

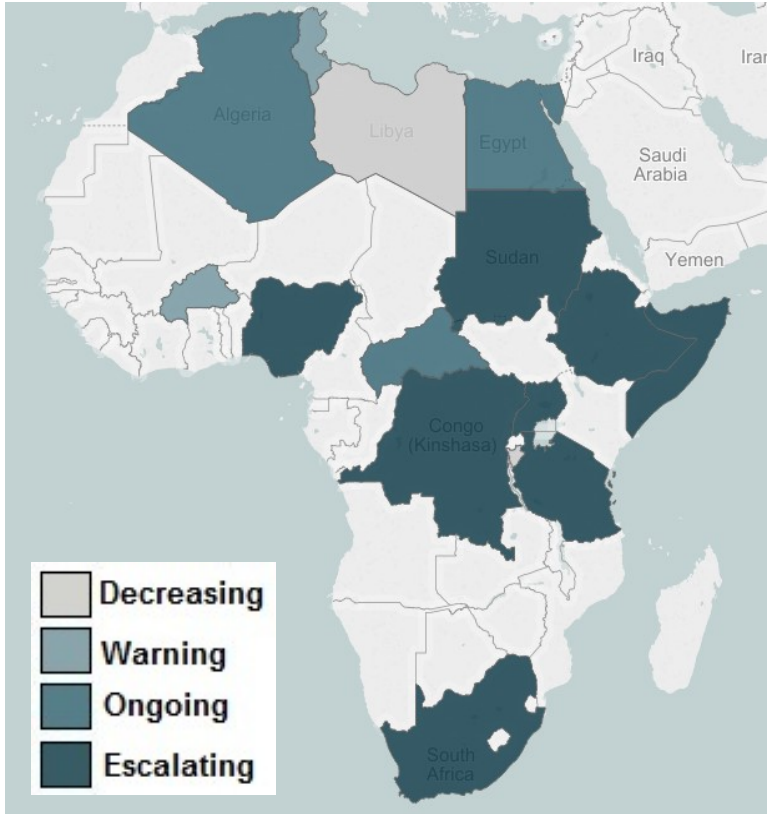
CONFLICT TRENDS (NO. 47)

REAL-TIME ANALYSIS OF AFRICAN POLITICAL VIOLENCE, APRIL 2016

Welcome to the April 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 a spike in protest activity in **Chad** in early 2016, widespread police abuses in **Egypt**, the resurfacing of RENAMO violence in **Mozambique**, AQIM and Al Mourabitoun attacks against foreign nationals in **Burkina Faso**, **Ivory Coast** and **Mali** and the rise of organised anti-state violence in the aftermath of Museveni’s electoral victory and anti-FDC violence in **Uganda**. A special report explores violence management and counter-balancing strategies for regime survival.

Elsewhere on the continent, political violence decreased in **Burundi**, unrest continued in in **Ethiopia** as Oromia protests proliferate, and riots and protests continued to escalate in Gauteng and Western Cape provinces in **South Africa**.



Conflict Trajectory, April 2016

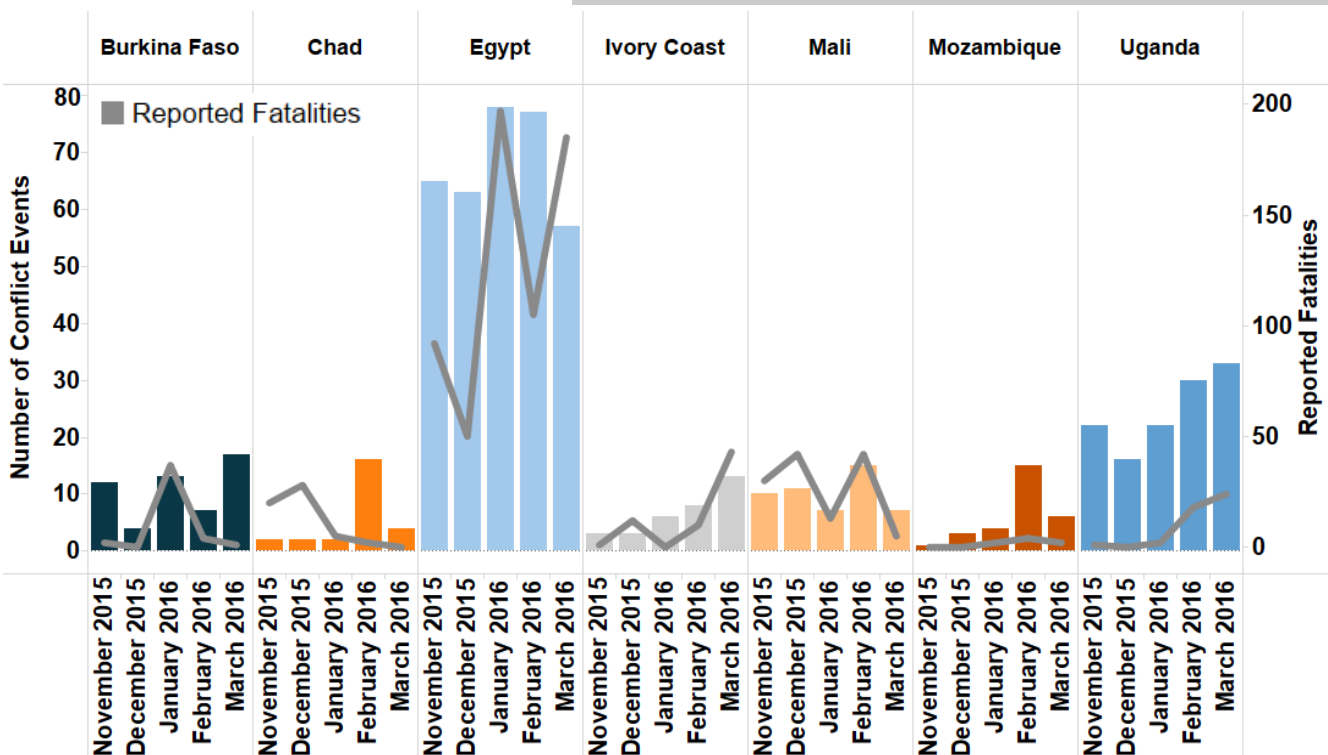


Figure 1: Conflict Events and Reported Fatalities by Country, November - March 2016.

Chad

Chad witnessed an increase in domestic protest in early 2016. This spike in political unrest represents a distinct departure in what has been a consistently low activity country from 2010 onwards (see Figure 2). A low level of political violence and unrest can be at least partially attributed to the thawing of relations between Presidents Idriss Deby (Chad) and Omar Al-Bashir (Sudan); the latter of whom previously sponsored rebel and Janjaweed incursions into Chadian territory during the mid to late 2000s (Lewis, 11 February 2010). While previous spikes of political violence have occurred in Chad due to incursions of external actors – Boko Haram in mid-2015, the Janjaweed in mid-2000s, multiple rebel groups in 2006 and 2008 - this recent wave of protest is also represents a change as the threat to Deby is both peaceful and domestic (Human Rights Watch, 2006; BBC News, 2008).

