

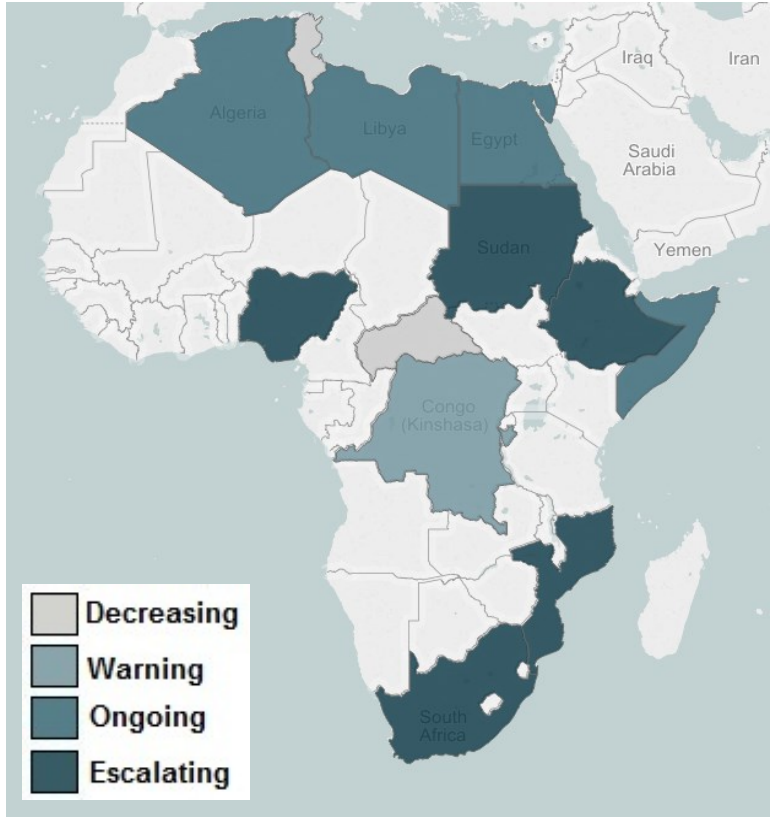
CONFLICT TRENDS (NO. 48)

REAL-TIME ANALYSIS OF AFRICAN POLITICAL VIOLENCE, MAY 2016

Welcome to the May 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 the Oromia protests in **Ethiopia** and how they challenge understandings of collective action, encroaching violence by Fulani herders in southeastern **Nigeria**, and a decline in overall protest events in April 2016 and concomitant rise in voter registration protests in **South Africa**. A special report focuses on the intractable political crisis in **Burundi**, exploring the types and locations of unrest and differential reporting of violence in 2015/16.

Elsewhere on the continent, civil society protests erupted in **Egypt** over the ceding of two Red Sea islands to Saudi Arabia, rebel activity increased in South Kordofan and Darfur in **Sudan** and fatalities decreased in **South Sudan** as Riek Machar rejoined government as first Vice-President.



Conflict Trajectory, May 2016

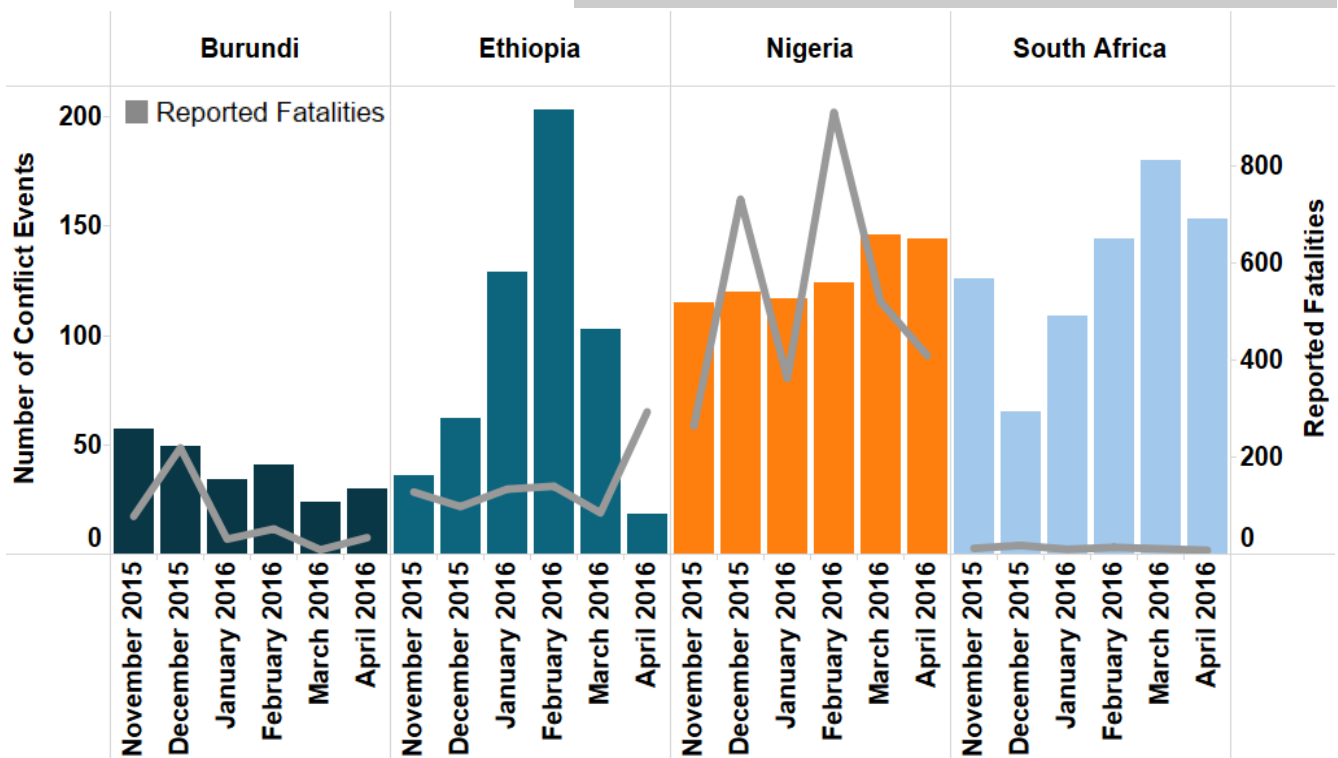


Figure 1: Conflict Events and Reported Fatalities by Country, November 2015 - April 2016.

Ethiopia

Since the beginning of March 2016, protests in the Oromia Region of Ethiopia have sharply declined. From November 2015 - February 2016, an average of 23 protests were recorded per week as protesters mobilised against the planned expansion of the Addis Ababa administrative region which threatened to displace Oromo farmers. On 12 January the Oromo Peoples’ Democratic Organization (OPDO) announced that the ‘Master Plan’ will be put on hold ([HRW, 15 January 2016](#); [ACLED March 2016](#)). Despite this concession, protests escalated to unprecedented levels in February 2016 as distrust prevailed amongst protest communities. However, since March, protests have been subject to a drop off with an average of 8 protests per week (see Figure 2).

A melting pot of grievances has been used to understand the most recent wave of protests, but two features of the Oromia protests challenge contemporary understandings of protest dynamics. First, the timing of protests and second, the power of unorganised protests to achieve their stated goals. This report considers both of these features by situating protest within the structural environment in which it takes place, as well as in relation to broader regional issues that impact the state’s capacity to respond.

In terms of timing, similar government actions to extend Addis Ababa and displace the people of Oromia under the pretext of development have occurred since 2005. Since 2005, forced evictions and urban land-grabbing escalated after two opposition groups - the Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD) and the Union of Ethiopian Democratic Forces (UEDF) - won 174 seats, or 32% of the vote for the Ethiopian Parliament ([VOA, 16 May 2010](#)). In 2014, similar protests erupted on a smaller scale after the Ethiopian government first announced its plans for development and growth. From this stance, fears “that Oromian farmers will be evicted from their lands without compensation and that the cultural and linguistic identity of the area surrounding Addis will be obliterated” ([Africa Confidential, 7 May 2014](#)) have prevailed for over a decade.

