11 JANUARY 2019

ACLED 2018

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Disorder is spreading. While the overall scale of political violence slightly decreased in 2018, the scope expanded. Political violence and protest surged in more countries than they declined, and the total number of conflict-affected areas rose sharply around the world. Close-proximity violence against civilians[1] escalated, and half the countries across Africa, South & Southeast Asia, and the Middle East witnessed an increase in reported violent deaths.

A review of the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) 2018 dataset demonstrates that the global political violence landscape has substantially shifted over the past year, registering distinct threat patterns across each region of ACLED coverage. The number and type of organized violence and protest events; the volume of reported fatalities; the proliferation of armed actors; and the geographic footprint of violence - all vary markedly across time and location.

ACLED 2018: The Year in Review surveys and contextualizes these trends, providing a comprehensive look back at a year of evolving disorder.

KEY TRENDS

Disorder is expanding. The number of locations affected by disorder grew by nearly 15% across Africa, Asia, and the Middle East in 2018, with an 11% increase in the geographic spread of organized political violence and a 24.5% increase for riots and protests. Nearly every country in ACLED's coverage area experienced conflict in at least one new location in 2018, meaning that conflict occurred in not just *more* but also *different* areas. Over half of these conflict-affected locations were newly violent as of 2018, and the vast majority of new locations are proximate to previously active locations, indicating the expansion, rather than emergence, of new frontlines.

Levels of political violence plateaued in 2018, while demonstrations have surged. Disorder decreased slightly (by about 2%) from 2017 to 2018. Organized political violence specifically decreased by about 16%, pointing to the comparatively high level of demonstrations in 2018: close to 36,000 demonstrations occurred last year in 75 countries covered by ACLED. This is an increase of 33% across all regions, with the total number doubling in the Middle East and growing by over a third in South Asia.

Though conflict was less lethal overall, violent deaths have increased across half the countries in the dataset. The overall number of reported fatalities from all events decreased substantially (by over 22%) from 2017 to 2018, largely due to the lower lethality of major conflicts, such as the Syrian Civil War. However, half the countries in the ACLED dataset reported *increases* in violent deaths during the year, including Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Mali, and Cameroon.

Close-proximity violence against civilians is increasing, though remote violence targeting civilians has declined. ACLED recorded approximately 1,000 more events of close-proximity attacks on civilians in 2018 than in 2017. Overall, civilians faced significant threats from conventional wars (Syria, Afghanistan, and Yemen), but also from government repression (the Philippines) and militia targeting (Nigeria and India). Remote violence targeting civilians declined largely due to a significant drop in the Middle East, even as it *increased* in other regions and in specific countries, including Yemen and Mali.

[1] This includes, for example, attacks by gunfire or crude weapons, and excludes attacks which do not require the perpetrator to be in close proximity, such as airstrikes or explosives that can be detonated remotely.

Conflict actors are proliferating. There was a substantial increase in conflict actors, with a 23% rise in the number of distinct, named actors from 2017 to 2018. Well over half of the 2,271 armed agents active in 2018 emerged this year, with over 1,400 new actors. Despite this, newly-emerged actors account for only 7% of the total number of organized violence events in 2018, demonstrating the entrenched nature of many of today's most active conflict actors.

State forces are the most violent actors worldwide and are responsible for the most direct civilian fatalities. Despite the growing prevalence of non-state actors in conflict, state forces were the most violent actors in 2018. State actors in Yemen, Syria, and Afghanistan were active in the highest number of conflict events. State forces were also responsible for the largest number of civilian fatalities across regions, indicating non-state actors are not alone in the use of 'terror tactics' in civilian targeting.

TOP FLASHPOINTS

Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, and Iraq are home to the most violent conflicts in the ACLED dataset. Together, these four countries make up over 60% of all organized violence events recorded by ACLED in 2018. The Syrian Civil War continues to be one of the most devastating conflicts in the world despite a significant drop in violence since 2017, accounting for nearly 30% of total organized violence events in ACLED's 2018 dataset - the most of any single country.

The Afghan War is the most lethal. Afghanistan was by far the deadliest country covered by ACLED in 2018, with nearly as many reported fatalities as Syria and Yemen *combined*, despite fewer conflict events. The Afghan War accounts for 30% of all fatalities recorded by ACLED during the year.

Syria is the deadliest place to be a civilian. Nearly as many civilians were killed in Syria last year as in Nigeria, Yemen, Afghanistan, and the Philippines *combined* -- the next four deadliest countries for civilians. Nearly four direct civilian deaths are reported per 10,000 Syrians -- excluding Syrians killed in the crossfires of battles (meaning the number of civilians killed is actually far higher).

The Philippines is a war zone in disguise. More civilians were killed in the Philippines in 2018 than in Iraq, Somalia, or the Democratic Republic of Congo -- highlighting the lethality of President Rodrigo Duterte's "War on Drugs"-*cum*-state terror campaign. Throughout the year, the Philippines saw similar levels of civilian fatalities stemming from direct civilian targeting as Afghanistan.

The threat for civilians in Mali continues to skyrocket. Despite a record 20-year high in the number of violent events in Mali in 2017, things further deteriorated in 2018 with a 40% increase in violence. What initially began as fighting between armed groups associated with different communities (counter-militancy operations and retaliations) has shifted dramatically toward civilian targeting. Civilian fatalities stemming from direct targeting via remote tactics rose in Mali in 2018, making it one of only a handful of countries across regions to see this trend, and second only to Yemen.

INTRODUCTION

THE ARMED CONFLICT LOCATION & EVENT DATA PROJECT (ACLED)

The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) is the highest quality, most widely used, real time data and analysis source on political violence and protest across the world. ACLED's mission is to produce disaggregated, locally informed political violence and protest data and analysis on conflict-affected countries across the world in real time for academic, policy, and public use. ACLED collects the dates, actors, types of violence, locations, and fatalities of all reported political violence and protest events across Africa, South & Southeast Asia, and the Middle East.[2]

Political violence and protest include events that occur within civil wars and periods of instability, public protest and regime breakdown. ACLED's aim is to capture the forms, actors, dates and locations of political violence and protest as it occurs across states. ACLED's guiding principles are transparency, conflict sensitivity, reliability and the prioritization of local data. The ACLED team conducts analysis to describe, explore and test conflict scenarios, and makes both data and analysis open to freely use by the public.

This report offers a review of data collected during 2018 and explores current trends and how dynamics have shifted.

2018: CONVENTIONAL CONFLICT, REPRESSION, AND DEMONSTRATIONS

Despite a slight overall decrease in the total number of political violence events in 2018, as well as the number of reported fatalities stemming from conflict, political violence actually *increased* in the majority of countries in 2018. Indeed, conflict in 2018 was characterized by its wide differences across regions and fluctuations in response to political shifts. It is therefore unwise to describe the year's political violence environment with broad strokes that sweep across multiple conflicts, political developments, and geographic areas. **It is only through disaggregating and contextualizing the wide scope of overlapping conflicts of 2018 that a complete picture of the year's political violence environment begins to emerge.**

In some of the most thoroughly-reported areas in which political violence is prominent – such as Yemen, Syria, and Afghanistan – conventional warfare between competing states and their proxy militias, or between states and rebel groups, caused devastating destruction and affected both the perpetrators of the violence and civilians in the line of fire. Even while contributing the highest level of conflict to the ACLED dataset, conventional conflicts are also the cause of the majority of the decline seen in 2018. Syria alone reported 37% fewer events last year than in 2017, yet still remains the most violent country, making up nearly 30% of events in the dataset. Afghanistan saw the highest number of reported fatalities stemming from conflict -- reporting nearly as many fatalities as Syria and Yemen *combined.* In fact, Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, and Iraq together -- all sites of conventional conflicts -- make up nearly 60% of all events in the ACLED dataset, pointing to the fact that despite decreases in the levels of violence within these wars, they continue to be devastating.

While there may be a general downward trend in the number of political violence events or fatalities reported in 2018 relative to 2017, one should be cautious before seeing this as a purely optimistic change. While conflict may be decreasing, it is also expanding, to more locations and to involve more actors. Over half of the locations housing conflict in 2018 were newly violent as of that year -- though most locations are proximate to previously active locations, suggesting that this is a spatial *expansion* rather than the emergence of entirely new frontlines. The numbers of distinct, named actors engaging in

[2] ACLED regional coverage will be expanding to cover Europe and Latin America & the Caribbean in early 2019.

conflict also increased substantially; over half of the actors active in conflict in 2018 were newly emerged, meaning they did not engage in conflict the year prior.[3] Technically, only half of the countries covered by ACLED saw a decrease in the number of reported fatalities, which means the other half had reports of increased fatalities in 2018. State repression of unarmed civilians and protesters increased dramatically across multiple countries in 2018, reminding analysts that fewer reported incidents of disorder is far from an indication that all is well. Such trends instead might imply increased levels of government suppression. In fact, while sites of conventional warfare were also countries where high levels of civilians were killed -- including Syria, Yemen, and Afghanistan -- countries such as Nigeria and the Philippines also topped the list. More civilians were killed as a result of direct targeting in Nigeria than in Yemen in 2018,[4] and more civilians were killed via direct targeting in the Philippines than in Afghanistan -- pointing to how conventional warfare is not the only threat to civilians.

While contemporary narratives highlight the decline of conventional actors in world conflict, trends suggest that state forces were, by far, the most violent actors of 2018. Four of the top five actors engaged in the most violence in 2018 are state actors. Further, state forces were also responsible for the majority of civilian fatalities across regions, suggesting that analysts ought to look beyond non-state actors alone when it comes to the use of 'terror tactics' in targeting.[5]

While the number of organized political violence events decreased worldwide (due in large part to a steep decrease in violence in Syria and other Middle Eastern conflicts), the number of riots and protests increased substantially, particularly in South and Southeast Asia -- increasing by nearly 33% across regions. Demonstrations also expanded spatially, with a more than 24% increase in the total number of locations seeing demonstrations. This expansion was most dramatic in the Middle East, where the number of demonstrations also doubled. While India continued to see the largest number of demonstrations -- nearly three times more demonstrations than the country with the second highest number -- the most dramatic increase in unrest in 2018 was in Iran, which saw a 284% increase in the number of demonstrations in the country.