The first protests in February began when unemployed graduates held a sit-in demanding jobs in the civil service (Africa News, 8 February 2016). The violent suppression of the demonstrations by the police force prompted denunciations by opposition parties and further protests (ibid.). Anti-government sentiment was galvanised in mid-February, when a video showing the gang rape of a young woman by the sons of several leading officials was circulated online (Reliefweb, 11 March 2016). After the video circulated, protests and shutdowns launched under the banner of 'Enough is Enough' brought N'djamena, Moun-

dou, Abeche, Largeau and Sarh to a standstill (Reliefweb, 28 February 2016). The protests endured, and in fact grew, after security forces killed a demonstrator in N'djamena, indicating that repression may not be sufficient to quell rising discontent with the incumbent regime.

Historically, protests and riots have been very rare in Chad, representing just 9% of recorded events in the ACLED dataset for that state, as opposed to a country-continental average of 26%. This lack of protest has been matched by a lack of political engagement by much of the public. The turnout for the 2006 and 2001 elections were incredibly low and boycotted by the opposition (BBC News, 2006; Reuters, 28 April 2011). Similarly, Deby was able in 2004 to amend the constitution to remove the two-term limit on presidential tenure without provoking public outrage, a marked contrast to the recent examples of Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo and Burkina Faso (Crisis ACLED, 23 June 2015; Reliefweb, 23 January 2016). Instead the amendment helped lay the foundation for the Second Chadian War in 2005, but opposition came from rebels guided by Sudan and former insiders of the Deby regime, not the public at large (Hicks, 24 March 2016).

March saw fewer protest events and Deby is still predicted to win the April elections (Reliefweb, 23 January 2016). Nevertheless, the demonstrations represent a departure from the political status quo.

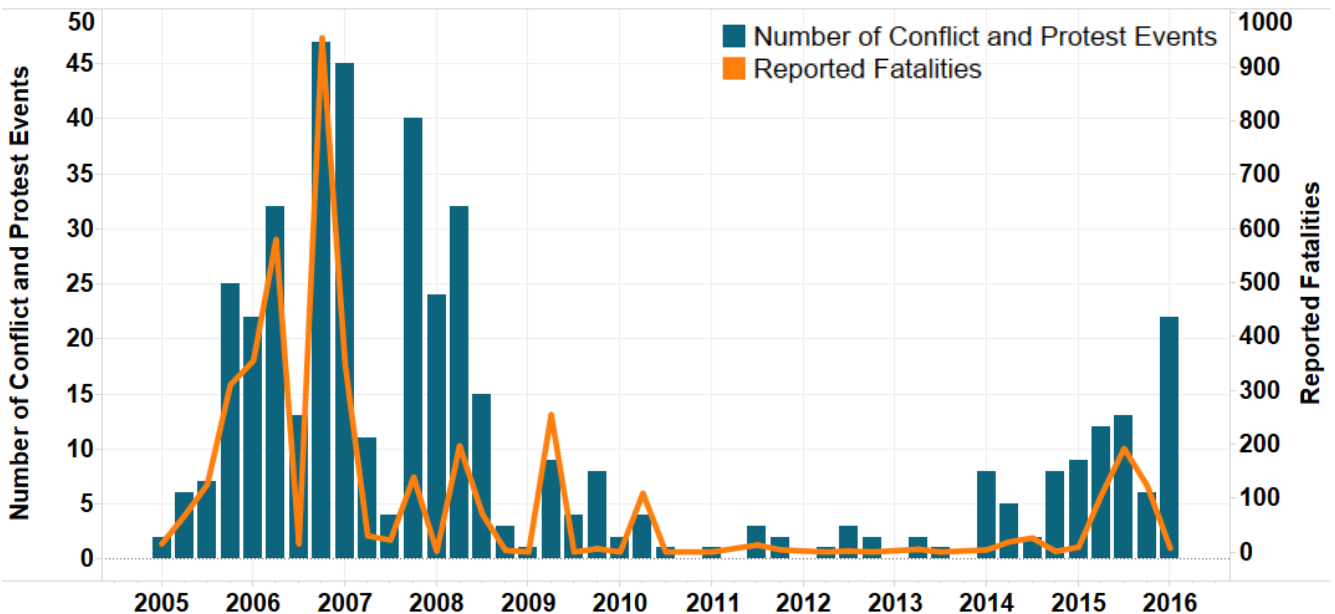


Figure 2: Number of Conflict and Protest Events and Reported Fatalities in Chad, from Q1 2005 - Q1 2016.

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Egypt

The number of reported abuses committed by Egyptian police forces dropped in March following a turbulent four months. Between November 2015 and February 2016, police forces perpetrated an average of 58% of all violence against civilians as old tensions between the Interior Ministry and ruling regime once again boiled to the surface ([Africa Confidential, 18 December 2015](#)). Police forces were the single largest threat to civilian safety in the same period, more so than unknown armed groups and political militias (see Figure 3). Police violence was predominantly recorded in the Lower Egypt region, particularly in Cairo, where opposition to the regime remains strong, albeit diffuse.

Public anger over such visible police excesses was renewed following the late November torture and killing of a man in Luxor in possession of Tramadol, a painkiller widely used as a recreational drug in Egypt. Two days of riots and protests in Luxor appear to have set the precedent for further unrest to challenge the hubris demonstrated by individual police officers. On the same day in 6 October City, west of Cairo, a traffic policeman was remanded in custody for four days pending investigations over allegations that he had violently beaten a microbus driver and threatened to fabricate a drug possession to incarcerate him. These incidents were followed in January by an assault on doctors by a policeman receiving medical care in Matariya district of Cairo. The embarrassment continued for the Interior Ministry on the 18 February when a plain clothed policemen shot and killed a taxi driver in a personal dispute in el-Darb el-Ahmar district in Cairo. The

swift response of the Cairo Criminal Court in handing the officer in question a life sentence – who have previously acted with relative impunity – illustrates the reproach with which the regime views these actions as it attempts to quell dissent and distance itself from continued police abuses ([Egypt Independent, 2 April 2016](#)).

Al-Sisi’s regime is on rocky ground amidst the continual denial by the Interior Ministry of systemic extrajudicial arrests and enforced disappearances, severely strained relations between Egypt and Italy over the death of Italian PhD student Giulio Regeni, a mounting crackdown against human rights NGOs such as El Nadeem Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence, and a stagnating economic recovery that forced Egypt to devalue the pound in March by 13 per cent against the U.S. dollar to stimulate investment ([Bloomberg, 5 April 2016](#)).

The death of Regeni has more recently been linked to the police beating of Khaled Said in 2010, a catalytic event for the 25 January 2011 uprising. Both the Editor-in-Chief Mohammed Abdel-Hadi Allam of the pro-government newspaper Al-Ahram and the mother of Khaled Said have made the connection between the two events, with the former warning of the incendiary potential of continued police impertinence ([Daily News Egypt, 3 April 2016](#); [New York Times, 3 April 2016](#); [The Big Story, 3 April 2016](#)). Given the pragmatism with which the ruling Egyptian military treats its interests, if the embarrassing situation continues unchanged, a reshuffle in the Egyptian top leadership could be on the horizon.

