

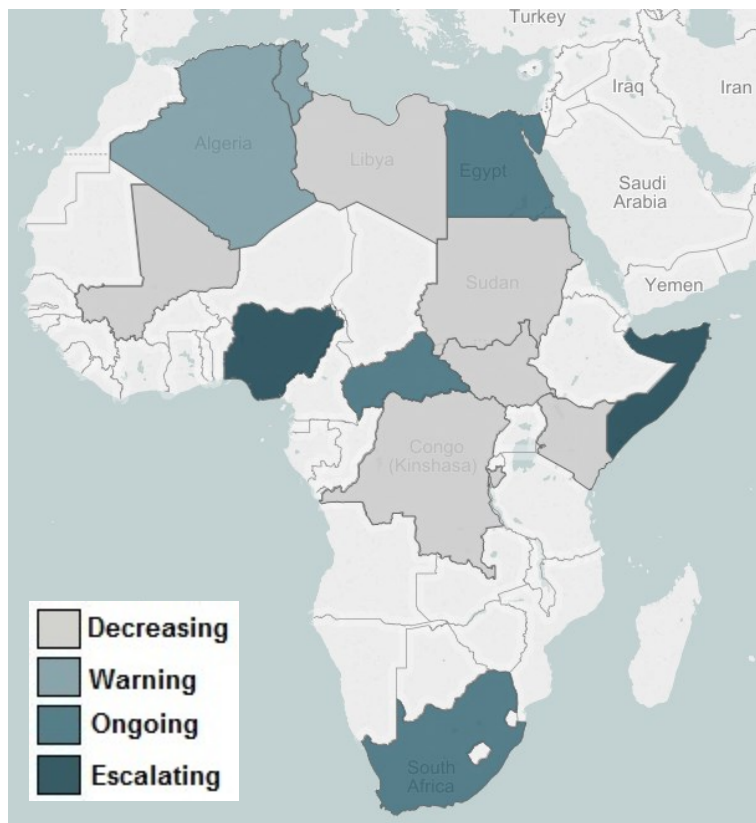
CONFLICT TRENDS (NO. 40)

REAL-TIME ANALYSIS OF AFRICAN POLITICAL VIOLENCE, AUGUST 2015

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. Weekly updates to realtime conflict event data are published on the [ACLED website](#), and are also available through our research partners at [Climate Change and African Political Stability \(CCAPS\)](#).

This month's issue focuses on **Algeria's** fragile security situation, tentative peace agreements and violence between Islamic State and Al-Qaeda affiliated groups in **Libya**, strategic adaption of **Al Shabaab** forces in **Kenya**, continued **Boko Haram** attacks in **Nigeria**, increased cultural protests in **South Africa** and the impact of sweeping security measures in **Tunisia** following the Sousse attack. Two Special Reports focus on **peacekeeping and violence against civilians** and **governance and conflict**.

Elsewhere on the continent, conflict events declined in **Burundi** and **Democratic Republic of Congo** and clashes intensified as AMISOM forces advanced on Al Shabaab positions in south-west **Somalia**.



Conflict Trajectory, August 2015

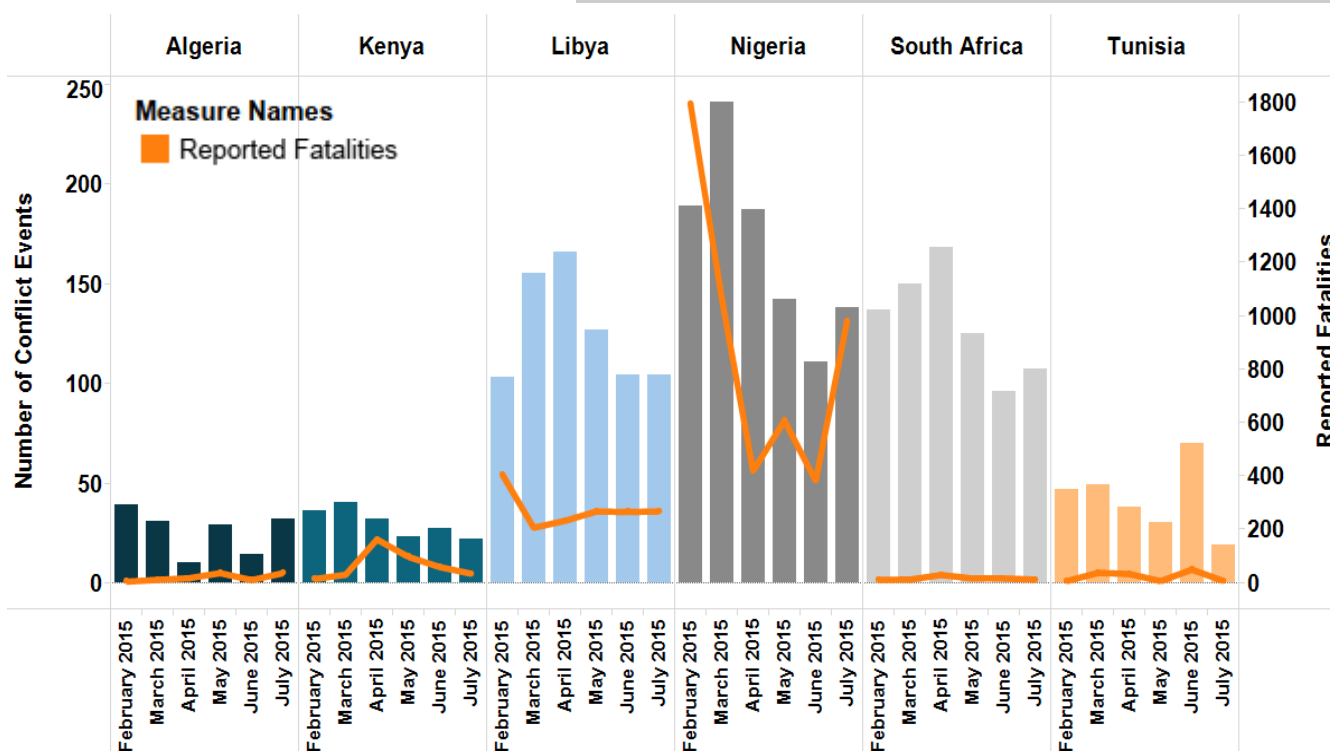


Figure 1: Conflict Events and Reported Fatalities by Country, February - July 2015.

Algeria

Despite its relative stability in a precarious regional context, a recurrence of violence in July has raised concerns over Algeria’s unresolved problems. A critical socio-economic situation is putting Algeria’s peripheral regions – where conflict activity has remained high since the beginning of 2015 (see Figure 2) – under constant pressure, exacerbating popular grievances and igniting long-lasting tensions.

Earlier this year, a protest movement emerged in the wilayas of Adrar and Tamanrasset over a proposed project of shale gas exploitation in the Ahnet Basin (ACLED, February 2015). On July 7-8, 23 people were reported dead during intercommunal clashes in the M’zab Valley, 600 km south of Algiers. After months of sporadic confrontations between the Mozabite Berber and Chaamba Arab communities, the towns of Guerrara, Berriane and Ghardaia saw an unprecedented escalation of violence that forced the police to intervene and restore public order (Al Jazeera, 10 July 2015). Although hostilities in Ghardaia region had been mounting since late 2013, when a Berber shrine was vandalised, the government has failed in containing violence between the two communities.

These episodes reflect Algeria’s problematic governance. While the 78-year-old President Abdelaziz Bouteflika vowed to bring about change by replacing senior security leaders after tensions in Ghardaia, plummeting global energy prices and shrinking foreign reserves are negatively affecting Algerian economy (Africa Confidential, 23 July

2015). Should these trends continue, the country’s ageing leadership may run out of means to buy off the loyalty of its citizens and secure stability as it did to avert revolt in 2011.

At the same time, military forces are grappling with frequent lethal incursions by Islamist groups. On July 16, nine soldiers were killed in an ambush carried out by Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in the northern region of Ain Defla (Radio France Internationale, 18 July 2015). This attack indicates that Islamists are attempting to extend their area of activity to outside the Kabylie, which includes the provinces of Tizi Ouzou, Boumerdes, Bouira and Bejaia, where armed groups have mostly operated in the past few years. It also points to the increasing pressure faced by AQIM, which has to expand its outreach in order to compete with other Islamist groups, including the Daesh-aligned Jund al-Khilafa.

According to local sources, AQIM’s leader Abdelmalek Droukdel would have reached a compromise with Mokhtar Belmokhtar’s Al Mourabitoun group to counter the rise of the Soldiers of the Caliphate in Algeria (Africa Confidential, 23 July 2015). Belmokhtar, who was reported dead during a US air strike in Libya in June, had previously denied claims that his group pledged allegiance to Daesh. Although the Algerian security forces have thus far succeeded in restricting the operational capacities of Islamist groups, persisting instability in neighbouring Libya and Mali may increasingly spill across the Algerian borders.

