

CONFLICT TRENDS (NO. 45)

REAL-TIME ANALYSIS OF AFRICAN POLITICAL VIOLENCE, JANUARY 2016

Welcome to the January 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, ACLED launched Version 6: a fully revised and updated conflict and protest event dataset containing records of all political violence and protest in Africa from

1997 through 2015 inclusive. This month’s report is an overview of conflict in 2015 and profiles sexual violence in **Central African Republic**, on-going police abuses in **Egypt** in 2016, Islamic State attacks and expanding quasi-military activity in **Libya**, religious-based violence in **Nigeria**, increased conflict activity by off-shoot militias in **South Sudan** and violence against civilians in North Darfur, **Sudan**.

Elsewhere on the continent, political violence increased in **Burundi**, **Chad**, **Ethiopia** and **Mali** throughout 2015, conflict levels decreased in **Somalia** and **DR-Congo**, with persistent levels of violence experienced in **Nigeria**.

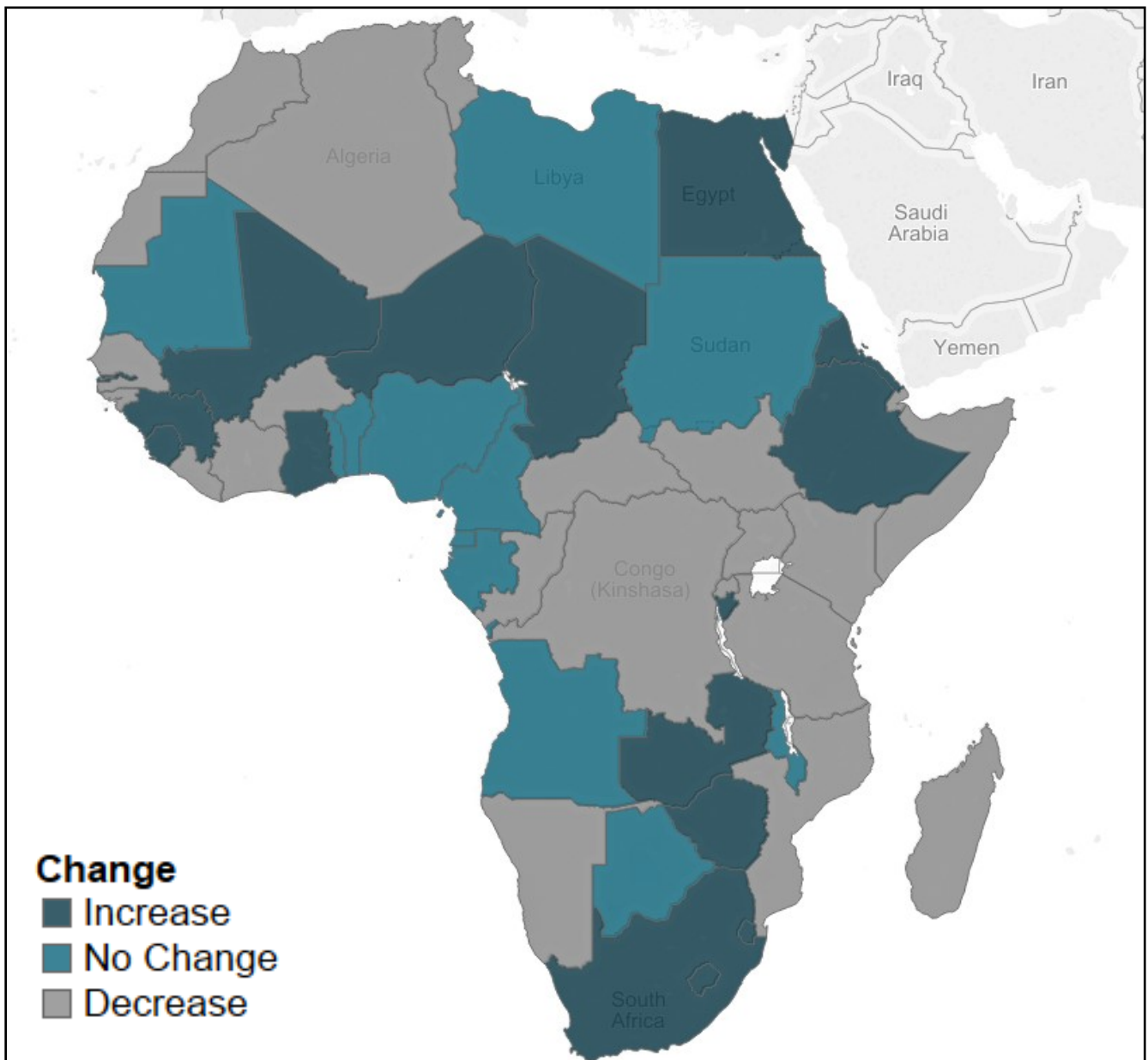


Figure 1: Conflict Increase, Decrease and No Change across Africa from 2014 - 2015.

African Overview

In 2015, ACLED recorded 14,640 conflict events on the African continent. Armed conflict decreased by 14.0% compared to the previous year, marking the first negative trend since 2009. In a number of high-activity countries, including Central African Republic, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo and Somalia, conflict levels declined by more than 20% over one year. However, Figure 1 shows that such trends were not homogenous across the continent, and that as many as 15 African states witnessed an overall increase in political violence. The escalation was most significant in Burundi, where the number of conflict events increased by more than four times the levels of 2014, but also involved medium- and high-activity countries such as Niger, Egypt and Mali. For the second consecutive year, Somalia (19.4) and Libya (15.3) showed the highest incidence of armed conflict events per 100,000 population ([World Bank, 2016](#)) against an average African rate of 1.2.

The number of conflict-related fatalities in the previous year also dwindled by 10.6%, declining from 39,391 in 2014 to 35,220 in 2015. The geographical distribution of fatalities illustrates that the decrease was highest in Central African Republic, Uganda, Madagascar and South Sudan, whereas Egypt, Chad, Burundi and Niger saw a dramatic increase in conflict mortality. Libya had the highest incidence of fatalities per 100,000 population (43.2) shortly followed by Somalia (38.9) and South Sudan (26.5), reflecting the enduring lethality of ongoing conflicts. The average fatality rate for African countries in 2015 stood at 3.4.