Given the historical marginalisation of the Oromia region and that “Oromo resentment of the capital’s expansion has been building for years” ([Africa Confidential, 18 March 2016](#)), grievances alone lack the explanatory power in determining the latest eruption of protest. Instead, the configuration of Ethiopia’s federal system offers insight into the proliferation of protests. The micromanagement of the federal regions, including Oromia region, through a

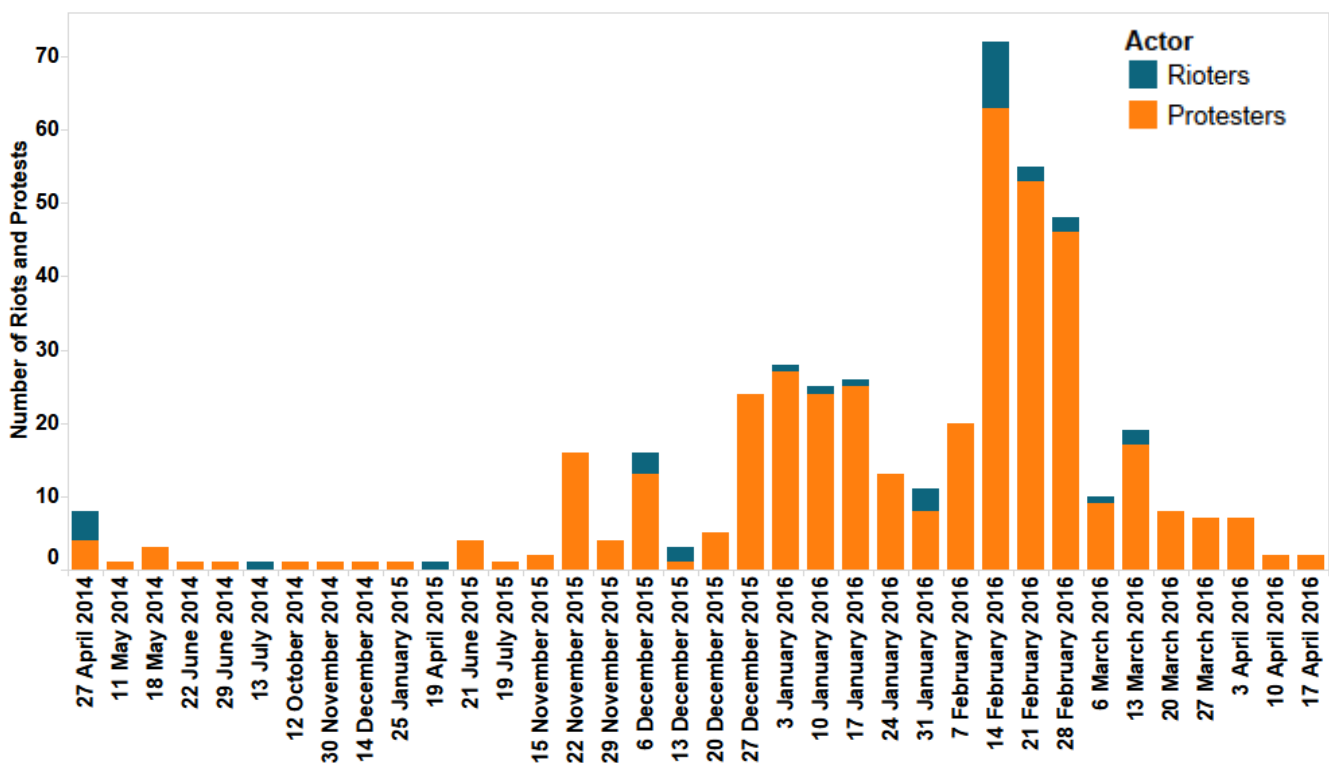


Figure 2: Number of Riots and Protests by Actor in Ethiopia, from April 2014 - April 2016.

Ethiopia

highly centralised state apparatus has removed any territorial autonomy defined in the 1995 Constitution. The imposition of the Oromo Peoples’ Democratic Organization (OPDO) as an “administrative representative of TPLF in Oromia region, but not the political representative of Oromo people,” ([IBTimes, 14 January 2016](#)) smothers the ability of Oromo people to voice their historical grievances. Furthermore, by acting as a puppet of the state ([Ethiopian Human Rights Project, March 2016](#)), OPDO has failed to adequately represent and backchannel the localised demands of the Oromia region.

Hence, the current wave of protest is the result of a governance blackspot. The severe lack of public consultation on state developmentalism and absence of a platform for the voices of Oromo to be heard have led to an unexpected local expression of grievance.

The second feature of the protests is the absence of civil society organisations in leading the protests. Despite this, non-organised groups have demonstrated their ability to exact concessions from the state. Protests first erupted on university campuses in Ambo in April 2014 and in the subsequent protest waves (November 2015 and January 2016) farmers and civilians then took the lead. The spread of protests has also been characterised by a noticeable

absence of civil society organisations or local representation as negative sentiment towards OPDO runs high. It is difficult therefore to establish a connection between civil society involvement and the success of protest demands. All of this challenges received wisdom on protest dynamics and formal organisation and calls for renewed attention into the trajectories of ‘unorganised’ protest movements.

The interaction between government and protesters may hold key insight into the latent power of protest movements. The EPRDF’s response may draw attention to wider regional dynamics that have influenced or constricted its ability to deal with the protest outright, thereby strengthening the position of the protesters. Leading up to the concession, Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn found himself between a rock and a hard place. Two such regional dynamics include balancing the demands of the Tigray elite who tie Desalegn’s hands in their push for greater economic expansion, and addressing the worst drought in 30 years. “Some suggest that he [Hailemariam] is a mere figurehead and that real power is still within a core TPLF group shadowing him” ([Huffington Post, 21 December 2015](#)). Here it is worth investigating how these interact to produce the trends observed. Amidst accusations that food aid has been distributed along partisan lines ([Counterpunch, 8 January 2016](#)), it is feasible that large portions of the \$192 million allocated for aid relief in the on-going drought is being directed towards the Tigray region in order to placate hardline Tigrayan’s pushing for a harsh response to unrest in Oromia.

Both of these are likely to have affected Desalegn’s strategic calculation of the potential power of the Oromia protest movement to capitalise on other regional issues at the time. The temporary back down on the Master Plan therefore reflects how the EPRDF positions itself and its interests against concurrent issues in Ethiopia and offers fresh insight into analysing protest dynamics. In this case it demonstrates an attempt to contain further confrontation as protests continued unabated in the face of worsening state repression.

The Oromia protest movement raises a number of questions in larger literature on protest success, dynamics, trajectories and escalation. Investigating the goals and challenges of African regimes and how they interact with non-state groups may provide better understanding of the specific developments witnessed in current protest dynamics across the continent including Tunisia, Nigeria, South Africa and Egypt (see Figure 3).

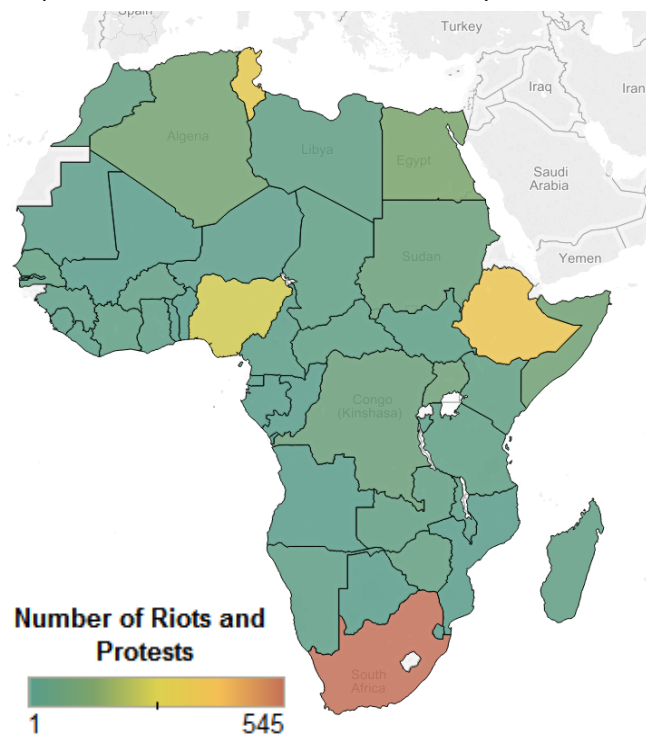


Figure 3: Number of Riots and Protests in Africa, in 2016.

Nigeria

Since the beginning of 2016, Nigeria has been subject to two notable trends in political violence. First, the Nigerian military has had significant success in its battles with Boko Haram, particularly in terms of the amount of territory recovered. Second, armed Fulani herders have engaged in a number of high fatality attacks against civilians and clashes with communal groups in the provinces of Benue, Enugu and Taraba (see Figure 4). This could signal a shift in the primary driver of violence in Nigeria away from the conflict in the northeast and towards the ever-present tensions between Nigeria's herders and farmers ([Quartz Africa, 30 April 2016](#)).

