Benghazi airport, intense fighting has scattered across several Benghazi residential districts, including the western entrance of Qaryūnus where the 17th February camp is located.

Operation Libya Dawn’s counter-offensive in Tripoli has expanded south into the Nafusa mountain region with factional fighting taking place between pro-government Zintan militia and Misratan and other tribal and city-based militia groups who claim to uphold the principles of the 2011 revolution (see Figure 7). Heavy fighting in the region has spread geographically, displacing tens of thousands of local residents ([AP, 5 November 2014](#)) as military forces have battled pockets of resistance in Kiklah, Gharayan and surrounding areas as they advance towards Tripoli.

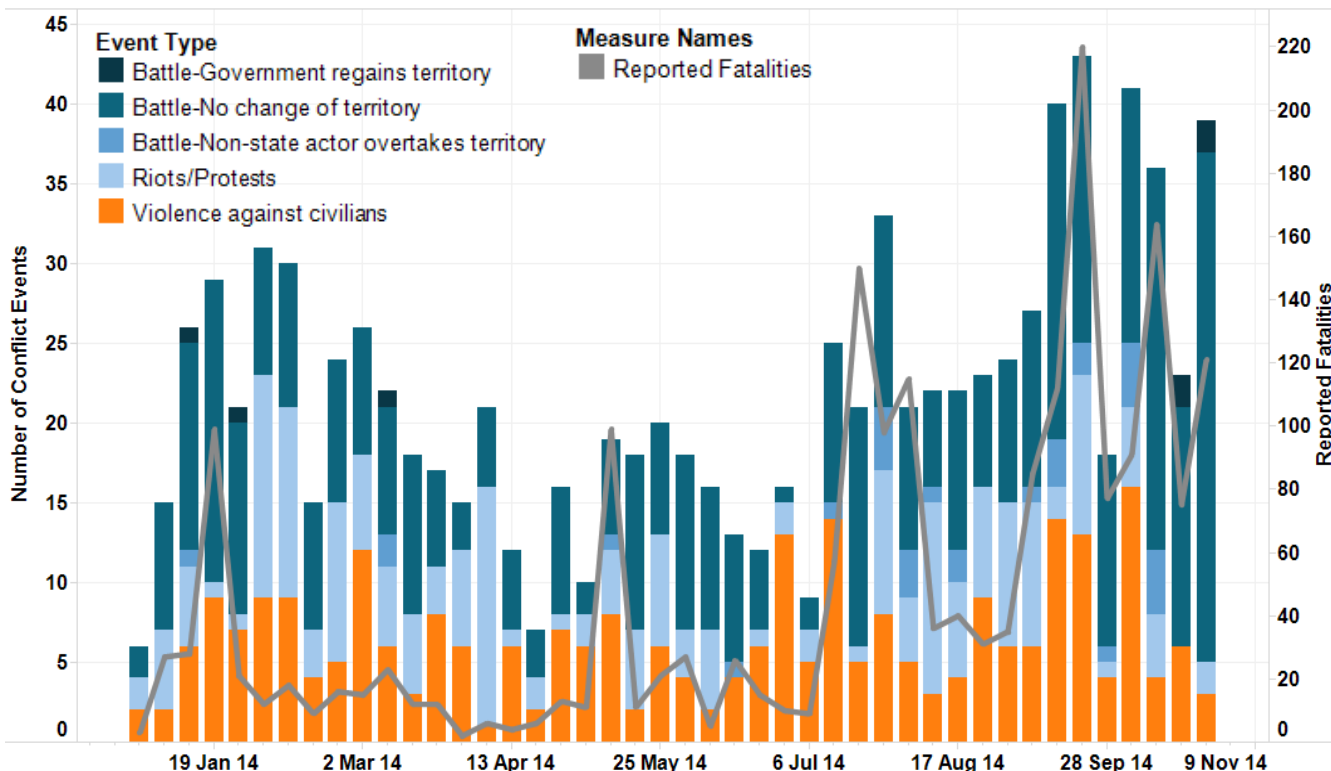


Figure 5: Number of Conflict Events by Type and Reported Fatalities in Libya, from January 2014 - 1st November 2014

Libya

A comparison of the Libyan political landscape in 2011 and 2014 highlights that conflict levels since August 2014 have been higher than all months during the Libyan civil war in 2011 except for March 2011. This pattern may be explained by the ‘opening up of the political space’ that has enabled multiple, competing factions to emerge. Whilst the number of events has dramatically escalated following the launch of Operation Dignity, conflict-related fatalities have in general remained well below their 2011 levels.

The competition between the rival parliaments has catalysed discussions over each government’s legitimacy, sparking debate on international intervention. The concentration of fighting in Tripoli and Benghazi has been to seize control over state institutions, with the focus now turning towards access to the Central Bank and the National Oil Corporation to shore up vital assets to fund their respective campaigns ([Libya-Analysis, 3 November 2014](#)).

Egypt and the UAE support the Tobruk-based Libyan government, but their direct involvement in shelling opposition camps is still contested, and Libya Dawn are believed to be backed by Qatar and Turkey ([The Washington Post, 26 October 2014](#)). Nevertheless, the channelling of funds and foreign support to these multifarious armed groups is adding fuel to the fire, and the ongoing crisis in Libya is at risk of being a proxy war by international powers contesting regional influence.

To avoid this, Libya’s neighbours and the international community must commit to a policy of non-interference ([Foreign Affairs, 6 October 2014](#)), otherwise the cleavages that currently beset the Libyan society are only likely to deepen. After Egyptian president Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi accused foreign groups of coordinating an assault in the Sinai Peninsula that left over 30 soldiers dead on the 24 October, any attempt to seek redress across the border will risk Egypt becoming further embroiled in the political developments in Libya ([Libya Herald, 26 October 2014](#)).