With regard to the types of political violence recorded by ACLED, riots and protests accounted for 39.7% of total conflict events, rising by almost 10.0% compared to the previous year (see Figure 2). Rioting and protesting increased significantly in more than half of African countries, revealing that popular demonstrations and domestic

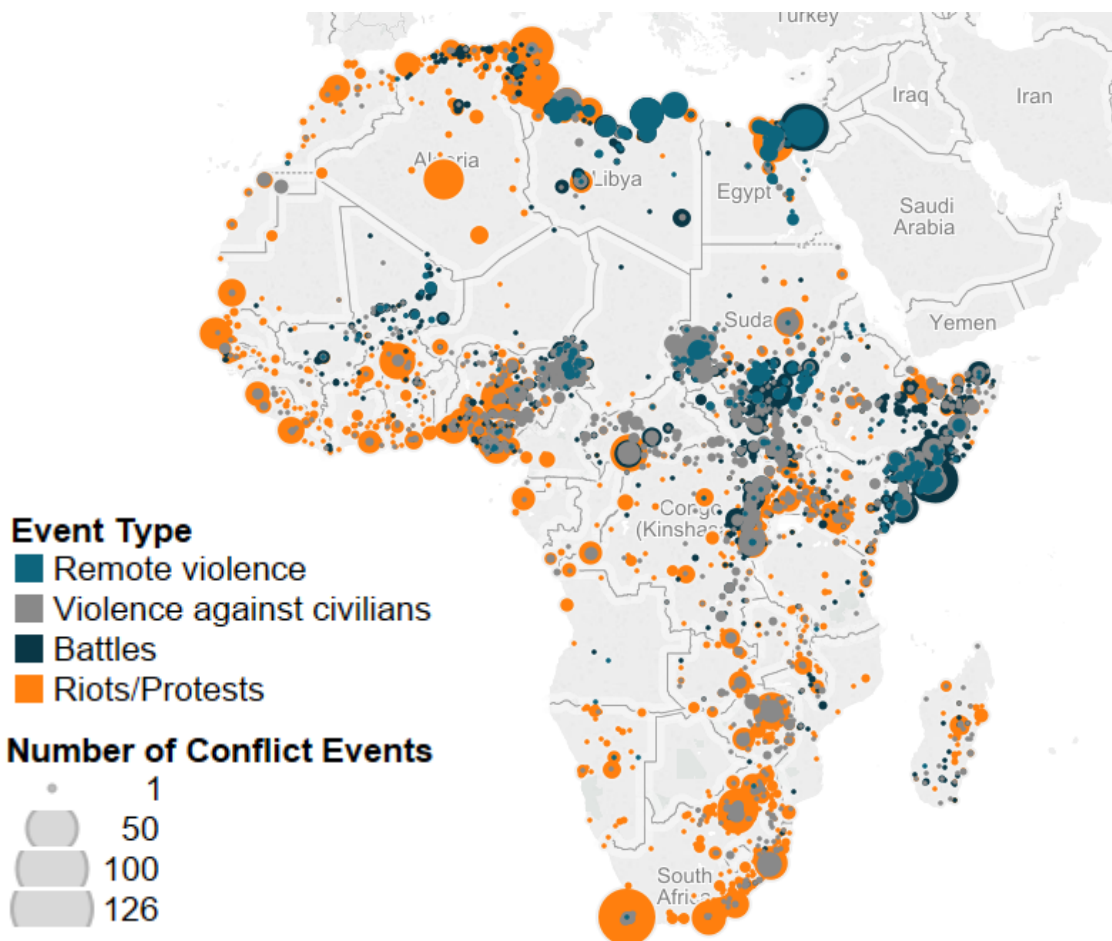


Figure 2: Number of Conflict Events by Event Type and Location in Africa, from January - December 2015.

African Overview

unrest pose a major challenge to a growing number of governments across the continent. Discontent with the current socio-political situation and fierce electoral competitions were key drivers of protest in South Africa ([ACLED Crisis Blog, 11 December 2015](#)), Tunisia ([ACLED Crisis Blog, 4 September 2015](#)) and Uganda ([ACLED Crisis Blog, 5 November 2015](#)), whereas President Nkurunziza’s successful bid for a third term in office generated violent clashes between opposition groups and police forces in Burundi ([ACLED Crisis Blog, 9 October 2015](#)).

Battles between armed groups made up 27.6% of all conflict events and more than half of total related fatalities: despite a relative annual decrease, battles still featured prominently in Africa’s conflict landscape (see Figure 2). However, significant regional differences exist among high-violence states. In northern Africa, armed Islamist groups linked to the Islamic State and Al Qaeda were able to establish a regular presence in the Libyan cities of Derna and Sirte and to launch large-scale attacks against Tunisian and Egyptian military forces, thus consolidating their outreach across the region ([ACLED Crisis Blog, 4 September 2015](#)). Mali saw a resurgence of conflict in 2015, as Tuareg insurgents and Islamist groups intensified their attacks against state forces and UN troops in the north of the country ([ACLED Crisis Blog, 10 July 2015](#)). In central Africa, Boko Haram extended its regional presence to Chad and Niger, while DRC, Sudan and South Sudan remain major

conflict hotspots. Further east, in the Horn, Somalia witnessed the highest number of battles in Africa, with 1,296 events recorded in 2015.

Civilian involvement in conflict also constitutes a critical and recurring element of contemporary African warfare. In 2015, violence against civilians represented 24.3% of total conflict events in Africa, with a 17.9% decrease compared to the previous year (see Figure 2). Civilian targeting declined markedly in several high-activity states such as Central African Republic, Kenya, Libya, Democratic Republic of Congo and Somalia, and witnessed a significant increase only in a small number of countries including Burundi (with 103 more episodes and three times the levels than in 2014), Cameroon and Egypt. These trends notwithstanding, ACLED recorded 12,466 civilian fatalities in 2015, which accounted for 35.4% of reported conflict deaths and represented the highest proportion since 2008. Civilian population suffered the most deaths in Nigeria, corresponding to more than half of total civilian fatalities in Africa (see Figure 3). Additionally, Burundi, Chad, Tunisia and Egypt witnessed the highest increase in the number of civilian fatalities, which rose by between three and fifteen times over the year.

Political militias carried out 46.3% of total attacks on civilians across the continent, although their incidence declined by around 8% as a result of the re-categorization of Boko Haram into a rebel group, following a change in its aims and goals. Within this set of actors, pro-government militias played a crucial role in perpetrating violence against civilians in association with, or at the behest of, state agents ([Raleigh and Kishi 2015](#)). In some contexts, state agents themselves continue to represent a major threat for civilians, like the military forces of South Sudan who targeted and killed as many civilians as no other group active in the country in 2015. Armed Islamist groups were also among the most lethal perpetrators of civilian violence. Boko Haram, Al Shaabab, the Egypt-based State of Sinai and the offshoots of the Islamic State in Libya and Tunisia were responsible for more than half of all violence against civilians in Africa, pointing to the increased operational capacity of these groups ([ACLED Crisis Blog, 11 December 2015](#); [ACLED Crisis Blog, 4 September 2015](#)). These findings illustrate the complex and changing patterns of conflict across the continent: while overall political violence seem to decrease in 2015, civil wars, armed insurgencies and violence against civilians remain a major source of conflict and instability.