Since regional cooperation began in mid-2015, operations by government forces in their conflict against Boko Haram have grown in momentum. Momentum peaked in March 2016, when the Nigerian military succeeded in taking back a considerable amount of territory from the insurgent group, including the "spiritual power base" of Boko Haram located in the Alagarno forest ([Sahara Reporters, 3 March 2016](#)). This symbolic victory took place in the midst of a larger offensive in which ACLED recorded 27 unique reports of battles involving the government's recapture of territory from Boko Haram in March, and 43 since the beginning of 2016 (see Figure 4). Meanwhile, significant violence has been recorded in the southeastern states of Benue and Taraba between January and April (see Figure 4), with more recent fatalities reported in late April in

Enugu ([Vanguard, 26 April 2016](#)). The perpetrators of the attacks are identified as nomadic Fulani herder militias engaging in cattle raiding against the settled farming populations of those states. There have also been reports of retaliatory violence and clashes between the Fulani militias and other communal groups ([France24, 1 March 2016](#)). The most fatal of these incidents was a series of attacks targeting Agatu communities in Benue, believed to have been carried out by Fulani militias, which killed at least 200 in late February 2016 ([Vanguard, 14 February 2016](#)). Last week, attacks attributed to Fulani militias were reported in Enugu, resulting in dozens killed after at least seven villages were attacked ([IBT, 26 April 2016](#)). These incidents represent a dramatic increase in violence in this region; violence of this type has historically been associated with the northern and central regions of Nigeria ([Quartz Africa, 30 April 2016](#)).

Just as the Nigerian government is getting one fire under control, another is starting. Although overall fatalities in 2016 from the violence in Borno, where Boko Haram is most active, are double those of Benue, Enugu and Taraba combined, this gap is closing. In April 2016, the total fatalities reported from political violence in Benue, Enugu and Taraba (177 fatalities) overtook the fatalities reported in Borno State (164 fatalities), giving credence to the prospect that this new trend could be "the biggest security threat facing Nigeria after [Boko Haram's] insurgency" ([BBC News - Africa, 28 April 2016](#)).

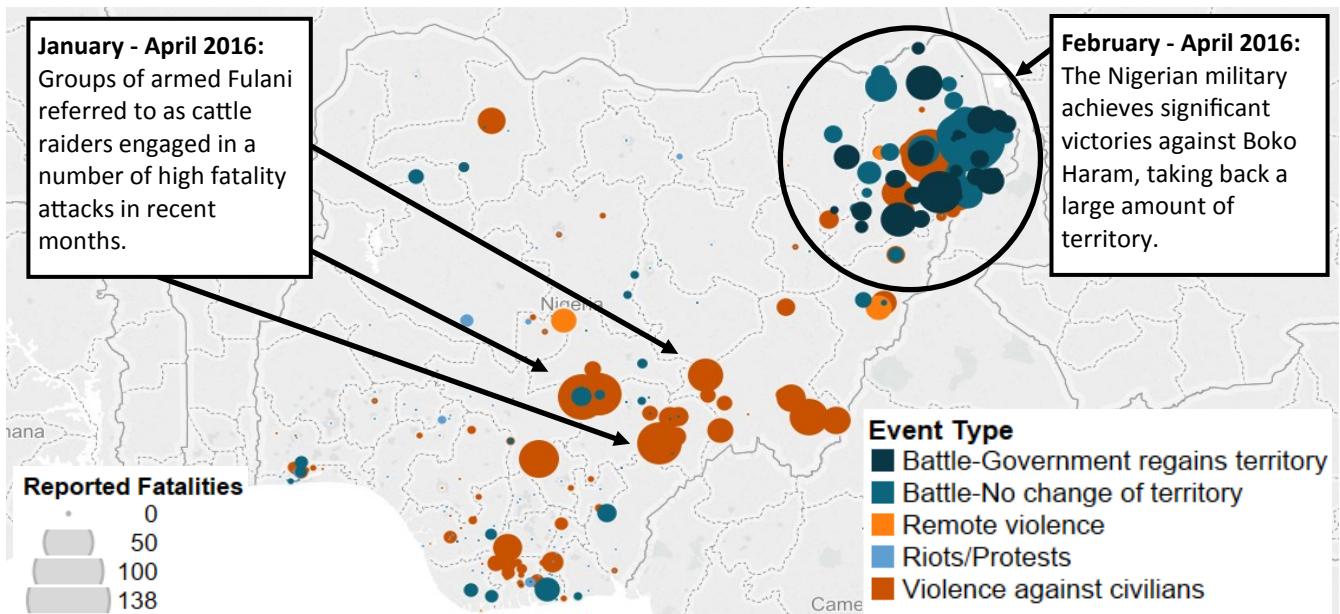


Figure 4: Number of Reported Fatalities by Event Type in Nigeria, from January - April 2016.

South Africa

Last month witnessed a slight decrease in conflict and protest events in South Africa. Nevertheless both April and March represent the most active months in terms of political unrest since October 2015 and the nationwide student protests against fees (see Figure 5). This high level of unrest is tied to the upcoming municipal elections and continuing protests on South African university campuses.

Despite the government’s announcement to freeze university fees for 2016, protests have continued at universities across South Africa. Although university campuses have not witnessed disturbances on the scale of the mass demonstrations in October and November, university campus protests and riots continue to be a significant source of unrest, typically accounting for between 10% and 20% of monthly events. This is because in spite of the freeze, students still face significant barriers to their education. Tuition and registration fees remain in place and, when combined with living costs for a single year, still add up to more than the annual income of the average South African household ([Mail & Guardian, 13 January 2016](#); [The Guardian, 03 March 2016](#)).

Furthermore, the issue of outsourced labour continues to galvanise both student and worker protests against university management. The #OutsourcingMustFall protests have pressured some universities – University of Cape Town, Wits University, Tufts University and University of the Free State – to review their outsourcing policies. The success of #OutsourcingMustFall at these institutions, along with the success of last year’s protests in stopping the increase in university fees and removing the status of Cecil Rhodes from UCT’s campus, indicates that protest, both violent and non-violent, is an effective mechanism of negotiating with the government and university management. If students and university workers continue to make small incremental gains on their demands, it may be the case that universities remain centres of protest in South Africa.

Protest action has marred voter registration periods for the upcoming municipal elections. No less than 51 instances of political disturbances occurred over voter registration weekends in March and April, consistent with a growing trend of demonstrations around electoral periods ([Lancaster, 2016](#)). The majority of voter registration disturbances were peaceful (57%), while over 43% of recorded disturbances involved riots or violence against civilians ([ACLED Trend Report, December 2015](#)).

The demonstrations were largely concentrated in ANC-dominated provinces of KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and Limpopo, and more specifically ANC-controlled municipalities (see Figure 6). This concentration suggests that citizens are increasingly dissatisfied and angry with the ruling party’s inability to deliver on its electoral promises. Recent data from Afrobarometer would seem to confirm such a theory as more than 50% of South Africans feel the country is going in the wrong direction, the current economic situation is bad (Chingwete and Nomdo, 2016) and that elected leaders are performing badly ([Lekalake, November 2015](#)).

Service Delivery Protests

The unrest at voter registration centres is tied to public dissatisfaction over service delivery and municipal boundaries ([Eyewitness News, 9 March 2016](#); [Times Live, 7 March 2016](#)). The demands of the violent protesters in Vumani and Pampierstad were centred on issues of municipal re-zoning and related issues of poor municipal service delivery ([Lancaster, 2016](#)).

