

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	433
Land:	DR. Congo
Kilde:	Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project
Titel:	Conflict trends (no. 52) real-time analysis of African political violence
Udgivet:	Oktober 2016
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	9. januar 2017

Welcome to the October issue of the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project's (ACLED) *Conflict Trends* report. Each month, ACLED researchers gather, analyse and publish data on political violence in Africa in realtime. Weekly updates to realtime conflict event data are published on the [ACLED website](http://www.acleddata.com), and are also available through our research partners at [Climate Change and African Political Stability \(CCAPS\)](http://www.climatichangeandafrikanpoliticalstability.org).

This month's issue focuses on election and insecurity-related protests in **DR-Congo**, conflict in **Libya's** east over governance, competition between RENAMO and the **Mozambique** government, civilian-targeted violence and Al Shabaab activity in **Somalia**, escalating student protests across **South Africa** and ZANU-PF violence against organised opposition in **Zimbabwe**.

Elsewhere on the continent, riots and protests continued to steadily rise across **Algeria** over water shortages and living conditions, civilian fatalities spiked in Anti-Balaka and Séléka violence in **Central African Republic**, Boko Haram attacks continued unabated in Borno and Yobe State in **Nigeria**, and low-level activity was recorded in **Burkina Faso**, **Burundi** and **Uganda**.

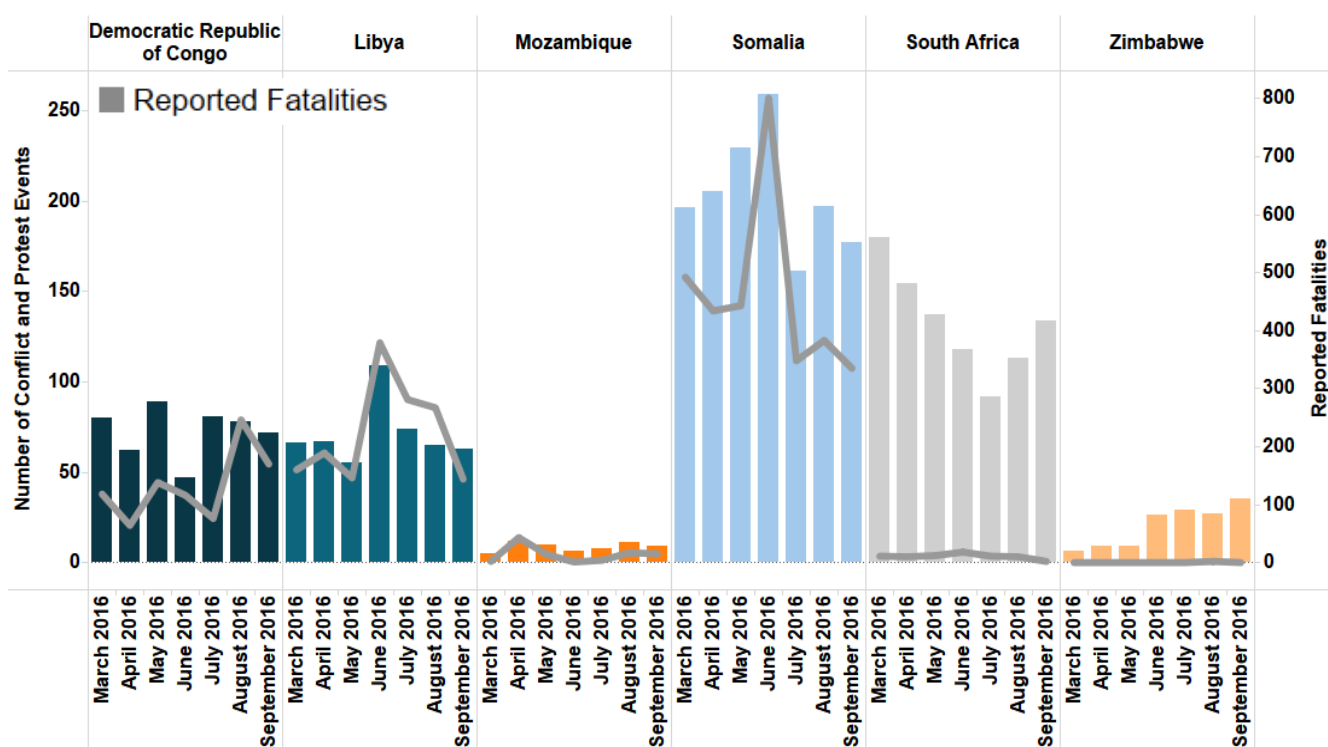


Figure 1: Conflict Events and Reported Fatalities by Country, March - September 2016.

Democratic Republic of Congo

Since the beginning of 2016, riots and protests in DR-Congo have generally fallen into two broad categories. First, protests against the presidential election delay scheduled to be held in late November 2016, a concern which was recently confirmed when the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) announced that the election will be pushed back to 2018 ([Bloomberg, 29 September 2016](#)). Second, protest events related to insecurity, with the most prevalent being those motivated by attacks on Beni territory by suspected ADF rebels but also occasionally prompted by violence in other areas of the country. While these two categories are not exhaustive, other protests in the country are largely sporadic and isolated.

There have been several notable episodes of election-related riots and protests in 2016 (see Figure 2). The first included a 24-hour national strike called by the G7 opposition coalition to demand elections within the constitutionally mandated deadline in February. Strikes in Kinshasa and some major cities in the east, including Bukavu, Uvira and Goma were well attended ([Reuters, 16 February 2016](#)). Following this, a day of demonstrations on 26 May 2016 saw protests against the constitutional court decision to allow Congolese President Joseph Kabila to stay in power beyond the end of his term in 2016 while elections were organized, resulting in at least one protester killed in Goma ([Al Jazeera, 26 May 2016](#)). During the 26 May

events, protests in Kinshasa also resulted in a number of injuries, although similar events remained peaceful in the cities of Kisangani, Moba, Kalemie, Bukavu and Beni. Other significant election protests in 2016 occurred on 19 January ([Congo Research Group, 20 January 2016](#)) and 7 July ([National Post, 31 July 2016](#)), both of which drew thousands of demonstrators to demand presidential elections be held in 2016 and were largely peaceful. The G7 coalition organised the majority of election-related demonstrations and later by the Rally of the Congolese Opposition (OCR), a coalition of opposition parties that came together to more effectively contest the presidential election.

By far the most significant bout of election-related mass demonstrations in 2016 were those witnessed in late September. On 19 September, the OCR rallied demonstrators in a number of cities across the DR-Congo demanding that elections be held in 2016. While a number of demonstrations occurred without reports of violence, Congolese security forces dispersed those in Beni and Matadi with a number of injuries reported ([Radio Okapi, 23 September 2016](#)). By comparison, Kinshasa saw an unprecedented number of protester and police fatalities during two days of violent protests. At least 32 people were reported killed in the violence, including at least six police officers ([Washington Post, 21 September 2016](#)). Assaultants burned a number of opposition HQs, including the UDPS,