The number of fatalities stemming from demonstrations also increased. While violent rioters attacking civilians (e.g. mob violence) increased by 173%, especially in South Asia, the number of fatalities stemming from rioters engaging with external forces increased the most dramatically, by 432%; this was largely a result of engagement between Palestinian rioters and Israeli state forces. Peaceful protests being forcefully put down increased by 12% in 2018, with the highest levels seen in Palestine and Ethiopia. The trend of state forces engaging in disorder extended also to demonstrations; state forces were the most active agents to engage with demonstrators, and demonstrations involving these state forces were the deadliest -- pointing to the tight grip of state power in many countries across the dataset.

The report below outlines these trends and more, and aims to provide a detailed, context-driven, and analytically rigorous overview of the state of conflict in 2018. The report separates the discussion of organized political violence from that of demonstrations, allowing thorough analysis of the two related, but functionally different, strands of disorder. The report also features a spotlight on civilian targeting in 2018, highlighting the ever-growing danger political violence poses to non-conflict actors. **All in all, the following sections piece together a picture of the vast, varied, and often oversimplified conflict environment of 2018, with the aim of providing users with a more robust idea of trends of disorder in the past year.**

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[3] The majority of these actors are communal or identity militias, especially active in Africa and South Asia where communal violence is prevalent. While numerous, these new actors did not necessarily engage in a majority of conflict events.

[4] This is a measure of civilians killed via direct targeting and does not include civilians killed as collateral damage or through indirect causes of warfare (such as famine or disease).

[5] Because terror tactics can be used by any armed agent, and because terrorism is a *tactic* and hence not necessarily descriptive of the only strategies an armed group may use, ACLED avoids labeling groups as "terrorists".

ORGANIZED POLITICAL VIOLENCE

FROM YEAR TO YEAR (2017 TO 2018)

As 2019 begins, understanding how the political violence landscape changed in the past year lends insight into how political violence will continue to shift. Below, ACLED contextualizes shifts in the level and type of political violence that affected the world in 2018, allowing analysts to unpack these trends and what they imply about the places in which they occur.

HOW HAVE CONFLICT RATES CHANGED SINCE 2017?

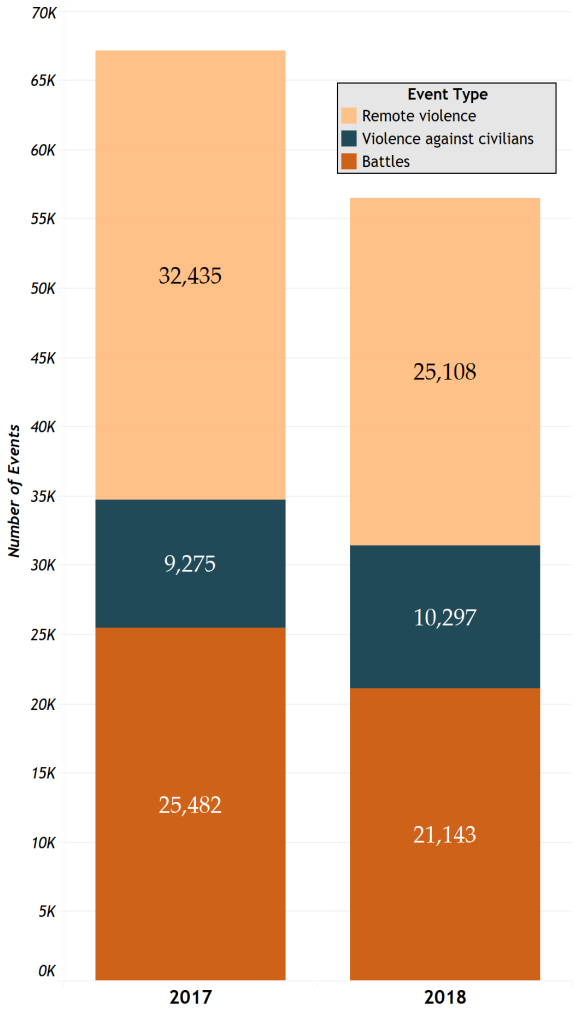
ACLED is an event-based dataset, and one of the primary ways in which ACLED contributes to conflict analysis is by providing a count of the number of organized political violence and protest events[6] that occur in a particular region or country over a particular period of time. Observing changes in this figure can indicate shifts in the scope, severity, and intensity of conflict in a given location.

The number of organized violence events decreased in 2018 to over 56,500 events, down from just over 67,000 in 2017, a decrease of nearly 16%. However, this decrease was not uniform across types of events or across regions. While the number of battles and remote violence events decreased in 2018, **close-proximity violence against civilians increased**, with about 1,000 more events in 2018 than in 2017 (see Figure 1).

This pattern, which reflects trends across all areas covered by ACLED, does not necessarily hold true for each individual region. For example, in Africa, the number of battles and violence against civilians increased, while remote violence decreased; in Southeast Asia, the trend was exactly the opposite. In South Asia, organized violence of every description - including battles, remote violence, and violence against civilians - increased. This trend was most substantial in regards to violence against civilians, where the number of events nearly doubled. In the Middle East, on the other hand, organized violence decreased across every category, largely due to the dramatic de-escalation in the Syrian Civil War.

Figure 1:

Type of Events by Year

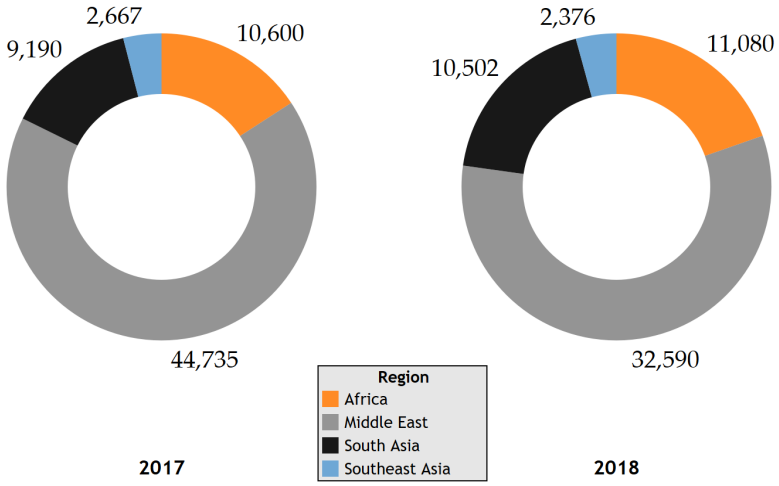


[6] "Organized violence" here is used to mean all ACLED events coded with the following event types: "Battle-No change of territory", "Battle-Government regains territory", "Battle-Non-state actor overtakes territory", "Remote violence", and "Violence against civilians". "Political violence and protest events" refers to the inclusion of all "organized violence" (as defined previously) plus the addition of events with event type "Riots/Protests". ACLED data with non-violent event types are not included in analysis here and are meant to help qualify analysis and should not be quantified; these include event types: "Non-violent takeover of territory", "Headquarters of base established", and "Strategic development". For more on how to work with the latter non-violent event types, see this ACLED methodology piece.

Indeed, as Figure 2 demonstrates, the proportion of all types of organized violence that occurred in the Middle East in 2018 (in gray) dramatically declined as the number of events fell over 26% from its 2017 levels. The number of organized violence events also fell in Southeast Asia (in blue), due in part to a more restrained take on the Drug War in the Philippines. In Africa (in orange), the number of political violence events increased by about 10%, while in South Asia (in black), the number of organized violence events increased by 14% from 2017 to 2018, and in five of the six countries in the region.[7]

Figure 2:

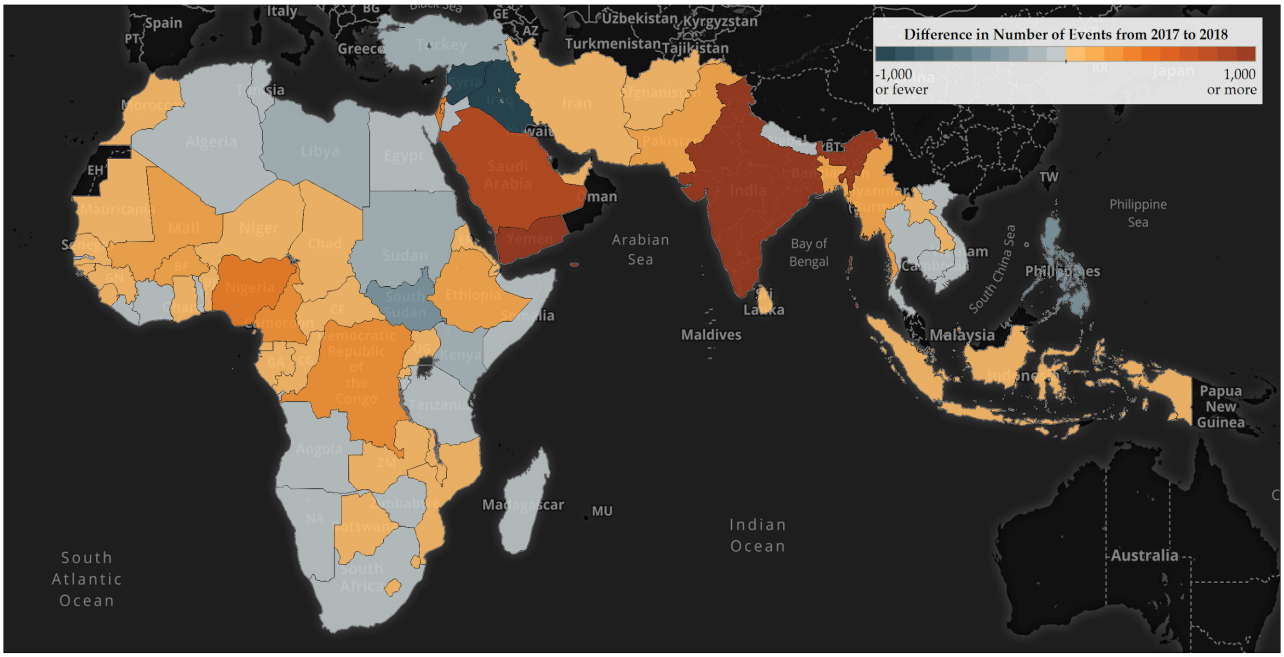
Number of Events per Region by Year



In fact, **the number of political violence events increased in more countries than it decreased**. The map below helps to depict where the largest changes occurred.