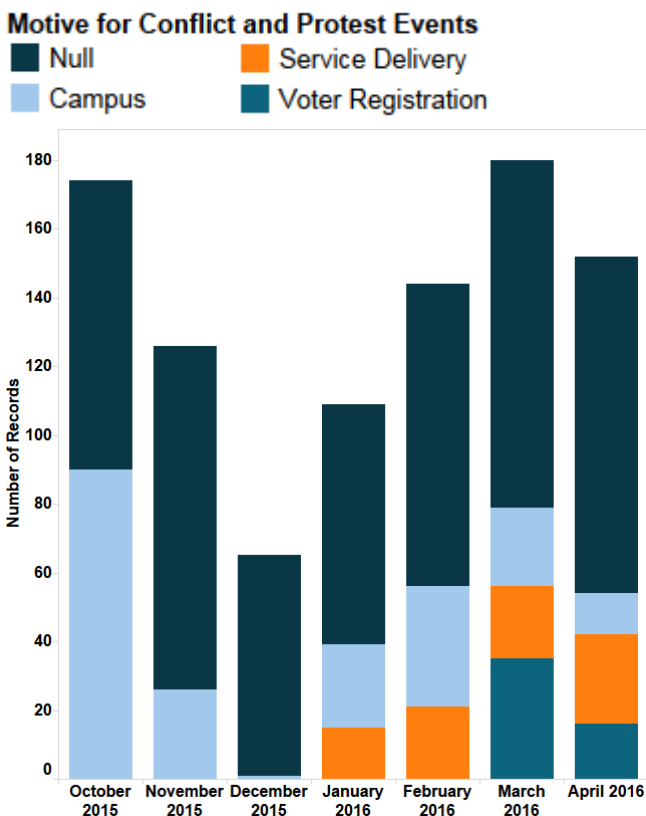


Figure 5: Number of Conflict and Protest Events by Motive in South Africa, from October 2015 - April 2016.

South Africa

Dissatisfaction with service delivery is common in South Africa, and could translate into electoral losses for the ANC. Opposition parties are feeding off recent political and economic scandals plaguing the ANC in a bid to increase their respective market shares of the South African electorate. Electoral demonstrations are a key factor of the South Africa’s political landscape in which citizens tend to vent their frustration through protest action, while concurrently supporting and voting for the ANC ([Booyesen, 2007](#)). Previous research has found that South Africa’s electorate believe that ‘voting helps and protest works’ ([Lancaster, 2016](#)).

Conversely, the Western Cape, despite being host to consistent service delivery demonstrations, witnessed relatively few voter registration protests. This suggests that, despite numerous social and economic problems in the Western Cape, the electorate have a large degree of faith in the local authorities. Analysis by AfricaCheck shows that the Western Cape is the best run province and provides the greatest amount of public services such as electricity, water and sanitation ([Wilkinson, 2014](#)). As a result, the electorate of the Western Cape may not feel the need to demonstrate discontent with the local authorities or government through a refusal to vote and the destruction of electoral infrastructure.

Election Protests

While election-based protests are on the increase, it remains unknown if this form of dissatisfaction will translate into fewer votes for the ANC. As such, the upcoming municipal elections will be a crucial litmus test for ANC support but also the validity of the insurgent opposition. The established Democratic Alliance (DA) has shown its strength through the lack of voter registration protests in its heartland, the Western Cape.

Meanwhile the left-ish Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) has moved away from being a party defined by protest and disruption of the ANC establishment. The EFF recently launched its manifesto which seeks to offer an alternative to the ANC’s cadre deployment, a policy that is often tied to poor public management and service delivery, two issues that have stoked consistent protest against the ANC ([Munusamy, 2 May 2016](#); [Areff, 12 July 2012](#)).

The unrest witnessed during this preliminary period of the electoral cycle likely indicates that there will be further instability during the August elections. EFF leader Julius Malema has announced that the opposition will remove Zuma ‘through the barrel of a gun’ should electoral fraud or state repression mar the elections ([Al Jazeera, 23 April 2016](#)).

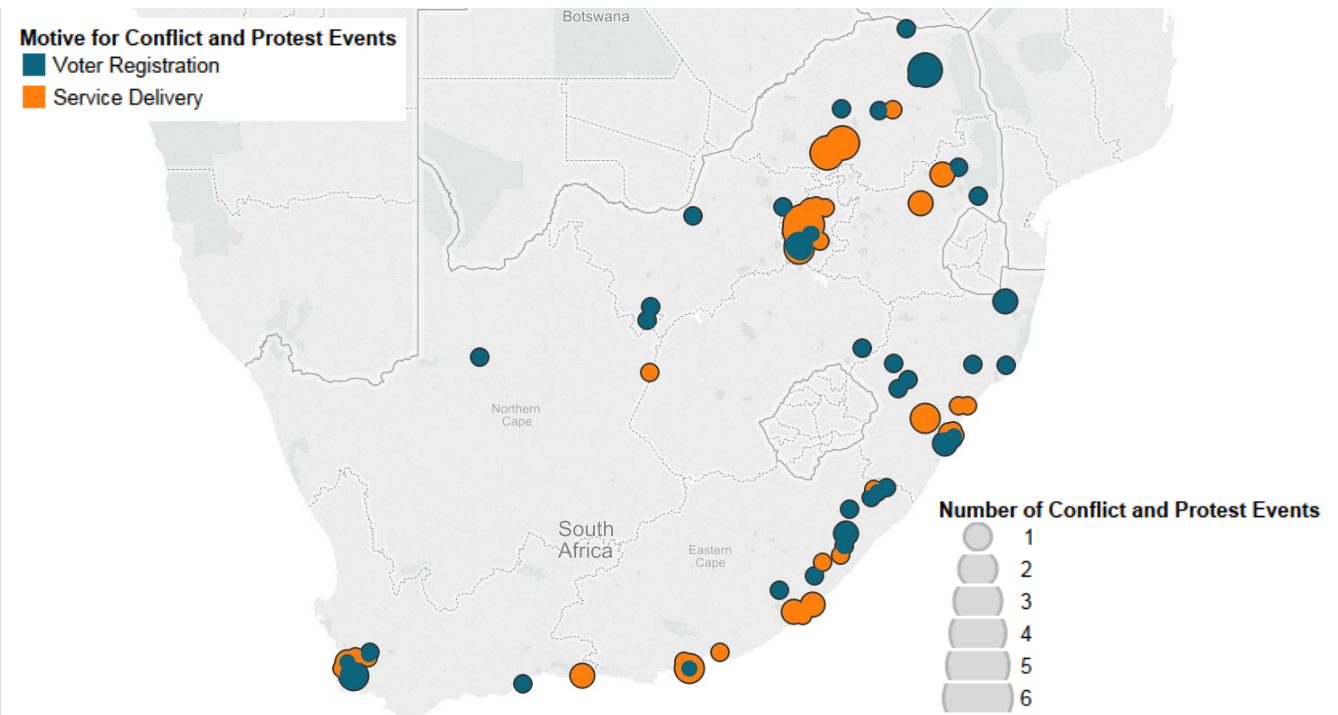


Figure 6: Number of Conflict and Protest Events by Motive & Location in South Africa, from January 2015 - April 2016.

Special Focus Topic: Burundi Crisis Year One

As the crisis in Burundi officially enters its second year, the country remains unstable, as dead bodies (often with signs of torture) continue to be discovered throughout various provinces, high-profile assassinations are on the rise, and newly formed armed opposition groups become more active. The conflict has a current reported fatality count of 1,155 between 26 April 2015 and 25 April 2016 (as of the time of publishing); at least 690 of the reported dead (or approximately 60%) are civilians. More than 260,000 people have reportedly fled outside Burundi and thousands have disappeared without trace: approximately 137,000 Burundian refugees have crossed into Tanzania, 77,000 into Rwanda, 23,000 into Uganda, and 22,000 into the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) ([UNHCR, 29 April 2016](#)).

Direction

In recent weeks, the crisis has become increasingly widespread throughout the country and increasingly varied with respect to actors targeted by violence – ranging from security forces, former soldiers, and members of various opposition groups. The consequences of the past year are

stark, but the crisis is not materializing into a civil war, a coup, or any other form of instability that is immediately recognizable. Since June 2015, reports have been referring to President Pierre Nkurunziza’s actions as ‘trigger for civil war’ and ‘spiraling into chaos’, yet continue to use the term ‘political crisis’ rather than ‘civil war’ to describe ongoing events in the country ([Al Jazeera, 28 June 2015](#)).

Because of Burundi’s recent conflict history, some, including the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein, have warned that the ethnic dimensions of the conflict “are flashing red” ([The Guardian, 15 January 2016](#)). However, the past year of political violence has remained primarily between regime supporters against regime critics. Additionally, many civilians who have not necessarily supported, or opposed, President Nkurunziza’s leadership or the ruling party National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD-FDD) have nevertheless become victims of the conflict by seeking a safer livelihood across borders.