Actor Type

- State Forces
- Rebel Forces
- Political Militia
- Ethnic/Communal Militia
- Rioters
- Protesters
- Civilians
- External Forces

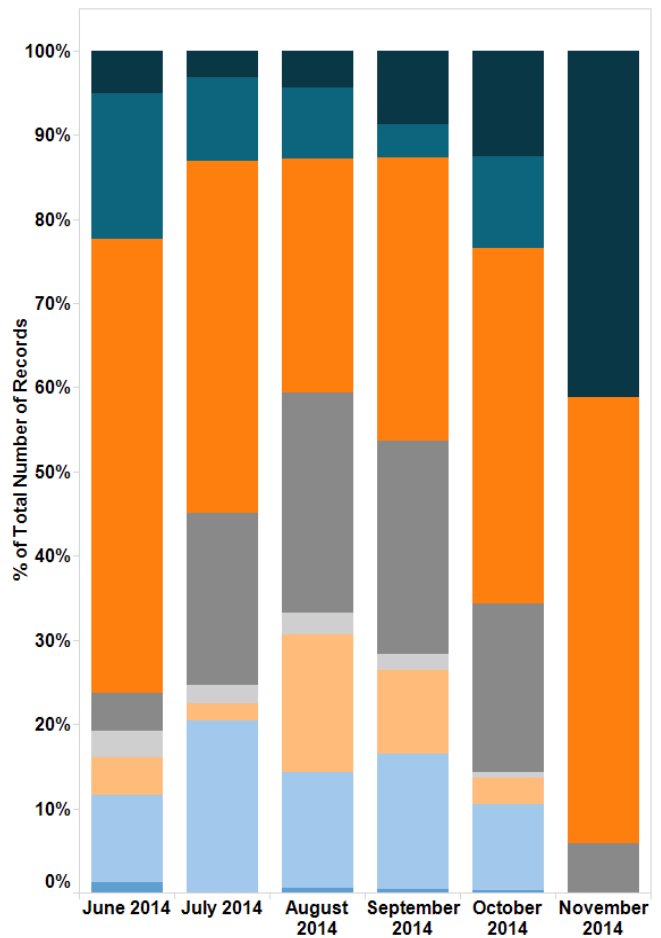


Figure 6: Percentage of Conflict Events by Actor Type, in Libya, from June 2014–November 2014

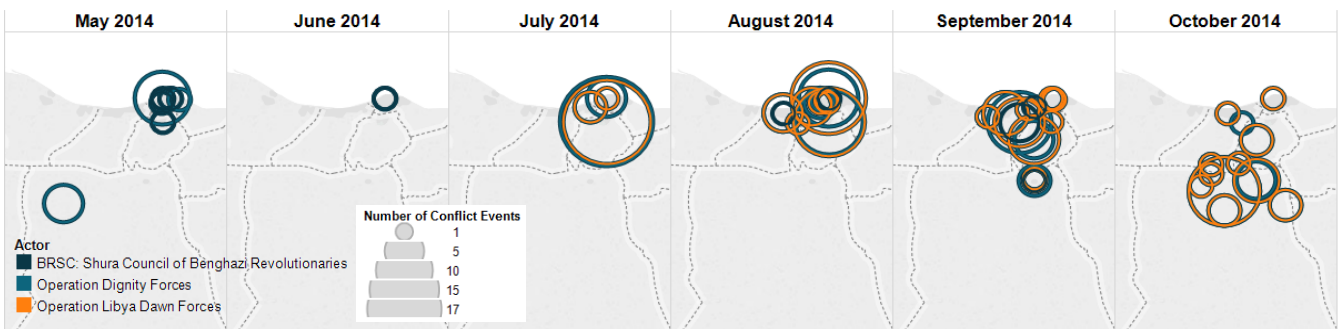


Figure 7: Number of Conflict Events by Actor in North-West Libya, from May 2014–October 2014

Mali

Following the short but deadly burst of fighting in May, Mali has generally seen a decreasing trend in overall events over the past few months (which follows a broader trend in decreasing violence since this time last year), with a spike in fatalities during July (see Figure 8).

However, although the number of violent events and fatalities in Mali are reminiscent of the period of calm which occurred in the summer of 2013, there are two dynamics which could mean that the rise in fatalities seen from August to October could signal a potentially longer term trend of increasing violence in the months to come (see Figure 8). These dynamics are violence between Tuareg

groups and increasing violence related to militant jihadist actors.

Since July, there have been several significant instances of fighting between militant Tuareg groups, with the most violent being a three day clash in July between the MNLA and MAA ([Mali Jet, July 11, 2014](#)), two of the most notable Tuareg groups, which was almost solely responsible for the spike in fatalities that month. However, despite this fighting, the MNLA and MAA, along with the

HCUA, were soon after able to come to a broad agreement to work together within the framework of the Coordination of Movements of the Azawad group, which since

Overall, between July and October 2014, fighting between Tuareg groups has been responsible for more than 50% of all fatalities reported in Mali.