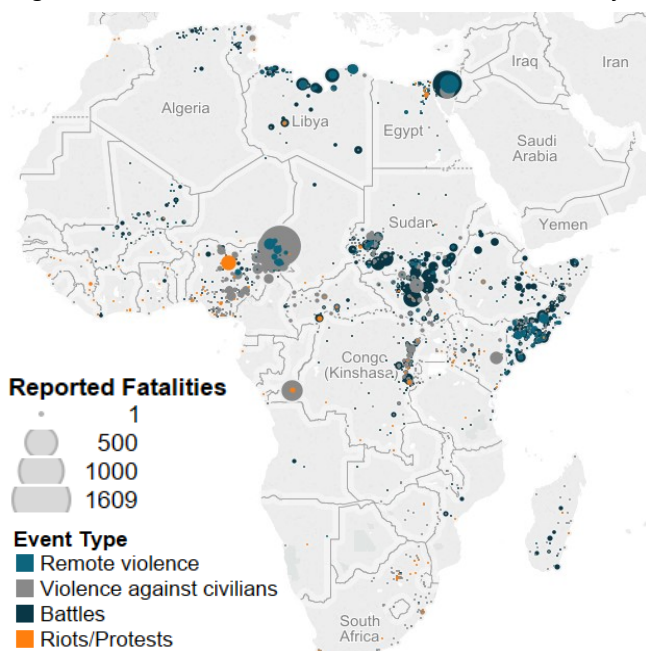


Figure 3: Number of Reported Fatalities by Event Type and Location in Africa, from January - December 2015.

Central African Republic

The Central African Republic (CAR) has faced increased insecurity and violence since Séléka rebels marched on the capital, Bangui, and ousted then-President Bozizé in 2012 ([Townsend, 27 July 2013](#)). Since the height of violence in late 2013 / early 2014, the conflict has remained persistent and widespread (see Figure 4).

To contribute to the insecurity citizens of CAR already face, other conflict agents also continue their activity within the country. Earlier this month, CAR saw the largest kidnapping in recent months by the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA); dozens have been abducted, and one villager was killed in the raids ([Reuters, 12 January 2016](#)). The Red Cross recently reported that this persistent violence in CAR has resulted in the separation of families; the weak infrastructure in the impoverished country, such as poor road networks, results in a big challenge for those looking for loved ones ([IFRC, 19 January 2016](#)).

In January 2014 Interim-President Catherine Samba-Panza called for elections to deal with the disputing political and armed factions. “[The elections] represent the best hope of reuniting the country, one of the world’s poorest, after three years of sectarian violence that has displaced hundreds of thousands of people” ([Benn, 30 December 2015](#)). The first round of the elections took place at the end of December after being postponed from mid-October of last year. No winner emerged from the 30 candidates on the

ballot ([The Economist, 8 January 2016](#)), and a run-off election is scheduled for the end of January 2016.

Two former CAR premiers — Anicet-Georges Dologuélé, a former central banker who served as prime minister from 1999 to 2001, and Faustin-Archange Touadéra, a former math professor who served as prime minister under former-President Bozizé — received the most votes in the first round of the election, and will vie for the presidency ([Agence France Presse, 7 January 2016](#)).

That the December elections were largely peaceful ([Benn, 30 December 2015](#)) is possibly related to the presence of UN peacekeepers (MINUSCA) deployed in the country. They were joined by the French Sangaris force as well as local security teams to maintain peace ([UN, 30 December 2015](#)).

However, this good has been marred by recent reports of sexual abuse in Bangui by UN peacekeepers serving in the MINUSCA mission to CAR ([Sieff, 11 January 2016](#)). UN peacekeepers from Gabon, Morocco, Burundi, and France are said to have paid as little as 50 cents in exchange for sex with girls as young as 13, using a prostitution ring in M’Poko, an internally displaced persons camp near Bangui ([Westcott, 12 January 2016](#)). This case is the latest in a string of similar accusations: in the past 14 months, peacekeepers affiliated with the UN mission in CAR have been

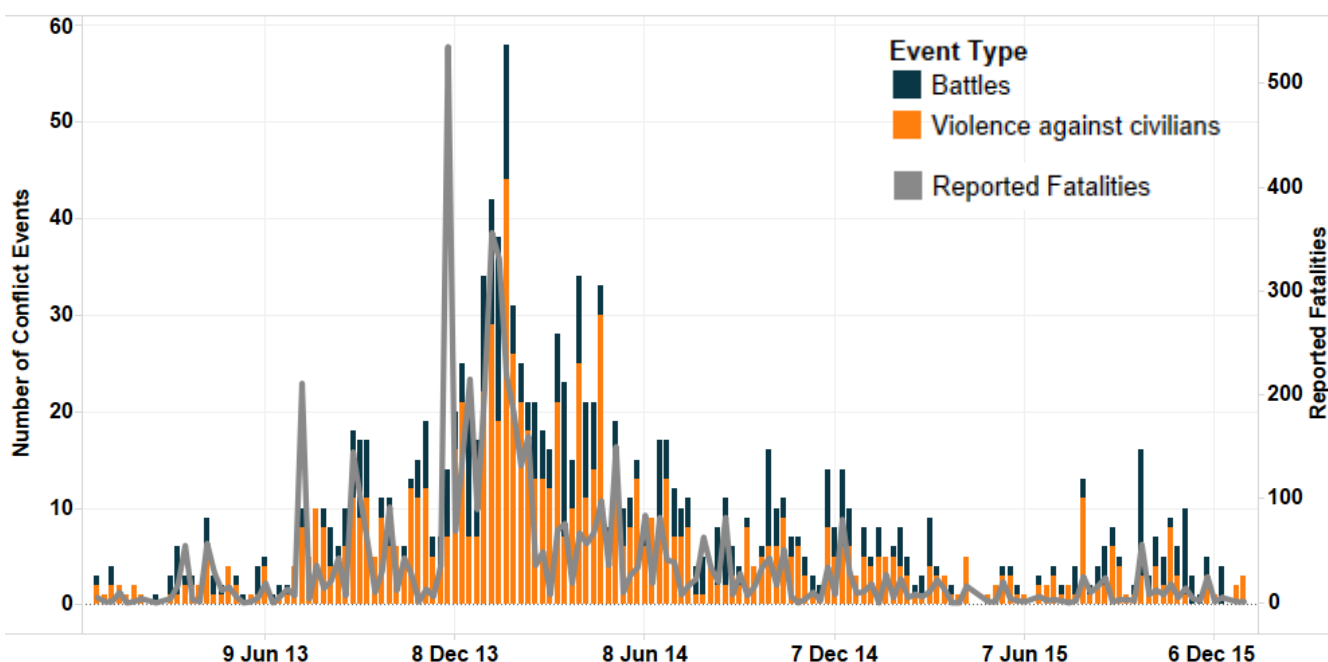


Figure 4: Battles and Violence Against Civilians in Central African Republic, from 2013 - 16 January 2016.

Central African Republic

accused of 22 other incidents of alleged sexual exploitation or abuse ([Sieff, 11 January 2016](#); see also: [Human Rights Watch, 22 December 2015](#)).

This ‘cancer in the UN system’ – as termed by Secretary General Ban Ki-moon ([Associated Press, 13 August 2015](#)) – has pushed the implementation of a ‘zero tolerance’ policy for such offenses ([Sieff, 11 January 2016](#)). Yet UN whistleblower Anders Kompass still originally faced suspension and dismissal for the passing of confidential documents detailing the abuse to authorities in Paris; only earlier this week was he completely exonerated after an internal investigation ([Laville, 18 January 2016](#)).