Burundi’s initial riots and protests starting in April 2015

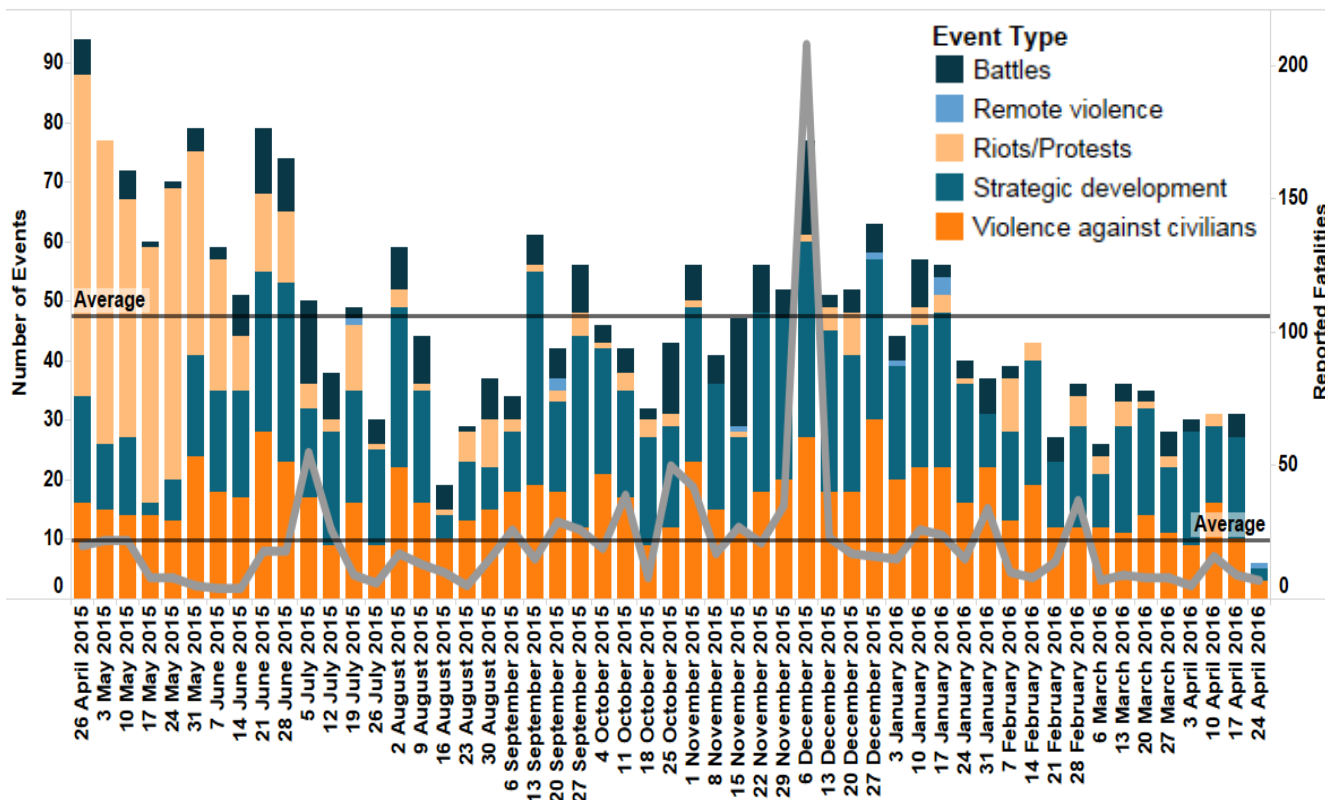


Figure 7: Number of Conflict and Political Violence Events by Type in Burundi, from 26 April 2015 - 25 April 2016.

Special Focus Topic: Burundi Crisis Year One

mirror that of other African countries where long-standing presidents have attempted to defy or constitutionally remove term limits. Riots and protests in Burkina Faso in 2014 ousted President Blaise Compaoré within two weeks. In DRC, President Joseph Kabila has been blocked by his legislature from extending term limits. However, riots and protests related to Burundi President Nkurunziza’s announcement of a third term did not as quickly bring a resolution. Instead, Burundi’s unrest has evolved into a seemingly intractable crisis with street clashes between government forces and armed opposition groups, grenade violence targeting police, militia violence against IDPs attempting to flee, and security agents conducting searches and arrests of suspected rebels throughout the country.

The conflict has been characterised by a shutdown of newspapers, raids on radio stations, and freezes on the bank accounts of human rights organisations. Due to the crackdown on media outlets and civil society, news of conflict events and fatalities are often delayed; many events have likely gone unreported. ACLED data often rely on domestic news and local-level sources. ACLED’s Burundi crisis information makes use of crowd-sourced data from the [2015 Burundi Project](#) (over a quarter of all events in ACLED’s local-level Burundi dataset rely on such crowd-sourced information, which is professionally monitored and validated), as well as a consolidated network of grassroots organisations and trained citizen journalists within the country (over half of all events in ACLED’s local-level Burundi dataset draw upon information from this network of grassroots organisations and trained citizen journalists). Figure 8 depicts the difference between the type of events reported by local-level sources versus media outlets; the

local-level sources report much of the ‘smaller-scale’ yet chronic issues many Burundians face, namely home searches, (at times arbitrary) arrests, and harassment in border regions while trying to leave or re-enter the country.

Dynamics

The dynamics of the conflict have stayed largely similar throughout the past year; violence against civilians has consistently comprised almost 75% of conflict in Burundi since last July, although riots & protests made up the majority of events in the early stages of the conflict (April to early June 2015) (see Figure 7). Peaceful protests soon subsided – a function of increased violence against protesters of the regime (see Figure 9). From June to September 2015, violent riots were common. From late 2015, ‘peaceful protests’ have become the primary form of demonstration in Burundi, though these are almost exclusively pro-government protests, over issues including the deployment of AU troops to Burundi, or citing anti-Rwanda and President Kagame rhetoric and chanting. Local reports state that locals are forced to participate in these pro-government protests via threats from police forces and Imbonerakure, a CNDD-FDD youth militia. During protests in March 2016, there were reports that local municipal leaders threatened that anyone who failed to participate would be considered an enemy of the state.

Civilian Targeting

Rates of civilian targeting have increased since the beginning of 2016 and most of the fatalities from this conflict (approximately 60%) have been borne by the civilian population. In the beginning of the crisis, attacks on civilians were more centralized in and around Bujumbura. In more

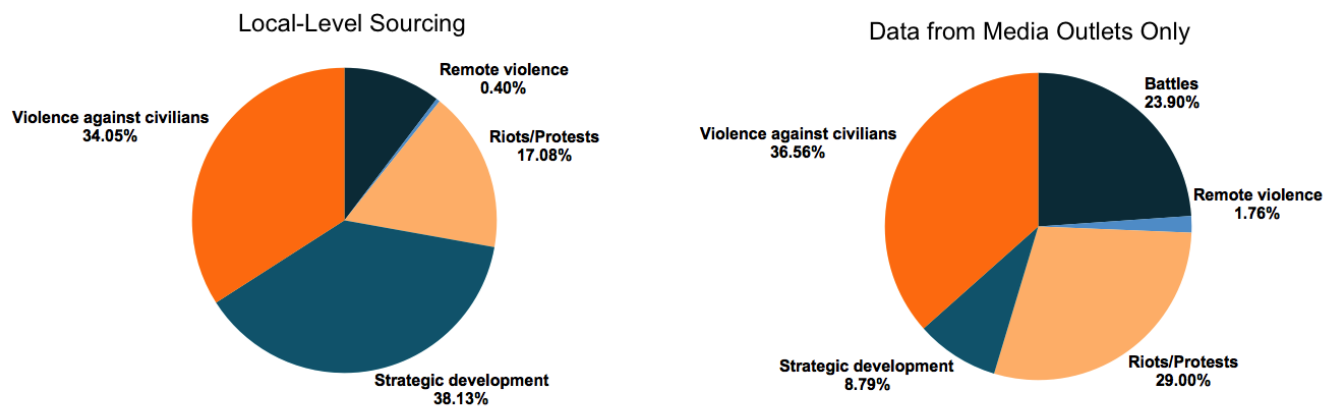


Figure 8: Data Differences by Proportional Event Type in Burundi, from 26 April 2015 - 25 April 2016.

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Special Focus Topic: Burundi Crisis Year One

recent periods, these attacks and civilian fatalities are prevalent across the country. Of all reported incidences of violence against civilians in the past year, approximately 49% occurred in provinces outside of the capital areas of Bujumbura Mairie and Bujumbura Rural. Although there is an increasing trend of Imbonerakure beating civilians in Kirundo Provinces bordering Rwanda and in Ruyigi and Makamba Provinces bordering Tanzania, more than 20% of all violence targeting civilians outside of the capital provinces in the past 12 months has occurred in Bubanza, which borders DRC and Lake Tanganyika to the west (see

Figure 10). The most commonly targeted civilian victims in Bubanza are either politically affiliated with the ruling CNDD-FDD or affiliated with the opposition group FNL (see Figure 11). In Bubanza, almost half (48%) of all violence against civilians is perpetrated by unidentified armed groups, and one-third of such violence is perpetrated by Imbonerakure.