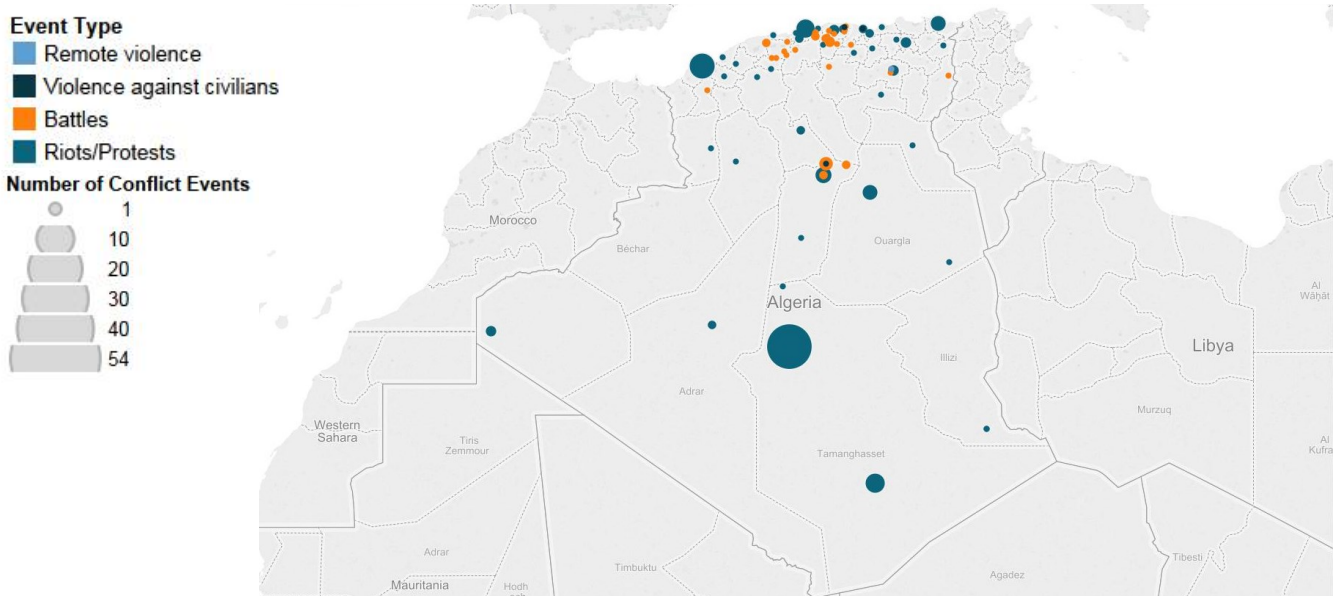


Figure 2: Number of Conflict Events by Event Type in Algeria, from January - July 2015.

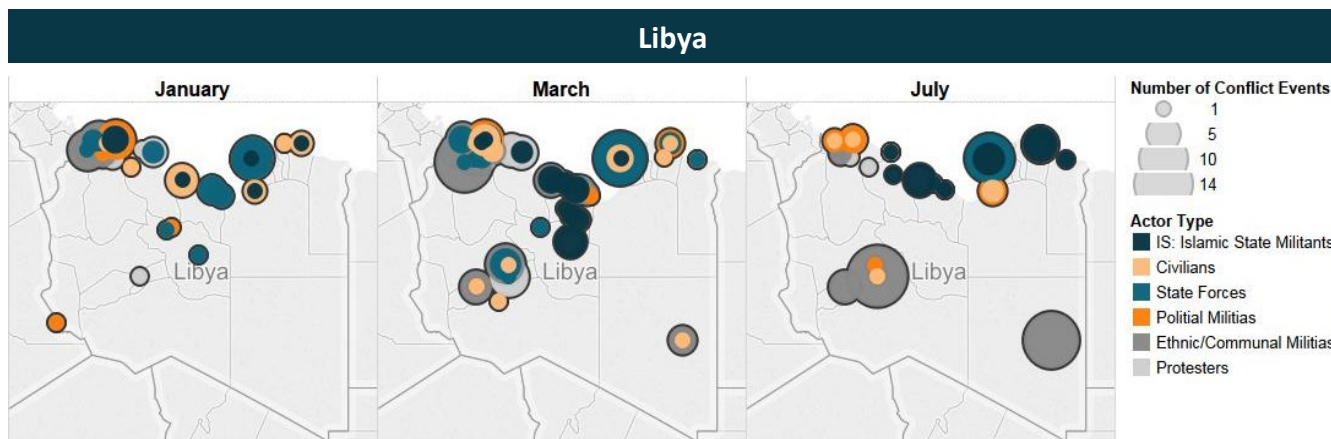


Figure 3: Number of Conflict Events by Actor Type in Libya, January, March and July 2015.

Conflict events in Libya were subject to a slight rise in July, although they steadily fell in the previous two months. Reported fatalities remained relatively constant with just over 250 deaths reported since May 2015. With overlapping conflicts occurring in distinct areas across Libya, this trend reflects stalemates on several battlefronts, including fighting in Benghazi as well as the subdued advance of the Islamic State due to confrontations with the Abu Salim Martyrs’ Brigade (ASMB). Furthermore, developments in the UNSMIL peace talks in Skhirat appear to have led to a diminishing role played by Operation Libya Dawn forces.

Fighting in Benghazi once again intensified as Islamic State militants join Ansar al-Sharia acting under the Benghazi Revolutionaries Shura Council (BRSC) to resist the Libya National Army offensive. Clashes continue to be concentrated in pockets of the city with prominent fighting taking place in the Leithi, Sabri and Buatni districts. Yet, the progress of General Khalifah Haftar’s forces remains stifled as the Special Forces soldiers sustain heavy losses in close combat. As the impasse carries on, morale within the army appears to be low, as Islamist snipers, booby-trapped houses and suicide bombers have impeded the efficiency of the operation ([Libya Herald, 30 July 2015](#)).

Despite the increased presence of Islamic State militants within Benghazi, their overall territorial influence both within Benghazi and within Libya as a country has diminished since March 2015 (see Figure 3). Whilst the overall activity of IS militants has steadily increased, their extension and reach has been limited. Islamic State fighters were operating over a larger territory in March, particularly concentrated in the central Sirte basin, and their substantial territorial gains looked to put the city of Misrata, the dominant player in the Libya Dawn coalition, under increased pressure. By July 2015 the Al-Qaeda affiliated ASMB re-established itself, driving IS militants out from

their central position in Derna into the farming areas of Al-Fatayah and Korfat Al-Saba'h that lie to the east of the city. These clashes reflect broader ideological divisions between the Islamic State and Al Qaeda leadership across the MENA region.

The ASMB assumed a role similar to the Al-Nusra Front by acting as a buffer between the Shura Council of Islamic Youth (Islamic State) and the military establishments in Libya. The latest bout of fighting started on the 10th June after accusations that Islamic State militants killed Naseer al-Akr. ([Associated Press, 11 June 2015](#)) cited Akr as the head of the Shura Council of Mujahideen in Derna, established in December 2014 as a response to the Operation Dignity offensive in Benghazi. Under this coalition is the ASMB. Ensuing clashes between the ASMB and SCYI saw ASMB regain control of the city of Derna, replacing black ISIS flags that hung around the city with the Libyan tricolour.

Explanations for the clashes have thus far centred upon the divergent ideologies between the two groups as well as a contest over power and resources ([Associated Press, 10 June 2015](#)). As a Salafi-nationalist group ([The Red Team Analysis, 26 January 2015](#)) the ASMB falls outside of the “global Jihadi milieu” according to Aaron Y. Zelin of the Washington Institute. Conversely, the Shura Council of Islamic Youth under the IS umbrella are orientated towards a global expansionist methodology. The nature of this ideological split is similar to that in Syria, where the Al-Nusra Front rejected allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi’s caliphate, aligning itself with Al-Qaeda, prompting hostility between them and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). In Libya, the group’s distinct histories, methodologies and strategies have meant that the ASMB is incompatible with the Islamic States’ co-optive strategies to absorb local militant groups. Furthermore, ASMB’s acquies-

Libya

cence to the orthodox political process has sought to antagonise the SCiy. A flashpoint of contestation is that ASMB provided shelter to Mustafa Abdel Jalil, the Chairman of the National Transitional Council (NTC) and that they operated under the remit of the Interior Minister during 2012 ([The Maghrebi Note, 16 December 2014](#)).

The Islamic State’s expanding activity occurred simultaneously as the stitching on the loosely structured alliances in Libya’s civil conflict started to fray. On 15th June, the Misrata-dominated Libya Dawn coalition fractured further after Saleh Badi announced the formation of the “Steadfastness Front”, charged with protecting Tripoli from brazen attacks. Some believed Badi was orchestrating a coup to counter the LNA reasserting power. As the GNC loses its grip over its allied forces, Salah Badi could be jockeying for political position and buy-in once Libya forms a transitional unity government. Others saw it as an attempt to stem the disintegration of Libya Dawn after it began unravelling when two of the most influential Misratan brigades - the Halboos and the 3rd Force - scaled down their operations and agreed peace deals with a number of pro-House of Representative groups, including Wersheffana elders in April ([Libya Herald, 18 June 2015](#)).