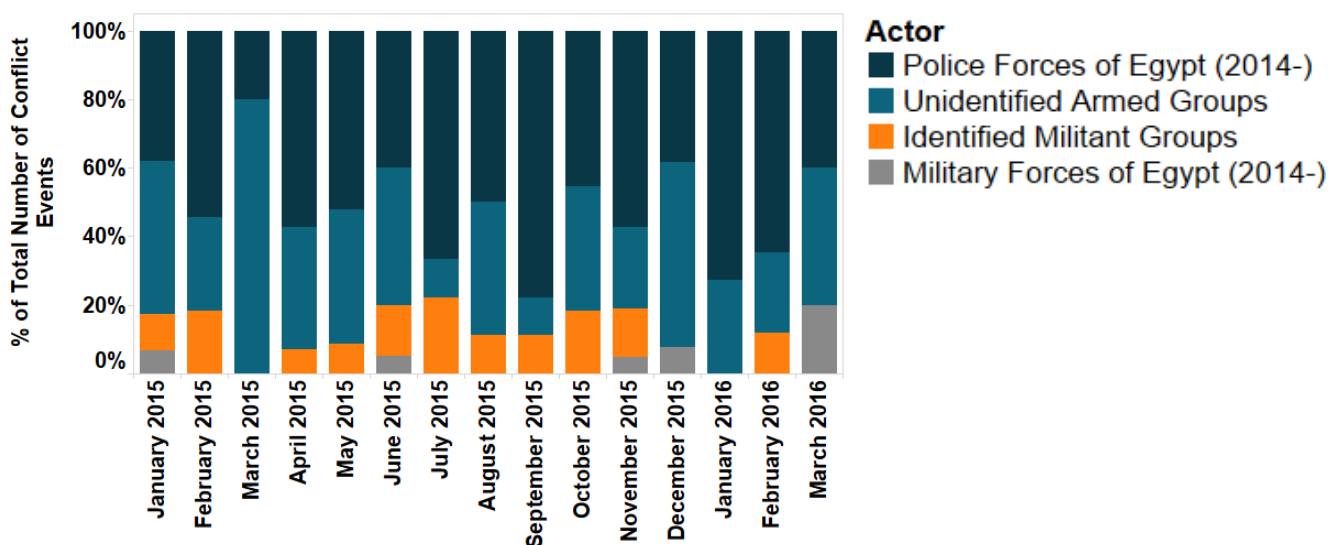


Figure 3: Percentage of Violence Against Civilians by Perpetrator in Egypt, from January 2015 - March 2016.

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Mozambique

Over the past few months, Mozambique has witnessed escalating tensions between the Mozambican National Resistance movement (RENAMO) and government forces. Following a series of army operations aimed at disarming RENAMO’s militias in late 2015, violence has resurfaced in the first three months of 2016. With twelve distinct incidents of political violence, the month of February saw the highest number of reported conflict events since June 2014 (see Figure 4).

In 2016, RENAMO engaged in several armed clashes with government troops. On the 17th of February, an attack on a police post in Sofala province resulted in the death of one officer and one RENAMO militant ([AllAfrica, 17 February 2016](#)). Other incidents occurred in the neighbouring provinces of Manica and Tete, two RENAMO strongholds in the north of the country, and in the southern town of Mazivila, where a group of five rebels assaulted a police station in a failed attempt of seizing weapons ([AllAfrica, 22 February 2016](#)).

Fighting in northern Mozambique has also fed renewed violence against the civilian population. In a worrying episode of factional violence, six RENAMO militants killed an official of the ruling Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) in his house in Nhamatanda ([AllAfrica, 16 February 2016](#)).

In a separate incident, suspected police injured RENAMO’s secretary-general Manuel Bissopo and killed his bodyguard in an attempted assassination in the central coastal town of Beira ([Africa Confidential, 18 March 2016](#)). The first quarter of 2016 saw five civilian fatalities, the highest number reported by ACLED since the beginning of the insurgency in 2013.

Protracted insecurity and allegedly widespread army abuses in northern Mozambique, together with a severe drought, prompted a major refugee crisis, with more than 12,000 people reportedly fleeing into neighbouring Malawi ([International Business Times, 16 March 2016](#)). Human rights organisations accused the Mozambican armed forces of carrying out forced disappearances and summary executions during disarmament operations in rebel-controlled areas ([Human Rights Watch, 22 February 2016; Times Live, 22 March 2016](#)). Government officials of both Mozambique and Malawi have denied that the displaced persons pouring over the border can be granted refugee status, and are jointly working on repatriation. Nevertheless, the deteriorating situation in northern Mozambique and across the border with Malawi raise concerns internationally, and the UNHCR has called both countries to take action in order to safeguard the rights of the Mozambican asylum-seekers.