Local reporting indicates that violence against civilians has largely been carried out against opposition supporters and civilians trying to flee violence; this violence is carried out by government forces or affiliates of the government.

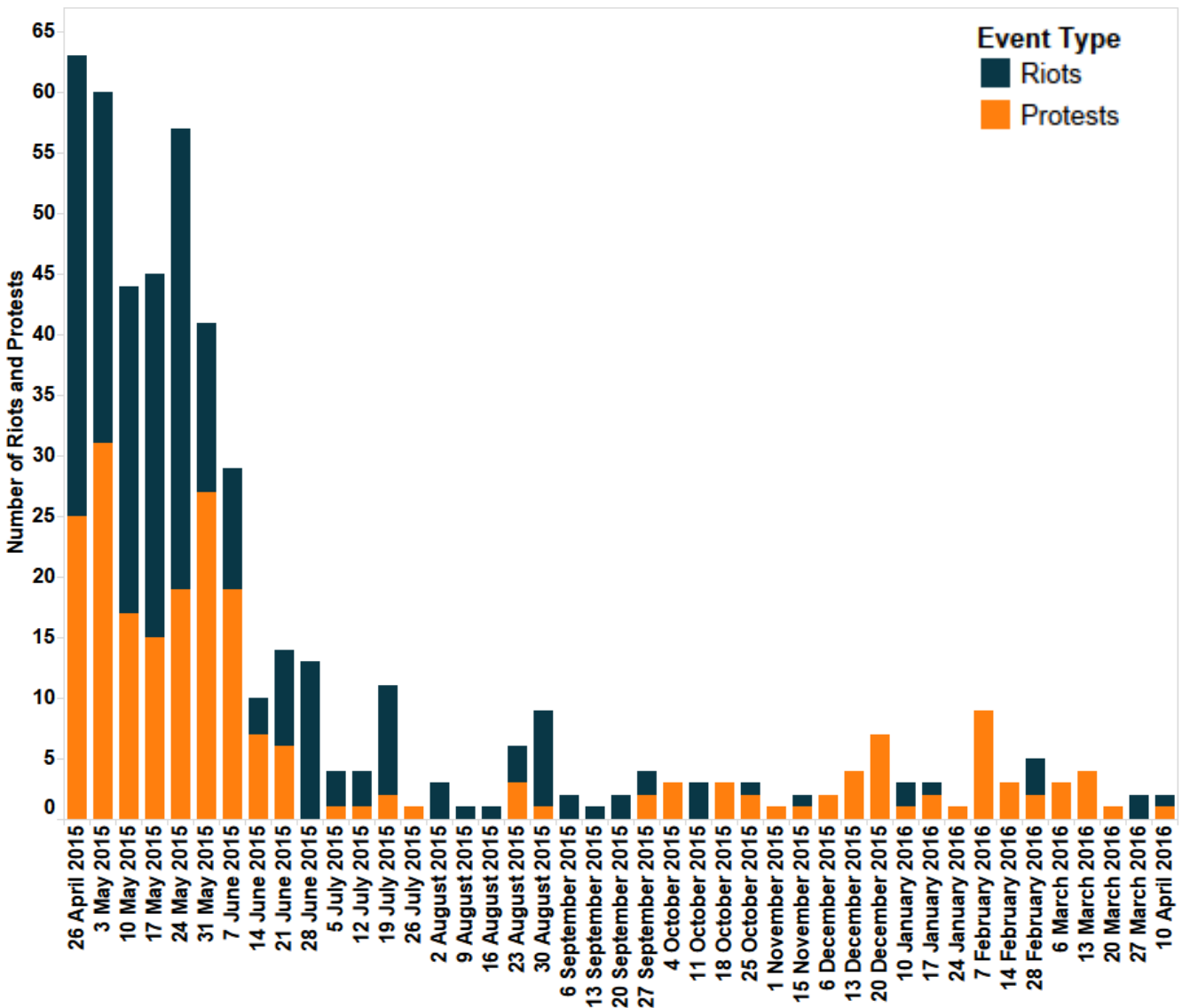
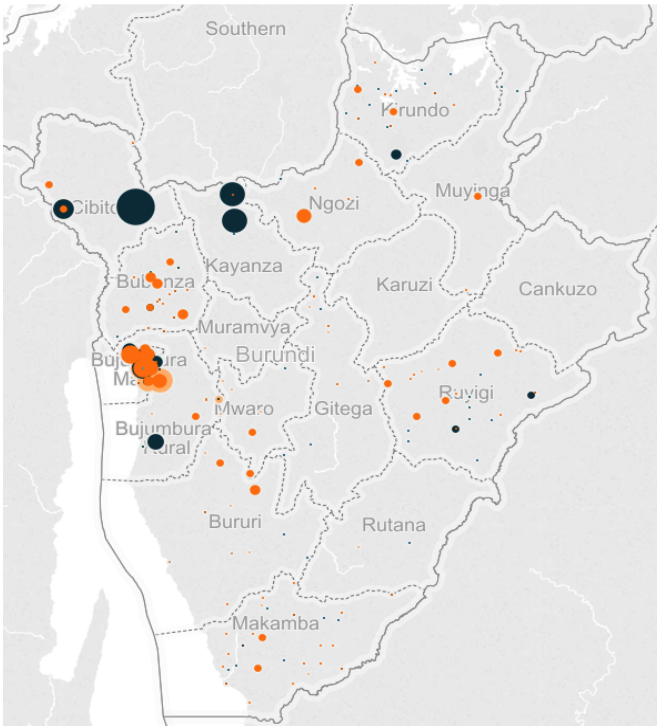


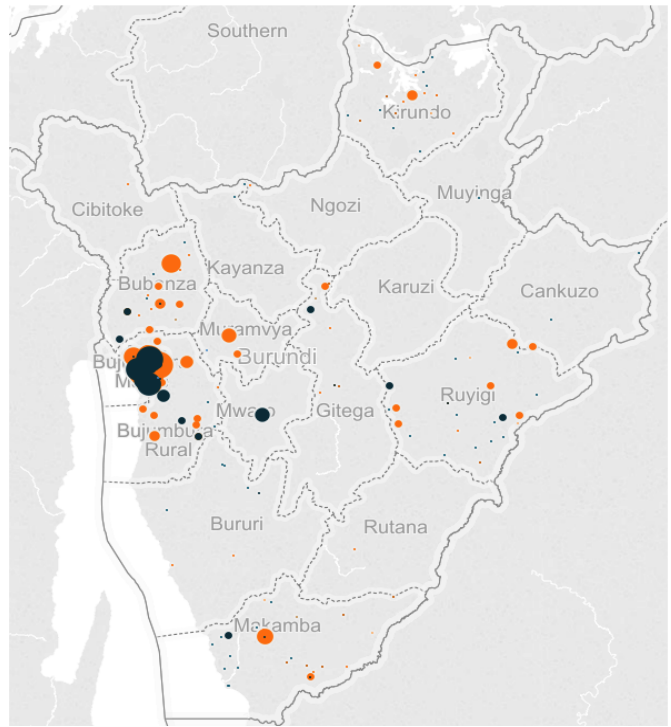
Figure 9: Number of Demonstrations by Event Type in Burundi, from 26 April 2015 - 25 April 2016.