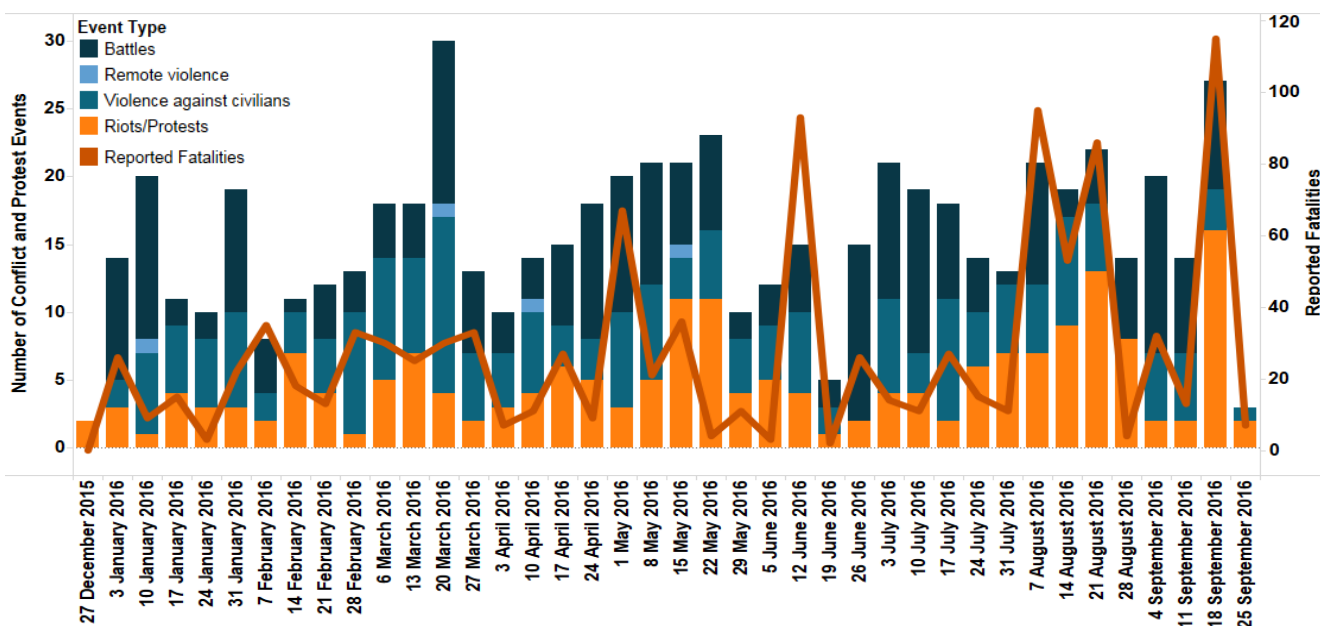


Figure 2: Number of Political Violence and Protest Events in DR-Congo, from January - September 2016.

Democratic Republic of Congo

the party representing the leading opposition presidential candidate Étienne Tshisekedi, as well as those of the ECIDE, FONUS, and MLP political parties ([Al Jazeera, 21 September 2016](#)). One of the political parties of the ruling coalition, the RCD, also allegedly had its HQ burnt by opposition protesters during the events of 19-20 September ([Radio Okapi, 20 September 2016](#)).

The DR-Congo regularly witnesses insecurity-related protests, particularly in response to rebel attacks in the eastern region of North Kivu (see Figure 3). The city of Beni is a notable focal point for demonstrations against the activities of the ADF which has been a regular perpetrator of mass killings of civilians over the past few years in Beni territory. In 2016, Beni territory alone has been the site of three major protest events related to insecurity. The first of these involved a coordinated 72-hour “dead city” protest strike in May against insecurity in North Kivu. These protests shut down Beni, Butembo, Eringeti, Lubero, Mbau and Oicha ([Radio Okapi, 18 May 2016](#)) following the killing of at least 30 civilians by suspected ADF rebels in separate attacks in the Eringeti area earlier in the month ([Reliefweb, 11 May 2016](#)). This bout of protests was followed by a major protest in Beni in August catalyzed by a suspected ADF attack on the Rwangoma suburb of the city that resulted in more than 40 civilian casualties ([Al Jazeera, 14 August 2016](#)). The demonstrations resulted in serious clashes between protesters and police which left at least one dead on either side ([Reuters, 17 August 2016](#)), while some incidents of vigilante and/or mob killings of suspected ADF members were also reported

([Reliefweb, 24 August 2016](#)). Most recently, another “dead city” protest strike in Beni on 23 September took place after suspected ADF rebels killed seven civilians in the Kasinga area of Rwenzori in Beni territory.

Although election-related and security-related riots and protest are the most notable in DR-Congo due to their associated risk of violence, a number of protest events motivated by socio-economic issues and local concerns transcend particular national situations. Many of the protests seen in DR-Congo involve concerns over pay, working conditions, or living conditions. However, these types of events are often entirely non-violent, usually peacefully dispersing without police intervention.

In summary, riots and protests surrounding both the issues of the election and insecurity have been gaining momentum over the course of the year as measured by the size of the protests and intensity of the violence involved. Growing frustrations by segments of the population in the capital, Kinshasa and in North Kivu over the government’s unwillingness to adhere to the election schedule and perceived inability to provide security clearly translate into collective action. Protests have similarly kept apace in Katanga province, where opposition leader Moise Katumbi holds a strong support base to rally demonstrators. Less clear is the increasing trend of protest clustering in South Kivu, particularly Bukavu since 2014. Looking to where protests were violently repressed and which cities authorised protests ([Jewish World Watch, 26 May 2016](#)) should reveal more insight into the location, form and intensity of growing popular frustration in the future.

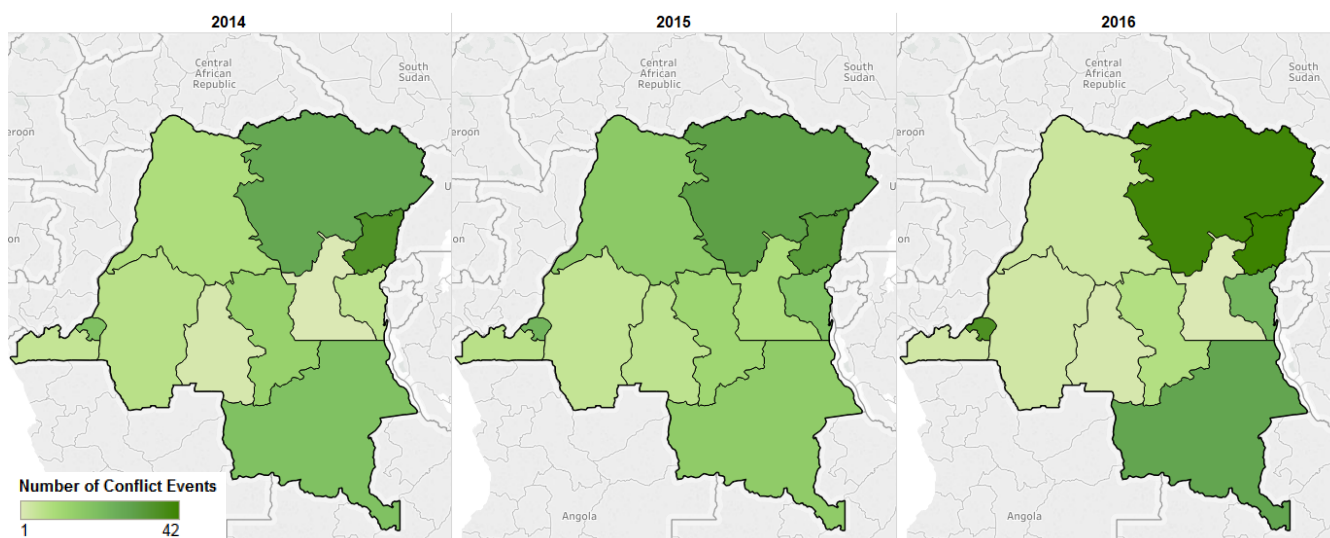


Figure 3: Number of Riots/Protests by Year and Province in DR-Congo, from January - September 2014, 2015 and 2016.

Libya

The number of conflict events recorded by ACLED in Libya remained stable throughout September 2016, exhibiting neither an overall increasing or decreasing trend. Whilst ostensibly this indicates relative stability in the conflict lifecycle ([ACLED Crisis Blog, 10 June 2016](#)), the underlying political dynamics were far from static, with a renewed offensive in the country's East and external military involvement leading to the emergence of General Khalifa Haftar as 'a man on horseback' grooming himself for power.

In a continuation of political dynamics initiated a few months ago, fighting in Sirte has continued to occupy the Misratan-dominated military forces in Tripoli. After July witnessed a spike in suicide attacks that inflicted major setbacks to Operation Bunyan Marsous forces, in August the United States launched a major airstrike campaign against the Islamic State (IS) in Sirte ([The Guardian, 1 August 2016](#)). The coordinated U.S. airstrikes have hastened the success of the offensive, with at least 175 airstrikes reported on Islamic State positions since August and only a few hundred militants are now barricaded in the city's central neighbourhood ([Libya Herald, 26 September 2016](#)). This success comes despite reduced engagement by forces loyal to the Presidency Council. In June 2016, Bunyan Marsous forces carried out over four

times as many attacks against the remaining Islamic State militants as September 2016 (see Figure 4). Nonetheless, Libyan military forces made the highest territorial gains in August 2016, coinciding with the official campaign of the U.S. Africa Command.