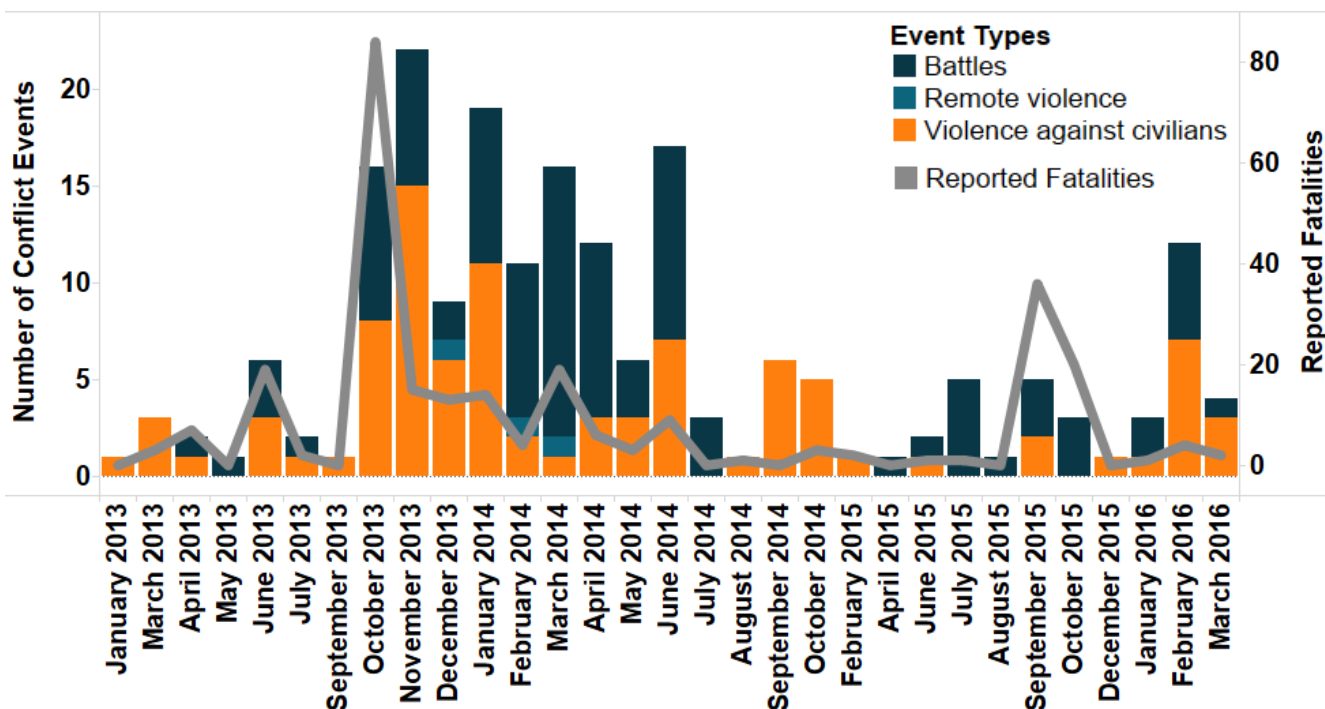


Figure 4: Number of Conflict Events by Type in Mozambique, from January 2013 - March 2016.

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Mozambique

The proximate causes of this recent wave of fighting lie in the increasing political isolation of RENAMO and of its leader Afonso Dhlakama after the 2014 elections. RENAMO's historical leader accused FRELIMO of vote rigging and rejected the electoral outcome, despite the increasing number of seats gained by his party in the legislative branch ([Africa Confidential, 7 November 2014](#)). Hostilities between FRELIMO and RENAMO peaked in March 2015, when Dhlakama declared that six central and northern provinces, including Manica, Sofala, Tete, Zambezia, Nampula and Niassa "shall be governed by RENAMO" ([International Business Times, 1 March 2016](#)).

FRELIMO's position over the possible reopening of negotiations with RENAMO has wavered under the presidency of Filipe Nyusi, who took office in January 2015. Whereas his predecessor Armando Guebuza advocates an uncompromising stance, Nyusi has formally expressed his sup-

port for holding talks and ending the conflict with RENAMO ([Africa Confidential, 18 March 2016](#)). However, while Dhlakama has agreed to drop his claim on the six provinces and return to the negotiating table with the South African president Jacob Zuma, the Vatican and the European Union acting as mediators, Nyusi restated his preference for bilateral negotiations, thus prolonging the stalemate. Furthermore, internal opposition loyal to Guebuza and the attempted killings of Dhlakama and Manuel Bissopo have posed further obstacles to the negotiation process, and thus far prevented official talks from taking place ([African Arguments, 15 February 2016](#)).

RENAMO's conflict activity has concentrated mostly in Mozambique's central and northern areas, which correspond to the provinces previously claimed by Dhlakama and constitute the party's traditional power base. The map in Figure 5 also shows that violent events involving RENAMO's militias clustered around the country's main communication routes, where the rebels have set up armed roadblocks and checkpoints. RENAMO's militias were held responsible for several ambushes on civilian vehicles along the main north-south highways, including an attack on a bus that caused the death of two people in Manica province in March ([International Business Times, 7 March 2016](#)).

The particular geographical distribution of conflict events highlights the strategic importance of the N1 and N7 roads, which, passing through Mozambique, represent a vital infrastructure connecting the resource-rich north with the south of the country. Whilst the prospects of a large-scale insurgency appear remote due to the limited military capabilities of RENAMO and the reluctance of its leadership – which would rather prefer a compromise with FRELIMO ([Africa Confidential, 18 January 2016](#)) – these sporadic attacks on the country's main thoroughfares may still harm the national economy, and point to RENAMO's attempt of influencing the political process.

These mounting tensions leave the country in a state of uncertainty. One of Africa's fastest growing economies, Mozambique risks losing trust of foreign donors and undermining its positive economic outlook should this situation continue. Debt distress – which has severely weakened the country's economy in the past – might still hamper growth in the future. Much of Mozambique's future prospects thus relies on whether the ruling FRELIMO and the opposition RENAMO will be able to settle their differences peacefully and agree on a shared political roadmap.

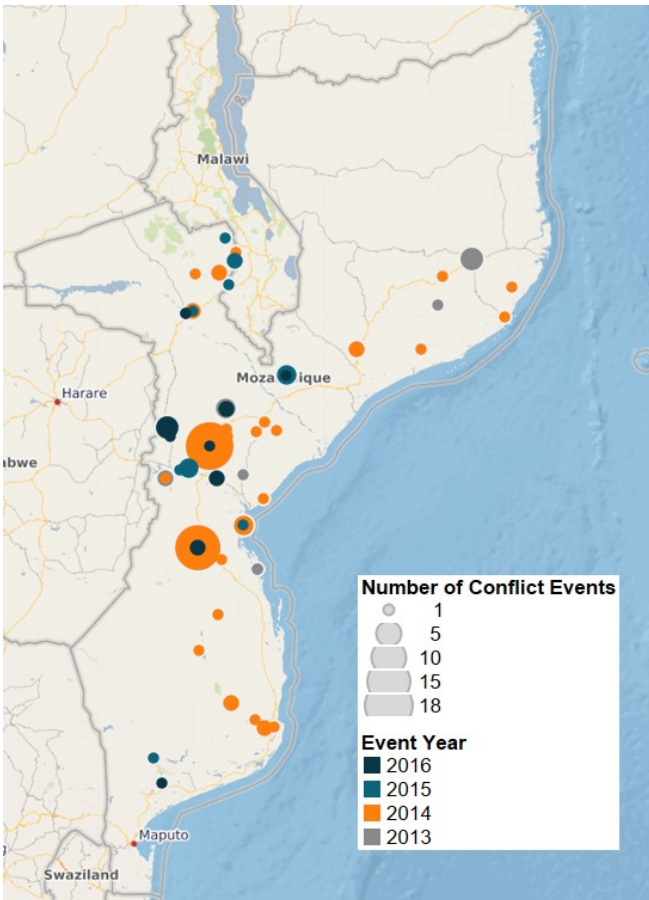


Figure 5: Number of Conflict Events Involving RENAMO in Mozambique by Location and Year, from January 2013 - March 2016.

Uganda

Political violence and protest events increased in Uganda in 2016, with unrest during the election period in February continuing to grow during the post-election period in March. Episodes of political violence have been concentrated within certain counties - most notably Kampala, Kasese, Bundibugyo and Kapchorwa - that have formed key battlegrounds in the 2016 election between incumbent Museveni and the National Resistance Movement (NRM) and the opposition Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) led by Kizza Besigye.

Though opposition politicians have typically garnered strong support in the north and east of Uganda, these regions were relatively untouched by violence. Isolated incidents of unrest in a few northern counties were due to protests over living standards or pastoralist violence rather than disputes over the election (see Figure 6).