Special Focus Topic: Burundi Crisis Year One

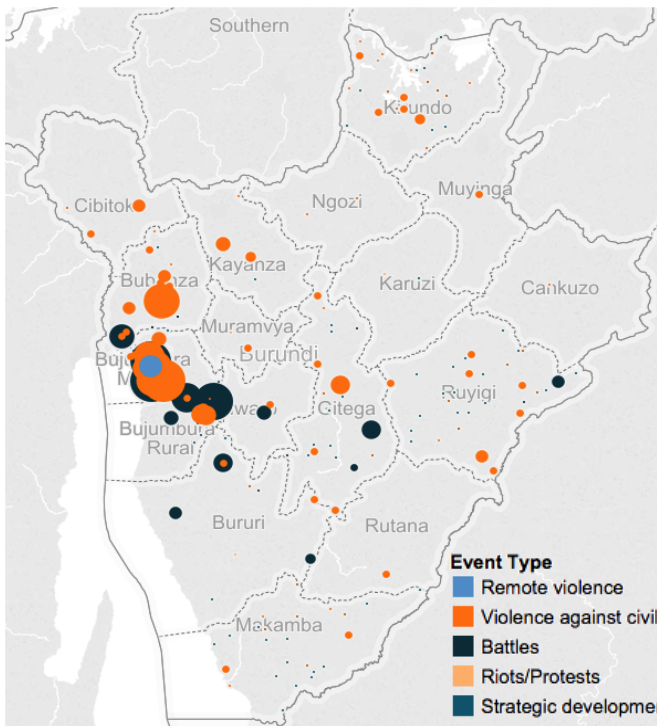
April - July 2015



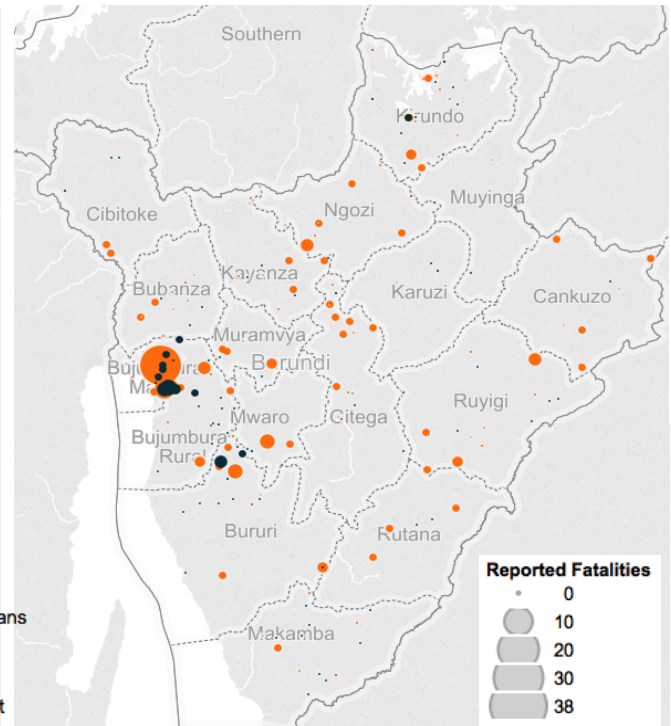
July - October 2015



October 2015 - January 2016



January - April 2016



Event Type
■ Remote violence
■ Violence against civilians
■ Battles
■ Riots/Protests
■ Strategic development

Reported Fatalities
● 0
● 10
● 20
● 30
● 38

Figure 10: Number of Reported Fatalities by Location in Burundi, from 26 April 2015 - 25 April 2016.



Special Focus Topic: Burundi Crisis Year One

Burundi Timeline 26 April 2015 – 26 April 2016

April 2015

25 - CNDD-FDD announces President Pierre Nkurunziza will run for a third term, despite constitutional term limits
26 - Hundreds riot and protest throughout Bujumbura; police respond with tear gas and live ammunition, killing six rioters and protesters; government officials also stormed offices of Radio Publique Africaine to disrupt live broadcasts of protests

May 2015

13 - Former Army Chief of Staff Major General Godefroid Niyombare leads a coup attempt while Nkurunziza visits Tanzania; Nkurunziza regains full control two days later
15 - Following failed coup, government bans main radio stations *Rema FM* and *Radio Isanganiro*
23 - Unidentified gunmen kill UPD-Zigamibanga leader Zedi Feruzi in Ngagara

June 2015

25 - Unidentified group with machetes assassinates Jean-Paul Ngendakumana, FRODEBU leader in Rugombo Commune and a candidate in local elections
29 - CNDD-FDD wins nearly 80% of seats in parliamentary elections; boycotted by some opposition groups; several high-ranking CNDD-FDD leaders abandon the party prior to elections

July 2015

10 - Intense fighting in Kayanza Province between military and mutineer military forces loyal to General Niyombare; 12 killed
11 - Intense fighting in Cibitoke Province between military and mutineer military forces under command of exiled General Leonard Ngendakumana; 20 killed; alleged support from Rwanda to Niyombare and Ngendakumana
21 - Nkurunziza re-elected for a third term with a majority of the vote; several FNL members killed following the election

August 2015

2 - Unidentified men in military uniforms launch rockets and gunfire from a military vehicle in Kamenge, killing Adolphe Nshimirimana, former Chief of National Intelligence Services
3 - Unknown group attacks and seriously injures Burundian civil society leader Pierre-Claver Mponimpa in Kinama; sparks riots in Musaga and Cibitoke
15 - Two unidentified attackers on a motorcycle assassinate former Army Chief of Staff Jean Bikomagu in Kabondo

September 2015

23 - At least 15 bodies of opposition members and activists found throughout Bujumbura following clashes between police and unidentified groups in Mutakura, Cibitoke, Ngagara, and Kamenge
29 - Unidentified gunmen fire shots and grenades, killing Jean Baptiste Nsengiyumva, an MSD leader in Muramvya Province

October 2015

13 - During clashes in Ngagara, 'insurgents' abduct three policemen; in retaliation, police execute seven civilians, including a journalist and a staff member of the International Organization for Migration
18 - MSD activist Charlotte Umugwaneza, whose family is originally from Rwanda, found in Gikoma River outside Bujumbura, showing signs of torture
23 - Police execute two unarmed rebels in Kibira forest, which straddles four northeastern provinces
28 - Police execute four rebels captured in Gishubi in Kayanza Province



Special Focus Topic: Burundi Crisis Year One

November 2015

- 7 - Nkurunziza's stated deadline for opposition forces to disarm and receive amnesty
- 18 - Unidentified armed group launches two mortar shells at the presidential palace, but shells miss and cause no damage

December 2015

- 11 - Heavily armed groups carry out coordinated attacks on military barracks in Ngagara, Musaga, and Mujejuru; 87 killed in clashes
- 11 - Military and police forces retaliate with violent raids of suspected rebel households; dozens of bodies buried in mass graves in Buringa, Mpanda, and Kanyosha; existence and location of graves discovered by satellite imagery in January 2016
- 11 - API Unit of police forces executes 21 civilians, shooting them in the head, in Nyakabiga
- 17 - African Union Peace and Security Council approves a 5,000-strong African Prevention and Protection Mission in Burundi (MAPROBU), yet to be deployed
- 23 - Former Colonel Edward Nshimirimana announces the Republican Forces of Burundi (FOREBU), aiming to oust Nkurunziza and restore cohesion between national defence and security forces
- 28 - Peace talks begin in Entebbe, Uganda

January 2016

- 3 - FNL youth league president William Nimubona found dead in Kinama
- 13 - Grenade attacks target and kill five police officers in Mutakura; In Kiyenza, soldiers kill former Captain Idi Omar Bahenda and former Police Brigadier Jean Claude Niyongabo, who defected and were thought to be recruiting rebels
- 25 - Clashes between RED-Tabara and government forces in Bururi Province; seven killed

February 2016

- 5 - FOREBU kill four Imbonerakure during an attack on a police station in Cibitoke neighbourhood of Bujumbura
- 13 - Thousands of ruling party supporters in seven provinces protest against the deployment of AU troops and against Rwandan involvement in Burundi
- 29 - Members of the press are allowed to view a mass grave in Mutakura; police claim opposition forces responsible for killing and burying Nkurunziza supporters

March 2016

- 4 - Following grenade attacks in Kamenge, SNR agents arrest 35 suspects including a soldier, and torture them with acid
- 15 - CNDD-FDD official Adrien Mudomo shot dead in Bururi Province
- 16-18 - Government releases 859 detainees as part of an agreement with the UN to release up to 2,000 prisoners
- 22 - Senior army officer Darius Ikurakure shot dead inside army headquarters in Bujumbura, reportedly by another soldier; Army Major Didier Muhimpundu shot and killed in a bar in Rohero

April 2016

- 11 - MSD activist strangled to death in Kayanza Province; Three bodies found bound together in a mass grave in Kadidiri, Ngozi Province
- 20 - Gunmen with rifles and grenades kill Colonel Emmanuel Buzobona and his driver in Kinama
- 24 - Unidentified gunmen assassinate FRODEBU activist in Kirundo Province; MSD activist's body found in Gitega Province; Imbonerakure suspected perpetrator though not confirmed
- 25 - In Bujumbura, unknown attackers use rockets and gunfire to assassinate Brigadier General Athanase Kararuzza, a military advisor in the office of the vice president
- 25 - International Criminal Court in The Hague announces preliminary investigation into the situation in Burundi

Special Focus Topic: Burundi Crisis Year One

Where an event includes information on a victim’s identity and their last known whereabouts, the violence can be attributed to a particular group or section of the armed forces. For instance, arrests and subsequent deaths of the same person are widespread; numerous events describe police arresting individuals and taking them to ‘an unknown destination’. Witness accounts are often vague and inconclusive as to whether an individual was detained in a local jail or forcibly abducted. All political-related searches and arrests, whether conducted by various units of the security forces or by unknown armed groups, are coded by ACLED as strategic developments so as not to inaccurately inflate the number of incidences of violence against civilians. However, deaths of those individuals arrested may not be reported and therefore the number of inci-

dents of violence involving police may be higher than what is reported here. In cases where civilian affiliation can be attributed, supporters of the FNL, MSD, and Amizero y’Abarundi have been targeted (13%, 12%, and 7%, respectively, of instances of civilian targeting in which the affiliation of the targeted civilian is known). In incidences where MSD leaders and activists have been targeted (mainly by unidentified armed groups), 74% of such incidences involved at least one fatality.