While carrying out airstrikes in Sirte in support of Tripoli-based alliances, the U.S. have coordinated a joint operations room in Benghazi supporting Haftar's Libya National Army (LNA), despite the fact that elites between these two camps are heading for direct competition. In mid-September, the LNA capitalised on their eastern position to force the Petroleum Facilities Guard (PFG) out of control of the key oil terminals of Ras Lanuf, Sidra and Brega. This came at a time when the controversial PFG leader Ibrahim Jadran had signalled its cooperation with the Tripoli-based government.

Haftar has thus emerged the strongest out of the latest offensives ([European Council of Foreign Relations, 23 September 2016](#)). Politically, he has curried favour with the national institutions by immediately ceding control of the oil facilities to the National Oil Corporation, thereby insulating his forces from counter-attacks to regain control and to create meaningful partnerships with key brokers Libya's economic landscape. His position as the national policeman and Libya's transitional talisman is further con-

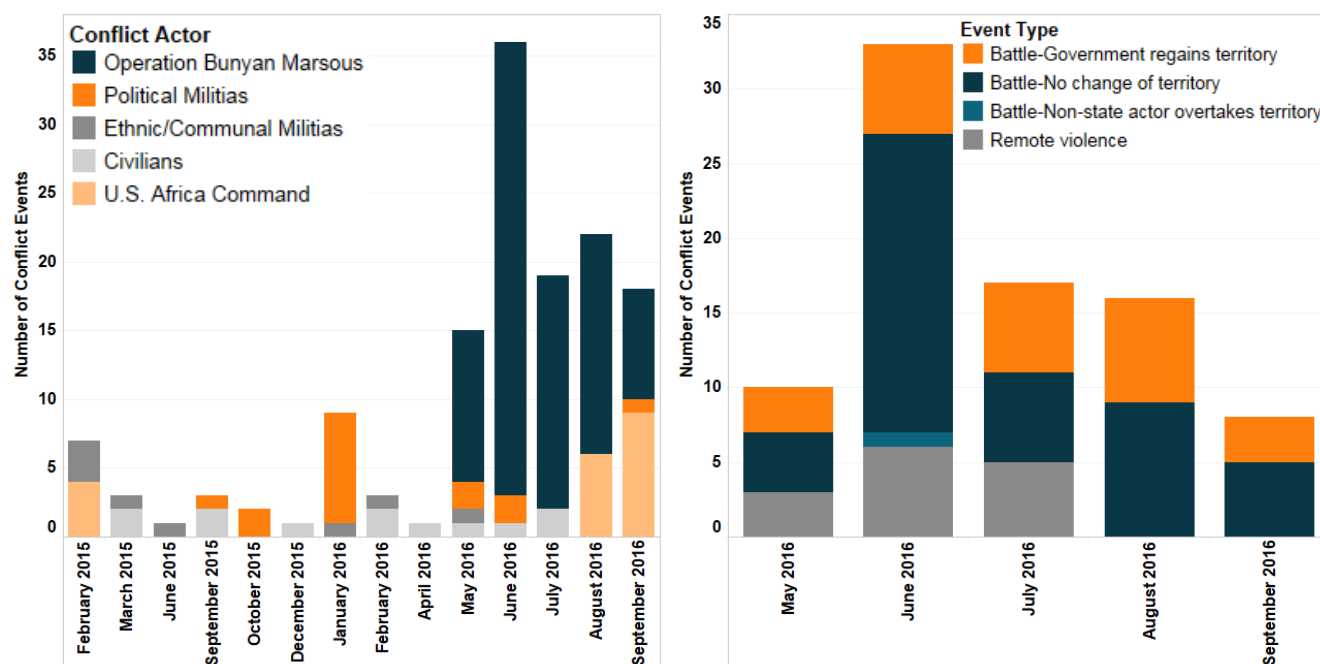


Figure 4: Number of Conflict Events Involving Islamic State by Opposition (Left) and Islamic State– Operation Bunyan Marsous clashes by Event Type (Right) in Sirte, Libya, from February 2015 - September 2016.

Libya

solidated by recent seizures of container ships – a move that at least signals a more serious engagement with security provision ([Libya Herald, 1 October 2016](#)).

As Haftar consolidates his position within Libya's frail governance, the Government of National Accord (GNA) struggles to extend its outreach beyond Tripoli. In August, a vote of no confidence by the Tobruk-based Parliament revealed the fragile authority of the UN-backed government, while mutual distrust between the two governing entities has shattered efforts to build a unified Libyan army ([France24, 22 August 2016](#)). Increasing protests against financial shortages and power cuts in Tripoli and other Libyan towns also show the growing dissatisfaction with a government unable to provide the basic services to its citizens ([Middle East Eye, 18 September 2016](#)).

Meanwhile, governance in eastern Libya is becoming mili-

tarised. There are reports that elected councils are being replaced with military management in Kufra, Ajdabiya, Soloug and Tobruk with speculation that the LNA will install a military governor in Sirte ([Libya Herald, 27 September 2016](#)). As the the LNA advances further west towards Sirte, renewed factional tensions between Misratan and Zintan militia groups are also likely to emerge. Misratan forces have lost close to 560 soldiers and sustained more than 2,600 injuries during a four-month-long offensive ([Middle East Eye, 24 September 2016](#)). After taking over the coastal towns of Hawara, Ras Lanuf and Beni Jawad, the LNA is now 50 km from the former IS stronghold (see Figure 5). Should the LNA – comprised of Zintan militias – attempt to lay claim to a liberated Sirte, historical grievances may well emulate the factionalism between militia groups after the fall of Gaddafi, therefore leading to a heightened risk of direct confrontation. Although there is some potential for a common economic governance shared by Libya's multiple authorities ([The Arab Weekly, 2 October 2016](#)), the prospects a stable political settlement remain fragile.

Domestic dynamics are also interacting with increasing, albeit incongruous, foreign intervention. The U.S. airstrike campaign has contributed greatly to the advance of Bunyan Marsous in Sirte, while the Italian government has recently deployed 300 soldiers to guard a hospital near Misrata airport ([Reuters, 12 September 2016](#)). Similarly, British special units were already reported to be active in Misrata. However, these moves are at odds with the alleged support that Great Britain, France, Italy and the United States have provided to General Haftar's LNA, whose main sponsor remains Egypt's al-Sisi ([Al Jazeera, 9 July 2016](#)). The most controversial incident occurred in July, when a militant group called Benghazi Defence Brigades (BDB) claimed to have shot down a helicopter carrying three French soldiers near Benghazi. While the French government initially denied that military personnel were present, it later had to admit that French special forces were deployed on a covert mission supporting Haftar's Dignity Operation ([The Long War Journal, 22 July 2016](#)). These episodes reveal the seemingly divergent strategies pursued by Western countries in Libya, which nominally back the internationally recognised government and abide by the international arms embargo while actually providing technical and ground support to the LNA.

Conflict Actor

- Ethnic / Communal Militias
- Military Forces of France
- Police Forces of Libya (2014-)
- U.S. Africa Command
- Operation Bunyan Marsous
- Islamic State
- LNA: Libyan National Army
- Political Militias

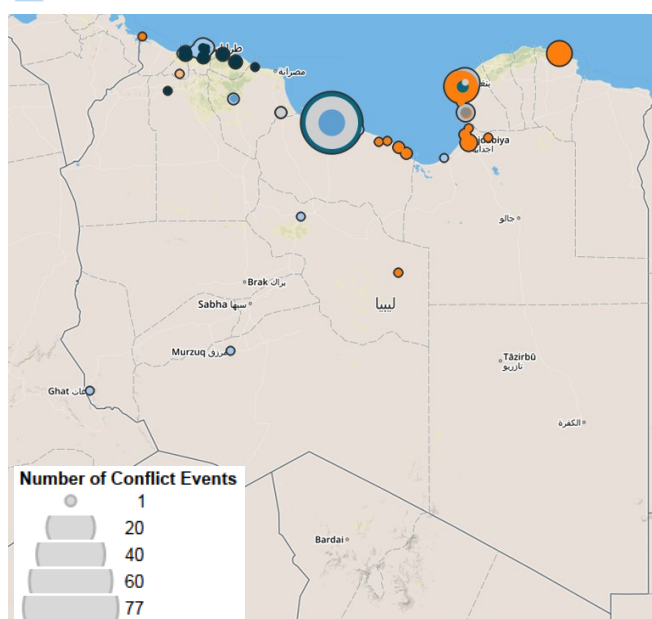


Figure 5: Number of Conflict Events by Actor and Location in Libya, from June - September 2016.