This set the ball in motion for a cascade of pro-Libya Dawn towns in the West to seek reconciliation with opposition

groups or agreeing to allow the Libya National Army (LNA) to assume security in their regions (see Figure 4). On 12th July, these agreements culminated in the initial signing of the UNSMIL Peace Agreement to form a one-year government of national accord, albeit with the absence of representatives from the Tripoli-based parliament, the General National Congress (GNC).

From an initial assessment, the agreements made by fighters on the ground and the UN Peace Negotiations have significantly reduced communal violence between armed brigades supporting Operation Libya Dawn and Zintan and Wersheffana groups. Compared to March and April, the Western Nafusa mountain region south of Tripoli witnessed a significant drop in activity in July (see Figure 3).

Instead, since the middle of July, ethnic tensions have grown in the southern towns of Sabha between Tabu-Tuareg groups and in Kufrah and Obari, where hostilities between Zwai and Tabu communities have once again erupted since March (see Figure 3). Although situated within the broader struggle for power in Libya with each side offering tacit support to rival parliaments, these clashes largely centre on economic competition, dominated by smuggling routes and distribution networks ([International Business Times, 24 July 2015](#)).

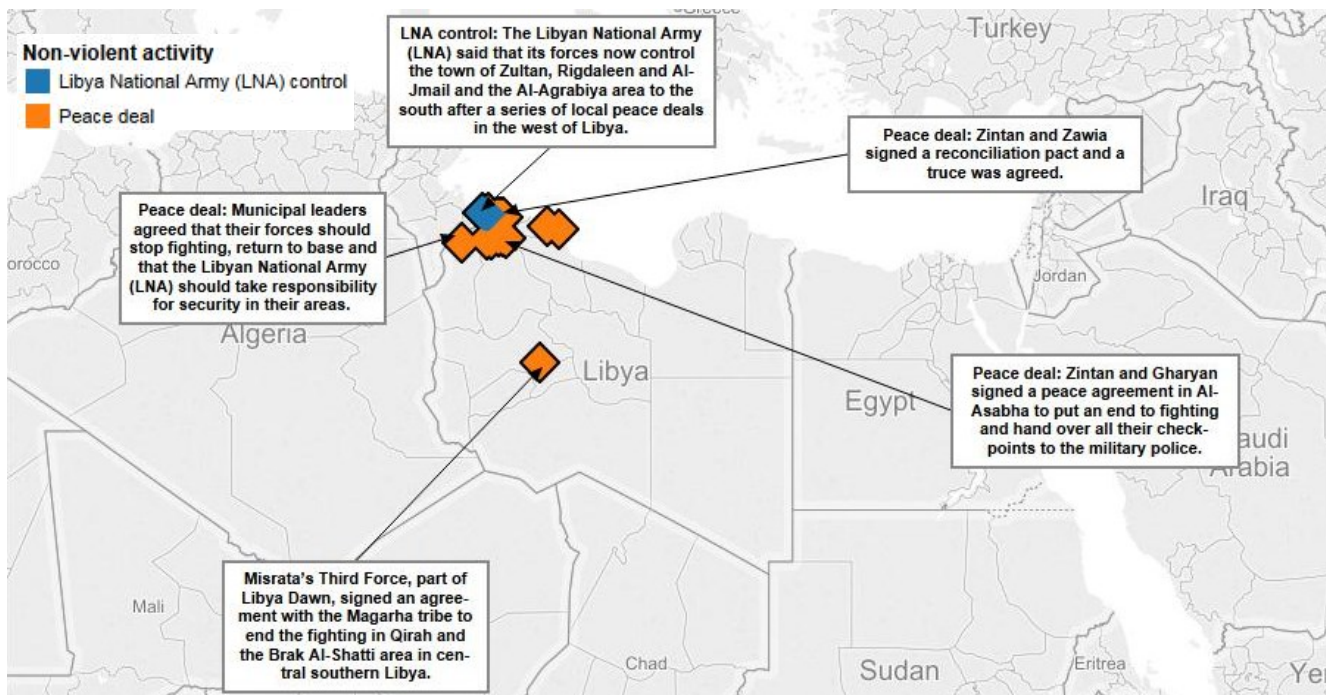


Figure 4: Peace Deals and Areas Under Libya National Army (LNA) Control in Libya, from April - June 2015.

Kenya

In July, US President Barack Obama completed his first official visit to Kenya, which he described as a country ‘at a crossroads – a moment filled with peril, but also enormous pride.’ ([Obama, 26 July 2015](#)). Security was high on the agenda for discussions, as Obama outlined ‘similar threats of terrorism’ faced by the US. Obama’s visit coincided with on-going violence by Al Shabaab and aligned forces in Kenya, but while Al Shabaab has been active in the country for several years, and carried out multiple high-profile attacks over that time, the past few months have illustrated some emerging dynamics and shifts.

Al Shabaab’s profile in Kenya reflects a three-pronged evolution in strategy by the group. First, the group has been concentrating its activity in the Coastal and North-

Eastern provinces in 2015, in spite of a heavy presence in Nairobi in 2013 and 2014 (*see* Figure 5). The conditions in these regions, which are historically marginalised and under-developed compared to much of Kenya, are being strategically exploited by Al Shabaab in a refocusing of their energy and resources away from the capital city, and towards these more peripheral communities.

A related second development is the solidification of a strategy of increasingly deliberate, selective targeting of civilians, with Al Shabaab explicitly targeting victims perceived as outsiders in the community. The Mpeketoni attacks in June 2014 ([BBC News, 16 June 2014](#)), the targeted killings of non-Muslims at the Kormey quarry in December of last year ([BBC News, 2 December 2014](#)) and

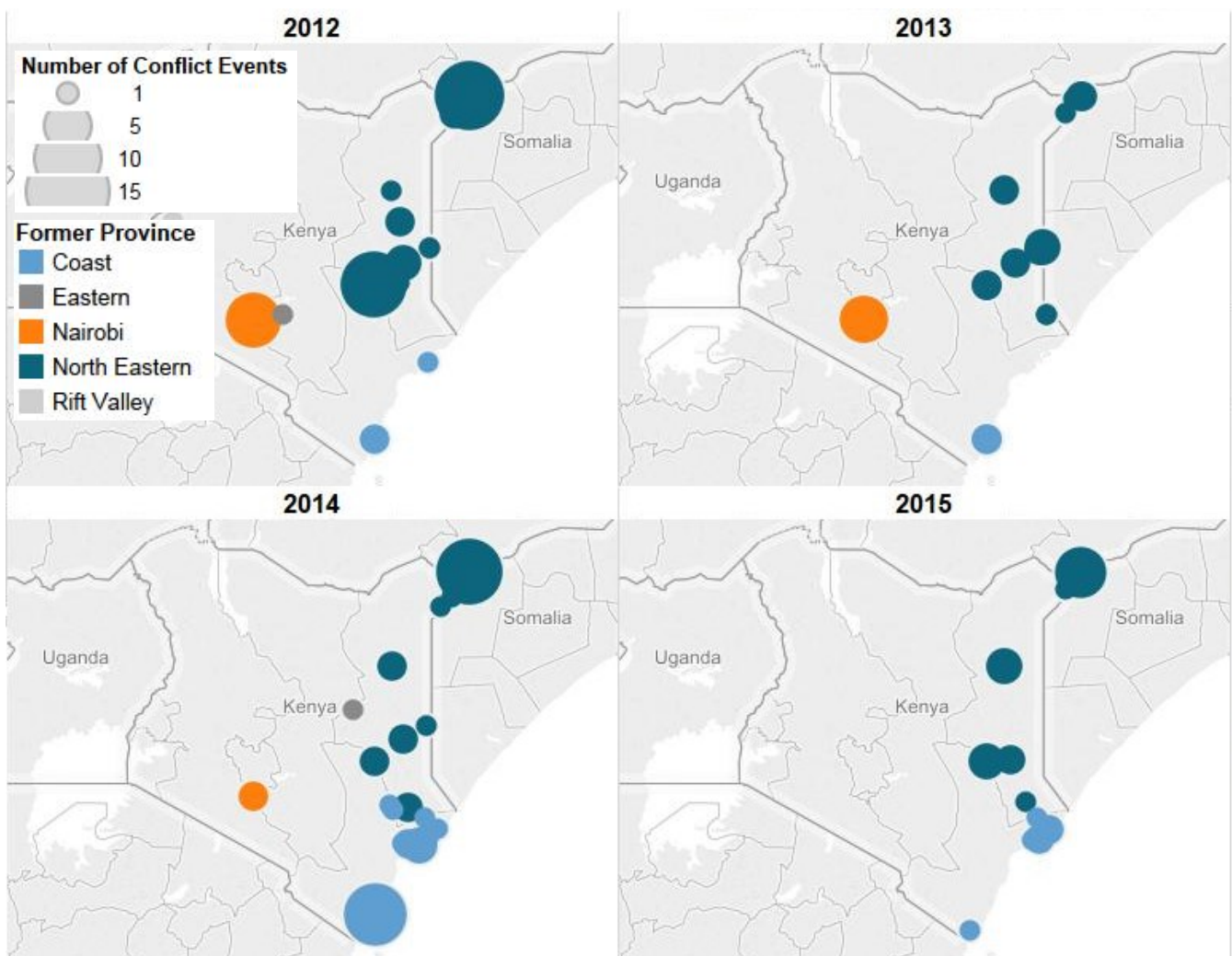


Figure 5: Locations of Al Shabaab Violence by Former Province in Kenya, from January 2012 - July 2015.