The exception is the eastern county of Kapchorwa which has seen attacks on security forces by a new group called the Ugandan Saving Force, which has pledged to eliminate the Museveni regime (Magabi, 13 March 2016). FDC supporters in Kapchorwa were victimised by unknown assailants during Basigye’s electoral campaign. The rise of organised anti-state violence in the aftermath of Museveni’s electoral victory and anti-FDC violence raises the possibility that individuals opposed to Museveni have deemed electoral competition as an unsuccessful means to unseat the regime and have deferred to violent opposition.

The most lethal episodes of violence have been concen-

trated in areas of opposition support within the NRM heartland of the central and western regions, specifically the Rwenzori sub-region. The region previously experienced a surge in violence in 2014 when armed Bakonzo attacked state forces in the Kasese and Bundibugyo districts (ACLED Trend Report, August 2014). Besigye has capitalised on discontent within the Bakonzo community, who accuse Museveni of failing to address local grievances, and has historically received strong support in the sub-region (Ngwomoya, 7 February 2016). The opposition won a good number of seats from the NRM in the local council elections and gained a majority in the region (Basiime and Mumbere, 20 March 2016). However, in heavily contested seats such as Hima and Busaru, NRM victories prompted opposition supporters to attack state forces and rival voters leading to multiple deaths (Mutegeki, 29 February 2016; New Vision, 14 March 2016).

The other main centre of post-election unrest has been Kampala. In contrast to the lethal violence that has flared in the west and Kapchorwa, political instability in Kampala has primarily taken the form of ongoing anti-government riots and protests by the FDC. In the run-up to the elections, Kampala was the epicentre of political unrest with violent repression by state forces and a bomb attack by unknown assailants resulting four deaths. However, in spite of the FDC’s ongoing campaign of protest, activity has significantly decreased in the capital with the number of recorded events halving in March.

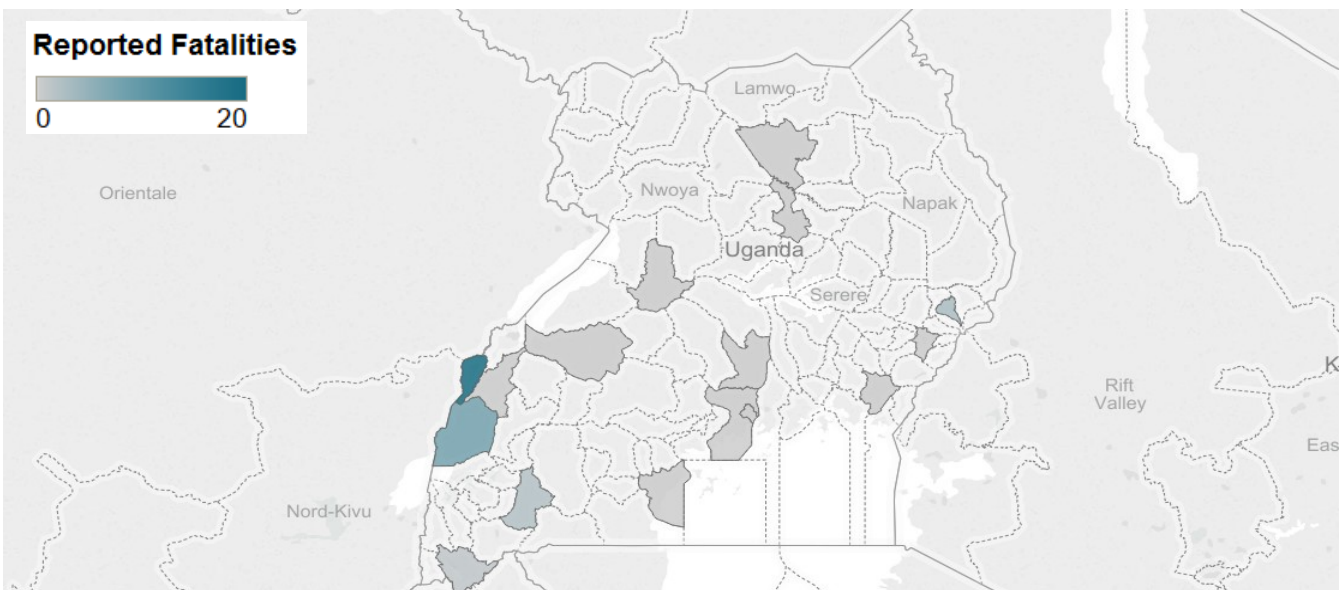


Figure 6: Reported Fatalities by County in Uganda, from 18 February - 2 April 2016.

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West Africa and Violence Against Civilians

Attacks by militants aligned with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), notably the Al Mourabitoun Battalion, in Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast and Mali have caught international headlines in the past few months due to their high fatalities counts and targeting of foreigners. The attack on the Splendid Hotel/Cappuccino Café which killed at least 30 in Burkina Faso’s capital of Ouagadougou in January ([Wall Street Journal, 17 January 2016](#)), and the attack on a popular beachside resort which killed at least 16 in the Ivory Coast town of Grand Bassam in March ([Guardian, 13 March 2016](#)) are particularly notable as they occurred in countries which have not previously seen such large-scale violence from these groups. This is in contrast to Mali, which has seen many instances of violence against civilians carried out by militants in its northern provinces. These include an attack on a nightclub frequented by foreigners in the capital Bamako in March 2015, and the November assault on Bamako’s Radisson Blu Hotel killing 19 ([VOA, 23 November 2015](#)). When taking account of fatalities among the perpetrators, the three attacks in Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast and Mali are all the more notable, given that they constitute the deadliest events recorded by ACLED in these countries since the beginning of 2015 (see Figure 7).

In total, Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast had less than 10 reported fatalities from violence against civilians in 2015. On the other hand, Mali - which is still dealing with the fallout of its 2012 civil war and the associated rise in militancy in the country - had 68 fatalities excluding the 19 from the Radisson Blu attack (see Figure 7). Focusing on Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast specifically, violence patterns hold two important insights: first, attacks of this type are extraordinary in these countries and have raised concerns about the abilities of security services to deal with them in the future ([Independent, 23 November 2015](#)). Second, the success of these attacks will likely embolden militants in general, and AQIM in particular, to plan further attacks in the future. Mali has experienced higher levels of violence against civilians relative to the other countries examined in this report, but even in its post-conflict context, only one other high fatality violence against civilians event (i.e. at least 10 deaths) occurred, and is related to inter-communal conflict. The three attacks in Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast and Mali have meant that AQIM, with the help of the Al Mourabitoun Battalion, has established itself as the deadliest militant group in terms of civilian fatalities in West Africa outside of Boko Haram (see Figure 8).