Mozambique

More than two decades after civil war ended in Mozambique, and despite years of economic growth and relatively peaceful elections, the country continues to face political and security challenges.

General levels of political violence have continued to rise in 2016 as events have increased in intensity and in geography (68 events of political violence across 10 provinces have been recorded in 2016 up from 19 such events were observed across 6 provinces in 2015). Among these events, violence against civilians has risen sevenfold, representing the largest shift from an initially low rate. Fatalities have reached their highest levels since 2013, and fatalities from violence against civilians have doubled compared to their highest levels in the past two decades (see Figure 6). Civilians are increasingly bearing the brunt of the clashes between RENAMO and the government. In addition to significantly higher fatalities, thousands of people have already fled the country, and access to health for tens of thousands of people in remote areas of the country is threatened by RENAMO attacks on medical facilities ([HRW, 6 August 2016](#)).

Political violence in Mozambique in 2016 has been driven for the most part by tensions between the Mozambican National Resistance Movement (RENAMO) and government forces. Competition between both grew after a stalemate in their negotiations concerning two main ten-

sions: the perceived non-fulfilment of core clauses in the 2014 ceasefire deal reached between the two groups, particularly the reintegration of RENAMO forces into state forces and the support to economic and social reintegration of demobilized forces ([IPI, 22 June 2016](#)); and the attempt by RENAMO's leader Dhaklama to seize power in six regions he claims were won by his party in the last election ([ISS, 15 July 2016](#); [ACLED Crisis Blog, April 2016](#)). The strategy on both sides between the talks appears to be demonstrating one's capabilities to retain credibility and to weaken the other side's bargaining position at the negotiation table. Negotiations have been President Nyusi's official policy towards RENAMO since 2015, but they have reached several deadlocks. For instance, in March 2016, due to inflexibility on both sides, the talks were "indefinitely postponed" by mediators. When they resumed in August, they reached a new stalemate over a temporary ceasefire that would allow mediators to go to Dhaklama's base in Gorongosa ([The Open University, 25 August 2016](#)).

In 2016, RENAMO's attacks spread to provinces where it had rarely or never carried out attacks since 2013, such as Nassa, Cabo Delgado and Inhambane (see Figure 7). This is believed to reflect a military strategy aimed at forcing the government to spread out troops across the country and reduce its concentration near Dhaklama's base in Gorongosa ([The Open University, 21 August 2016](#)). Additionally,

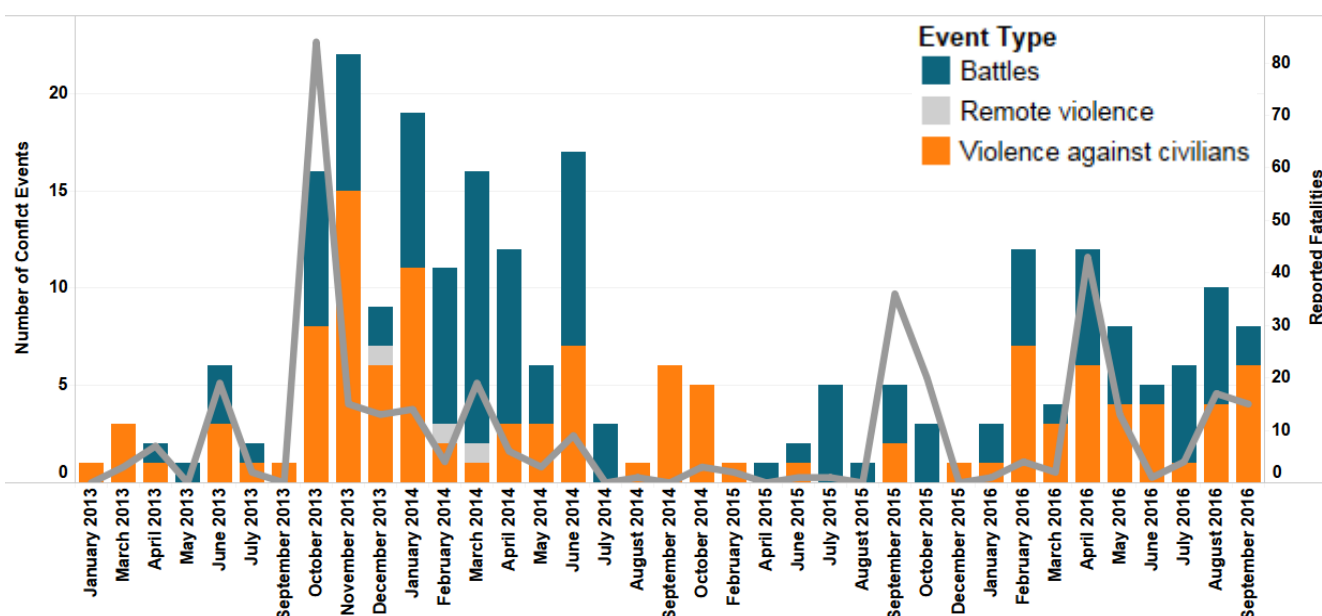


Figure 6: Number of Conflict Events by Month and Type and Reported Fatalities in Mozambique, from January 2013 - September 2016.

Mozambique

after the 1 April ultimatum to have the six provinces transferred to its authority passed without being granted, the group's strategy and campaign was seemingly extended to target government resources and weaken the economy ([Voa Portugues, 30 March 2016](#); [IPI, 22 June 2016](#)). Dozens of commercial trucks and trains were ambushed on main highways and railways in Sofala, Manica and Zambezia provinces, including when they were escorted in military convoys. For example, RENAMO gunmen attacked trains belonging to the Brazilian Company Vale on three occasions in June and July in Sofala ([Lusa, 26 July 2016](#)). These attacks are believed to put a significant strain on the largely import-dependent economy as military convoys have been criticized for not being frequent or fast enough to support it ([AFP, 19 June 2016](#)). RENAMO gunmen also repeatedly raided entire villages in Zambezia, Nassa, Manica, Sofala and Tete provinces, each time targeting health units and local government and police posts, stealing dozens of goods and damaging property ([Agencia de Informacao Mocambique, 31 July 2016](#); [Human Rights Watch, 24 August 2016](#)).

Additionally, there has been evidence of mounting violence towards RENAMO as well as towards people suspected of supporting the group ([Africa Confidential, 22 January 2016](#)); ([Africa Confidential, 27 May 2016](#); [The Open University, 21 August 2016](#)). In particular, government forces have been accused of committing summary

executions, looting, destruction of property, rape and other human rights violations in its campaign to disarm RENAMO fighters ([UN Human Rights Council, 29 April 2016](#); [HRW, February 2016](#)). In April, reports of a mass grave containing 120 bodies came out in a region that saw important clashes between security forces and RENAMO members in October 2015; however, local and provincial authorities denied the existence of the grave. The results of their investigations launched in June are yet to be announced ([HRW, 6 August 2016](#)). There have also been at least three attacks by unidentified assailants on RENAMO officials in 2016: in the latest event, a senior official was killed on 22 September in Tete province ([Agencia de Informacao Mocambique, 23 September 2016](#)).

These attacks come against a backdrop of rising repression, with human rights defenders having reportedly been harassed and threatened for calling for demonstrations in favor of accountability and transparency in the management of public resources, and with the announcement by the Head of Police in April that any public protest would be repressed ([UN Human Rights Council, 29 April 2016](#)). All of these elements appear as signs that Nyusi might have become frustrated with the deadlocks reached in the negotiations with RENAMO and have become more aligned with hardliners in his own party, as well as with previous Presidents, favoring military confrontation ([Africa Confidential, 18 March 2016](#)).