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Kenya

at Garissa University College in April of 2015 ([Reuters, 2 April 2015](#)) are ready examples of this trend. July witnessed another high-fatality attack in which 14 people were killed in an overnight attack in Mandera, which Al Shabaab described as deliberately targeting ‘Kenyan Christians’ ([CNN, 7 July 2015](#)). The group has clearly established a pattern of explicitly isolating non-indigenous or non-Muslim civilians in targeted attacks, in a tactic which strategically exploits Kenya’s religious and ethnic divisions, and issues around access to land, power and privilege ([Lind and Dowd, 2015](#)). This tactic differs markedly from the earlier strategies of the group, which in 2011 and 2012, engaged in lower-intensity, indiscriminate attacks in Nairobi, characterised by grenade attacks on buses, shopping areas and social venues. The evolution illustrates Al Shabaab’s deft adaptation to political conditions in Kenya.

Finally, and perhaps most ominously, the group is now seizing territory-- even if only briefly-- following a series of reports in May, June and July that Al Shabaab forces had temporarily gained control of remote villages and rural mosques in the country’s North Eastern and Coast provinces. The move echoes the evolution of Boko Haram in Nigeria, which turned to seizing territory rather rapidly, and made quick progress in expanding its control across large parts of Nigeria’s far north-east. In contrast to Boko Haram, Al Shabaab has not reportedly used any violence yet in its takeover of territory, involving only temporary incursions by forces into remote sites, although some seizures have prompted waves of displacement. Moreover, the seizures have been brief and therefore, most likely,

symbolic. Like Boko Haram, it is unlikely the group could effectively seize and hold territory for any extended period of time, although their ability to do so even briefly shines a spotlight on weaknesses in two of the continent’s most powerful economies. A final difference worth noting is that in contrast to Boko Haram, Al Shabaab has an organisational legacy of ruling and administering territory in South Central Somalia, where its governing structures and bureaucracy developed over several years of uninterrupted rule. While Al Shabaab in Kenya may, as yet, lack the capacity to hold territory, it has both the ambition and history to govern it.

In looking to what the coming months might hold for Al Shabaab violence in Kenya, a fourth pattern in the group’s activity is worth highlighting: throughout its history in Kenya, Al Shabaab violence has been characterised by peaks and lulls in activity levels, with a low level of volatility in 2011-2012, and an increasing stark contrast between spikes of high-fatality violence, and low-activity ‘regrouping’ periods from late-2013 onwards.

These spikes are most apparent in September 2013, June 2014, December 2014, and April 2015, and characterised by a gradual reduction in the intervening period between spikes. The Garissa attack in April represents the single most fatal month in the group’s history of violence in Kenya (see Figure 6), but if Al Shabaab’s established cycle of high-fatality violence followed by lower-activity intervening periods holds true, we can expect a circuitous return to high-violence levels in the coming months.

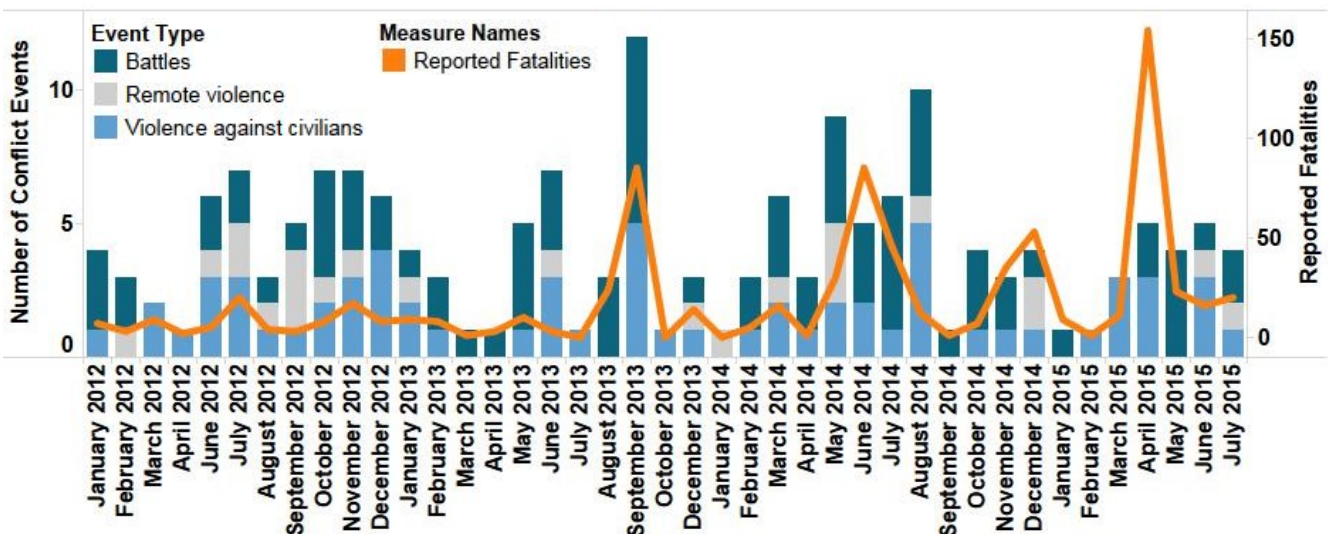


Figure 6: Al Shabaab Violence and Reported Fatalities by Type in Kenya, from January 2012 - July 2015.

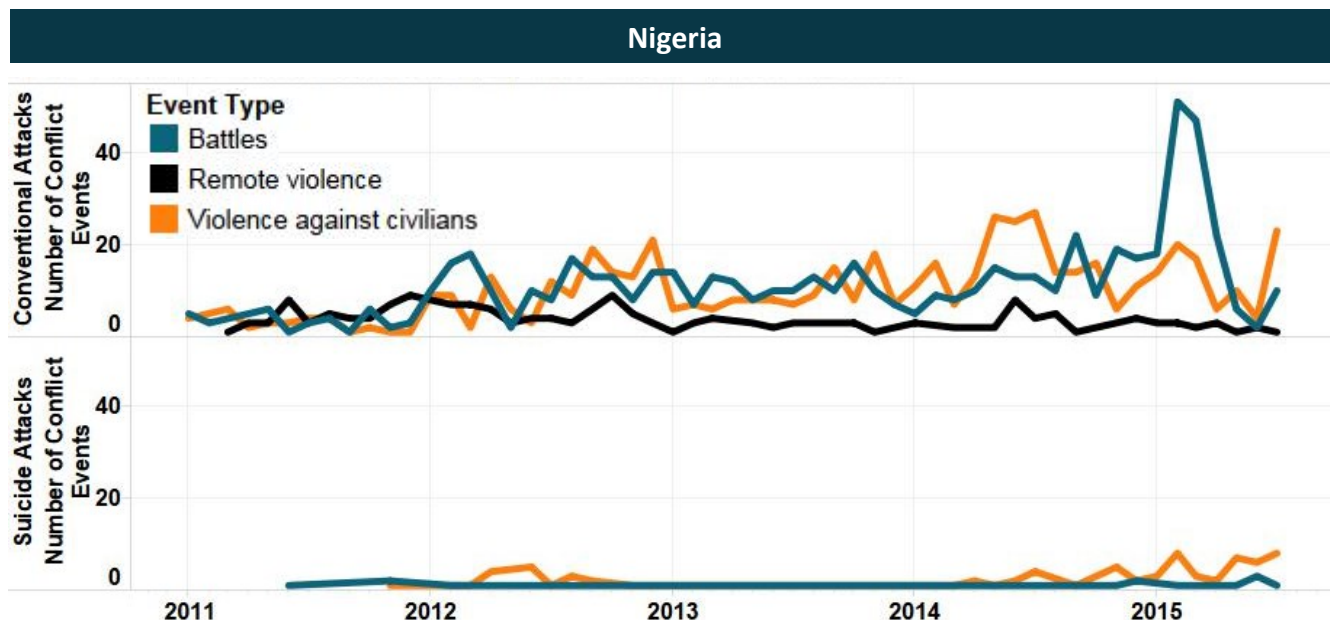


Figure 7: Number of Conflict Events by Tactic by Boko Haram in Nigeria, from January 2011 - July 2015.