Given the difficulties in exposing such activity – coupled with the fact that many cases likely go unreported – the rate of sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeepers could in reality be much higher ([Westcott, 12 January 2016](#)). Figure 5 maps the locations of (known) violence

against civilians by peacekeepers in CAR, noting specifically instances of sexual abuse and exploitation. Other conflict actors in CAR are also responsible for gender-based violence (GBV); rates of GBV spiked to over 3 times the average rates seen in the country in 2013 and 2014, in line with the heights of the war ([Kishi, 25 February 2015](#)).

However, when sexual violence involves UN peacekeepers it is especially damning given the way it challenges the legitimacy of the peacekeeping mission at large. A recent study by [Karim and Beardsley \(2016\)](#) in the *Journal of Peace Research* suggests that including a larger proportion of female peacekeepers as well as personnel from countries with better records of gender equality in missions is associated with lower levels of sexual exploitation and abuse allegations. Minimizing these gross human rights violations, especially against populations who are already at risk, is imperative.

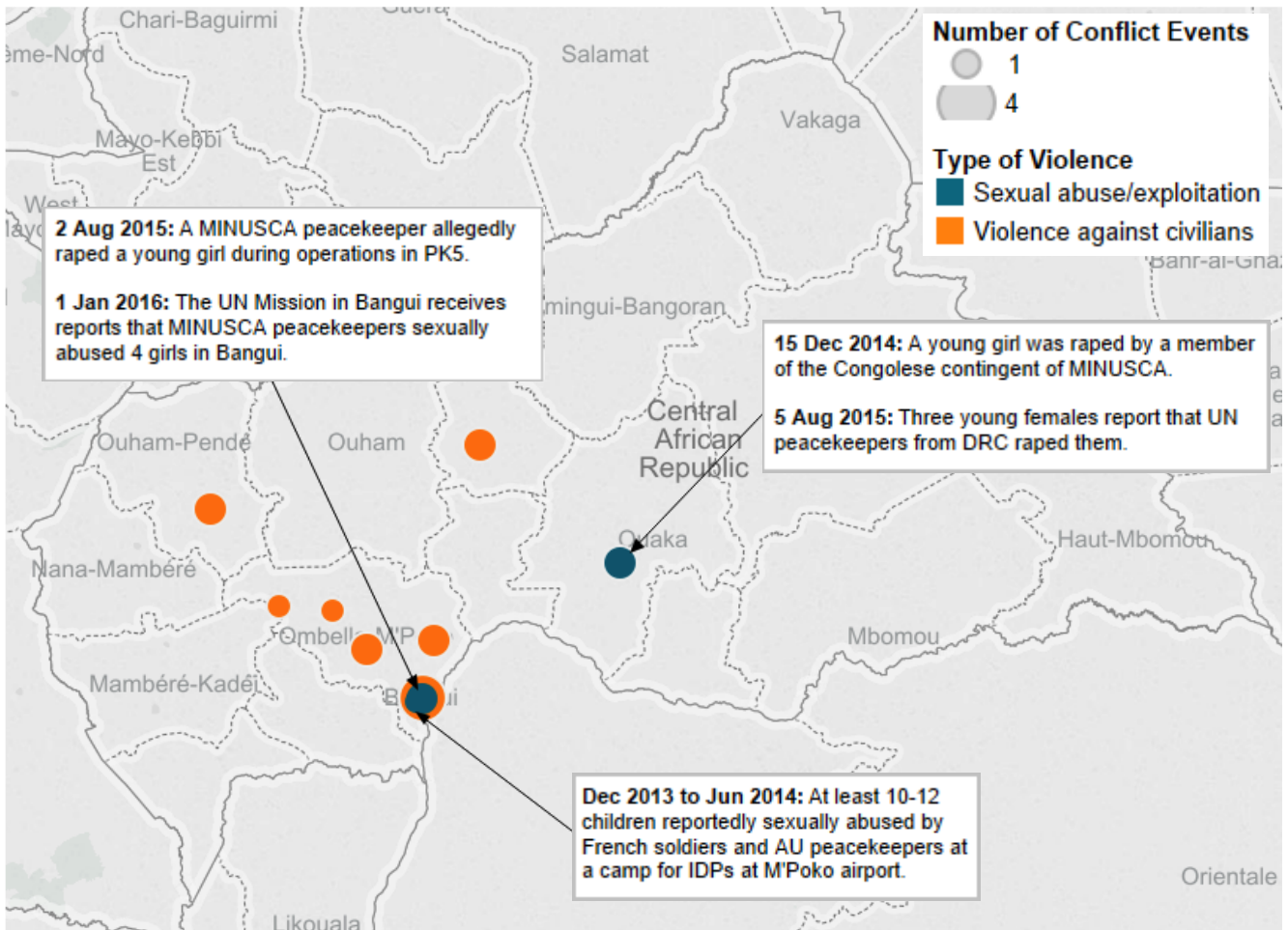


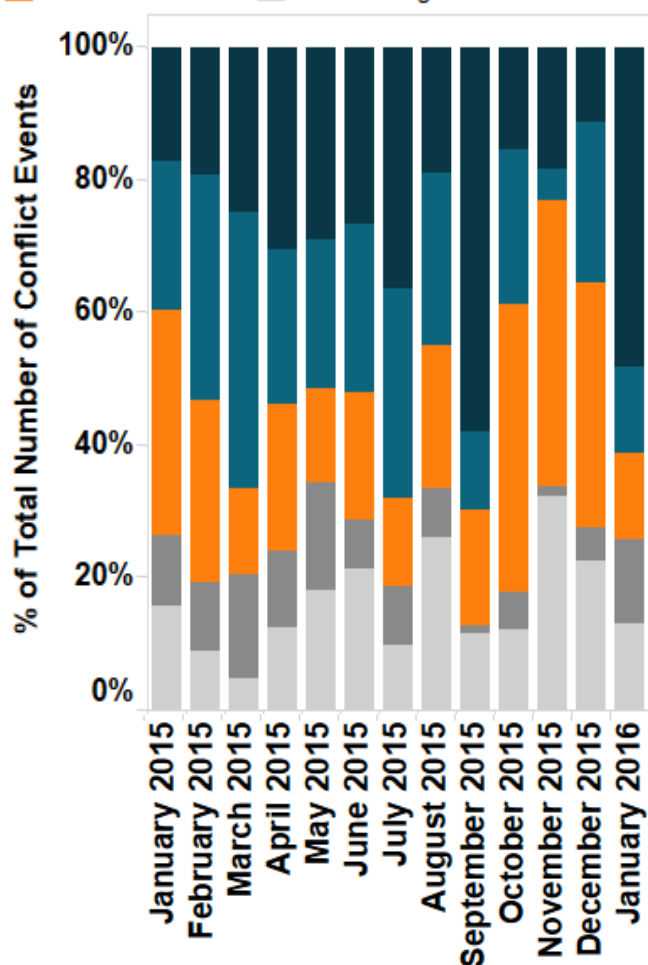
Figure 5: Violence Against Civilians by Peacekeepers, in Central African Republic, from 2014 - 2016.