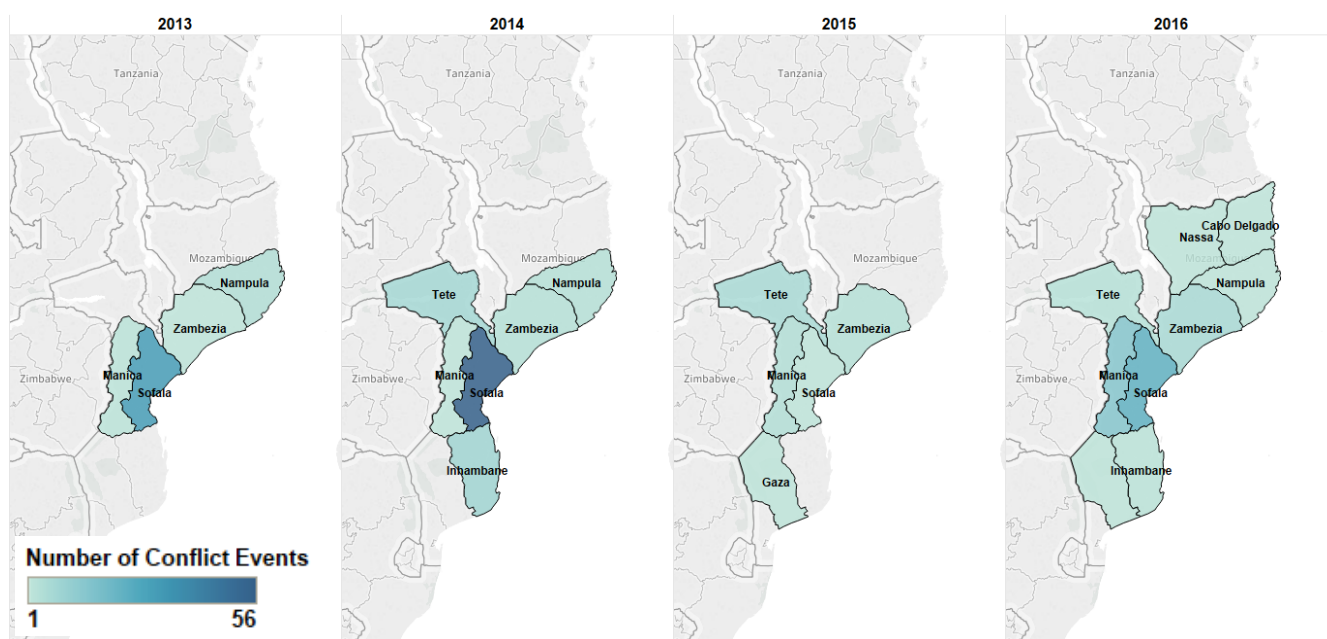


Figure 7: Conflict Events by RENAMO by Province and Year in Mozambique, from January 2013 - September 2016.

Somalia

Somalia continues to be the most conflicted affected country across Africa. It has experienced almost twice as many violent events in the past two years as the second most affected state of Nigeria; however, Nigerian fatalities for the same period are more than double Somalia's total. Since early 2015, three main patterns have emerged: the war's threat to civilians varies significantly across the state; second, while Al Shabaab and the state are engaged in intense and frequent battles, their combined conflict amounts to just over half of all violence. Relatedly, there are several dozen intense, ongoing and fatal competitions for local and regional power playing out in Somalia. Finally, in October 2015, ISIS and Al Shabaab supposedly joined forces to expand the agenda of both; a [recent video from Puntland](#) suggests this is the area chosen as a testing ground. There remains little activity recorded by the Islamic State in Somalia, but distinct increases in Al Shabaab's activity in new northern spaces. The remainder of this piece will concentrate on the first two patterns.

Variance in Violence Against Civilians

Between January 2015 and October 2016, anti-civilian violence in Somalia made up approximately 23% of all recorded violent events; and 14% of associated reported fatalities. As a proportional share of overall violence, anti-civilian violence events have shown a steady trend since the beginning of 2015, with June 2016 being the most violent month for civilians (see Figure 8). Approximately 13% of anti-civilian violence events, and 13% of associated reported fatalities, involved remote violence technologies.

Since January 2015, political militias (including unidentified armed groups) have been responsible for the largest share of anti-civilian violence events (approximately 44%), followed by rebel forces (Al Shabaab, 26%), and communal militias (14%). In terms of associated reported fatalities, Al Shabaab has been responsible for the largest share (37%).

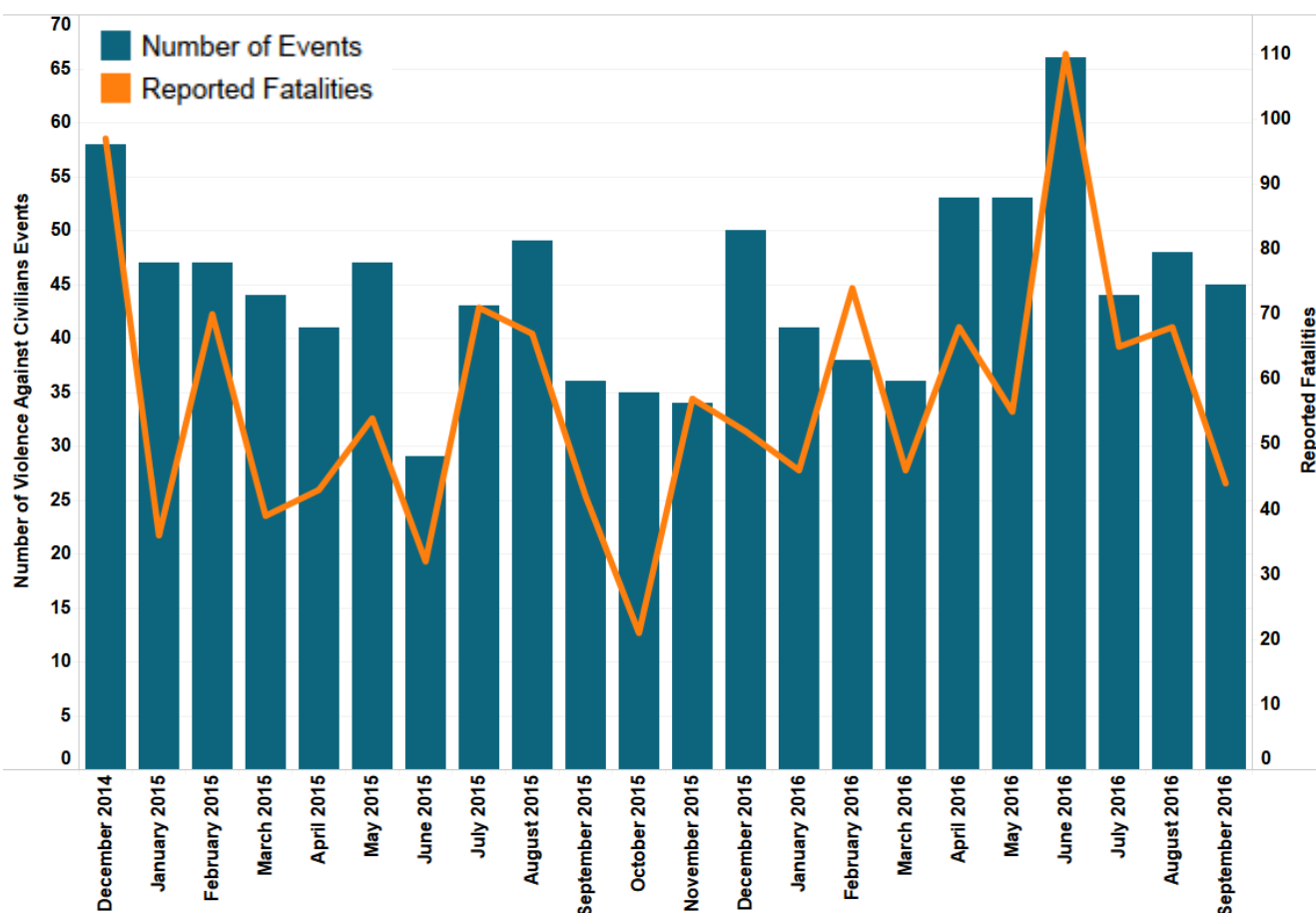


Figure 8: Number of Civilian-Targeted Events & Reported Fatalities in Somalia, from December 2014 - September 2016.

Somalia

But violence against civilians in Somalia varies considerably: regions including Mudug, Banaadir, Bari and Middle Juba all have considerably higher than average rates of civilian targeting by administrative district (+20%, +5%, +15%, +12%, respectively), while surrounding regions, and those bordering both Kenya and Ethiopia have lower reported rates.

Who Fights?

Somalia's conflict continues to be dictated by Al Shabaab who are engaged in 30% of all violent occurrences from 2015 to October 2016 (see Figure 9). In contrast, state forces are engaged in two thirds of the activity of Al Shabaab. Al Shabaab has considerably strengthened over the past two years, dominating new spaces in Mudug and beyond as they seek to expand their base and accommodate multiple local affiliates and their respective contests. In contrast, state forces have poor permanent presence across much of the state, and have reduced capacity in the past two years, gauged by the increase in direct attacks by non-state agents on state bodies and institutions (e.g. such as the increase of attacks in Galgaduud).