Political violence in Nigeria resulted in 980 reported fatalities in July, the highest count since March 2015. This increase in fatalities is largely due to the actions of Boko Haram, which has increased its campaign of violence against civilians. In July, Boko Haram was responsible for 67.3% of all civilian fatalities, the highest proportion since January 2015. This represents a substantial increase on June and May, when actions by Boko Haram accounted for 40.3% and 29.9% of civilian fatalities respectively. Despite this poor sign of progress, President Buhari has predicted that the insurgency will be defeated by December of this year ([Reuters, 15 May 2015](#); [Laccino, 3 August 2015](#)).

In spite of their lethality, Boko Haram still seems to be comparatively weak by other measures: the group has not successfully captured territory since May when it asserted control over the medium-sized town of Marte. This weakness has not translated into reduced lethality as the group has increased its reliance on suicide attacks and bombings in major metropolitan areas, such as Gombe and Maidaguri, as a means to retain its coercive hold over the population.

Improvised explosive devices and bomb attacks, while not the preserve of the weak, enable actors that lack the ability or will to seize territory from the government to discredit the government's monopoly on violence and intimidate or demoralise the citizenry ([ACLED, 29 October 2014](#)). Accordingly, the rise in Boko Haram's use of suicide bombings has been accompanied by a noticeable

decline in the number of battles with the government since March 2015 (see Figure 7).

President Buhari made security in the North-East a cornerstone of his electoral platform, and Boko Haram's attacks pose a severe risk to his administration's perceived legitimacy ([Nossiter, 1 April 2015](#)). Unlike the previous administration, Buhari has strong support in the states most affected by Boko Haram's campaign, meaning that sustained attacks could undermine the regime's electoral bulwark ([BBC News, 13 April 2015](#)).

However, Boko Haram's shifting tactics will likely necessitate a change in the government's counter-insurgency strategy. If the group continues to rely on urban bombings and mass shootings, the government response may be characterised by mass arrests and raids, instead of battles and aerial strikes. These tactics carry their own risks as similar operations in Kenya by anti-terrorist units have been accused of driving radicalisation and undermining human rights ([Crisis Group, 25 January 2012](#); [Anderson, 15 June 2015](#)). The Nigerian security services have already proved all too willing to ignore human rights and engage in atrocities in its fight against Boko Haram ([Amnesty International, 5 August 2014](#)). Boko Haram itself functions as a cautionary tale of the risk of overt state violence fomenting insurrection, with the group stating on its re-emergence in 2010/2011 that it sought to avenge the death of its former leader, Mohammed Yusuf, who died in police custody ([BBC News, 13 July 2011](#)).

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South Africa

Riots and protests increased this month in South Africa with Gauteng, Western Cape and Eastern Cape having the highest incidence of demonstrations (see Figure 8). In spite of this general increase, service delivery protests remained low and accounted for only 10% of all demonstrations. This represents a decrease from June (15.6%) and May (15%). Instead most protest action seemed to focus around cultural and economic issues.

Universities remain a centre of protest primarily over cultural issues pertaining to accessibility to non-white students. Ever since the ‘Rhodes Must Fall’ protests earlier this year resulted in the removal of the statue of Cecil Rhodes from the University of Cape Town ([ACLED, April](#)

[2015](#)), universities have come under increasing pressure to abandon the symbols and trappings of their apartheid past. These demands for transformation have continued at other universities such as Stellenbosch, where students are demanding that lectures be taught in English rather than Afrikaans, which they claim is discriminatory against non-Afrikaans speakers ([Mtembu, 1 August 2015](#)).

In Gauteng, taxi drivers were responsible for a large proportion of the province’s unrest. In Mamelodi, taxi drivers rioted over the introduction of a subsidised bus service which they claimed would put them out of business. In some cases, the demonstrators resorted to firing upon bus passengers ([Times Live, 4 July 2015](#)).

Taxi drivers have previously used their integral position as transport for the urban poor, as well as violence, to protest against attempts by the state to regulate the industry or expand the infrastructure for alternative means of travel ([Rees, 8 June 2009](#)). Eastern Cape similarly suffered from numerous economically orientated demonstrations. These were generally protests by large unions against the state or municipal government over unpaid wages, insufficient equipment or the reversal of previous benefits.

KwaZulu-Natal had the highest incidence of violence against civilians in both aggregate and relative terms. Much of this violence has been centred in the on-going conflict in Glebelands hostel in Durban’s Umlazi Township. The hostel has been wracked by assassinations since mid-2014 with two occurring in July. The conflict is reportedly between two African National Congress (ANC) factions, one supporting ward councillor Robert Mzobe and the other comprising his opponents, including block committee chairpersons ([Asmal and Maregele, 29 November 2014](#)).

Political assassinations were witnessed elsewhere in the province with an Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) ward chairman murdered in KwaMashu, a township where multiple IFP politicians have been killed due to rivalry with the ruling ANC and splinter-faction National Freedom Party ([ENCA, 15 July 2015](#)). In Empangeni, the bodyguard of the provincial premier, Senzo Mchunu, was killed in a hit speculated to be related to intra-ANC rivalry. There are fears that political killings in KwaZulu-Natal may increase in the run-up to the 2016 municipal elections as assassinations spike when parties begin to draft the local leadership rosters ([News24, 20 July 2015](#)).

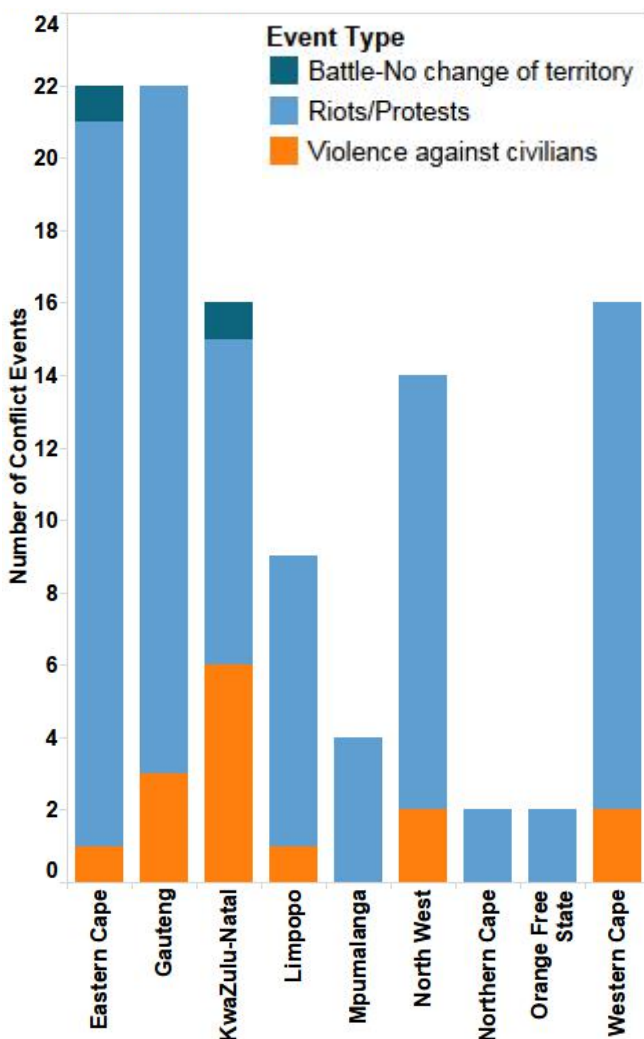


Figure 8: Number of Conflict Events by Type and Province in South Africa, July 2015.

Tunisia

In the immediate aftermath of the Islamist attack on Marhaba hotel in Sousse, Tunisia’s government adopted urgent measures aimed at safeguarding tourist sites and preventing other attacks on Tunisian soil. Under the state of emergency declared by President Essebsi on July 4, thousands of army troops have been deployed nationwide for reasons of internal security, while unauthorised rallies and mosques were either banned or shut down.

July’s conflict levels in Tunisia thus reflect these recent developments. The number of conflict events in July fell by more than 70% compared to the same period in June, when conflict levels reached their highest since January 2012. This general decrease notwithstanding, there exist significant differences in terms of conflict activity (see Figure 9). While riots and protests saw the most drastic decrease, due to the entry into force of governmental restrictions and the end of prolonged sit-ins in the periphery, Tunisian security forces conducted a series of military operations against Islamist militias. During two raids in Gafsa and Bizerte regions, the army killed six Islamist combatants, including a senior leader of the Al Qaeda-affiliated Okba Ibn Nafaa Brigade ([France 24, 12 July 2015](#)).