Figure 3:

More Countries Experienced More Violence in 2018



[7] Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka saw increases, but not Nepal.

The number of organized political violence events increased most substantially in Yemen, India, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria and Israel, and decreased most substantially in Syria, Iraq, the Philippines, South Sudan, and Libya. Despite the significant decreases in the latter countries, many of them still remain highly violent places -- indeed, Syria remains the most violent country covered by ACLED in 2018 despite this decrease. The below table outlines the context for these major trends.

Table 1. *Countries with major* ***decreases*** *in recorded number of organized political violence events, 2018*

Country	***Change in the level of organized political violence events since 2017***	***Contributing factors***
Syria	Decrease of **12,820** events, or **44%** decrease from 2017	**Regime consolidation:** While the Syrian Civil War is far from over, violence has somewhat subsided as the Syrian regime and its allies consolidate territorial control around the country. *For more on territorial shifts in Syria, see ACLED monthly map The State of Syria*
Iraq	Decrease of **2,287** events, or **47%** decrease from 2017	**End of the Civil War:** In December 2017, Iraqi Prime Minister Abadi declared victory in Iraq's four-year civil war against the Islamic State (IS). However, despite claims that IS has been defeated in Iraq, the group still poses a significant threat to civilians across the country. *For more on IS's changing campaign in Iraq, see ACLED analysis piece IS Underground: The Post-War Threat to Iraqi Civilians*
The Philippines	Decrease of **396** events, or **21%** decrease from 2017	**Toning down the War on Drugs**: Philippine President Duterte's War on Drugs, which began in earnest in 2016, was rife with state-sponsored killings and corruption. The most recent phase of the war, begun in late 2017, has seen fewer events and fatalities than earlier phases, in part due to critical attention focused on the state's tactics. *For more on drug violence in the Philippines, see ACLED analysis piece Duterte's War: Drug-Related Violence in the Philippines*
South Sudan	Decrease of **380** events, or **36%** decrease from 2017	**Ceasefire**: In addition to a ceasefire between warring parties in South Sudan signed in late 2017, the Khartoum Peace Agreement was negotiated in stages from late June 2018 onwards, which has reduced violence between the military and various rebel factions.

		For more on South Sudan's ceasefires, see ACLED infographic This War is Not Over
Libya	Decrease of **161** events, or **24%** decrease from 2017.	**End of the Battle of Benghazi:** With the end of the 3-year Battle of Benghazi in 2017, violence decreased significantly in Libya in 2018. However, this decline in violence may take a turn in 2019, as the Islamic State shifts south, and defected militias remain active in the north. *For more on militias in northern Libya, see ACLED analysis piece Targeting Tripoli: Newly Active Militias Targeting Capital in 2018*

Table 2. *Countries with major* ***increases*** *in recorded number of organized political violence events, 2018*

Country	***Change in the level of organized political violence events since 2017***	***Contributing factors***
Yemen	Increase of **1,880** events, or **25%** increase from 2017	**Escalation of the Civil War:** The Saudi- and UAE-backed offensive to recapture the last port under Houthi control contributed to a significant increase in conflict events in Yemen. *For more on the conflict in Yemen, and ACLED's estimated fatalities count, see ACLED press release Yemen War Death Toll Now Exceeds 60,000*
India	Increase of **964** events, or **78%** increase from 2017	**Various causes:** India faces a variety of intersecting and overlapping crises across its distinct regions and diverse population. A variety of local and regional-level elections in 2018 increased violence levels in multiple areas of the country. Continued violence in Jammu & Kashmir, the Red Belt, the Northeast, and between castes factor into this increase as well. *For more on the multifaceted forms and causes of disorder in India, see ACLED analysis piece The Complexity of Disorder in India*
Saudi Arabia	Increase of **718** events, or **58%** increase from 2017	**Impact of the Yemen Civil War:** Among other things, Saudi Arabia experienced an increase in political violence along its border with Yemen, which contributed to the overall rise in events throughout the country. *For more on Yemen-Saudi border violence, see ACLED*

		analysis piece The Saudi-Yemeni Border Conflict
Nigeria	Increase of **316** events, or, **35%** increase from 2017.	**Fulani-related violence:** While Nigeria faces a number of concurrent crises -- including the continued threat of Boko Haram and, in late 2018, rising election-related violence -, heightened Fulani-related violence was the primary impetus behind the significant increase in activity in the country in 2018. *For more on Fulani-related violence, see ACLED analysis piece Fulani Militias in Nigeria*
Israel	Increase of **308** events, or **592%** increase from 2017.	**Conflict on the Gaza border:** Conflict activity on the Gaza border increased with Israel's blockade of Gaza, resulting in further negative impact on living conditions. The result: a turn towards the use of crude weapons (including incendiary devices, such as Molotov cocktails, attached to kites) directed against Israel, as well as shelling by Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ). *For more on violence on the Gaza border, see ACLED analysis piece Homemade Resistance: The Popular Response to the Difficulties of Life in Gaza*

HOW HAVE REPORTED FATALITY RATES CHANGED SINCE 2017?

The changing number of organized political violence events is not the only way in which political violence levels can be measured; ACLED also records reported fatalities from conflict-related events, allowing for analysis of changes in fatality counts over time. While this metric has a wider margin of error than a count of organized political violence events,[8] it nevertheless provides a different way to conceptualize how conflict intensifies and changes over time.

However, it is important to keep in mind that "fatality numbers are frequently the most biased and poorly reported component of conflict data. They are often debated and can vary widely. Conflict actors may overstate or under-report fatalities to appear strong to the opposition or to minimize international backlash against the state involved. And the numbers can be off simply because it's difficult to collect exact data mid-conflict. While ACLED codes the most conservative reports of fatality counts to minimize over-counting, this does not account for biases that exist around fatality counts at-large" (Washington Post, 2 October 2017). *While a telling indicator of how conflict intensity and lethality shifts over time, fatality counts are generally less reliable than other metrics coded by ACLED, due in part to highly politicized and widely varying fatality counts reported by different sources. Such a metric is therefore largely used as supplemental to other modes of analysis.*

The number of **reported fatalities from political violence decreased** by nearly 23% from 2017 to 2018. Reported fatalities across all regions decreased, though most substantially in the Middle East, and particularly across Iraq and Syria.

[8] See Fatalities in ACLED Data for further information on how ACLED codes fatalities.

These two countries, both of which face waning yet continuing internal conflict, had combined nearly 53,000 fewer reported fatalities in 2018 than in 2017. In fact, half of the countries covered by ACLED had a decrease in reported fatalities -- which means that the other half saw *increased* fatalities in 2018. The largest decreases across the dataset occurred in many of the same places which experienced fewer organized violence events: Iraq, Syria, South Sudan, the Philippines, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The countries which had the highest *increases* in reported fatalities were Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Mali, and Cameroon. The Yemeni Civil War was the primary contributor to the increase in reported fatalities in both Yemen and Saudi Arabia. An increase in high fatality events stemming from larger operations by both the Taliban and the Afghan military, especially during the height of the Taliban's spring offensive Al Khandaq, contributed to the increase in reported fatalities in Afghanistan.[9]. A dramatic shift in the intensity and number of mass atrocities between 2017 and 2018 involving communal groups contributed to the increase in reported fatalities in Mali.[10] Lastly, conflict in Anglophone Cameroon involving Ambazonian separatists contributed to the increase in reported fatalities in the country, especially in the lead up to the election in October.[11]

HOW HAVE CONFLICT ACTORS PROLIFERATED SINCE 2017?

ACLED data also allow for analysis of actors involved in conflict, providing a key metric for understanding how conflicts emerge, fracture, and expand.[12] An increase in the number of distinct, active, named conflict actors may indicate the expansion of a conflict to include additional violent groups, the fracturing of larger actors into multiple groups, or the emergence of new actors fighting on entirely new battlefronts. All of these metrics can contribute to making conflicts even more difficult to resolve, with more parties needing to be brought into the fold before resolution. Further, the number of armed, organized groups can increase future threat levels, as mobilized groups can more easily expand and are more likely to participate in additional conflicts in the future.

It it important to consider that the number of distinct conflict actors does not serve as a direct metric for the size or severity of a conflict. For example, a smaller number of groups might indicate increased strength and consolidation of conflict actors, and therefore their increased efficiency and strategic capacity; a decrease in the number of conflict actors could point to the merger of smaller conflict actors into a stronger, allied group, such as the merger of Islamist factions in the Sahel in early 2017.[13] Nevertheless, actor count can be an invaluable tool for understanding the breadth and scope of the conflict environment in a given area.

Overall, **there was a substantial increase in the number of actors participating in conflict events across the areas of ACLED coverage**, with a 23% increase in the number of distinct, named actors active from 2017 to 2018. Additionally, **well over half of the 2,271 conflict actors active in 2018 were newly emerged this year with over 1,400 new actors**,[14] indicating a substantial change in the political violence environment across multiple conflict fronts. Table 3 below highlights the countries which housed the highest numbers of new conflict actors.

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[9] While IS is responsible for a number of high fatality events in Afghanistan as well, IS attacks in general have decreased, so despite usually resulting in high fatalities, the total fatality number stemming from their attacks did not largely contribute to these trends. For more on violence in Afghanistan, see ACLED analysis piece Violence against Civilians in Afghanistan: The Taliban and the Islamic State.

[10] For more on the changing patterns of violence in Mali, see ACLED analysis piece From the Mali-Niger Borderlands to Rural Gao: Tactical and Geographical Shifts of Violence.