But the activity of Al Shabaab and state military forces does not explain the remaining fifty per cent of conflict that occurs throughout the state. Conflict in Somalia can be best characterized as occurring over four distinct scales and environments where the focus is on who is fighting with whom, and the risks to both state and civilians as a result. To that end, the four categories of (1) the attacks from and on the state, (2) violence against civilians, (3) intra-opposition contests and (4) local security contests. The first type of violence in Somalia involves all branches of the state in their contests with other opposition groups and with each other- that violence is 44% of all occurrences since January 2015. It is primarily concentrated in attempts to secure Banaadir and its surroundings, but as of April 2016, decreased substantially. This may be one reason that the government has determined that elections must be postponed until November of this year. In a recent statement, it blamed [Al Shabaab](#). However, previous attempts to deal with elections in a time of insecurity have reinforced the [power of local elites](#) who select the national government, rather than the citizens of the state. There is some reason to believe that the competition between local and regional power holders is the reason for a

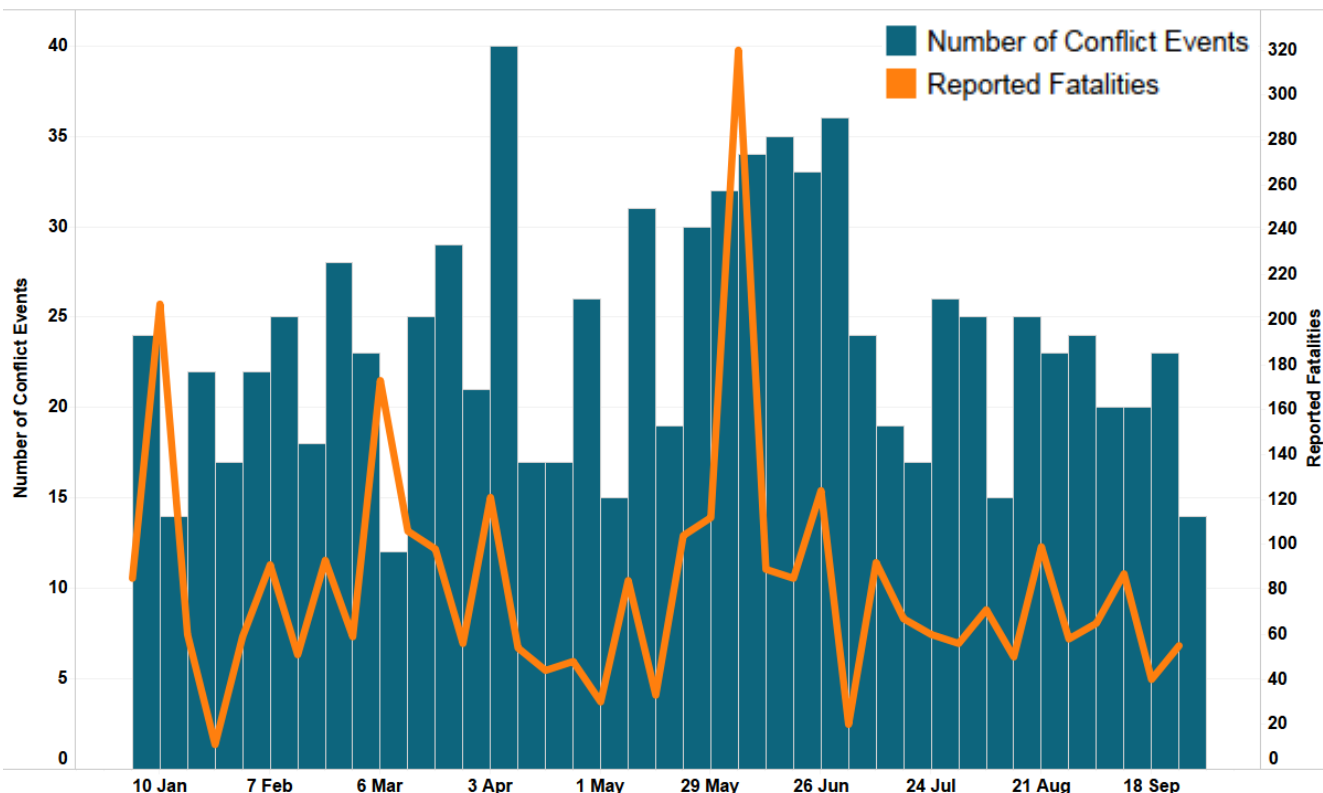


Figure 9: Number of Conflict Events & Reported Fatalities by Al Shabaab in Somalia, from January - September 2016.

Somalia

high, consistent and varied rate of 'intra-opposition' fighting, involving militias belonging to politicians, governors, local power holders, large clan leaders and others. This violence alone accounts for 24% of all recent acts.

Smaller clans and their internal disputes with neighbours and clans of similar size are widespread, but account for a small amount of violence (approximately 5%). Finally, threats to civilians are separate attacks that all of the above engage in. This violence is one third of all reported events, and closely follows the spatial and temporal dynamics of violence towards and with the state. In short, in areas where groups are fighting the state, they (and the state) are also engaged in civilian attacks. Contests that do not involve the state may result in high insecurity for civilians, but at a lesser rate than regime competition attacks.

As noted in Figure 10, the majority of contests between armed actors occurs on main roads across Somalia - this indicates high and ongoing competition for all spaces as state forces do not adequately control and hold main areas.

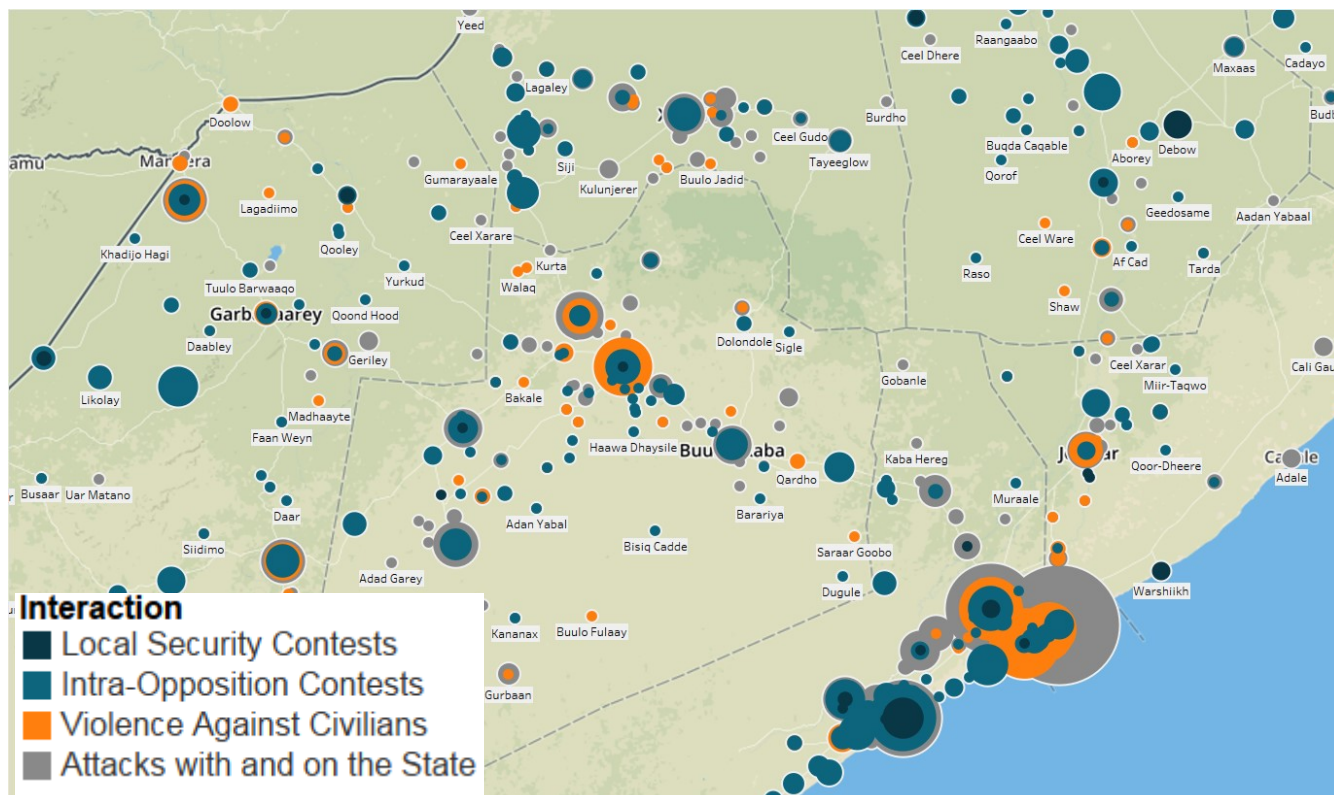
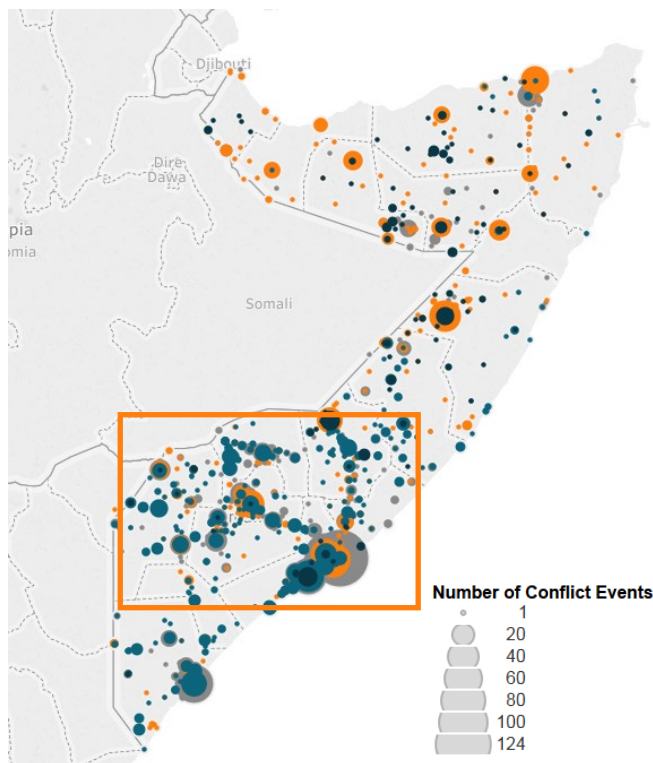