As the country begins to face the political and economic consequences of the recent attacks on security forces and foreign nationals, Tunisian authorities have launched a new security clampdown. On July 25, Tunisia’s Parliament passed an anti-terrorism legislation that extends the pre-trial detention from six to fifteen days and introduces capital punishment for terrorism-related charges, including the dissemination of information connected to terrorist

attacks ([Jeune Afrique, 25 July 2015](#)). The adoption of the new anti-terrorism law, which replaces the previous one adopted in 2003 under Ben Ali’s regime, came a few days before the extension of the country’s state of emergency for an additional period of two months ([Radio France Internationale, 31 July 2015](#)).

Despite a nearly unanimous vote in Parliament, the measures introduced by the government attracted widespread criticism from human rights groups. Eight non-governmental organisations, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, condemned Tunisia’s new antiterrorism law because it “imperils human rights and lacks the necessary safeguards against abuse” ([Human Rights Watch, 31 July 2015](#)). According to these NGOs, the law grants broad and ill-defined powers to security forces, while the extension of pre-trial custody exposes detainees to torture and mistreatment.

Prioritising security over human rights, the Tunisian government maintains that such repressive measures are necessary to restore the country’s internal security and confront radical groups effectively. However, repression alone will hardly contain violence in the medium and in the long term. Tunisian authorities will also need to focus on a comprehensive security sector reform that could root out corruption and prevent abuses of the armed forces ([International Crisis Group, 23 July 2015](#)). Should the government fail in improving the organisation and the conduct of its police, violent radical groups may succeed in attracting more militants while Tunisia’s fragile democracy will risk precipitating into further instability.

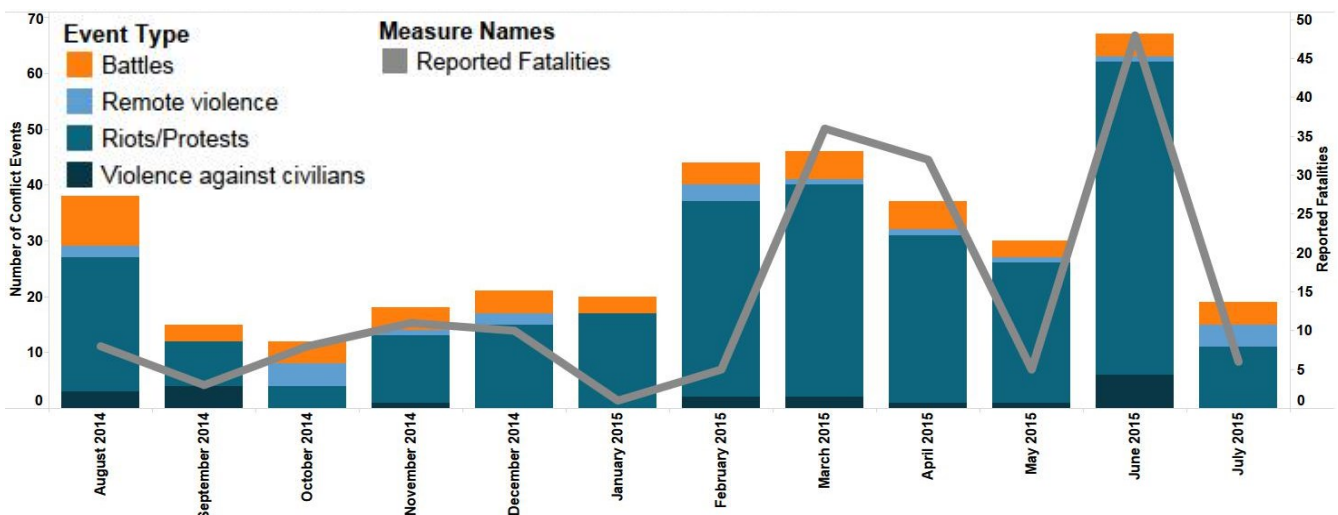


Figure 9: Number of Conflict Events and Reported Fatalities by Event Type in Tunisia, from August 2014 - July 2015.

Special Focus Topic: Governance and Conflict

The World Governance Indicators (WGI), produced by Kaufmann, Kraay, and Mastruzzi (2014), measure governance defined as “the set of traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised; this includes (1) the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced, (2) the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies, and (3) the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them.”

Drawing on information from a large number of different data sources, six broad dimensions are measured and capture specific facets of governance including: voice and accountability; political stability and the absence of violence/terrorism; government effectiveness; regulatory quality; rule of law; and control of corruption. In the empirical literature, these six indicators are often used to create a composite (equally-weighted) index (for example, see: Neumayer, 2002; Beck & Laeven, 2006; Easterly, 2007).

Using real-time conflict data from ACLED (from January 2014 to August 2015) and the composite (equally-weighted) World Governance Indicator, the effect of ‘good governance’ on future conflict and violence in Africa is explored here. Figure 10 maps the geographic locations of all political conflict in Africa in 2014 and 2015 thus far, over a map of the 2013 composite governance indicators of African states – in which higher indicator scores (green) denote better governance. States with the lowest governance scores reported 4,192 conflict events and 6,537 fatalities on average during the time period; those with scores at the medium level reported 298 conflict events and 932 fatalities on average; and states with the highest scores reported only 6 conflict events and 0 fatalities on average during the time period.

As expected, states with the lowest indicator scores – such as Somalia and Central African Republic – do indeed exhibit extremely high levels of violence, while states such as Botswana – exhibiting the highest indicator score on the continent – see extremely low relative levels of conflict. However, South Africa – with the third highest governance score on the continent – is responsible for almost one-fifth of all riots and protests occurring on the continent during the time period, as well as approximately 5% of all violence against civilians, suggesting it is a hotbed of contention. These findings may be obscured if solely relying on the composite index without considering how

forms of political violence can be endogenous to the type, strength and stability of established political institutions (see Choi & Raleigh, 2014). Further, the need for a differently-weighted, annually-calculated index may facilitate better analysis of how violence and governance correspond (see Pinar, 2014).

Numerous studies argue for a link between good governance practices and successful development strategies, contending that institutional quality is the most important determinant of income differences and growth patterns amongst countries (for example, see: North, 1990; Acemoglu, Johnson, & Robinson, 2001; Easterly & Levine, 2003). And others present findings suggesting that ‘good governance’ practices best explain various types of conflict, especially deprivation-based conflict which can be fueled by social inequalities (Hegre & Nygård, 2014). While institutional quality may be an important mechanism in shaping conflict and development, it is important to be cognizant of not imposing a “one-best-way model”. Andrews (2008) finds that this has often been the case with the ‘good governance agenda’, arguing that this model “lacks consistency, ...seems inappropriate for use in the development dialogue and is not easily replicated... [resembling] a set of well meaning but problematic proverbs” (p.379).

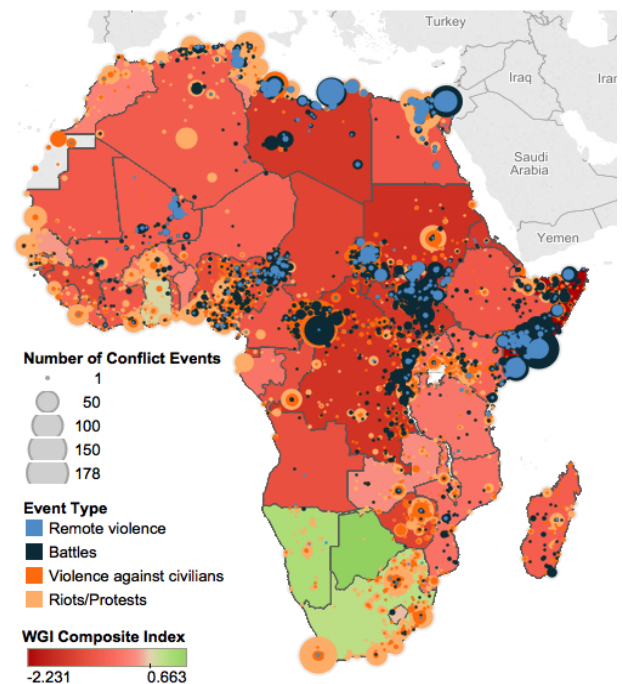


Figure 10: Good Governance and Political Conflict in Africa, from January 2014 - August 2015.

Special Focus Topic: Peacekeeping and Violence Against Civilians

Up until the end of the 1990's, United Nations (UN) peacekeeping (PK) missions did not necessarily specify the protection of civilians (PoC) in their mandate under 'immediate threats of physical violence' (Holt et al., 2009). Nor did their mandates clearly permit the "use of force" to fulfil their mission. However, failures of peacekeeping in the 1990s, associated with the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 and the Srebrenica massacre a year later, pushed the UN to revise their approach. The Brahimi Report (UN, 21 August 2000) suggested essential reforms for subsequent PK deployments. It proposed the need for peacekeepers to be allowed to fulfil their mandate using "all necessary means." Some mandates were subsequently adjusted, explicitly naming and targeting the main security threat, surpassing the previous neutrality of previous peacekeeping missions. Moreover, most of the mandates from then on included PoC. Investigating this evolution over the 1997-2014 period, this piece addresses whether PK missions have subsequently been effective at reducing violence against civilians (VAC), and whether the shift in mandates has resulted in a shift in the frequency and levels of VAC.