Egypt

January saw the Egyptian military forces redouble their efforts against Islamic militants and the State of Sinai group in the North Sinai towns of Al-Arish, Sheikh Zuweyid and Rafah. ACLED data recorded 120 fatalities as a result of the ‘Retribution for the Martyr’ military operation. And as the Egyptian tourism sector struggles to recover from the Russian plane crash in October 2015 – claimed by the Islamic State – militants dealt another blow to the tourism industry on 8 January when the Bella Vista hotel in the Red Sea resort of Hurghada was attacked by knife-wielding attackers, injuring a number of foreign tourists ([Daily News Egypt, 16 January 2016](#)).

Event Type

- Battles
- Remote violence
- Riots/Protests
- Strategic development
- Violence against civilians



Protest and riot events formed the dominant mode of political expression in Egypt in the final quarter of 2015, for the first time since January 2015. From October – December 2015, protest and riot events were responsible for an average of 41% of all recorded political activity in Egypt (see Figure 6). This coincided with a rise in deaths in police custody and renewed attention on excessive police brutality. November witnessed the sharpest spike in violence against civilians, where 21 individual acts of violence were recorded; the highest levels in 6 months. The intensification of these protest events was predominantly concentrated in the North of Egypt in the Nile Delta region. Police abuses continued into January 2016 when Egyptian security forces were accused of killing a doctor suspected of involvement in Muslim Brotherhood-led protests ([Daily News Egypt, 11 January 2016](#)). Enforced disappearances of regime opposition supporters have been commonplace throughout 2015; the rise in torture, deaths in custody and police violence against civilians holding no political affiliations has caused outrage amongst the Egyptian community ([Africa Confidential 8 December 2015](#)).

The recent upswing in staged protests is unlikely to buck the trend that has dominated 2015, where almost all attempts at protest were suppressed. Following electoral success of coalitions and political blocs supporting Abdel Fattah al-Sisi’s regime, the Egyptian parliament met for the first time in three years on 10 January. The assembly is tasked with discussing and revising 380 laws passed in the absence of a legislature. Of these 380, the controversial protest law passed by Adly Mansour – that effectively smothers attempts to organise peaceful protest by requiring three-days’ notice before protesting and justifies forcible dispersion of protests – will not be considered ([HRW, 12 January 2016](#)).

Last year’s anniversary of the 25 January Revolution witnessed a number of anti-government protests and riots. Most notably, 17 people were killed in clashes in Matariyah district in Cairo. January 2015 also witnessed a number of small-scale attacks against Central Security Forces (CSF) by local militant groups such as the ‘Death Cell’, ‘Popular Resistance’ and ‘Revolutionary Punishment’. With the fifth anniversary of the 25 January Revolution quickly approaching, and the continued suffocation of legitimate protests, escalatory attacks by small armed groups may occur next week.

Figure 6: Number of Conflict Events by Type in Egypt, from January - December 2015.

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Libya

Throughout 2015, multiple theatres of violence played out over the Libyan territory. Two prominent dynamics shaped the trajectories of violence in 2015, providing the foundation for the conflict patterns present in early 2016. The first was the continuation of violence between Operation Dignity and Operation Libya Dawn forces that led to the erosion of political salience held by brigades from Misrata. The second and perhaps most evident trend in 2015 was the rise in prominence of Islamic State (IS) affiliate groups in the midst of the civil conflict.

Misratan Brigades initially engaged with the Libya National Army (LNA) and pro-government militias from Zintan from January – March for control over the eastern oil ports of Al-Sidra and Ben Jawad. In March, this contest de-escalated as Misratan forces pulled out to concentrate their firepower on Sirte where IS forces began consolidating their position.

This period represents a turning point in the 2015 violence, punctuated by the 166 Brigade’s withdrawal from Sirte in late May. The withdrawal signified mounting friction between the General National Congress (GNC) and, at the time, its de facto fighting force from Misrata. Misratan forces withdrew owing to a lack of resources, as combatants overextended their military capacity and as the GNC withheld reinforcements and military hardware ([Middle East Eye, 30 May 2015](#)). From May onwards, Misrata’s role in the conflict declined as splintering alliances resulted in a number of communal brigades — once allied to Misrata and Operation Libya Dawn — acting autonomously and vying for political inclusion.

As Misrata tightened its grip on administering and securing Tripoli, a number of Tripoli brigades responded by intensifying communal clashes towards the end of 2015 and January 2016 (see Figure 7). Although the Special Deterrence Force (Rada) acts under the remit of the Ministry of Interior to prevent crime and police Tripoli, the Tripoli Revolutionaries Brigade/1st Company controlled by Haitem Tajuri, and the Abu Saleem Brigade militia leader Abdul Ghani Al-Kikli (“Ghneiwa”) scaled their attempts to assert dominance for local power and control of the capital in the final quarter of 2015. Constituting two-thirds of all conflict in Tripoli in December 2015 and January 2016 (see Figure 7), the brigades of these powerful figures turned their attention away from Misratan brigades onto each other.

The first week of 2016 witnessed a massive escalation of violence conducted by IS militants. A series of suicide attacks targeted security forces around the country, threatening Eastern and Western Libya (see Figure 8). These attacks come after growing activity in Ajdabiya, where daily assassinations and remote violence attacks against Salafi groups and security forces were widespread. A group of fighters from the Ajdabiya Revolutionaries Shura Council (ARSC) pledged allegiance to the IS on 31 December. Similar to pledges by other Islamist groups across North Africa, the council’s central leadership denied the pledge was representative of the group as a whole, blaming individuals ([SITE Intel Group, 5 January 2016](#); [BBC News, 11 January 2016](#)), though it does emphasise continued expansion from small cells to a more coordinated entity.

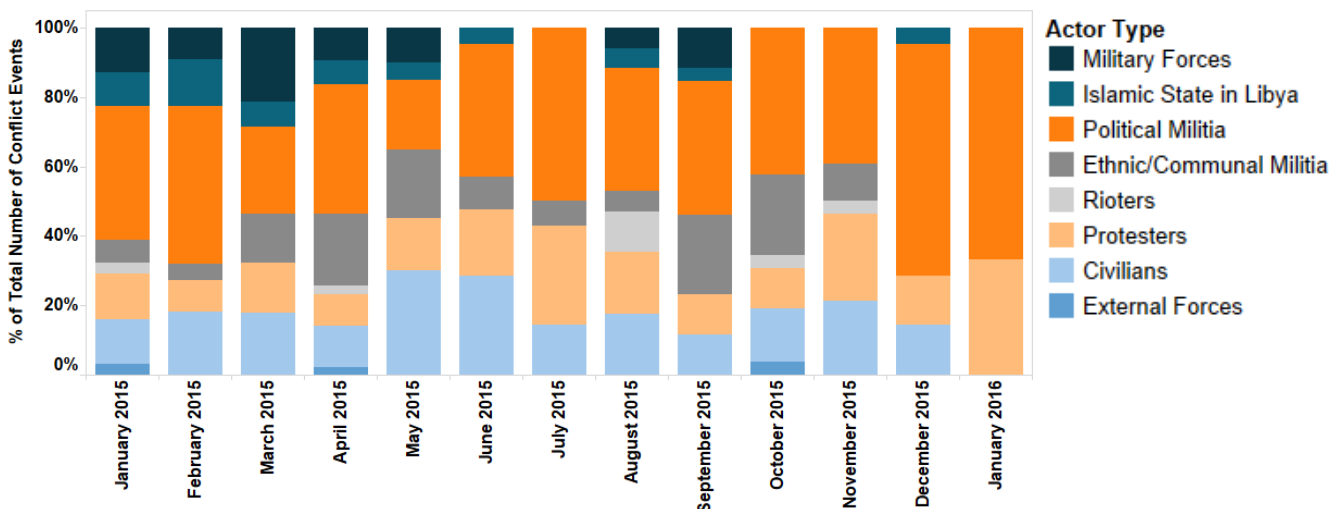


Figure 7: Number of Conflict Events by Actor in Tripoli, Libya, from January 2015 - January 2016.