[11] For more on the Ambazonian conflict in Cameroon, see ACLED analysis piece Political Violence in Anglophone Cameroon and Picking a Fight: The Rise of Armed Separatists in Cameroon.

[12] See The New York Times for comments on ACLED actor counts.

[13] See this ACLED infographic on the impact of the merger on violence in the Sahel region.

[14] In many cases, actors active in 2017 were not active in 2018. Therefore, the emergence of new actors does not necessarily mean that the number of actors in total increased; *it is possible conflict shifted, rather than expanded.*

Table 3. *Countries with highest number of new conflict actors and highest increase in number of actors*

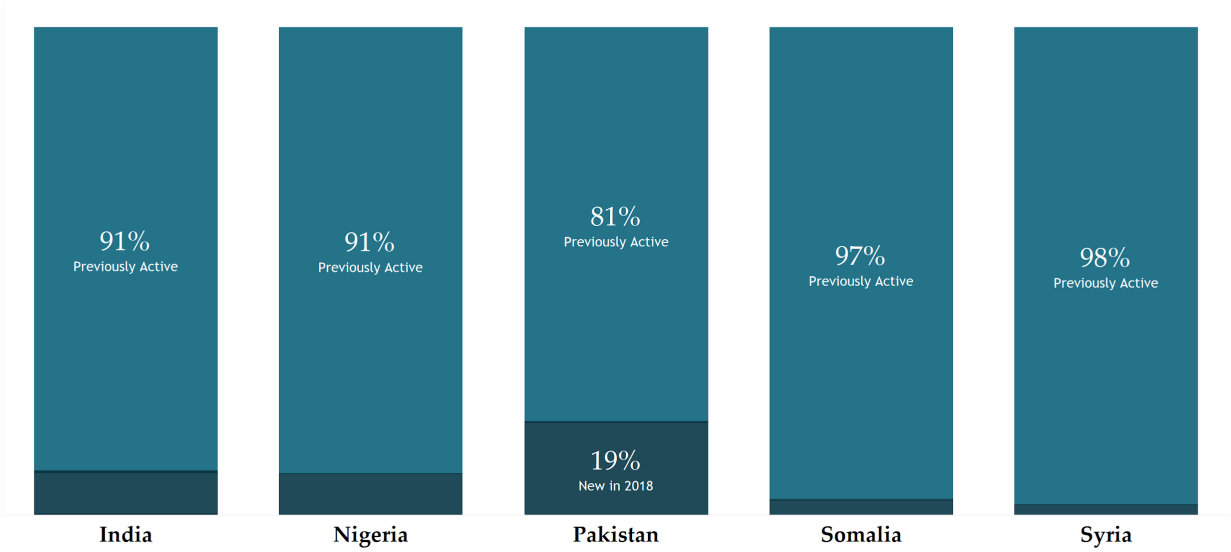
Country	***Number of actors in 2017***	***Number of actors in 2018***	***Growth in number of actors from 2017***	***2017 actors no longer active in 2018***	***Number of actors newly emerged in 2018***	***Main type of actor of the new actors***
India	163	291	78% growth in number of actors	99	227	Communal Militias (e.g. Morbi Communal Militia)
Pakistan	123	237	90% growth in number of actors	76	189	Communal Militias (e.g. Gabol Communal Militia)
Nigeria	105	145	36% growth in number of actors	69	109	Communal Militias (e.g. Awe Communal Militia)
Somalia	137	174	27% growth in number of actors	62	99	Communal Militias (e.g. Reer-Gahayle Sub-Clan Militia)
Syria	208	107	15% **decrease** in number of actors[15]	102	81	Rebel Groups (e.g. Hamza Brigade)

Despite the high number of new actors participating in organized violence in 2018, these new actors were involved in relatively few events compared with more ingrained conflict actors. In most cases, there were far more freshly-emerged actors in 2018 than actors who had also been present in 2017, but these actors were involved in far less activity than those actors with more years of conflict experience. Newly emerged actors were only active in about 6% of organized violence events in 2018; nevertheless, they represent a significant change to the conflict landscape across regions. Figure 4 below depicts the proportion of conflict events involving *newly* active versus *previously* active actors, highlighting the relatively small proportion of violence involving these 'new' groups.

[15] In the case of Syria, despite the addition of over 80 new conflict actors, a corresponding inactivity on the part of actors who participated in conflict in 2017 means that the overall number of actors decreased from 2017 to 2018. This speaks both to the shifting nature of the Syrian civil war, and also to its sheer magnitude even in its decline; even with the fifth highest number of new actors of any country in the dataset, there were still fewer actors participating in conflict in Syria in 2018 than in 2017.

Figure 4:

Proportion of Events Engaged in by New vs. Previously Active Conflict Actors in 2018



Of the new conflict actors in 2018, a majority - over 64% - are communal militias, meaning community, ethnic, or other local identity militias (see Figure 5 below).[16] These groups often arise as local security providers and tend to engage in violence over local-level resources or 'micro' political dominance (often llivelihood defense), with catalysts including factors such as land disputes, water scarcity, grazing rights, or cattle theft. These groups often engage with other communal groups and/or civilians from opposing communities rather than with state forces, and violence tends to be locally bound.

New actors also emerge at different rates across different regions. **Africa and South Asia combined had over 80% of the newly emerged actors in 2018, in part because of the prevalence of identity-based violence in these regions.** Conflicts in Southeast Asia, on the other hand, involved very few new actors in 2018, pointing to the entrenched and unchanging nature of the conflict landscape in many of the ongoing conflicts in this area. This includes the constellation of ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) in Myanmar;[17] Islamist violence in southern Philippines;[18] and continued separatist violence in southern Thailand.[19]

Figure 5:

New Actors by Region

[16] See ACLED Actor methodology for an overview of actor types; these actors are coded as inter1 = "4" within ACLED coding methodology.
[17] For more on actor-based analysis of the conflict in Myanmar, see this ACLED analysis piece.
[18] New data capturing these dynamics from ACLED's local partner, International Alert, to be integrated and released in early 2019.
[19] New data capturing these dynamics from ACLED's local partner, Deep South Watch, to be integrated and released in early 2019.

HOW HAS CONFLICT EXPANDED SPATIALLY SINCE 2017?

Another important factor in understanding the political violence landscape is conflict's geographic spread and scope. A count of the discrete number of locations in which organized political violence took place in a country, and how this changes over time, offers a 'footprint' of disorder and allows for increased understanding of the expansion or consolidation of this disorder subnationally. Conflict can occur in new locations, cease to occur in previously active locations, or continue to be active in the same locations as before. Identifying which of these occur and to what extent allows for analysis of the spread and 'movement' of conflict across space, which is an important metric for determining the scope and change in disorder over time.

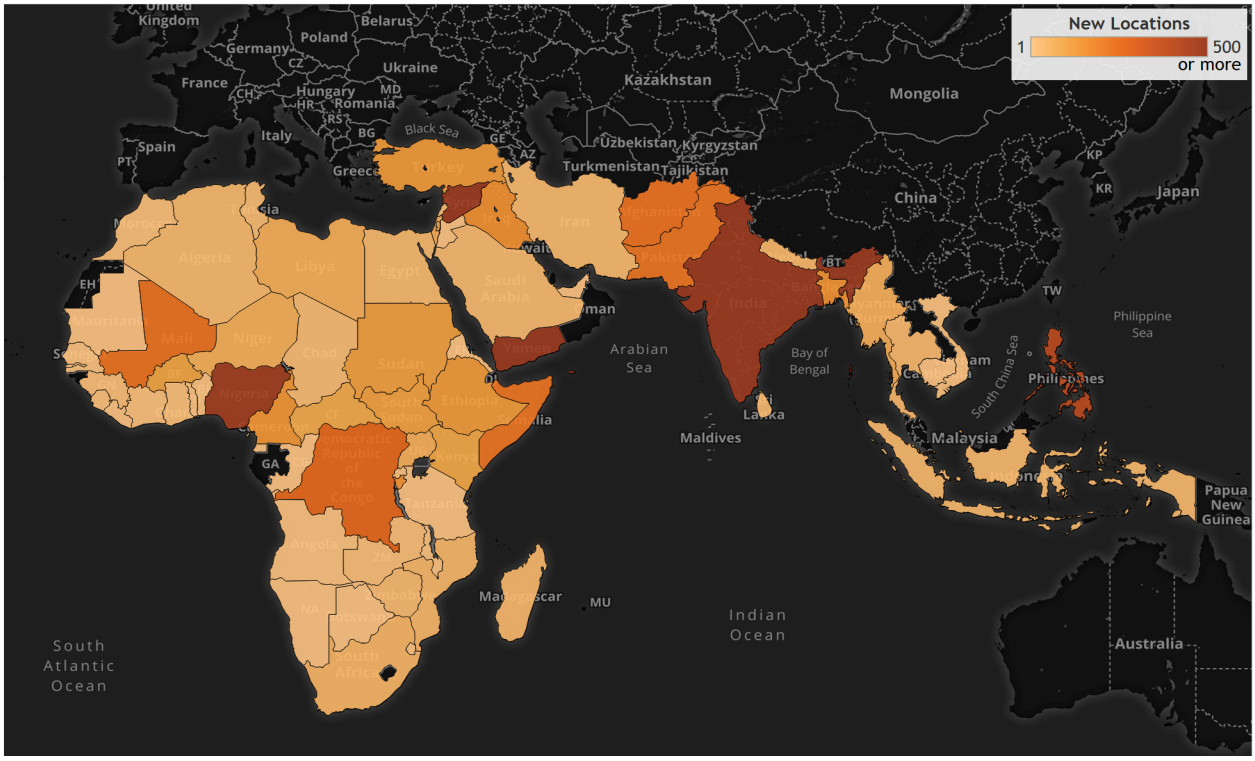
Accounting for which locations are newly active or cease to be active, as opposed to solely the total number of locations, can help us to understand shifts in conflict. In 2018, conflict *expanded*; 11,820 locations saw conflict activity in 2018 relative to 10,628 locations in 2017; this is an 11% increase in the total number of violent locations. Conflict also *shifted*; 6,171 new locations saw conflict activity in 2018, while 5,068 previously active locations ceased to report activity In fact, **over half of the locations in which organized political violence events took place last year were newly violent as of 2018.** These newly active locations housed over 21% of the organized political violence events in 2018.