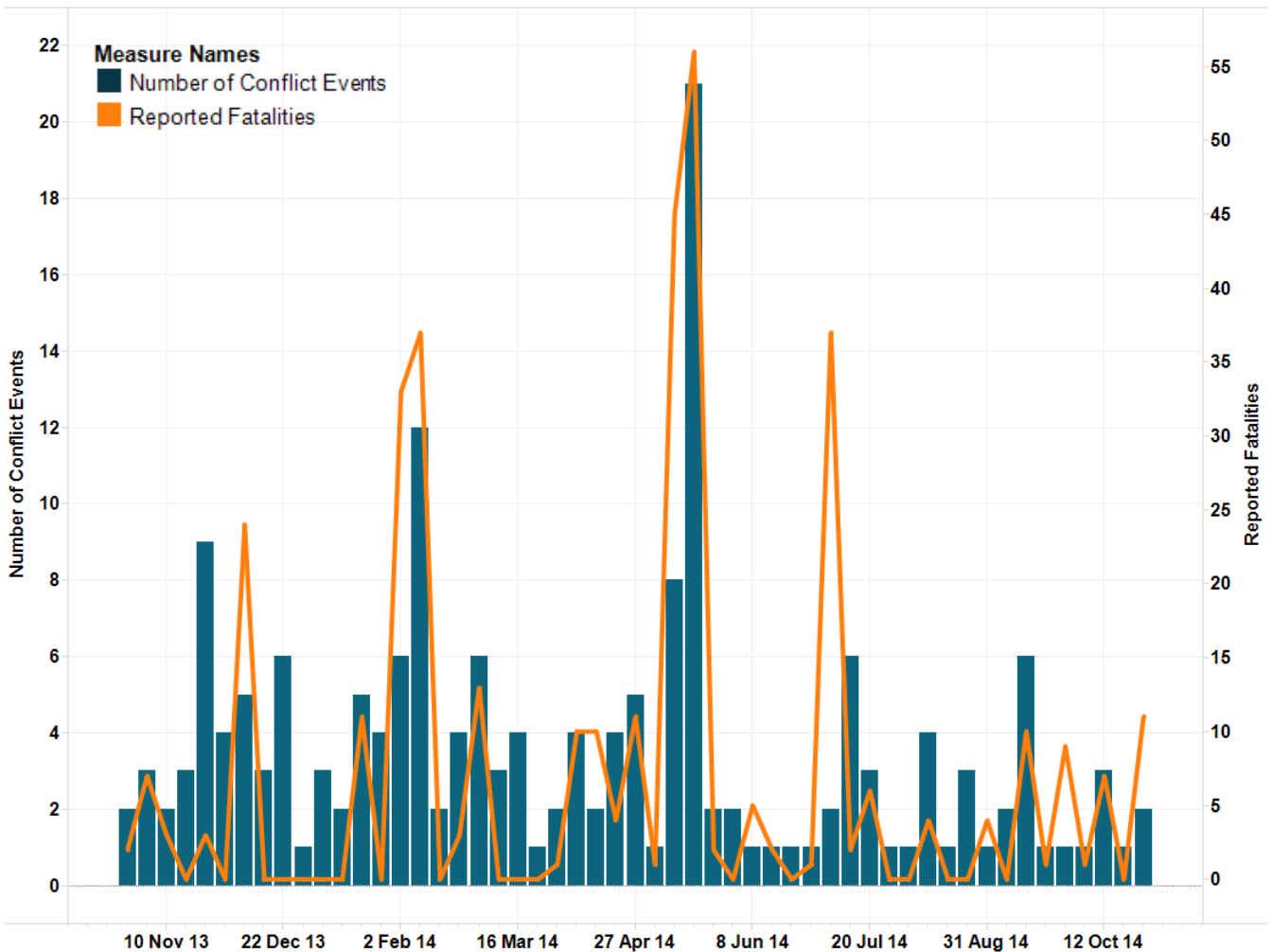


Figure 8: Number of Conflict Events and Reported Fatalities in Mali, from November 2013–October 2014