Libya

In the days that followed, a massive car bomb attack struck a police training academy in Zliten, killing between 50 and 60 people (see Figure 8). The attack was similar in scale to the one launched in Al Qubbah in February 2015, also claimed by IS. The group also successfully took full control of Ben Jawad, previously used by Libya Dawn militias. From here, the group conducted a series of attacks on oil terminals at Sidra and Ras Lanuf, clashing with the Petroleum Facilities Guards (PFG) that had nominally supported the internationally-recognised government until its leader Ibrahim Jathran fell out of favour with General Khalifa Haftar, accusing him of attempting to kill him in an LNA airstrike (Libya Observer, 10 September 2015).

It is unclear whether IS intended to seize control of the terminals in the Oil Crescent, but these attacks demonstrate the capabilities of the IS in Libya group to exploit the coastal road for rapid offensives that have so far spread from Zliten to Derna — a distance over 1,100km [see Libya Security Monitor, 5 January 2016 for [Map of IS Control and Attack Zones in Libya](#)].

Targeting oil institutions suggests an intent to control the production and export of oil to finance their activity. However, although overall IS operations rose throughout 2015, the share of fatalities from violence against civilians decreased from 28.4% in 2013, to 8.7% in 2015 and their

activity appears characterised by diffusion rather than growing strength (ACLED, September 2015). These latest attacks could well be an attempt to reassert their presence within their Libyan enclave, at a time when the rival parliaments were making steps towards a unity government, and as reports suggest the group has lost 30% of its territory in Iraq and Syria (International Business Times, 6 January 2016).

Although a unity government formed of a 32-member cabinet was finally announced on 19 January, questions hang over its ability to govern. The capricious behaviour of stakeholders in the peace accord and unresolved disputes appear ever present, as angry protests sprung up in reaction to the visit of Prime Minister of UN-imposed government Fayaz Sirraj in Western Libya including Zliten, Misrata and Tripoli on 8 January. Whilst new armed group coalitions are forming to tackle IS — such as the Petroleum Facilities Guards (PFG) and Ajdabiya Border Division (LANA, 12 January 2016) — they seem more likely to widen political antagonisms and erode the ability of a cohesive military force rather than unify them under a central command. The coming weeks are set to see a mélange of local brigades, militias and quasi-military groups intensify their organisational efforts to combat IS in rebel-held areas such as Sirte.

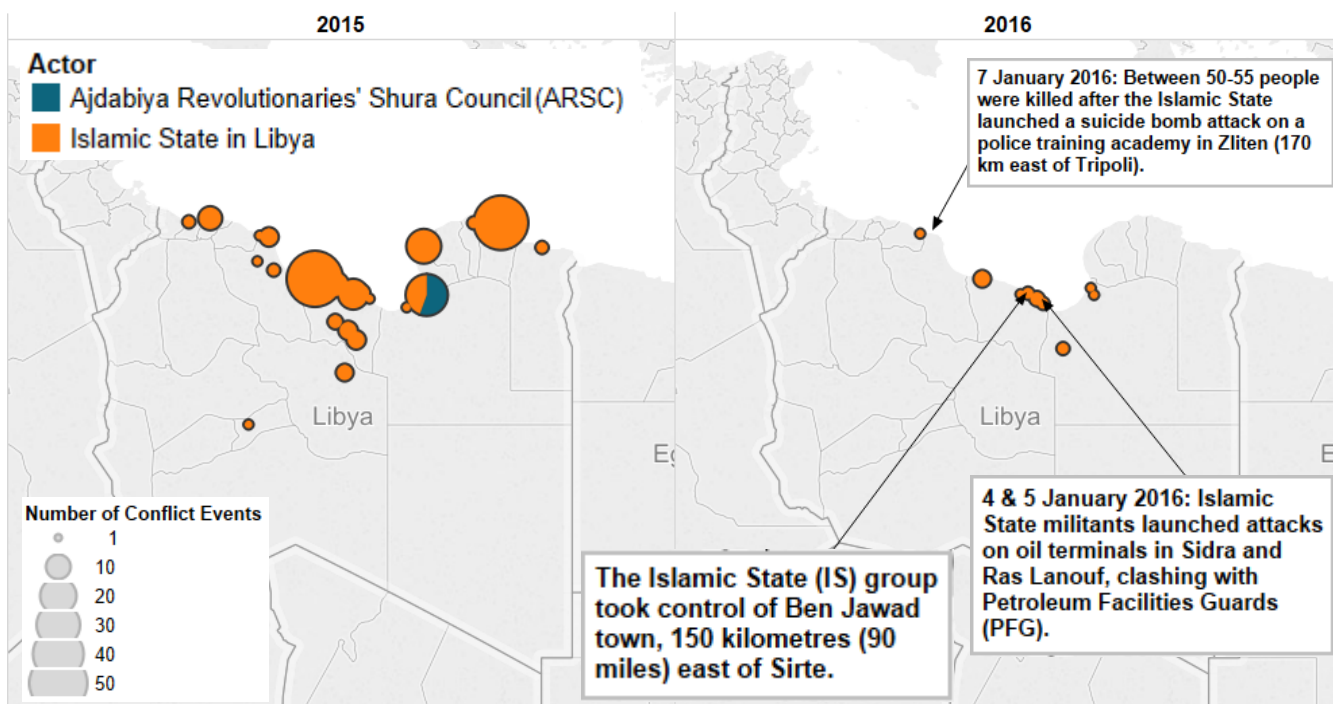


Figure 8: Activity of ARSC and Islamic State Militants by Location in Libya, from 2015 - 16 January 2016.

Nigeria

Violence and protest levels in Nigeria in December and early January were fairly consistent with patterns in the final quarter of 2015, where riots and protests were the primary mode of political expression. The majority of violent events in December remained clustered in the north-east, specifically in Borno state (see Figure 9), with Boko Haram remaining the single most prominent actor in instances of battles and violence against civilians. Notable instances of violence against civilians carried out by the group included several suicide bombings which took place in and around Maiduguri on 24, 27 and 28 December, killing more than 60 civilians.

Nigeria saw a rise in fatalities in December (731) as compared to November (264), although the rise represents a slight increase compared to the average number of fatalities over the last few months (fatalities averaged just under 570 per month from July – December 2015). This rise is attributed primarily to two events, one of which is an outlier in the overall violence trends Nigeria has been experiencing over the course of 2015. The first event was a battle between the Nigerian military and Boko Haram in early December in which the military claims to have achieved a decisive victory, killing a large number of fighters and securing the town of Pulka (see Figure 9). The Boko Haram militants had allegedly been fleeing a military bombardment of the Sambisa Forest before being intercepted ([Leadership, 9 December 2015](#)).