It is important to note that these new locations have largely involved the expanding of frontlines in growing, but existing, conflicts, rather than the eruption of conflict in entirely new areas. The vast majority of new locations are proximate to previously active locations, indicating the expansion, rather than the emergence, of new frontlines.

Apart from mere conflict expansion to more locations than in previous years, nearly every country in ACLED's coverage area experienced conflict in at least one new location in 2018. **Not only is conflict occurring in *more* locations in 2018 than in 2017, but in different locations as well.**

Figure 6:

New Conflict Locations by Country in 2018



THE MOST VIOLENT PLACES IN 2018

Conflict occurred in nearly every area of ACLED coverage, across 77 countries and four distinct regions of the world. Understanding which of these places were home to the most organized political violence in 2018 - as well as the forms this violence took and what changes, if any, occurred - aid in our understanding of the political violence environment at large, as well as understanding potential shifts in the coming year.

Featured below are two of the most commonly used metrics for discussing the relative violence of a country: number of events and fatality counts. Examining both together aid in contextualizing and specifying the types of conflicts faced by different countries during 2018.

WHERE DID MOST VIOLENCE OCCUR?

The most violent countries by number of organized violence events across ACLED's coverage area in 2018 are primarily those with large conventional conflicts, including Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, and Iraq. **Together, these four countries make up over 60% of all organized violence events recorded by ACLED in 2018.**

Syria continues to be among the most devastating conflicts covered by ACLED, with the most political violence reported in 2018. **Syria alone makes up nearly 30% of the total number of organized violence events in areas of ACLED coverage in 2018, despite a dramatic decrease in the number of events in the country since 2017.** This is especially damning when considering the size and population of the country; of the five countries listed below (those with the highest numbers of conflict events reported), Syria had the highest number of events per capita, with twice as many events weighted by population as any other country.

Figure 7:

Percent of Organized Violence Events in 2018 by Region & Country

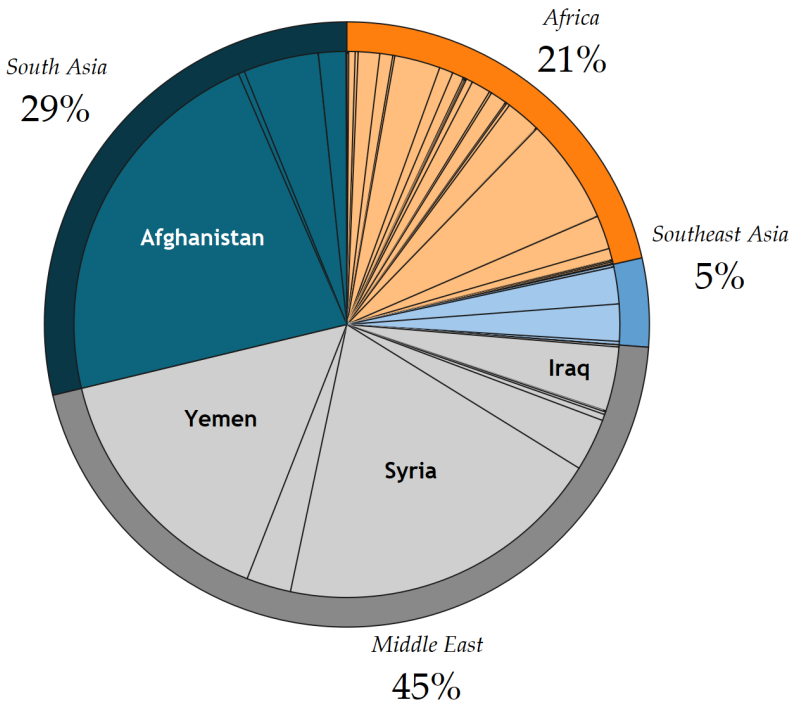


***Table 4**. Countries with the highest number of organized political violence events in 2018*

Country	***Number of recorded events***	***Recorded events weighted by population (per 10,000)*** [20]	***Main event type***	***Main engagement type***
Syria[21]	16,618	9.10	Remote violence	Sole activity by Military Forces of Syria
Yemen[22]	9,551	3.38	Remote violence	Military Forces of Yemen (Saudi-backed) vs. Supreme Political Council (Houthi Forces)
Afghanistan[23]	6,983	1.96	Battles	Military Forces of Afghanistan vs. Taliban
Iraq	2,533	0.66	Battles	Military Forces of Iraq vs. Islamic State (IS)
Somalia	2,508	1.70	Battles	Military Forces of Somalia vs. Al Shabaab

WHERE WERE THE MOST PEOPLE KILLED?

Many of the countries with the highest numbers of political violence events had high reported fatality counts as well. The countries with the most reported conflict-related fatalities in 2018 were:

[20] Population data from the World Bank Group at http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/all
[21] For more on ACLED's Syria data and coding, specifically the Syria Partner Network, see: https://www.acleddata.com/syria-partner-network/
[22] For more on ACLED's coding methodology for coverage of the war in Yemen, see: https://www.acleddata.com/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2018/10/Coding-of-YemenCivilWar_Final.pdf
[23] For more on ACLED's coding methodology for coverage of the war in Afghanistan , see: https://www.acleddata.com/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2019/01/ACLED-Methodology-and-Coding-Decisions-Around-the-Conflict-in-Afghanistan_final-1.pdf

Table 5. *Countries with the highest numbers of reported fatalities in 2018*

Country	***Number of reported fatalities***	***Fatalities weighted by population (per 10,000)*** [24]	***Fatalities as percent of total ACLED dataset***	***Main event type contributing to fatalities***	***Main engagement type contributing to fatalities***
Afghanistan	43,574	12.26	30%	Battles	Military Forces of Afghanistan vs. Taliban
Yemen	30,638	10.85	21%	Battles	Military Forces of Yemen (Saudi-backed) vs. Supreme Political Council (Houthi Forces)
Syria	26,623	14.57	18%	Battles	Military Forces of Syria vs. Islamic State (IS)
Iraq	6,049	1.58	4%	Remote violence	Military Forces of Iraq vs. Islamic State (IS)
Nigeria	5,519	0.30	4%	Violence against civilians	Fulani Ethnic Militias' targeting of civilians

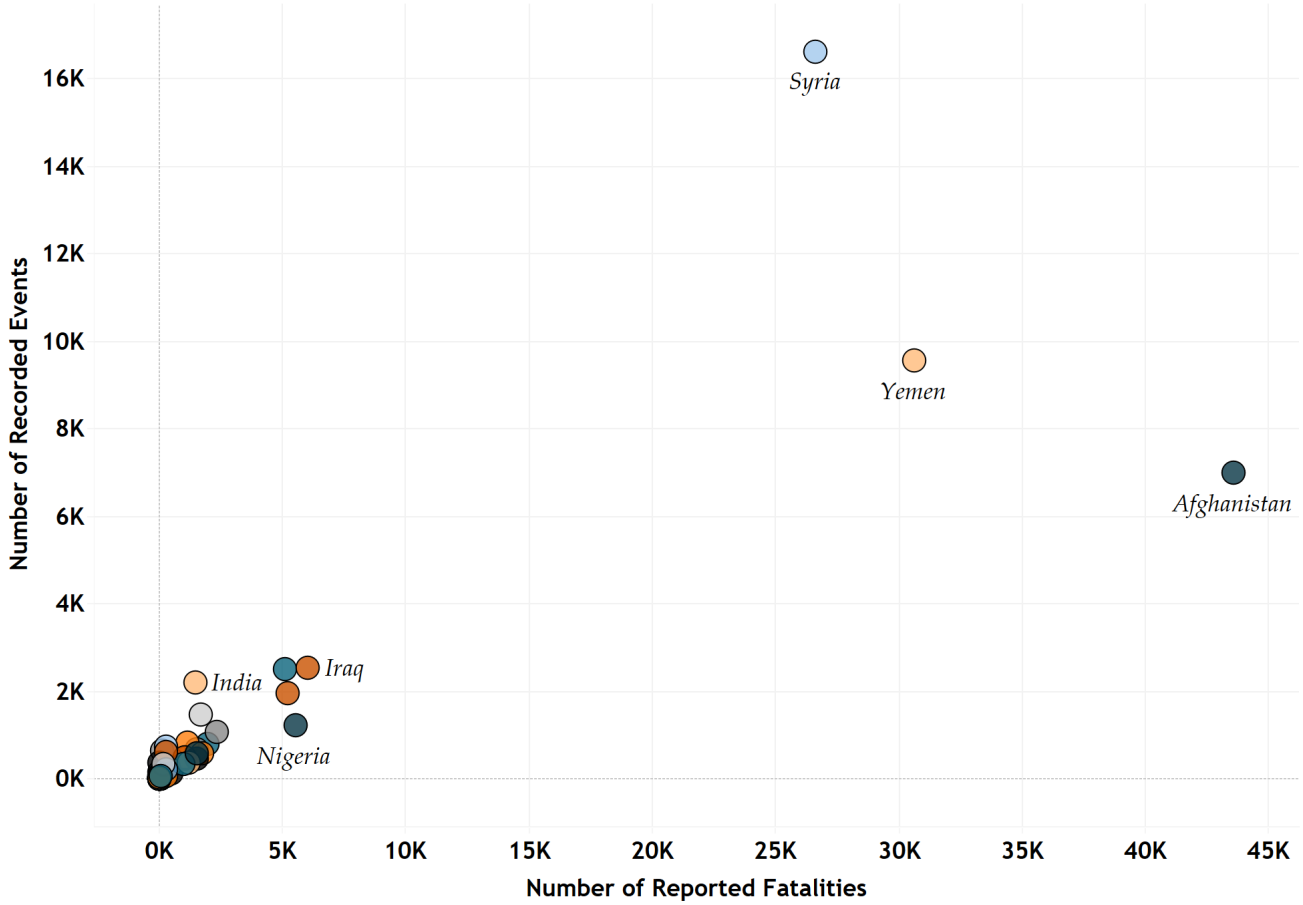
Afghanistan, despite reporting fewer events than Syria and Yemen, was by far the deadliest country covered by ACLED in 2018, with nearly as many fatalities as Syria and Yemen *combined*, and responsible for 30% of all fatalities reported by ACLED during the year. This is largely due to both conflict between rebel groups (the Taliban, IS, and others) and the government, and high-fatality attacks by the Tablian. Afghanistan also had among the highest number of reported fatalities per capita among these countries, with over 12 people killed per 10,000 people in 2018. Syria had a higher number of reported fatalities per capita as well, with nearly 15 people killed per 10,000, even as the conflict slows its pace. The highest proportion of fatalities in most of the countries noted above resulted from battles, and specifically from engagements between state forces and rebel groups -- with the exception of Nigeria where the spike in violence carried out by Fulani militias against civilians resulted in thousands of civilians reportedly killed.[25]

[24] Population data from the World Bank Group at http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/all
[25] For more on Fulani violence in Nigeria, see this ACLED analysis piece, or this recent discussion on NPR.