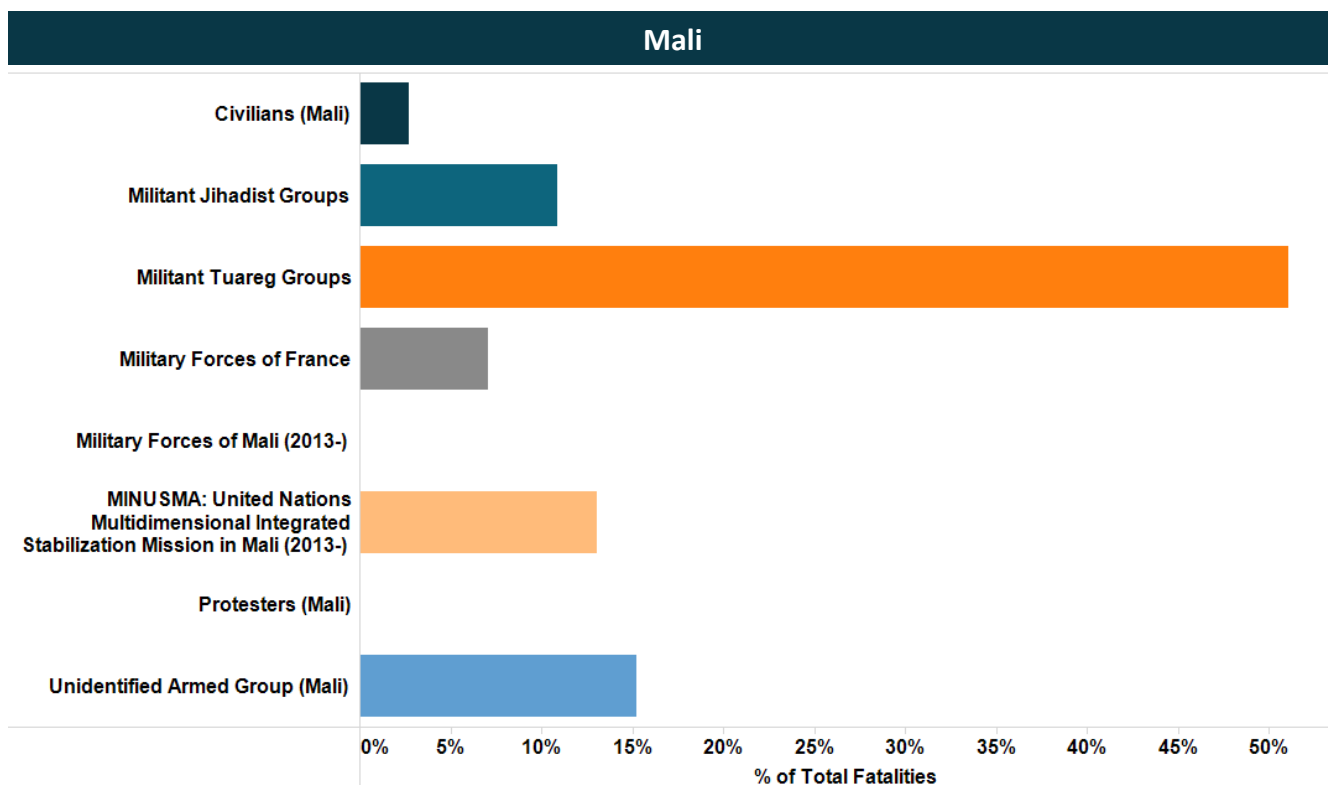


Figure 9: Percentage of Conflict-Related Fatalities by Actor in Mali, from July-October 2014

October also includes military cooperation ([MNLA Website, Oct 28, 2014](#)).

Despite this consolidation within the pro-independence movement, a new militant Tuareg group, GATIA, which opposes independence has emerged to challenge this unity. Since its inception in August it has succeeded in capturing two towns, N'tilit and Tessit from the MNLA, which a MINUSMA source claims has been done in order to get a seat at the ongoing peace negotiations between the Malian government and Tuareg groups in Algiers ([AFP, Oct 17, 2014](#)).

This conflict between GATIA and the other Tuareg groups, but primarily the MNLA, has the potential to grow and could reignite wider conflict within Mali as the MNLA claims GATIA is a pro-government militia and is being used by the Malian military to indirectly weaken them ([Jeune Afrique, Oct 16, 2014](#)). Overall, between July and October, fighting between Tuareg groups has been responsible for more than 50% of all fatalities (see Figure 9).

However, while conflict between Tuareg groups signifies part of the upward trend in violence over the past few months, the most consistent factor has been the increase in violence carried out by militant jihadist groups. This is represented primarily by violence carried out by AQIM, MUJAO, and unspecified militant Islamist groups against international forces, alongside unattributed casualties caused by explosive devices planted primarily on the roads of the Kidal and Gao regions.

An increase in violence carried out by militant jihadist groups accounts for a dramatic rise in fatalities among MINUSMA forces, most notably the deaths of 10 Chadian peacekeepers in September 2014.

These avenues of violence have accounted for a dramatic rise in fatalities among MINUSMA forces, most notably the deaths of 10 Chadian peacekeepers in separate events in September ([VOA News, Oct 3, 2014](#)), and the ambush of peacekeepers from Niger by Islamist militants in October, leading to 9 deaths ([Associated Press, Oct 3, 2014](#)). French forces have also experienced growing engagement with militant jihadists, with a recent operation in the Tigharghar mountains resulting in the death of one French soldier and an unspecified number of militants seized or killed ([RFI, Oct 30, 2014](#)).

Mozambique

Mozambique continues to see riots and protests surrounding its elections on October 15 last month. In November 2013, Mozambique saw a marked increase in election-related riots and protests in association with its local elections involving the ruling Frente de Libertacao de Mocambique (FRELIMO) party (who have held a monopoly on ruling power since independence from Portugal in 1975) and opposition Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM) party. Reported election-related unrest occurred almost exclusively in the *aftermath* of the election. These riots and protests primarily involved supporters of MDM – attacking supporters of FRELIMO, clashing with police, and demonstrating in response to elections results. MDM made significant gains in the election, and this marked the first time the party entered party candidates to contest local elections since breaking away from the Mozambican Resistance Movement (RENAMO). However, FRELIMO still maintained a stronghold on power following the election ([Southern African News Features, November 2013](#)).

In relation to the general election on October 15, 2014, Mozambique saw a marked increase in riots and protests *prior to*, the election, followed by an absence of riots and protests by political party supporters as those seen following last year’s elections. Beginning in early September,

Mozambique began to see the highest number of riots and protests seen in recent years – 30 riot and protests were recorded during September and October. This tension prior to the elections may be related to an increased number of battles and instances of violence against civilians reported earlier this year, primarily between, and at the hands of, FRELIMO and RENAMO.

Conflict involving the two groups recalls the fifteen-year civil war between the two parties that plagued Mozambique from 1975 to 1992. Conflict spiked following the annulment of the 1992 peace accord in 2013. Afonso Dhlakama, leader of RENAMO, and current president Armando Guebuza of FRELIMO signed a peace deal on August 24 of this year; since then battles have not again occurred, though the number of conflict events still remains high (Figure 10). Though battles between the two groups ceased, unrest continued with riots and protests in September 2014 involving supporters of the two groups.