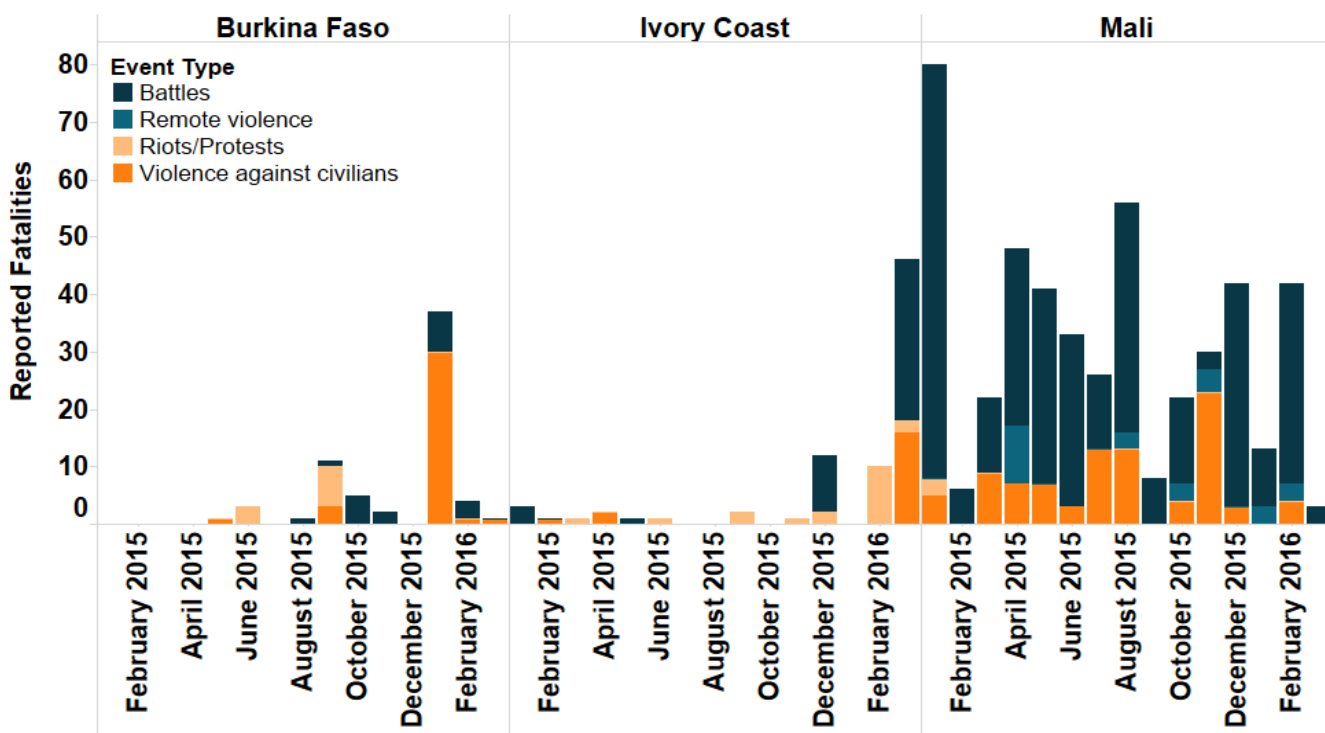


Figure 7: Number of Politically Violent Events and Riots/Protests by Type, from January - March 2016.

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West Africa and Violence Against Civilians

The fact that AQIM was able to engage in these attacks outside of its traditional zone of operation should also highlight the potential threat of future attacks across the region. AQIM has shown that it is now comfortable striking outside of the trans-Saharan regions of the Sahel and Maghreb, which is the group’s main areas of operation in the past. The geographical expansion of attacks can also be seen as having a demonstrative impact on AQIM’s rivals, such as the Islamic State (IS) and Boko Haram (which has sworn allegiance to IS), as well as potential recruits ([AllAfrica, 4 February 2016](#)), as the group shows that it is able to strike targets previously thought to be out of the reach of militant groups.

Although occurring in a different context, these West African attacks can be said to parallel those over the past few months in Paris and Belgium, whereby IS has displayed its capability in coordinating international attacks. The justifications given by both IS and AQIM parallel each other, with both claiming their attacks were aimed against the French due to their respective military actions against the groups, with IS referring to Syria ([Vox, 14 November 2015](#)) and AQIM referring to French deployments in West Africa under Operation Serval ([Quartz Africa, 16 March 2016](#)).

Just as there are fears in Europe that IS could strike elsewhere following the attacks in Brussels, other West African countries are feeling equally threatened in the wake of the Bamako, Grand Bassam, and Ouagadougou attacks. Countries such as Senegal and Mauritania feel vulnerable to future attacks ([Mail & Guardian, 14 February 2016](#)) and have responded to threats accordingly. In Senegal for example, over 500 people were reportedly detained in a ‘terrorist’ crackdown in January ([Telegraph, 27 January 2016](#)). In the same month, suspected AQIM activists of Guinea-Bissau nationality were detained in Guinea while traveling with a Mauritanian fugitive and senior AQIM member wanted in connection with a plot to assassinate the Mauritanian president in 2011 ([Reuters, 21 January 2016](#)).

The possibility that militant networks might manage to make the jump from the Saharan borderlands of West Africa all the way to its southern and western coasts has for many years been recognized to be a serious threat to regional security ([Al Jazeera, 24 June 2013](#)). But with the reality now established, the question of having the capacity to deal with this threat will now become a key priority.