Figure 10: Number of Conflict Events by Interaction and Location in Somalia, from January 2015 - September 2016.

South Africa

The number of conflict and protest events has steadily risen in South Africa due to student demonstrations in universities across South Africa concerning a rise in tuition fees.

The recent spike in protest activity represents a repeat of the student demonstrations against rising tuition fees witnessed last year. The demonstrations were successfully pressured the government into freezing university fees for 2016 ([ACLED Conflict Trends, December 2015](#)). Yet, with the start of the new academic year the issue of fee hikes has reappeared with Education Minister Blade Nzimande allowing universities to increment their fees by up to 8% , though poorer students will have the increases covered by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) ([Havergal, 20 September 2016](#)).

Yet in the mind of # FeesMustFall, the movement that spearheaded the 2015 protests, the key issue last year was not the increase in fees but the very existence of tuition fees ([Mosiuoa, 21 September 2016](#)). Any concessions garnered from the government concerning fee hikes are interpreted as merely delaying the need to protest for a year as increases are deemed inevitable under the current university funding model. The fact that last year's freeze created a gap in the budgets of many universities, resulting in the government addressing the shortfall through additional investment, highlights that a cycle of fee in-

creases and protest would be unlikely to secure a fiscally sustainable outcome ([Matlala, SABC 24 February 2016](#)).

As a result, both the government and the demonstrators perceive last year's negotiations as a failure. In response Zuma has opted to rely on force and has ordered state security agencies to take a zero-tolerance approach towards protesting students that engage in violence ([BusinessTech, 2 October 2016](#)). The strategy includes the implementation of maximum sentences on those involved in violent protest and a communication strategy to combat the narrative of the #FeesMustFall movement (*ibid.*).

One of these strategies is to portray the current demonstrations as more violent, intolerant and less warranted than last year's protests ([BusinessTech, 2 October 2016](#); [Duncan, 30 September 2016](#)). Yet this conflicts with the reality that over the past couple of months the majority of demonstrations have involved peaceful protesters (see Figure 11). When last year's demonstrations reached their apex in October 2015, the majority of demonstrations involved violent rioters.

Nevertheless, given the failure of last year's negotiations in securing a sustainable settlement between the student body and the government, and Zuma's decision to focus on coercion, it is likely the violence in South Africa's university campuses will increase in the coming months.

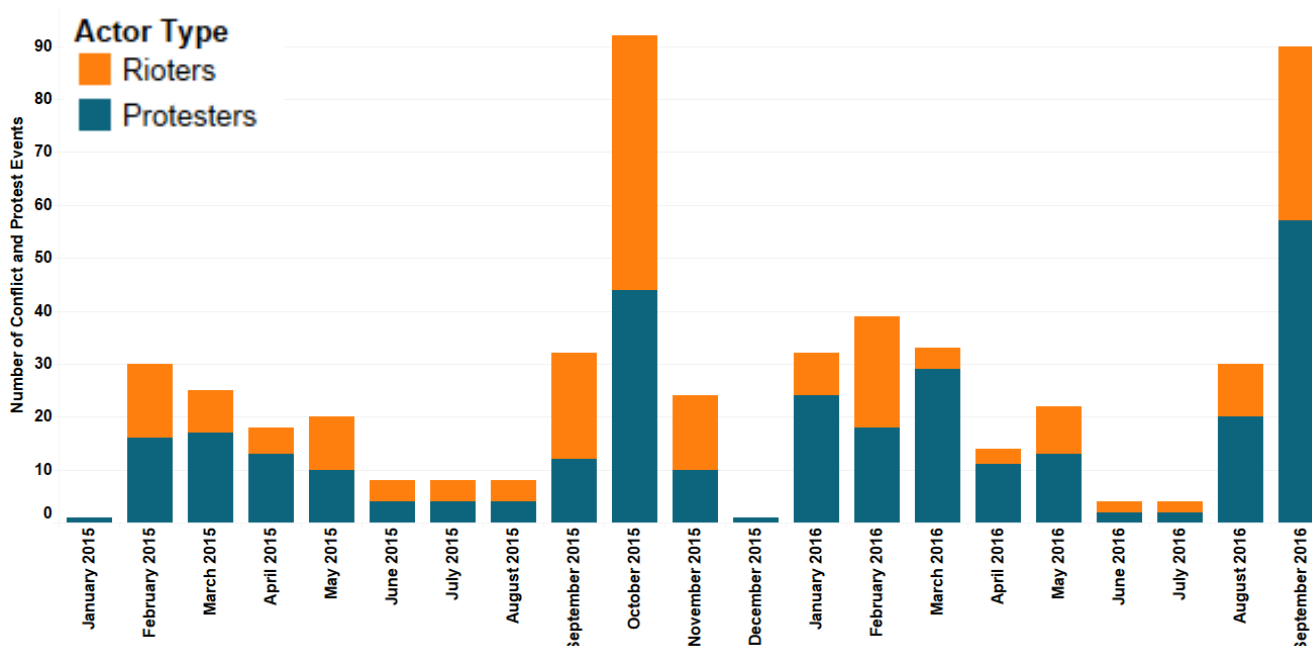


Figure 11: Number of Riot and Protest Events Involving Students in South Africa, from January - September 2016.

Zimbabwe

The number of political violence and protest events increased over the past month in Zimbabwe. The spike in violence is largely due to an increase in the incidence of violence against civilians, which doubled between August and September (*see* Figure 12).

This spike in violence against civilians comes after months of upheaval against the Mugabe regime by protesters from various pressure groups. Protesting against the regime is a mixture of organised political opposition, unions and seemingly spontaneous social movements.