With their focus on conflict while forsaking political engagement, RENAMO suffered in polls last year; MDM made large gains in the 2013 local elections in RENAMO’s absence, winning three of the nation’s four largest cities, largely viewed as the new main opposition party in Mozambique ([Reuters, December 4, 2013](#)).

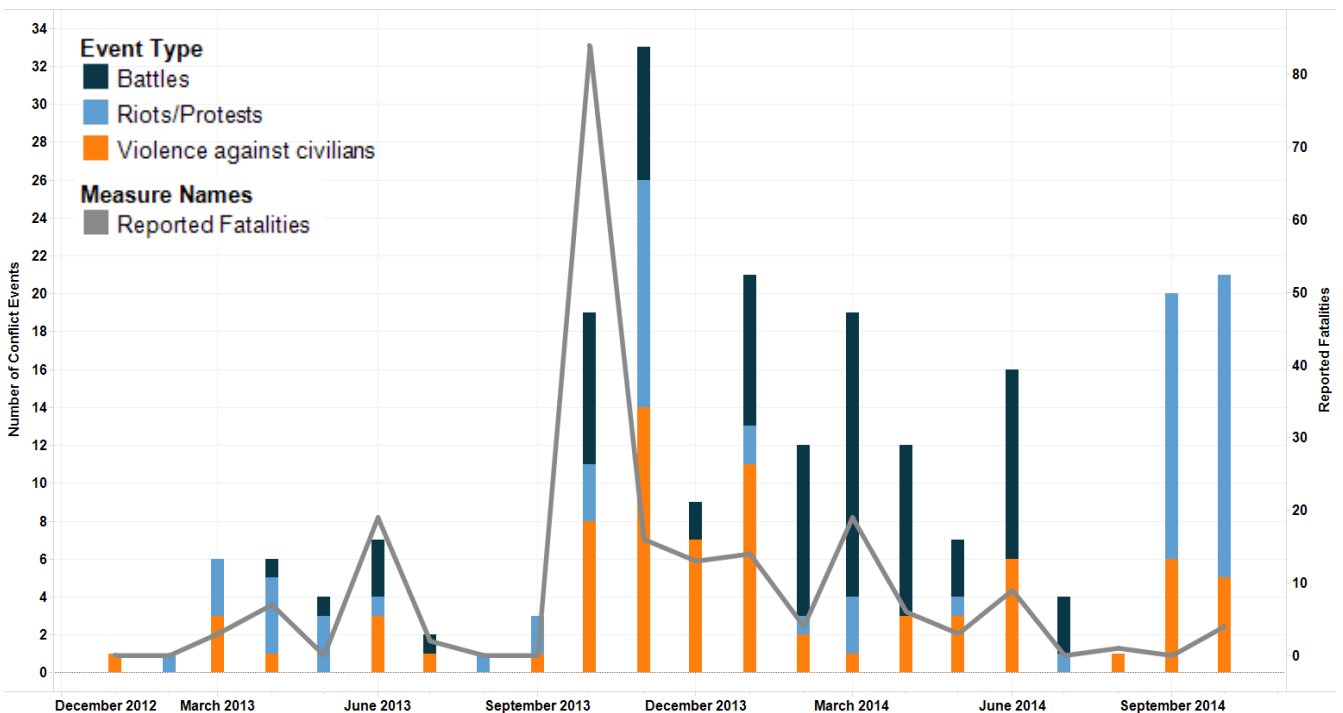


Figure 10: Number of Conflict Events by Type in Mozambique, from January 2013-October 2014

Mozambique

Hence, many viewed MDM’s candidate Simango as the only candidate expected to offer any real competition to FRELIMO’s candidate Nyusi (current president Guebuza is constitutionally barred from seeking a third term) ([Agencia de Informacao de Mocambique, August 29, 2014](#)).

However, RENAMO maintained its grasp on power with its return to the political arena. Though FRELIMO won the presidency as expected, they did so with only 57.3% of the vote (down from the 75% they won in 2009’s presidential election). RENAMO improved its performance, winning 36.6% of the vote, an increase from the 16.5% garnered in 2009. MDM received only 6.4% of the vote ([South African Press Association, October 31, 2014](#)).

Figure 11 maps the riots and protests following the 2013 elections as well as those leading up to the 2014 elections. In 2013, the riots and protests in large part involved MDM supporters, with FRELIMO supporters focused on rioting and protesting in central Mozambique. Prior to the 2014 elections, one can see the increased participation of FRELIMO as well as RENAMO supporters in riots and protests (along with a reduction in MDM activity), with FRELIMO supporters expanding their presence across the country. This is likely due to the fact that RENAMO was re-entering the political arena after an absence, and FRELIMO now has more than one political adversary at the polls (an old rival at that).

Civil society bodies had warned against the possibility of further violence and unrest following the announcement of election results, though thus far no election-related conflict events have been reported in the country in the aftermath of the election. However, despite the lack of violence, the elections and their aftermath have been far from smooth. The losing political parties (RENAMO and MDM) have been slow to accept the announcement of FRELIMO’s Nyusi as victor. RENAMO’s Dhlakama wants to negotiate a unity government, calling for the total restructuring of the state apparatus and security forces to remove FRELIMO influence, claiming that he won the election last month ([Mozambique Political Process Bulletin, October 19, 2014](#)).

Meanwhile, MDM’s Simango demanded last week that the October elections should be annulled completely, stating his “profound sorrow because these elections were stained by an unequal combat during the election campaign, and in proven acts of fraud and violence they have now had final discredit” ([Agencia de Informacao de Mocambique, October 30, 2014](#)). A number of votes were declared invalid at polling stations on election day; some deliberate invalidation of opposition votes had been detected. It is not a surprise that opposition groups have qualms with the election outcome ([Agencia de Informacao de Mocambique, October 27, 2014](#)). Future election-related conflict to come is hence not out of the question.