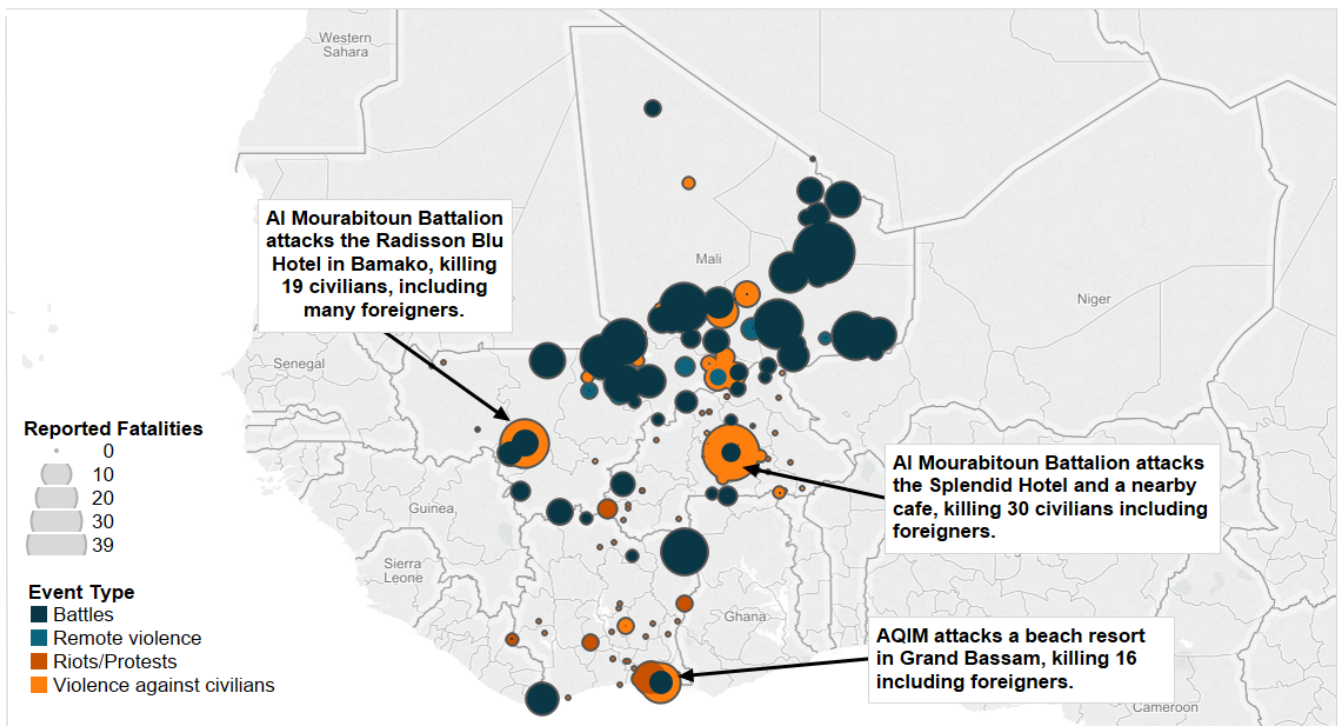


Figure 8: Political Violence and Riots/Protests by Location, from January 2015 - March 2016.

Special Focus Topic: Leadership Survival and Hired Guns

Regimes in developing states engage in practices of ‘violence management’ that involve both offensive and defensive strategies to contain, repress, and curtail various domestic threats. Some of these strategies include public repression, counterbalancing (fragmenting military and police units through offering varying levels of support, equipping units differently, and the creation of paramilitary forces) and supporting pro-government militias (PGMs) to combat opponents within and outside of the regime. A new working paper by [Raleigh and Kishi](#) presents a ‘violence management’ framework through which to understand why, where, and when states employ these tactics, and introduces a new dataset on pro-government militias – PGM-Set – to test these hypotheses.

African leaders face a high internal risk in the form of coups, purges, putsches, and mutinies; these are more common than civil wars ([Roessler, 2011](#)). To mitigate or lessen these threats, states may use repression tactics ([Escribà-Folch, 2013](#)); intimidating, targeting, and/or killing potential opposition is effective in quelling threats from organized groups ([Hafner-Burton, Hyde, and Jablonski, 2010](#)) and assisting regimes to stay in power. African regimes often use repression to eradicate competition and subordinate civilian reform and revolt in order

to ensure their survival (see [Clapham, 1996](#)). Regimes also decentralize security forces, thereby limiting the ability of the military to overwhelm the executive. Counterbalancing strategies through the establishment of paramilitary forces can aid in guarding against internal threats. Auxiliary state forces operate as supplements to particular branches and elites in governments, as the internal fractures within developing countries’ institutional structures are often significant and exert a far greater threat to the stability of the state than external threats. Finally, PGM forces loyal to a regime are a cheap alternative to state or paramilitaries. PGM activity rises in response to increased domestic threats to the state. Militias are increasingly becoming the primary agent of conflict across the African continent, and operate as ‘private armies’ for political elites vying for increased influence ([Raleigh, 2016](#)) - see Table 1 for a presentation of common armed group types under consideration.

Previous studies contend that PGMs are used in places where the state does not have the capacity to carry out violence itself (see: [Jones, 2012](#); [Peic, 2014](#)). This is the ‘weak state capacity’ argument. Another ‘accountability’ argument suggests these forces are employed when regimes do not want to carry out particularly brutal forms of violence itself for fear of reprisal (see: [Ron, 2002](#); [Alvarez, 2006](#); [Staniland, 2012](#); [Mitchell, Carey, and Butler, 2014](#); [Carey, Colaresi, and Mitchell, 2015](#)). However, Figure 9 maps the locations of all organized, armed conflict events in Africa between 1997 and 2014, specifying between PGMs and state conflict agents; this suggests that the state is largely active in all of the same areas as PGMs. States also continue to carry out particularly brutal attacks themselves. For example, while PGMs were active in South Sudan, there are reports of South Sudanese military forces killing up to one thousand Nuer civilians in late 2013. That the practices of PGMs and state forces overlap suggests that capacity and accountability may not be the factors driving states to outsource violence.

Raleigh and Kishi argue that these different organizations and responses – PGM activity, counterbalancing efforts, and the use of state repression – are specifically designed to deal with various types and scales of threat. Co-occurring counterbalancing and PGM activity (see Figure 10) suggests that these actions and groups have distinct purposes, and one regime strategy does not exclude the need for others.

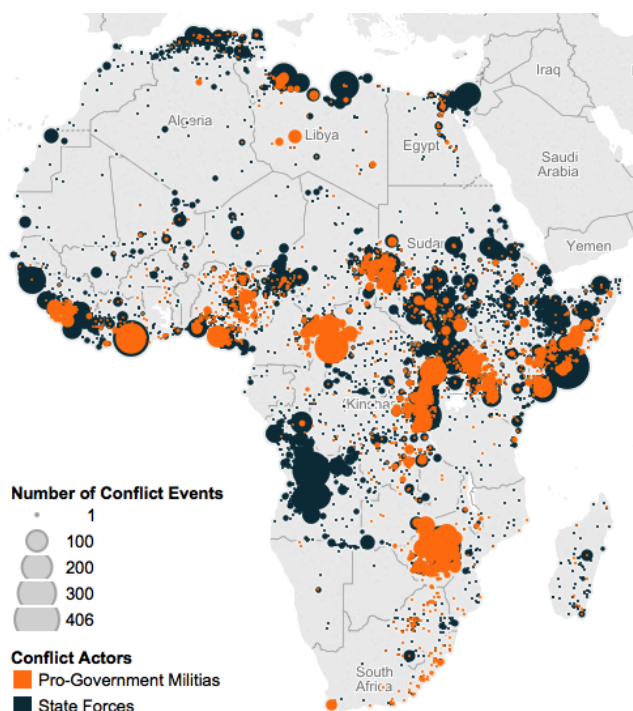


Figure 9: Organized Armed Conflict Involving Pro-Government Militias and State Conflict Actors, Africa, 1997-2014.