The second event, the outlier, was the result of a failed

assassination attempt against the Nigerian Chief of Army Staff Lt. Gen. Tukur Buratai while he was traveling through Zaria (see Figure 9) on 12 December. This attack was blamed on the Islamic Movement of Nigeria, a largely peaceful group with ties to Iran which has been targeted by both Boko Haram and the Nigerian military in the past. The army claimed that around 500 Shia from the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) barricaded the road the general's convoy was traveling on and proceeded to attack it, which led to a clash that caused casualties on both sides ([Vanguard, 12 December 2015](#)). Military forces then attacked sites in Zaria arresting the leader of the IMN, Ibrahim Zakzaky. This led to a two-day long bout of violence in which around 300 Shia were killed in the Zaria area ([HRW, 22 December 2015](#)), including the deputy-leader and spokesman of the IMN and members of Zakzaky's family, and religious sites destroyed ([BBC News - Africa, 23 December 2015](#)). Zakzaky's arrest and the high casualty toll prompted a number of protests in Nigeria. Although a Judicial Commission to investigate the events has since been announced, the IMN has said it will not participate until its leader has been released ([Premium Times, 17 January 2016](#)). The events have also clearly strained relations between Nigeria and Iran, and Nigeria's Islamic spiritual leader — the Sultan of Sokoto — has warned that the army's actions could spark a new insurgency ([BBC News - Africa, 23 December 2015](#)). In general, this development indicates a further deepening of religion as a dominant political identity across Nigeria.

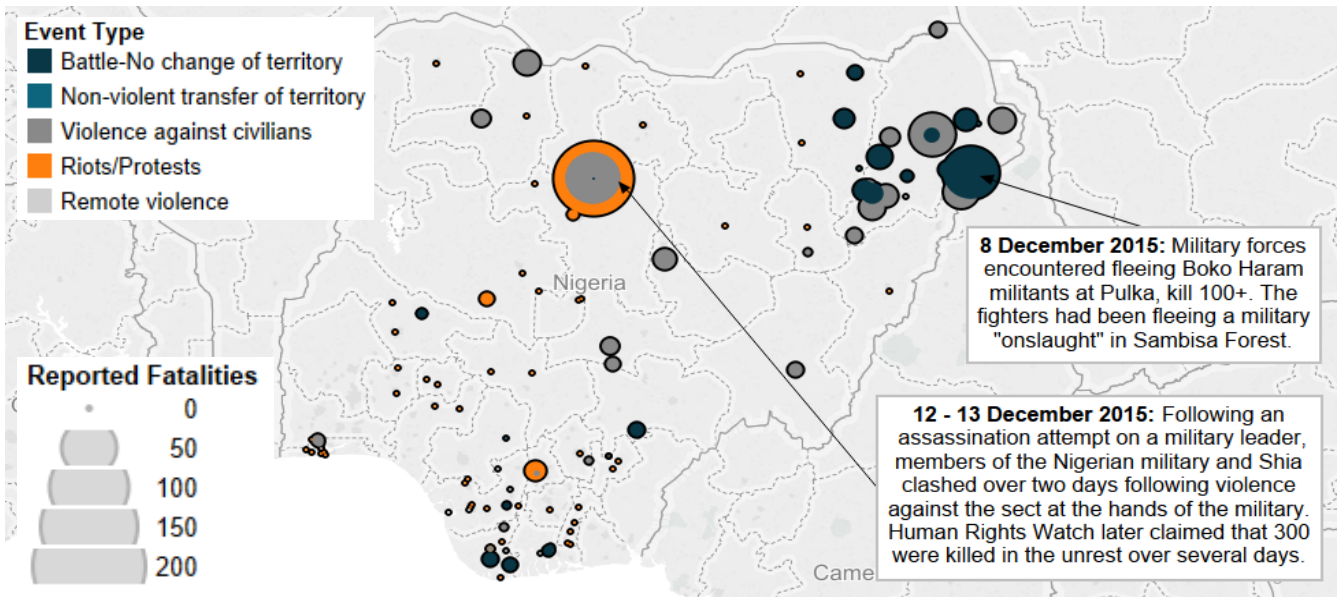


Figure 9: Number of Reported Fatalities by Location in Nigeria from December 2015 - January 2016.

South Sudan

On 26 August 2015, South Sudan President Salva Kiir and opposition leader Riek Machar signed a peace deal in an attempt to end a 20-month civil war ([Reuters, 26 August 2015](#)). The agreement has already proven fragile with an escalation in the number of conflict events and reported fatalities involving Sudanese People's Liberation Army/Movement-In Opposition (SPLA/M-IO) in September, October and November (see Figure 10). There has also been an increase in activity by new rebel groups, formed in reaction to Kiir's plan to restructure the country's ten existing states into 28 states.

In Juba in December, the Jieng Council of Elders, an influential group of Dinka politicians, welcomed Kiir's appointment of 28 new state governors ([Radio Tamazuj, 26 December 2015](#)). Elsewhere in the country, groups demanded that the peace deal be implemented as agreed – with power-sharing over ten states, not 28 (SPLA/M-IO to be given control of Upper Nile and Unity States) ([Radio Tamazuj, 3 October 2015](#)).

Opposition to the 28-states plan has led to the formation of the South Sudan Armed Forces (SSAF) and Tiger Faction New Forces (TFNF) ([Radio Tamazuj, 3 October 2015](#)). In early December, the Anthony Ongwaja-led SSAF announced its arrival by taking control of a police station in Idolu (in what will be Imatong State) and overrunning a

military outpost in Longiro, killing three soldiers. (see [Figure 2](#)). Fifty soldiers and police, mainly from the Latuka ethnic group, have defected to join the new rebellion. The Yaones Okij-led TFNF, made up predominantly of members of the Shilluk ethnic group, have introduced a new source of insecurity in Manyo County (in what will be Western Nile State). On 31 October, TFNF held the Manyo County Commissioner hostage, claiming control of Wadakona as its headquarters. In November, the group clashed with military forces in Malakal.

In Western Equatoria, armed youth known as Arrow Boys have recently re-emerged after remaining inactive for the first nine months of 2015. Arrow Boys were the main actor in at least one conflict event each month since October, clashing with military in Mundri, Napele, and Sar Sibou (see Figure 10). The most recent clashes occurred on 3 January in Yambio (in what will be Gbudwe State).

Increased activity from smaller offshoot militias is the result of a growing suspicion that the military will only integrate Machar's rebel troops (predominantly Nuer tribe members) upon implementation of the peace agreement. "The mobilisation of armed young men highlights the peace deal's limitations in addressing the deeply rooted grievances of smaller ethnic groups" ([Al Jazeera, 21 November 2015](#)).