Table 1 presents a categorisation of PK operations deployed from 1997 to 2014 according to their mandates. A limited mandate is defined as one which restricts the use of force except in cases of self-defence. It is characterised by PK operations with an observer mandate, or with a primarily monitoring (border or cease-fire) function. Examples include the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola (MONUA). A robust mandate is defined as one which permits the use of "all means necessary" to fulfil

the mandate or parts thereof. It is typically characterised by higher levels of troops compared to limited mandate missions. Examples include the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB). An expanded mandate is defined as one in which a mission is tasked with targeting a specific armed group. It is characterised by the use of force, alongside a governmental ally, against an enemy explicitly named within the mandate. Examples include the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) with Al Shabaab in Somalia.

Although the period 1997-2014 witnessed an overall increase in levels of VAC (from 29 events in January 1997 to a maximum of 303 in January 2014), the relative share of VAC as a proportion of total violence levels remained consistent over this time, constituting roughly one-third of all violent events on average. However, this overall pattern obscures some variation and volatility in specific time periods and contexts. For instance, the Sierra Leonean crisis provoked an increase in the share of VAC from the first quarter of 1997 (when anti-civilian violence constituted one-third of all events in the dataset) to the second quarter of 1998 (when it made up to half of all violent events across the continent). Disaggregated analysis allows us to assess whether PK deployments succeeded in reducing VAC in specific contexts.

Sierra Leone experienced high levels of VAC during its conflict (1991-2002, with PK deployment from July 1998 until December 2005), with peaks of more than 50 events per month in June 1997 and February-March 1998 (see Figure 11). A 'limited' PK mission, the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNMOSIL), was deployed

	<i>Protection of Civilians</i>	<i>No Protection of Civilians</i>
<i>Limited</i>	UNMIL (2003)	MINURCA (1998); UNOMSIL (1998); MONUA (1997); UNMEE (2000); MINURCAT (2007)
<i>Robust</i>	UNAMSIL (1999); MONUC (2000); ECOMICI (2003); Artemis (2003); ONUB (2004); UNOCI (2004); UNMIS (2005); Eufor DRC (2006); Eufor Chad/CAR (2007); UNAMID (2007); MINURCAT (2009); MONUSCO (2010); UNISFA (2011); UNMISS (2011); MINUSCA (2014);	AMISOM (2007); Eufor CAR (2014)
<i>Expanded</i>	UNAMSIL (2000); AMISOM (2013); MINUSMA (2013); MONUSCO (2013);	AMISOM (2012)

Table 1: Classification of PK Missions, Based on the Content of their Mandate Concerning the 'Use of Force' and 'Protection of Civilians'.

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in July 1998. However, as an observer mission, it was poorly equipped with troops and equipment. In the months following its deployment, Sierra Leone experienced high levels of VAC with 48 events in December 1998, and an average of 17.9 events per month during UNMOSIL’s lifetime.

To address this, the UN Security Council (UNSC) approved a robust follow-up mission, the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), in November 1999. Progressively increasing the level of troops during first months of its deployment (11,000 troops in February 2000 compared to 6,000 in October 1999), and adjusting its mandate (notably to include securing key areas) (Dwan, 2002) seems to have reduced the level of VAC (Hultman et al., 2013). On average, during UNAMSIL’s deployment, there were 2.1 events of VAC per month (more than 7 times less than the UNMOSIL’s average rate). However, as Seybolt suggests, the legitimacy of UNAMSIL’s success remains questionable. Indeed, the intervention of well-equipped British troops outside of UN-command, in parallel with an end of Liberian funding to Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels, modified the balance of power (Seybolt, 2014) and may have independently lowered the imperative for civilian attacks.

In Sudan, despite successive peacekeeping deployments, levels of VAC have continued to increase. This is particularly apparent in Darfur: during the first 6 months of the United Nations–African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID)

deployment (2007-present), there were on average 2.5 events of anti-civilian violence per month; whereas during the last 6 months of 2014, civilians experienced 42.3 events on average per month. VAC as a proportion of total violence has also seen an increase of almost double (constituting 62% of all 2014 violent events in Darfur compared to 37.3% over the first year of deployment). This may be partly explained by the fact that the UNAMID mandate was severely restricted: Sudanese president al-Bashir refused a UN-led operation. Requiring the consent of the host state to deploy, UNSC agreed to a light hybrid mission (AU/UN). Therefore, the mission may not in practice meet the conditions of a robust mission.

The UNAMID mandate faces an issue in ensuring it effectively protects civilians. Technically, its ability to guarantee PoC is restricted by a use of force “within its capability and areas of deployment, without prejudice to the responsibility of the Government of the Sudan” (UN, 31 July 2007). Yet, since July 2007, and the deployment of UNAMID troops, Sudan’s security forces have been involved in 12.5% of VAC events in Darfur. Without including pro-government militia (22.5%) and paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (4.5%) this might already suggest that an increase of VAC is facilitated by the mission’s limited mandate. Moreover, as Sloan suggests, UNAMID—as well as several other UN PK missions—face a lack of required troops, equipment and leadership, which undermine potential effectiveness (Sloan, 3 June 2014).

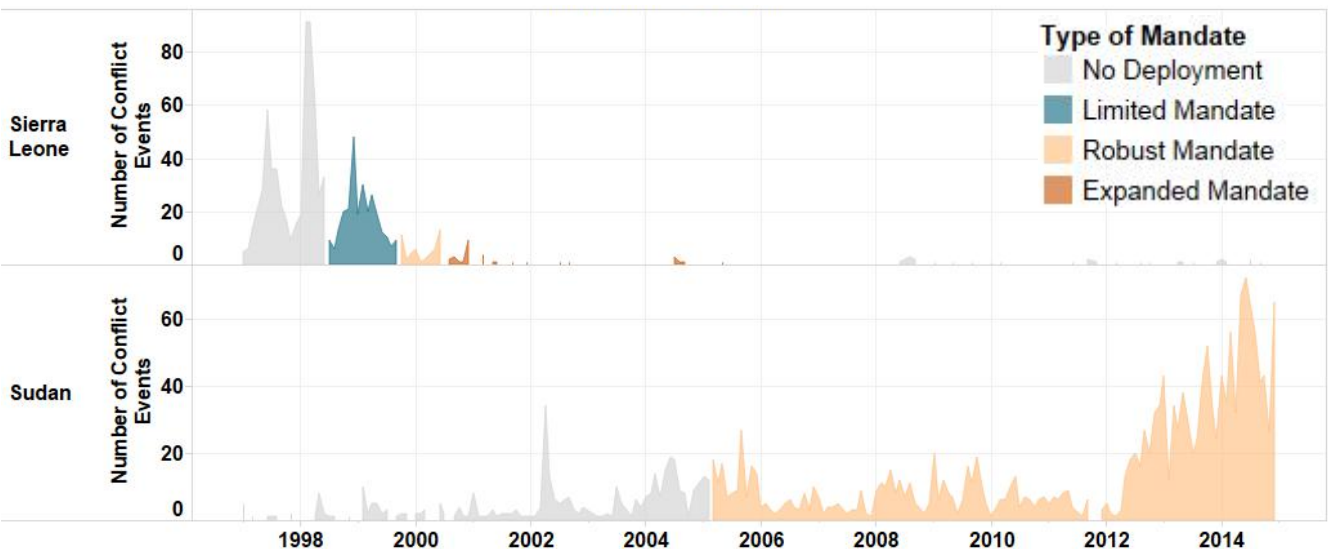


Figure 11: Violence Against Civilians in Sierra Leone and Sudan, With Regards To Deployment of Peacekeeping Missions and Content of the Mandate, 1997 - 2014.

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Specific Targets

In several situations, UNSC had to adjust mandates in order to be more effective. AMISOM, UNAMSIL and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) mandates have evolved to deter and fight respectively Al Shabaab, the RUF rebels in Sierra Leone and several armed groups in Democratic Republic of Congo. In Mali, the 2013 deployed United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) was directly mandated to work in close cooperation with other enforcement missions (the French Serval mission for instance) to deter threats from AQIM, MUJAO and Ansar Dine. Do new measures which specifically target an identified threat significantly reduce levels of VAC in these contexts?

In February 2012, AMISOM’s mandate explicitly named Al Shabaab as the main threat ([UN, 22 February 2012](#)), to be targeted by peacekeepers. As Figure 12 shows, while during the robust mandate period, levels of VAC by Al Shabaab were on average 2.7 events per month from January 2010 to January 2012; these events increased to 10.5 per month since the expansion of the mandate, and the naming of Al Shabaab of a specific threat. This includes the period from May 2013 onwards, when the UN mandated a specific, mission-wide PoC ([Williams, 2013](#)). AMISOM’s tactical strategy may in part explain its failure to curb VAC. According to Williams, although AMISOM is mandated to

support the Somalian National Army, the strategy employed involving large and concentrated battalions, instead of small units spread all over the territory, does not fit with Al Shabaab strategy. Indeed, since the end of 2012, VAC is no longer concentrated in and around Mogadishu, but spread all over the south and central regions of Somalia. Deploying small and quick units might be a solution to more effectively reduce levels of VAC ([Williams, 2014](#)).