Yet, there has also been an increased trend of military, police officials, and ruling party CNDD-FDD leaders both targeted by opposition forces (as well as ‘unidentified armed groups’ acting on behalf of opposition forces), as well as targeted by other state forces in cases when indi-

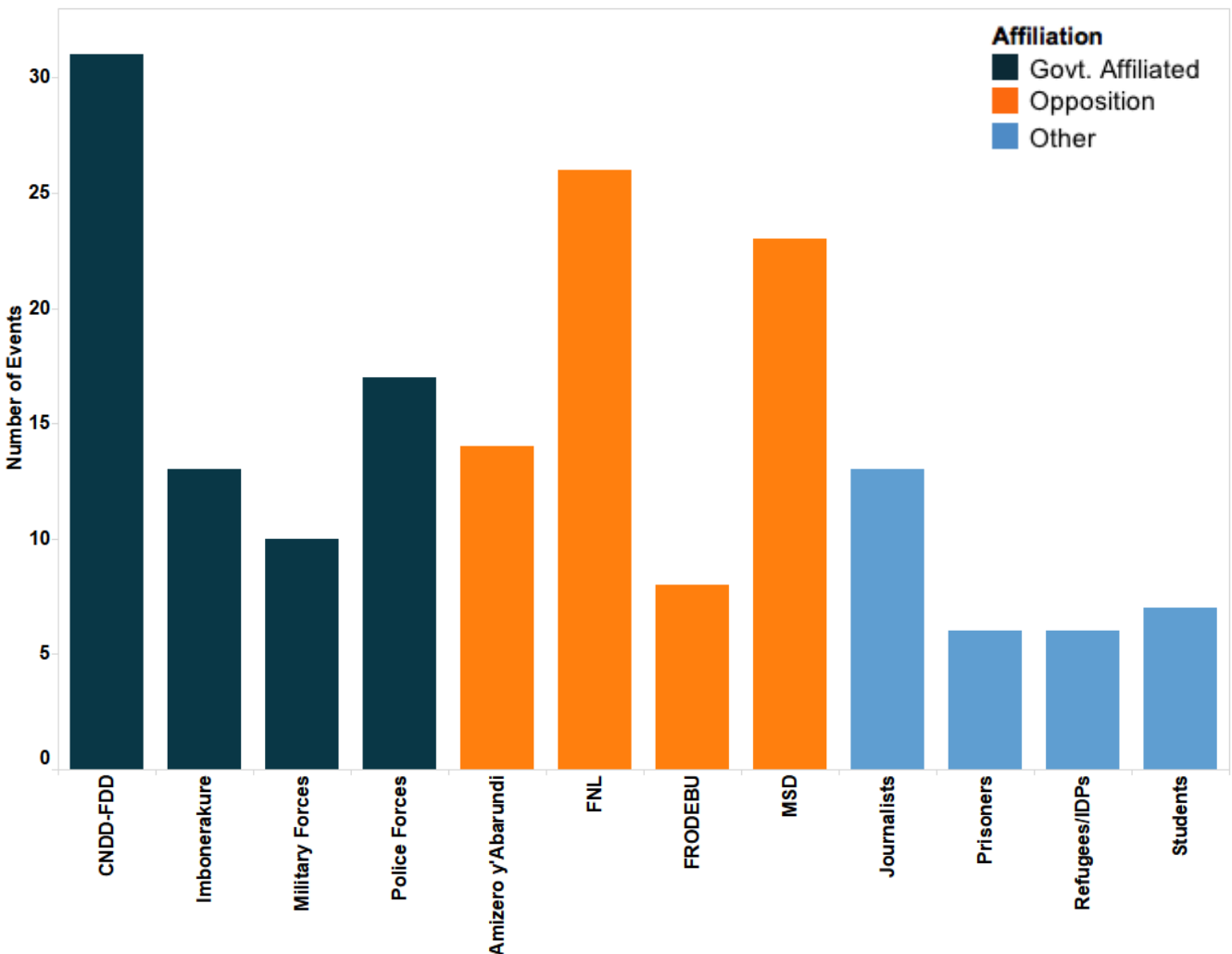


Figure 11: Violence against Civilians by Victim’s Affiliation in Burundi, from 26 April 2015 - 26 April 2016.



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viduals are deemed to be critical of the regime. As recently as 20 April 2016, Colonel Emmanuel Buzubona was assassinated in Bujumbura. Although his death is attributed to an unidentified armed group, suspicions lie with government forces. Buzubona had previously been arrested for suspected support of rebel groups during the 11 December 2015 attacks on military barracks. And 25 April 2016, in Bujumbura, unknown attackers used rockets and gunfire to assassinate Brigadier General Athanase Kararuzza, a military advisor in the office of the vice president ([Reuters, 26 April 2016](#)). This highlights the emphasis being placed on complete support and loyalty to the Burundian regime. In cases where civilian affiliation can be attributed, CNDD-FDD members, as well as members of the police and military forces, have been targeted (16%, 9%, and 5%, respectively, of instances of civilian targeting in which the affiliation of the targeted civilian is known).

Battles

While battles made up about a quarter of events between July and December 2015, these events have become less common. These battles largely consist of state forces, such as police or military forces, taking up arms against unidentified armed groups, which are believed to often consist of opposition supporters. However, with the crack-down of police searches of homes for weapons and opposition supporters, coupled with the increased targeting of civilians, it has become increasingly difficult for opposition supporters to continue taking up arms against the state, and to be open about their acts against the state. This is partially why a high proportion of acts involve 'unidentified armed groups'. Battles involving unidentified armed groups are often described as involving 'opposition forces' or 'insurgents'; therefore, it is difficult to attribute violence to just one of the numerous opposition groups active in the country.

There are a number of 'acts of provocation' in this conflict, similar to previous Burundian conflicts. In November 2015, unknown assailants launched two mortar shells at the presidential palace, but caused no damage. Targeting

the palace may seem reminiscent of attacks that sparked the country's civil war. Tutsi paratroopers assassinated Burundi's first Hutu president Melichor Ndadaye in October 1993, sparking an ethnic-based war that claimed 300,000 lives.

The deadliest day of the political crisis occurred on 11 December 2015, when armed groups carried out coordinated attacks on military sites in Ngagara, Musaga, and Mujejuru. At least 87 were reportedly killed and 49 were captured. Police retaliated with searches, raids, and arrests throughout Bujumbura. Dozens of civilians' bodies were discovered in mass graves in the days and weeks afterwards. However, mass graves may not only be a tactic of government forces. On 29 February 2016, members of press were allowed to view a mass grave in the predominantly anti-government neighborhood of Mutakura. Bujumbura Mayor Freddy Mbonimpa stated that the victims were supporters of a third term ([Bloomberg, 1 March 2016](#)).

The events of 11 December 2015 garnered attention from international organisations, with the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council unanimously backing an investigation into the country's crisis. The African Union (AU) approved the deployment of a 5,000-strong African Prevention and Protection Mission in Burundi (MAPROBU), which has yet to be deployed due to opposition from the Burundi Government. In February 2016, the government agreed to allow 100 military observers and 100 human rights observers into the country. Promised action by the AU, often-postponed peace talks mediated by Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, and a visit from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and a delegation of African leaders in late February have had no tangible effect on the number of conflict events. Due to continued reports of acts of killing, torture, imprisonment, sexual violence, and enforced disappearances, International Criminal Court Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda announced on 25 April 2016 the start of a preliminary investigation into the situation in Burundi ([International Criminal Court, 25 April 2016](#)).

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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](#).