Generally, the number of events correlates with the number of reported fatalities, with some exceptions. Afghanistan in particular has high fatality counts relative to its number of events, demonstrating the particular lethality of organized political violence in the country.[26]

Figure 8:

Reported Fatalities Compared to Recorded Events, 2018



[26] See ACLED Methodology and Coding Decisions around the Conflict in Afghanistan for more on the coverage of fatalities in Afghanistan.

MOST VIOLENT ACTORS IN 2018

WHO ARE THE MOST ACTIVE CONFLICT ACTORS?

Across all countries in 2018, **four of the five most active conflict actors were domestic state forces, and three out of five of these operate in Yemen**.[27] All of these conflict actors are involved in conventional wars in the Middle East, and largely represent the host government - or a portion of it. **Starkly, this trend indicates that even as conventional inter-state wars become less common, and non-state armed groups become increasingly sophisticated conflict actors, state forces often remain the most powerful and deadly conflict actors.**

Table 6. *Actors participating in highest number of organized violence events*

Actor	*Actor type*	*Primary country of Operation*	*Number of events*	*Main event type*
Military forces of Syria	State forces	Syria	8,689	Remote violence
Supreme Political Council (Houthi Forces)	State forces	Yemen	7,338	Remote violence
Military forces of Afghanistan	State forces	Afghanistan	4,657	Battles
Operation Restoring Hope (Saudi-led Coalition)	Other/External forces	Yemen	3,898	Remote violence
Military Forces of Yemen (Saudi-backed)	State forces	Yemen	3,379	Battles

For all of their similarities, these most active conflict actors vary widely across their engagement and activity. Operation Restoring Hope -- the Saudi-led intervention in Yemen -- and the military forces of Syria engage most commonly in 'solo' action, meaning that reports do not specify their engagement directly with another conflict actor. This is largely due to the fact that these actors most commonly engage in remote violence, often shelling and bombing, against infrastructure and strategic territorial points. In the case of Operation Restoring Hope, this is largely in order to complement and support the military forces of Yemen (i.e. forces allied with the Government of President Hadi), who engage the vast majority of the time with the rival Houthi government, often in the form of the Supreme Political Council.[28] The Military Forces of Afghanistan, on the other hand, engage almost entirely directly with rebel groups; most commonly, these are a result of the

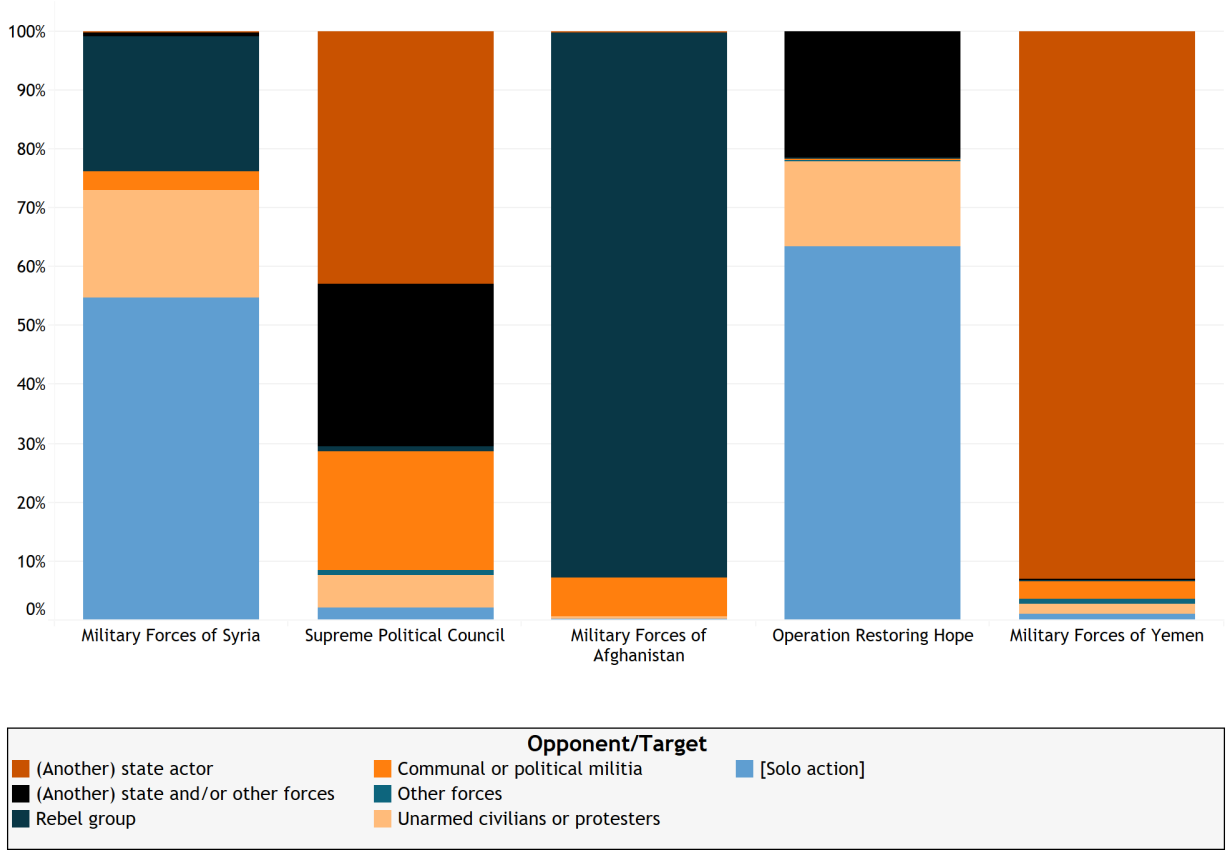
[27] ACLED treats the forces allied with both the government of President Hadi and the Houthi-led executive bodies as state forces. It is important to note that the classification does not imply legitimacy, but rather acknowledges the fact that there currently exist two distinct governing authorities exercising de facto control over different portions of the Yemeni territory. These include military and paramilitary actors. For more on ACLED's methodology around coding of the Yemen Civil War, see: https://www.acleddata.com/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2018/10/Coding-of-YemenCivilWar_Final.pdf.

[28] See this ACLED analysis piece for more on the Saudi-led Coalition in Yemen.

Taliban perpetrating direct attacks on state forces and their strongholds. The engagement profile of these five actors is depicted in Figure 9 below.

Figure 9:

Violent Actors by Type of Engagement in 2018



WHICH ACTORS ARE INVOLVED IN THE DEADLIEST ENGAGEMENTS?

The actors engaged in the highest number of conflict events are largely also those involved in events that result in the most reported fatalities. This includes both rival governments in Yemen, the military forces of Afghanistan and of Syria, and the Taliban -- the principal rebel group fighting against the military forces of Afghanistan, and whose attacks are particularly lethal. Across all these actors, the majority of fatalities arise from battles, though a substantial proportion - particularly for Houthi forces in Yemen and the military forces of Syria - result from bombing, both by and against them. It is important to remember that *these are reported fatalities stemming from violence in which the actor was engaged, and as such include both reported fatalities the actor incurred as well as perpetrated*. ACLED offers total reported fatality counts and does not disaggregate fatalities by actor.

Table 7. *Actors with highest number of reported fatalities stemming from events in which they are engaged*[29]

Actor	***Actor type***	***Country of Operation***	***Reported Fatalities***
Supreme Political Council (Houthi Forces)	State forces	Yemen	33,154
Military forces of Afghanistan	State forces	Afghanistan	30,360
Taliban	Rebel group	Afghanistan	25,155
Military forces of Yemen (Saudi-backed)	State forces	Yemen	18,087
Military forces of Syria	State forces	Syria	12,658

WHICH ACTORS INCREASED THEIR ACTIVITY THE MOST?

Many of the most prominent conflict actors also saw the largest increase in their rate of activity between 2017 and 2018. These consist mainly of the primary actors in Yemen, as well as the primary actors in the Kurdish conflict in Northern Syria - Turkish forces and the People's Protection Units, or the YPG. Both of these conflicts entered new stages in 2018, with actors in Yemen initiating conflict in previously uncontested strongholds, and Turkish forces launching operations against Kurdish forces in Syria.

Table 8. *Actors with the greatest increase in rate of activity since 2017*

Actor	***Actor type***	***Country of Operation***	***Difference in number of events since 2017***	***Percent increase since 2017***
Supreme Political Council (Houthi Forces)	State Forces	Yemen	2,204	43%
Military Forces of Yemen (Saudi-backed)	State Forces	Yemen	991	41%
National Resistance Forces[30]	Political Militia	Yemen	958	3,832%

[29] These are fatalities both incurred *and* perpetrated by the listed actor

[30] The National Resistance Forces are a coalition of militias active along the western Yemeni coast bringing together the Giants Brigade, the Tihama Resistance, and the Guardians of the Republic. For more on the National Resistance Forces, see this ACLED analysis piece.