By contrast, MONUSCO’s expanded mandate has corresponded to an overall reduction in the levels of VAC, and suggests a success strategy. MONUSCO’s expanded mandate was built around the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) deployed in March 2013 to fight the M23, ADF-NALU, LRA, FDLR and Mayi Mayi militias, alongside DR-Congo government forces. Prior to this measure, as Figure 13 shows, levels of VAC from the targeted groups during MONUSCO deployment were 19.1 events per month on average. Since March 2013, levels of VAC averaged 13.6 events per month.

Despite an increase of VAC by ADF and Mayi Mayi militias, this use of force beyond the traditional conception of peacekeeping has allowed peacekeepers to significantly reduce the absolute level of anti-civilian violence. As noted by Lamiot, MONUSCO’s success at deterring selected groups in DR-Congo and reducing VAC may be attributed to the increasing number of MONUSCO troops; weakness-

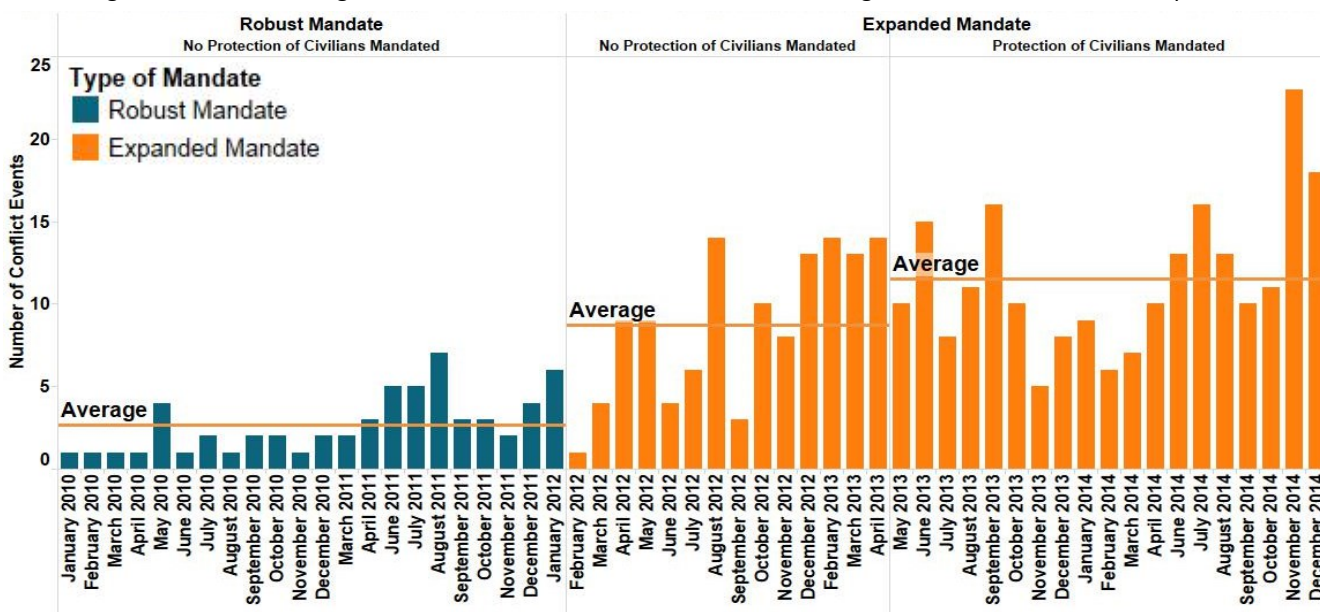


Figure 12: Violence Against Civilians by Al Shabaab in Somalia During AMISOM Deployment, With Regards to the Mandate, from August 2007 - December 2014.

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es of rebels groups, especially when external support is lacking; more traditional warfare strategies by rebel groups, which render these groups easier to target than more innovative strategies, such as terror tactics; and certain groups allying with government forces ([Lamiot, 2015](#)). This case has some similarities with Sierra Leone case, where the RUF lost support from Liberian government, alongside an increase of peacekeeping troops.

Conclusions

This special report aimed to analyse the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions in reducing levels of VAC. Overall, and in contrast with several other studies ([Hultman et al., 2013](#); [Kathman and Wood, 2014](#)), data does not suggest that peacekeepers uniformly and significantly reduce the levels of VAC during deployment. This might be attributable to different methodological approaches: other studies consider anti-civilian violence only if the incident in question resulted in at least one fatality. The ACLED dataset has a broader conception of VAC as low-intensity violent

conflicts still produce VAC, even if there are no reported fatalities.

Secondly, the findings suggest that robust mandates appear to be insufficient measures to prevent anti-civilian violence in the most intense conflict situations. In spite of the mandating of the use of force by “all means necessary,” failures have continued to occur: the Darfur crisis and recurring massacres in DR-Congo during MONUC deployment testify to recurring obstacles to PoC. These findings indicate that reducing levels of VAC may instead require comprehensive peace agreements with warring parties, rather than robust mandates alone.

Finally, expanded mandates, which explicitly name the target, *do* appear to support effective reduction in levels of VAC, but only if armed groups also experience difficulty in accessing funding, as was the case in DR-Congo and Sierra Leone. Taken together, these findings suggest that the context of implementation matters as much, if not more so, than the content of the mandate itself.

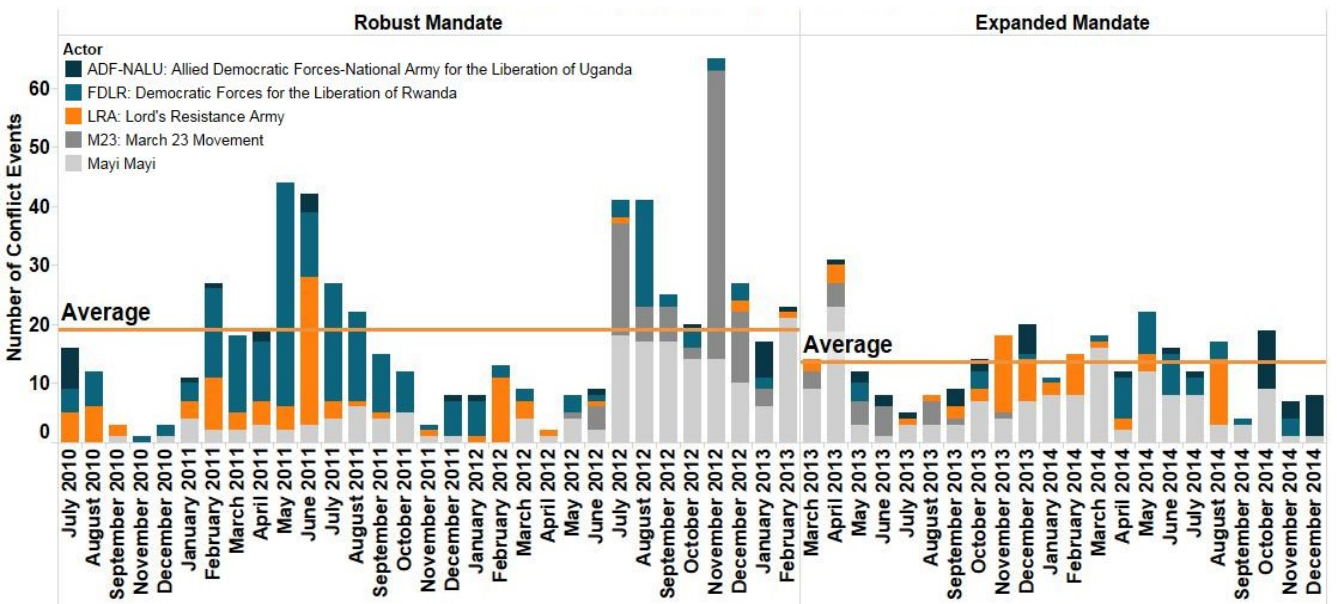


Figure 13: Violence Against Civilians by LRA, FDLR, ADF-NALU, M23 and Mayi Mayi Militias in Democratic Republic of Congo, During MONUSCO Deployment, With Regards to the Mandate, from July 2010 - December 2014.

Support

This material is based upon work supported by, or in part by, the U.S. Army Research Office grant number W911NF-09-1-0077 under the Minerva Initiative of the U.S. Department of Defense. European Commission Grant no. 283755 supported the work of Prof. Clionadh Raleigh and Caitriona Dowd.

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 on the [ACLED website](#).