The #Tajamuka and #ThisFlag campaign represent examples of popular movements which have protested against the government on the street and online. #ThisFlag seems to function as an avenue by which ordinary Zimbabweans can demonstrate their grievances against the government with the group's leader, Pastor Evan Mawarire, calling for Zimbabweans to engage in passive strikes and stayaways to make their voices heard ([ACLED Conflict Trends, Sep-](#)

[tember 2016](#)). In contrast, the #Tajamuka campaign is focused on forcing Mugabe to step down before the 2018 elections and has been engaged in active protests and riots in Harare and Bulawayo ([Tajamuka, 2016](#)). Protesting with these social movements is the National Vendors Union of Zimbabwe (NAVUZ) which is also demanding an end to Mugabe's administration ([Masasi, 24 July 2016](#)).

In response, the conventional opposition parties are concerned about losing relevance as the mouthpiece of anti-Mugabe sentiment; they have formed an alliance and also engaged in widespread protest against the government. The alliance includes notable former regime insiders and opposition politicians including Morgan Tsvangirai's Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai (MDC-T), Welshman Ncube, former Vice-President Joice Mujuru's Zimbabwe People First (PF) party, Tendai Biti's People's Democratic Party (PDP) and Elton Mangoma's Renewal Democrats of Zimbabwe (RDZ) ([Africa Confidential, 26](#)

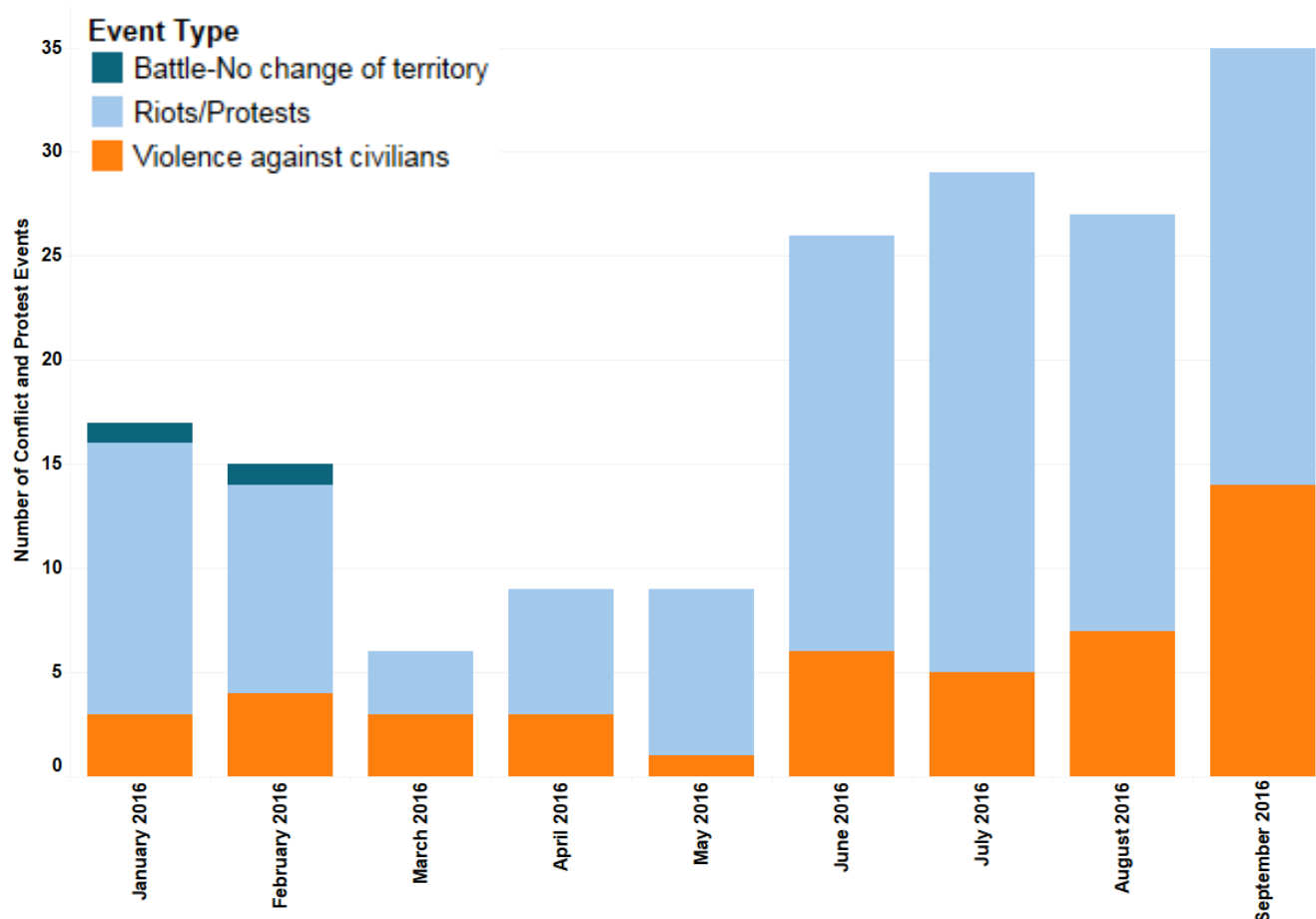


Figure 12: Number of Conflict and Protest Events by Event Type in Zimbabwe, from January - September 2016.

Zimbabwe

August 2016).

With Mugabe and the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) facing both internal coalition competition and popular discontent, the regime has defaulted to violence in order to cow the opposition into submission (see Figure 13). The spokesperson of the #Tajamuka campaign and the leader NAVUZ have both been abducted and tortured by unidentified men suspected to be security agents ([Dewa, 14 September 2016](#); [Ncube, 29 September 2016](#)). The manner in which these individuals were targeted echoes the disappearance of Itai Dzamara, who led a protest against the Mugabe regime

and is yet to be found ([Nehanda Radio, 8 May 2016](#)). This sends a clear message to those orchestrating the anti-Mugabe protests that they can also be made to disappear altogether if necessary.

ZANU-PF is also continuing its campaign of violence against the street-level machinery of the opposition with ward councillors from both the MDC and PF assaulted by ruling party cadres. While the regime is seeking to decapitate the unions and social movements by intimidating their leaders, it is aiming to cripple the political opposition by removing its supporters and lower level functionaries.

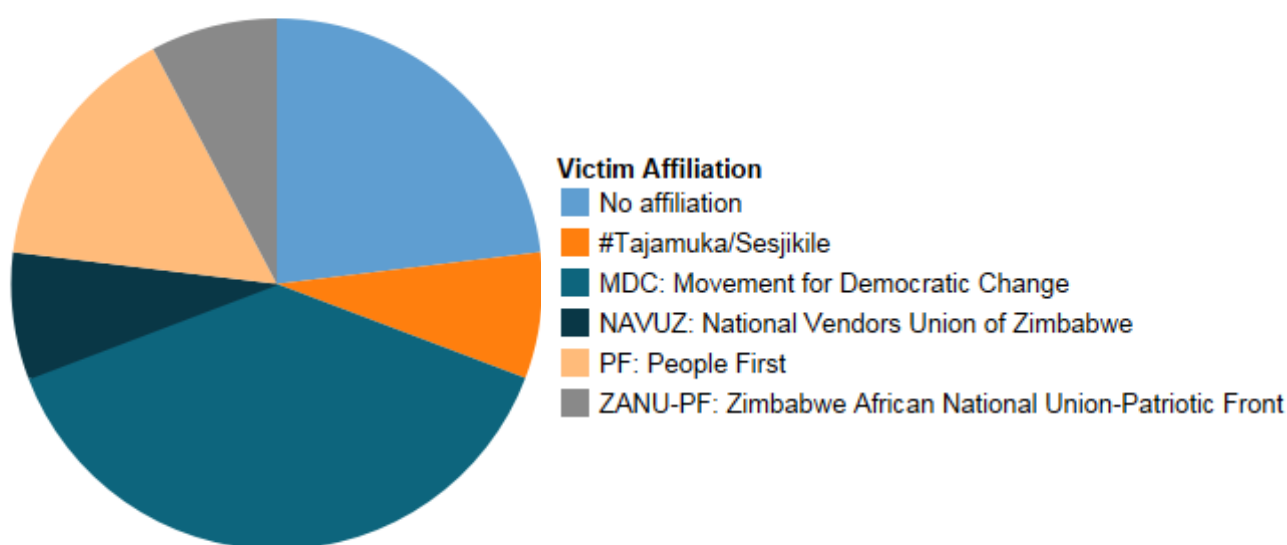


Figure 13: Violence Against Civilians by Victim Affiliation in Zimbabwe, September 2016.

Support

The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) is supported by European Commission Grant no. 283755

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](#).