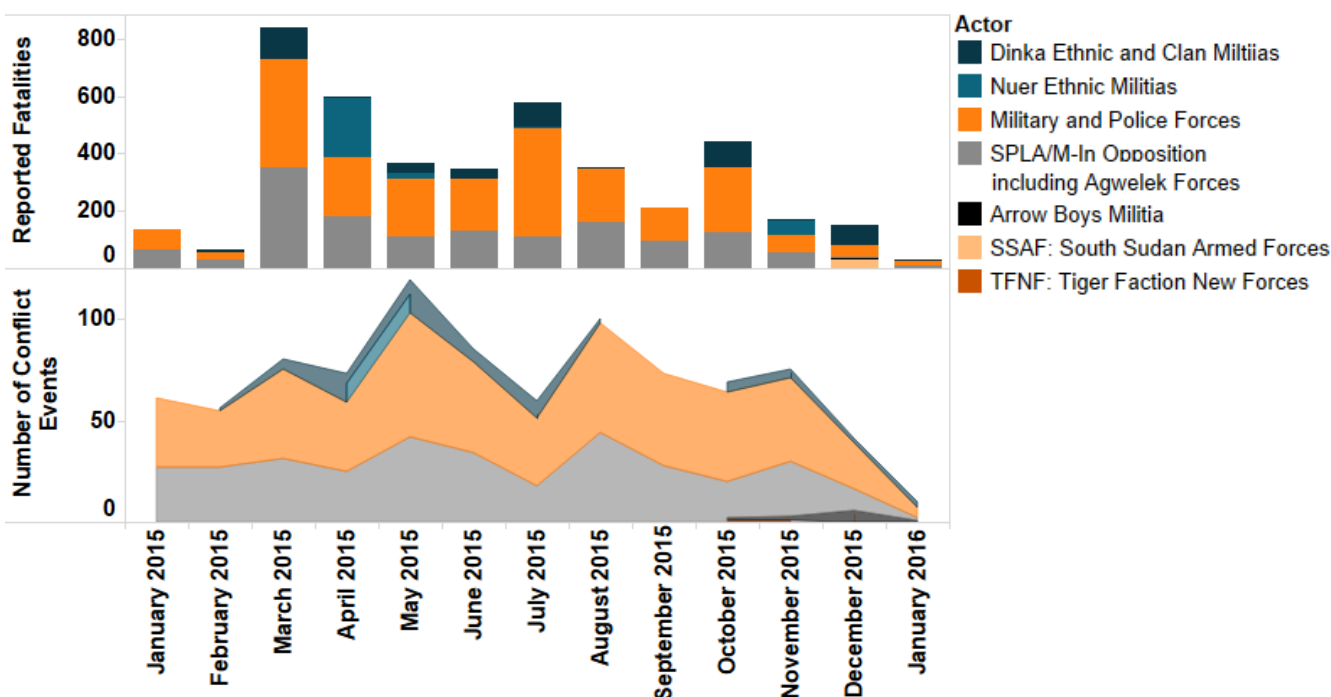


Figure 10: Number of Conflict Events and Reported Fatalities by Actor in South Sudan, January 2015 - 16 January 2016. 10

Sudan

On 31 December, Sudan President Omar al-Bashir announced a 30-day ceasefire for the regions of Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile ([Radio Dabanga, 8 January 2015](#)). The ceasefire came on the heels of joint attacks by the military, Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and Sudanese Air Force (SAF) on villages surrounding Jebel Marrah in Darfur (see Figure 11). On 30 and 31 December (continuing on 1 January 2016), Antonov aircrafts bombed Dab Naira, Sunga, Terenga, Beronga, Dolo, Dana and Dalo in Central Darfur (see Figure 11). Eight civilians were killed. Joint attacks were also carried out on Aradeib and Deribat in South Darfur. More than half of SAF bombings in Darfur in the final three months of 2015 resulted in fatalities or injuries to civilians.

Although the Jebel Marrah attacks and ceasefire announcement shine a spotlight on military activity, many of Darfur’s conflict events over the past three months involved inter-ethnic fighting. Darfur saw eight battles in October, including a two-day clash between Misseriya and

Salamat tribes in Umm Dukhun. Seven were killed. The number of battles in Darfur increased to nine in November and 13 in December, including continued clashes between Misseriya and Salamat militias (see Figure 11). On 12 December, Misseriya militia also clashed with Abala herdsmen in Umm Zahefa, resulting in 17 killed. Most recently, Misseriya militia attacked a police convoy in Bielel, accusing police of favouring the Abala tribe.

Incidences of violence against civilians in Darfur remained steady in October, November and December 2015, with at least 40 such events each month (see Figure 11). A majority of these incidences occurred in North Darfur, and involved militant herders assaulting farmers. There were also attacks on civilians by pro-government militia, RSF and Abala herdsmen. In the past three months, at least 50 people were abducted and 40 women raped throughout Darfur. Often, those abducted are children, and those raped are women collecting firewood outside of internally displaced camps.

Darfur-related peace talks between the government, Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), and the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army- Minnawi Faction (SLM/A-Minnawi) will begin in Debre Zeyit, Ethiopia, in late January. Informal peace talks that stalled between the government and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) in late November will also resume in Berlin this month ([Sudan Tribune, 15 January 2016](#)). Much of the difficulty in negotiating and enforcing peace deals lies in the fact that there are more parties affected than there are signatories to a particular agreement. Neither JEM nor SLM/A-Minnawi signed the 2011 Darfur Peace Agreement. Therefore, those groups may boycott April’s referendum (stemming from the 2011 agreement) on whether Darfur will become one semi-autonomous government or remain as five states ([Radio Tamazuj, 13 January 2016](#)). Additionally, the military saw a recent increase in clashes with the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army-Abdul Wahid al-Nur Faction (SLM/A-Nur), a main Darfur rebel group that refuses to join any mediation talks until fighting ceases on the ground.

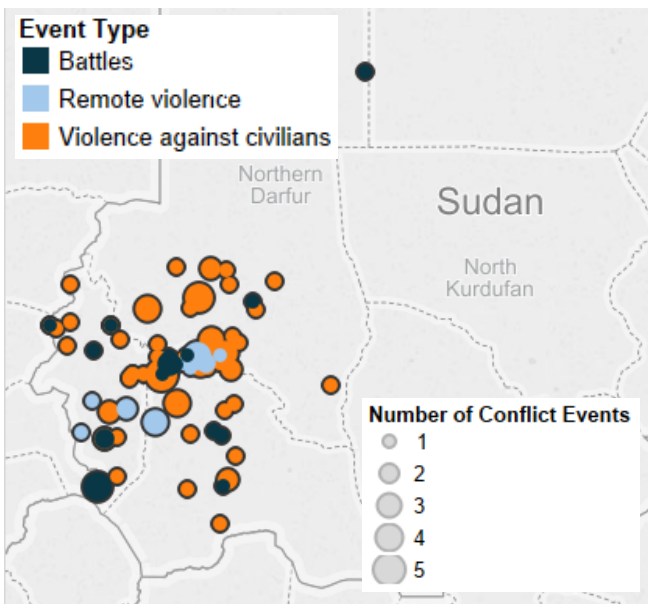


Figure 11: Number of Conflict Events by Event Type and Location in Sudan, from October - December 2015.

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Sources

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