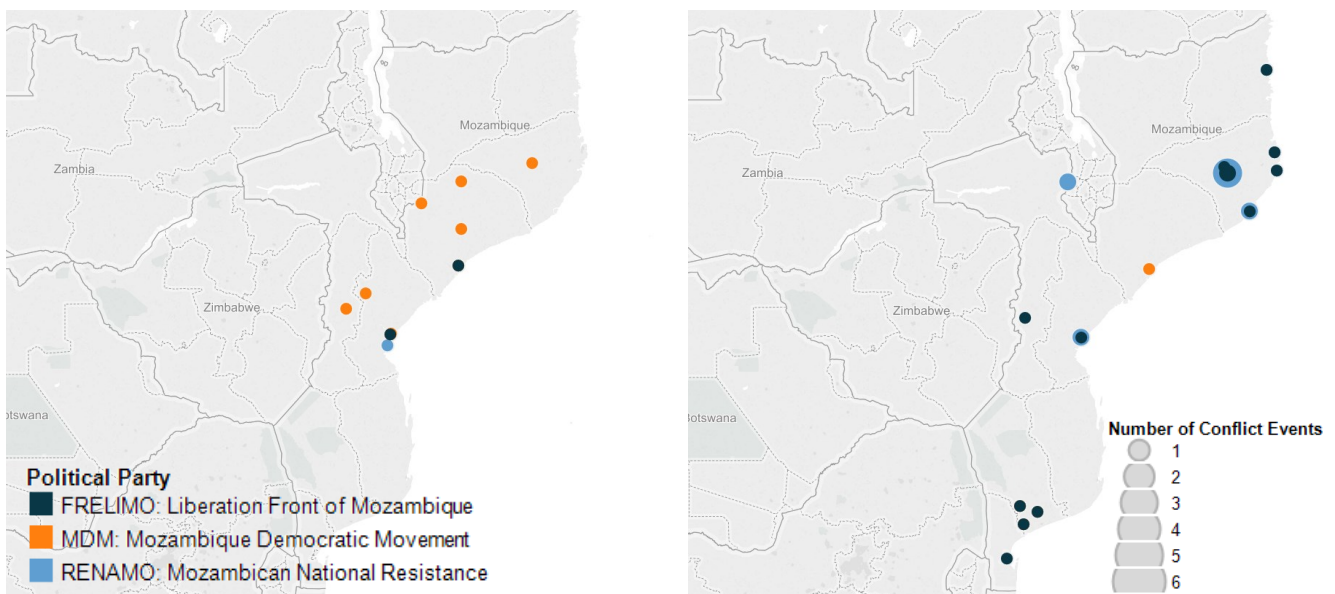


Figure 11: Riots and Protests Involving Supporters of Political Parties in Mozambique, from November 2013 (Left) and October 2014 (Right)

Special Focus Topic: Remote Violence

The use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in conflict zones across has become [increasingly prevalent](#) over the past few years (Norton-Taylor, 3 July 2014). Conflict in Africa mirrors this global trend, as the number of discrete events involving IEDs grew from 9 reports in 2005 to 468 in 2013. The number of fatalities resulting from IED attacks also increased in 2014, and accounts for 1009 fatalities, the highest on record in the ACLED for such events.

However, the relationship between IED attacks and fatalities is not linear (see Figure 12). In 2012, 974 fatalities resulted from 356 discrete events, compared to 644 fatalities resulting from 468 events in 2013. Previous [studies](#) of IED attacks have previously found a weak relationship between the number of attacks and the number of fatalities.

One of the main reasons for this is that the lethality of an IED is dependent upon the ability of state forces to disarm or dispose of the bomb ([START, 2012](#)).

The increase in fatalities between 2013 and 2014 is due to the growth of unrest in areas such as Libya and Nigeria, where the presence of external forces and expertise has

been limited, particularly in comparison to other IED hotspots such as Mali or Somalia.

Theorists have argued that IEDs function well as symbolic weapons, which can be used to demonstrate a regime's vulnerability to violence or a government's inability to protect its citizens ([McCormick and Giordano, 2007](#)). By targeting agents of the state, civilians, popular monuments or symbols, conflict actors can use IEDs to undermine confidence in the government and coerce public opinion and government policies ([Merari, 1993](#)). The data supports these theories: 31.8% of IED-related conflict events involve political militias using these weapons against civilians, while 26.49% involve political militias and state forces.

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Interactions between political militias and civilians are wide spread across Africa (see Figure 13), are present in regions not typically associated with IED-related violence, and areas that do not involve any other types of IED-related interaction. For example, Southern Africa shows a prevalence of IED-related violence by political militias against civilians, in spite of having a very low