Special Focus Topic: Leadership Survival and Hired Guns

Organization type	Purpose	Circumstances	Links to Government	Example
Paramilitary Groups	Militarized police units, domiciled in part in barracks, equipped with light military weapons and military vehicles, and organized under the central government (Janowitz, 1988); “forces whose training, organization, equipment, and control suggest they may be used to support or replace regular military forces” (IISS, 2015); these groups are at least partially militarized and operate as auxiliary forces (1) in place of, (2) as a supplement to, or (3) as a balance against regular military units (Böhmeit and Clayton, 2015)	An auxiliary state force (i.e. not a part of the regular army), usually performing regular security functions (as they often replace or balance the official armed forces) while addressing domestic threats; as such, state capacity is a somewhat necessary requirement for building these groups	Directly linked to the government (hence with minimal autonomy from the government); mobilized by the incumbent, and so the state is more accountable for these groups	Presidential Security Unit in South Sudan; Gendarmerie Nationale of Madagascar
Political Militias	Armed groups using violence or the threat of violence to influence an immediate political process; rarely organized in a formal or rigid hierarchy, but are closely affiliated with a political elite patron who dictates the goals of violence; operate at the subnational level, and often in a localized area (Raleigh, 2016)	Competition and fragmentation within regimes and between opponents encourages political elites -- seeking to increase their position, influence, and/or power within governance processes -- to use these groups as private armies (Raleigh, 2016)	These groups are affiliated with political elites and/or parties, and in that way may have a link to the regime; when working on behalf of the regime, they are categorized as "PGMs"	Séléka militia in CAR; RENAMO in Mozambique
Pro-Government Militias	Organized armed groups aligned informally or semi-officially with the government and not part of the regular armed forces; receive explicit or implicit support from the state; disconnected from the state's central command and control structure, so have greater autonomy; as such, usually less well-equipped and trained than paramilitaries or regular state forces (Böhmeit and Clayton, 2015)	An auxiliary state force (i.e. not a part of the regular army) performing a wide range of 'irregular' duties while addressing domestic threats; given the loose/indirect links to the regime, state capacity is not a requirement in order to build these groups; as such, they are an attractive security option for politically unstable regimes	Semi-official/informal link to the government (hence with more autonomy from the government); mobilized by the state rather spontaneously	ZANU-PF in Zimbabwe; Janjaweed in Sudan
Local Defence Forces	Often found in areas of state decay where elites create militias to dominate local politics in response to absent or limited government control; rarely act outside of immediate localities (Raleigh, 2016)	Where the provision of security is localized, either through a failure of national security services, an autonomy of local security elites and/or particular issues relevant to local areas (e.g. raiding, cattle rustling)	Contingent on local elite and regime relationships grounded in regional, ethnic, party and/or strategic basis	Bakassi Boys in Nigeria; Karamajong Ethnic Militia in Uganda
Mercenaries / Private Security Forces	Armed agents or groups hired to carry out violence; individuals may not be national or a party to the conflict, yet are motivated to take part in the hostilities for private gain	Contexts where security or some facet of military actions have been privatized	These groups can be hired by the state to carry out security measures and in this way may have a link to the regime	Executive Outcomes (South African) active in Angola and Sierra Leone; Specialized Tasks, Training, Equipment and Protection (STTEP) (South African) active in Nigeria

Table 1: Definitions of Agents of Violence Management.

Special Focus Topic: Leadership Survival and Hired Guns

PGMs offer several attractive benefits to regimes:

- PGMs are a flexible and inexpensive force that can be deployed when necessary (e.g. election periods) (see [Carey, Colaresi, and Mitchell, 2012](#)).
- PGMs provide local knowledge and representation, especially in cases where the state relies on indirect rule via local intermediaries in areas within its territory in which it has inconsistent control (see [Mann, 2004](#); [Gerlach, 2010](#); [Ahram, 2014](#)).
- PGMs are flexible in their use, formality, and instruction, and do not require formalization and associated responsibility (see [Carey et al., 2012](#)).

Across African states from 1997 through 2014, just 7% of civil war events were committed by PGMs, while over half of all militia activity outside of civil war periods are com-

mitted by PGMs. The rates of activity outside of traditional civil war contexts suggest that PGMs are far more than a replacement force for incapable state militaries.

PGMs and their activities are of concern as they constitute a grave threat to civilian safety generally: of all active militias operating on behalf of political elites (e.g. rebel leaders, politicians, political parties, warlords, military, government officials, etc.), those associated with the state have the most pervasive and negative impact on civilians. Over 10% more PGM conflict activity targets civilians relative to non-PGM militias; and these actions are more lethal relative to other militias. On average, each instance of civilian targeting by a PGM leads to three times more civilian deaths than those carried out by other militias.

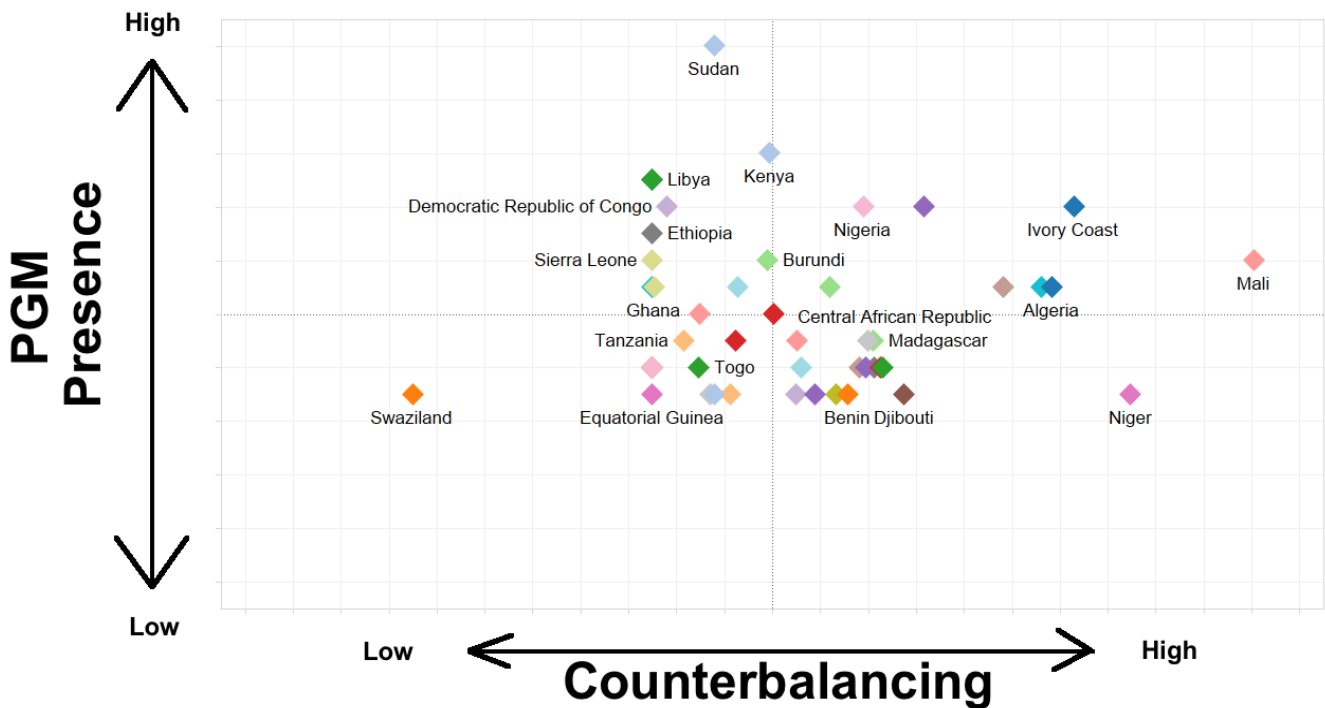


Figure 10: Pro-Government Militia Presence versus Counterbalancing.

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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](#).