Military Forces of Turkey	Other/External Forces	Syria	559	40%
YPG: People's Protection Units	Rebel group	Syria	428	149%

WHICH ACTORS EXPANDED THEIR GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE THE MOST?

Actors expand by not only increasing their *rate* of activity, but by expanding their *geographic scope*. The actors that have expanded to the most new locations may have moved onto new battlefronts, shifted to different areas of operation, or expanded current operations to include new strategic areas. The actors whose activity spanned to the highest number of new locations in 2018 are outlined in the table below.

Table 9. *Actors active in the highest number of new locations in 2018*

Actor	***Actor type***	***Country of Operation***	***Difference between number of locations in 2017 and 2018***	***Percent Increase***
Supreme Political Council (Houthi Forces)	State Forces	Yemen	342	53%
Military Forces of Yemen (Saudi-backed)	State Forces	Yemen	254	71%
YPG: People's' Protection Units	Rebel Group	Syria	169	161%
Operation Olive Branch	Rebel Group	Syria	155	*No activity in 2017*
Fulani ethnic militias	Communal Militia	Nigeria	135	178%

Fulani ethnic militias in Nigeria were active in nearly three times the number of locations in 2018 as they were in 2017. This expansion did not broaden the Fulani ethnic militias' areas of operations substantially into new parts of Nigeria. It did, however, serve to consolidate their presence in areas of the country in which these militias were already active, through expansion to additional towns and villages. This spread is largely indicative of increased tension and activity between the militias and other communal groups.

DEMONSTRATIONS

ACLED not only tracks events of organized political violence perpetrated by the state, rebel groups, and other organized armed actors, but also records *unorganized*, or spontaneous, events that speak to a state's political disorder. These can be broadly characterized as demonstrations, a category that consists of riots and protests.[31] Riots can be violent either through unorganized violence perpetrated by rioters; or through the clashing of rioters with armed, organized forces, such as the state, rebel groups, or political or communal militias; or with other groups of rioters. Protests only become violent when other actors use violence against peaceful protesters.[32] Demonstrations are a form of political disorder, but their level of disorganization constitutes a qualitatively different type of event than that of organized political violence, and therefore are examined separately here.

FROM YEAR TO YEAR (2017 TO 2018)

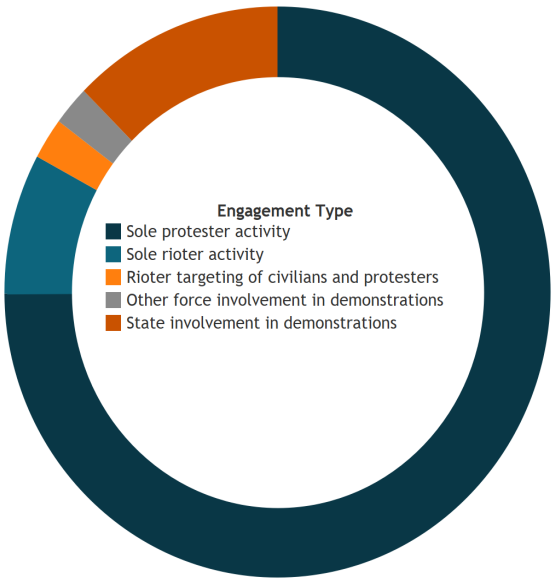
HOW HAVE DEMONSTRATION RATES CHANGED SINCE 2017?

Close to 36,000 demonstrations occurred in 2018 across 75 countries in South Asia, Southeast Asia, Africa and the Middle East. This represents **a 33% increase in the number of demonstrations since 2017**, even as levels of organized political violence dropped. As with organized political violence, this dramatic shift did not occur uniformly across all regions.

The most common type of demonstration both in 2017 and in 2018 was sole protester activity - that is, nonviolent demonstrators who were not dispersed, repressed, or interfered with by another group. The number of these events specifically increased by more than 32% from 2017 to 2018. In fact, nearly every engagement type of demonstrations increased in 2018, with the exception of rebel group targeting of protesters, which decreased by around 47%.

Figure 10:

Number of Demonstrations in 2018 by Engagement Type



The type of demonstrations which increased most dramatically from 2017 to 2018 was rioters attacking civilians, which increased by 174%. This increase primarily occurred in both India and Bangladesh, as rioters and strike enforcers targeted civilians not participating in the demonstrations. General strikes (often referred to as 'bandhs') are a common form of protest in South Asia. Bandhs are

[31] ACLED describes rioters as demonstrators who use violence, though rioters are not an organized group and therefore cannot participate in organized political violence, such as violence perpetrated with advanced weapons or through explicit targeting and premeditation. Protesters are demonstrators that do not engage in violence.

[32] How much violence is used can vary from low levels, which result in minor injuries at most and serve to disperse demonstrators, to high levels, which can result in mass injuries, serious injuries, or death. The latter are coded as "Violence Against Civilians" rather than "Riots/Protests" to distinguish their severity.

typically called by political parties, labour groups, communal groups (such as ethnic, tribal, or caste groups), women's groups, student groups, or others as a form of protest over a particular issue (i.e., price rises, taxes, or pay cuts). Bandhs often affect large swaths of - or even the whole - country, and can last for several days. During a bandh, organisers request locals to close shops, suspend work and remain off the streets. At their core, bandhs are passive protests and are not covered by ACLED. However, many bandhs include active enforcement – both peaceful and violent. Reported events during a bandh often include protest marches, the blocking of roads, burning of tires, vandalism of property, stone pelting, arrests, assaults of civilians and clashes with police as well as anti-bandh activists. During a typical bandh event, supporters take to the streets and make sure that people adhere to the strike. While bandh enforcement can be peaceful — with supporters flagging down cars asking the drivers to turn around, or reasoning with traders to close shops — bandh enforcement can also be violent — with supporters pelting stones at moving cars and "forcibly closing shops". Such activities are a large portion of what contributed to this jump in rioters attacking civilians in South Asia in 2018.

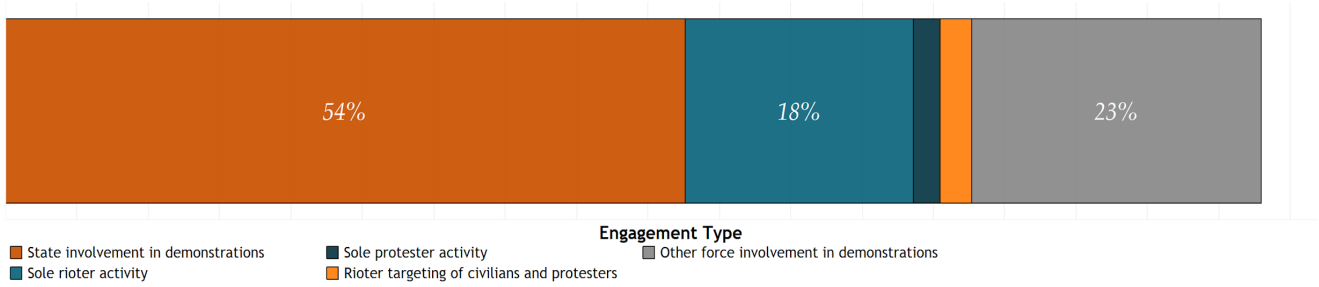
Not all regions saw the same jump in the number of demonstrations. South Asia saw the largest increase in terms of event count, with a 5,768 event increase, or 34% more events since 2017. On the other hand, the Middle East saw the most dramatic proportional increase, with a 116% increase since 2017, or 3,373 more events - *more than doubling the total number of demonstrations in the region since the previous year.* A number of countries in the Middle East saw extensive demonstrations in 2018, including outbreaks of protests Iran and Iraq, spurred in part by discontentment with the government. Palestine also saw a striking surge in demonstrations in 2018, due in part to the 'Great March of Return' Gaza border protests. Two regions, Southeast Asia and Africa, had fewer demonstrations in 2018 than in 2017. Africa had 218, or 4% fewer demonstrations in 2018 than in 2017, likely in part due to the tightening of government control in many sub-regions, and repression which heavily thwarted outward displays of disaffection. Southeast Asia had 92 fewer, or a 12% decrease in demonstrations.

HOW HAVE REPORTED FATALITY RATES FROM DEMONSTRATIONS CHANGED SINCE 2017?

During both 2017 and 2018, the highest number of reported fatalities came from clashes between state forces and rioters. In 2018, 475 deaths resulted from state forces interacting with rioters, a small decrease (of four events) from 2017. On the other hand, the number of deaths resulting from rioters' interaction with foreign and other forces increased dramatically in 2018, by 432% or 164 deaths in 2019. This dramatic upsurge can partly be attributed to an increase in violent clashes between the military forces of Israel and Palestinian rioters in Gaza in 2018, which saw 199 reported fatalities from this engagement type in 2018 (as opposed to 25 reported in 2017).

Figure 11:

Fatalities from Demonstrations in 2018 by Engagement Type



Palestine's clashes between rioters and Israeli forces also contributed to the Middle East seeing the most dramatic increase in the number of fatalities from 2017 to 2018 stemming from this type of disorder -- the region had 232 more fatalities

reported in 2018 than in 2017, increasing by 301%. While the increase in the Middle East was most dramatic, **the number of fatalities from demonstrations increased in every region in 2018.**

HOW HAVE DEMONSTRATIONS EXPANDED SPATIALLY?

The total number of locations in which demonstrations occurred increased from 2017 to 2018. In 2017, there were 6,340 locations in which demonstrations occurred, while in 2018, 7,891 locations were home to demonstrations. This represents a 24% increase in the total number of locations in which demonstrations took place in 2018.[33]

Demonstrations expanded geographically most substantially in the Middle East in 2018, by 53% or 418 more locations than in 2017. South Asia also witnessed a substantial increase in the number of locations; demonstrations occurred in 985 more locations in 2018 than in 2017, or in 30% more unique locations than the previous year.