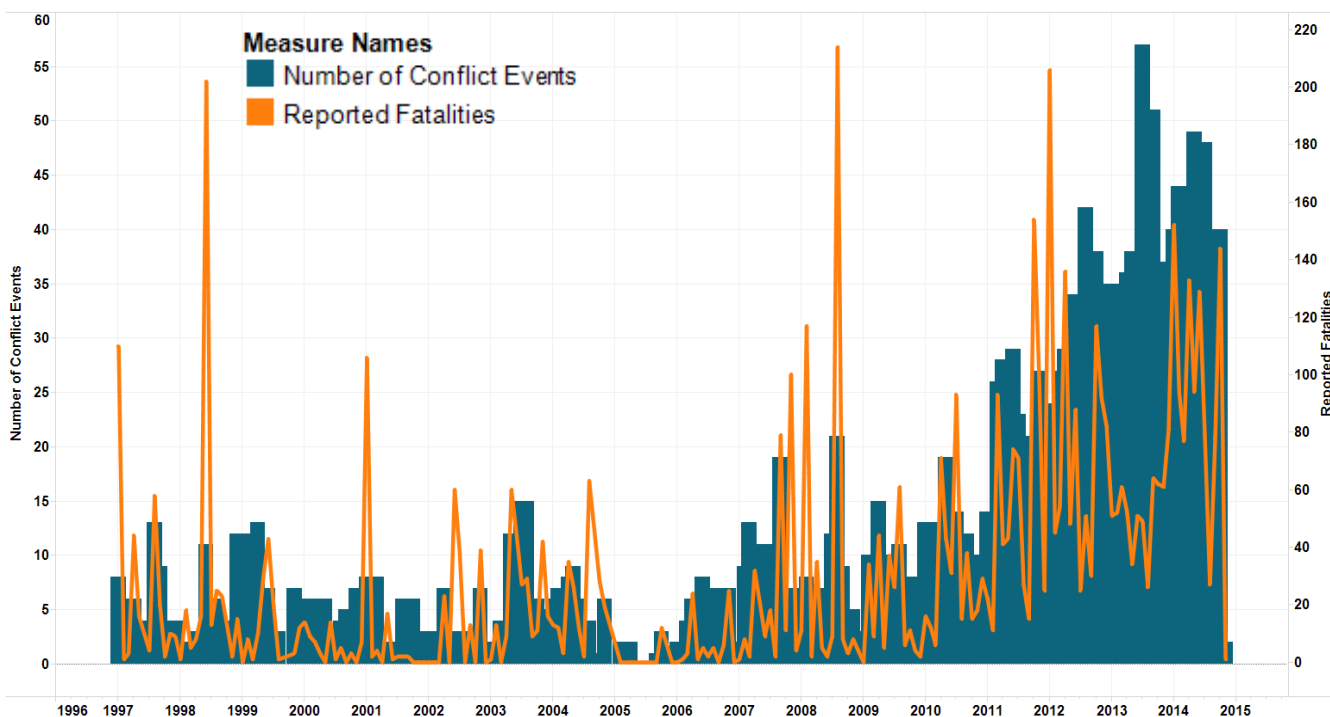


Figure 12: Number of Conflict Events and Reported Involving IEDs in Africa, 1 January 1997-1 November 2014

Special Focus Topic: Remote Violence

incidence of other forms of IED-related violence.

Interactions between political militias and the state are more concentrated within high-activity countries such as Libya, Somalia, Egypt and Nigeria. In contrast rebel groups, who differ from political militias in that they have

a stated political agenda for national power, are involved in far fewer IED-related events. Rebel interactions with state forces, civilians, and external forces accounted for 26.43% of all IED-related conflict events. This suggests that, in many cases, IED's are a weapon of political coercion rather than a means to defeat the government.

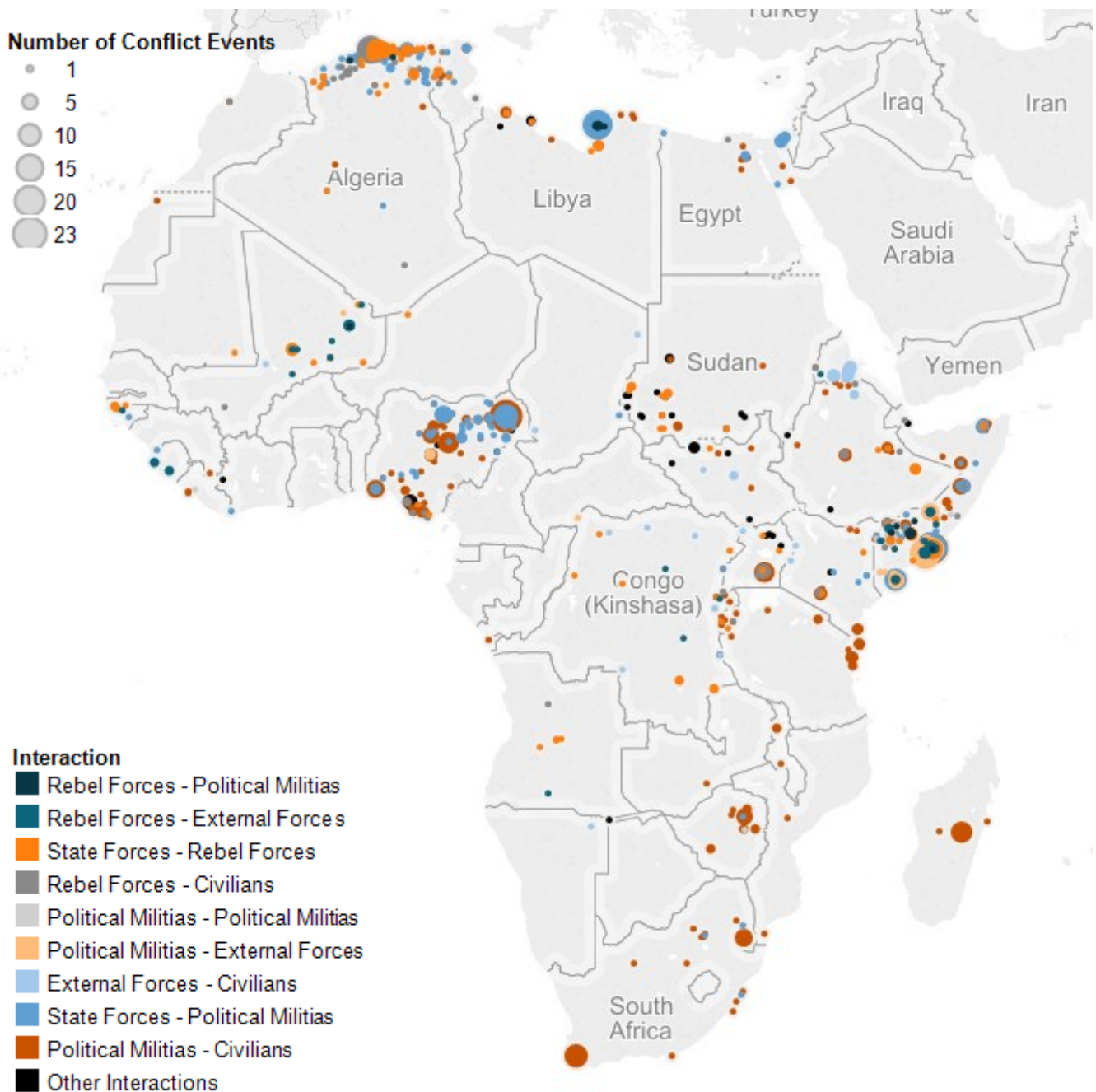


Figure 13: Conflict Events Involving IEDs by Interacting Actors and Location in Africa, 1 January 1997-1 November 2014 12



Special Focus Topic: Remote Violence

There are, of course, exceptions. IEDs have been employed in conflicts between rebels and governments in Algeria, Mali, Somalia, Senegal, Niger Delta, Darfur and Angola.

On the subnational level, IED-related events show a locational bias towards urban areas. Of the most active locations for IED-related violence, the vast majority are urban areas housing a population of over 150,000 (see Figure 14). Subnational IED hotspots include urban areas such as Jos, Kano, Tripoli and Algiers. Urban areas create a severe security predicament for governments and IEDs that successfully detonate in these areas will cause more casualties and more effectively demonstrate the inability of the government to maintain security. IEDs, while not purely the preserve of weak actors, are a low-cost tactic that is attractive to non-state conflict actors with a limited capac-

ity for direct conflict (ACLED, 29 October 2014). The growth in IED usage could be due to non-state conflict actors becoming increasingly weak when compared to state forces. Over the past decade political militias have overtaken rebel groups as the primary non-state actor. Political militias now involved in 21.71% of conflict events, as opposed to 8.78% for rebel forces.

Political militias typically lack the capacity or will to take control of the state. For these actors, the IED is an ideal tool to either damage state forces with minimal risk or to coerce the state without controlling it. It may be the case that as governments consolidate more control over their territory and as credible threats seeking to usurp state power decrease, IED-related attacks will become a more frequent fixture of African conflicts.

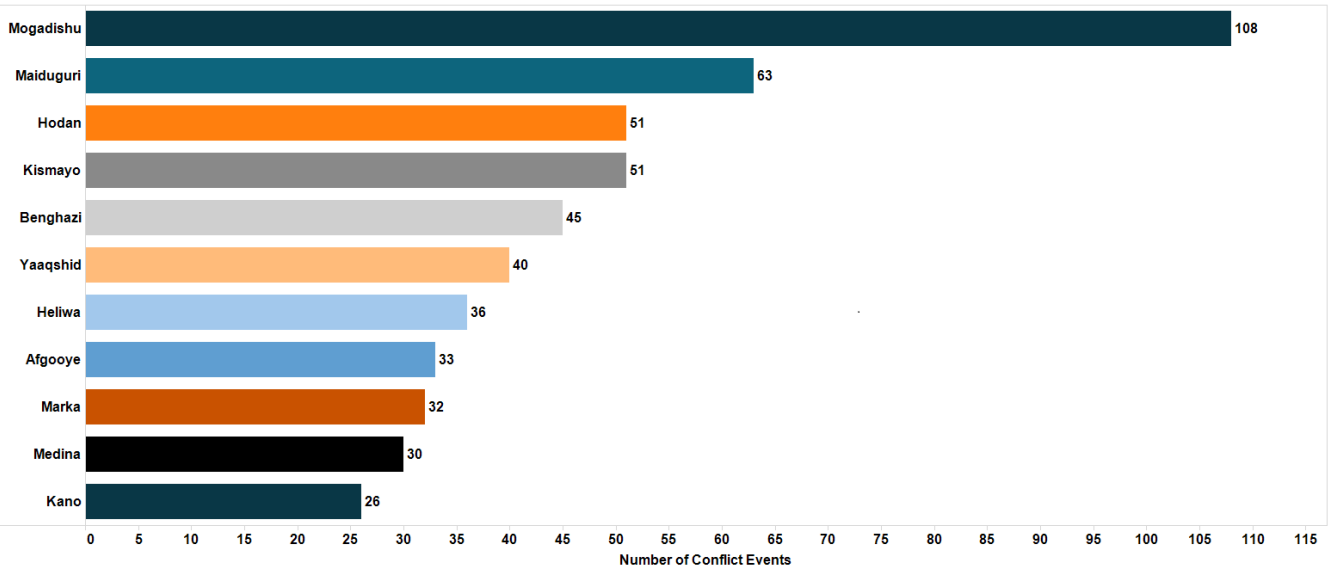


Figure 14: Conflict Events Involving IEDs by Most Active Locations in Africa, 1 January 1997-1 November 2014

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 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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