The type of demonstration that increased the most in terms of number of events also increased the most in terms of number of locations. Events involving rioters targeting civilians increased the most dramatically in 2018, by 146% or 505 more locations. Sole protester action had the highest absolute increase in the number of locations, with 1,025 more locations hosting demonstration in 2018 than in 2017, an increase of 22%.

HIGHEST LEVEL OF DEMONSTRATIONS: PLACES AND ACTORS

WHERE DID MOST DEMONSTRATIONS OCCUR?

An entirely different set of countries had the highest number of demonstrations than had the highest number of organized political violence events - namely India, Pakistan, Iran, Palestine, and South Africa -- pointing to the varied ways in which disorder manifests across different states. The concentration in South Asia and the Middle East emphasizes the increased role that demonstrations played in the political landscape across these regions in 2018. All of these countries had an increase in the number of demonstrations from 2017, the most substantial of which was Iran, which had a 284% increase in demonstrations. India alone witnessed nearly three times as many demonstrations as Pakistan, the country with the second highest number of demonstrations (see table below).[34]

Table 10: *Highest number of demonstrations by country in 2018*

Country	Number of Demonstrations in 2018	Primary Engagement Type
India	14,784	Sole protester action
Pakistan	5,777	Sole protester action
Iran	2,251	Sole protester action
Palestine	1,091	Foreign force engagement with rioters

[33] Specifically, there were 4,751 new locations housing demonstrations in 2018; 3,203 locations that previously saw demonstrations in 2017 did not see any demonstrations in 2018.
[34] For more on demonstrations in India, see ACLED analysis piece Demonstrations in India.

South Africa	979	Sole protester action

WHERE WERE DEMONSTRATIONS DEADLIEST?

Ethiopia, Palestine, India, Nigeria, and Iraq saw the highest number of reported fatalities stemming from demonstrations (see table below), though fatalities resulted from a wide variety of different types of events. In Palestine, Israeli military forces clashed with rioters, resulting in nearly all of the deaths from demonstrations suffered in that country in 2018. In Ethiopia, India, and Nigeria, a majority of deaths from demonstrations resulted from clashes between rioters and state security forces, while in Bangladesh, most deaths resulted from clashes between groups of rioters (e.g. street-fighting).

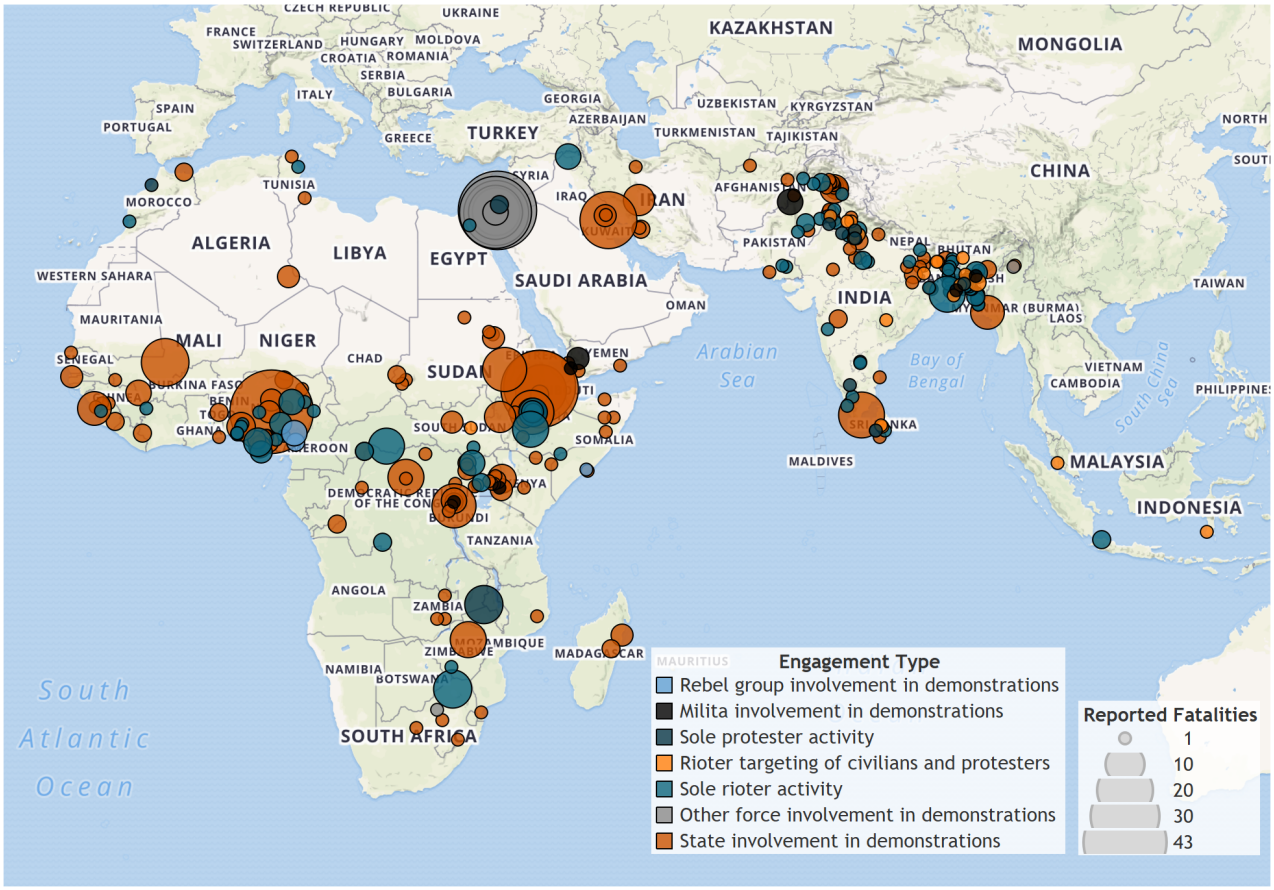
Table 11: *Highest number of fatalities from demonstrations by country in 2018*

Country	**Number of demonstrations**	**Number of demonstration-related fatalities in 2018**	**Primary engagement type resulting in fatalities**
Ethiopia	379	238	State forces engagement with rioters
Palestine	1,091	211	Israeli forces engagement with rioters
India	14,784	124	State forces engagement with rioters
Nigeria	588	110	State forces engagement with rioters
Iraq	352	48	State forces engagement with rioters

These reported fatalities are mapped below.

Figure 12:

Reported Fatalities from Demonstrations in 2018



While demonstrations involving rioters -- those in which demonstrators engage in violence -- result in the largest numbers of reported fatalities, demonstrations involving peaceful protesters being targeted can also be deadly.[35] In fact, these protests forcefully put down by armed groups increased 12% in 2018, with 32 more events. These events were most prevalent in Palestine, Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, India, and the Sudan (see table below). Palestine and Ethiopia both also topped the list of countries with the greatest increase in such events in 2018; Palestine saw a 222% increase in such events (an increase of 40 such events) and Ethiopia saw an increase of 143% (an increase of 30 such events). A large contributor to demonstrations in Palestine in 2018 surrounded the US moving of its Israeli embassy from Tel Aviv to the disputed city of Jerusalem in May 2018,[36] as well as the Great Return March Demonstrations, on-going mass demonstrations in Gaza involving tens of thousands of Palestinians;[37] in Ethiopia, the swearing-in of Prime Minister Abiy has impacted demonstration rates.[38]

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[35] ACLED codes peaceful protests that are repressed using excessively violent force as 'Violence Against Civilians' rather than 'Riots/Protests'. Excessive force constitutes cases resulting in fatalities or those that could result in fatalities (e.g. the use of live fire), serious injuries (resulting in hospitalization), or large numbers of injuries.

[36] For more on the movement of the US Israeli embassy, see this Update on ACLED Resources on Gaza and the US Embassy Opening in Jerusalem; for more on the further regional impacts of the event, see ACLED analysis piece The Regional Impact of the US Embassy Move.

[37] For more information on the Great Return March, see ACLED analysis piece Great Return March.

[38] For more on demonstrations in Ethiopia since Abiy took power, see ACLED analysis piece Change and Continuity in Protests and Political Violence in PM Abiy's Ethiopia.

Table 12: *Countries with the highest number of violence against protesters in 2018*

Country	**Number of violence against protesters events**	**Primary actor involved in violence against protesters**
Palestine	58	Foreign Israeli forces
Ethiopia	51	State forces
Democratic Republic of the Congo	28	State forces
India	18	State forces
Sudan	15	State forces

Demonstrations involving the government saw the highest number of deaths in general. State forces engage with demonstrators -- including clashing with violent rioters, dispersing peaceful protesters, and using excessive violence against peaceful protesters -- the most, by far, in India, followed by Turkey, South Africa, Pakistan, and Tunisia. India alone saw over 5 times as many demonstrations illicit state involvement relative to Turkey, the country with the second highest number of such events.

Table 13: *Countries with highest number of government-dispersed demonstrations in 2018*

Country	Number of government-dispersed demonstrations	Number of deaths resulting from these events
India	1,994	68
Turkey	373	0
South Africa	175	4
Pakistan	174	8
Tunisia	141	2

Apart from India, however, these countries did not have the highest fatality rates associated with demonstrations involving the government. These instead are Ethiopia (with 199 reported deaths from such events in 2018), Nigeria (with 72 reported fatalities), India (with 68 reported fatalities), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (with 36 reported fatalities), and Iraq (with 33 reported fatalities). *The vast differences between these lists indicate that not all government involvement involves unnecessary violence against protesters, or between rioters and state forces.* Instead, those countries with higher death tolls from government involvement were often those facing additional sources of conflict - Iraq, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo - or, in Ethiopia's case, where demonstrations threaten a powerful state's grip on civil society to a large extent.

WHO ENGAGED MOST IN DEMONSTRATIONS AND WITH WHOM?

The identity of demonstrators themselves varied across time and place, from ordinary citizens, to highly centralized cohorts representing particular political parties or interest groups. Labor groups, students, political parties, farmers, and teachers were the primary groups of people engaged in the largest number of demonstrations across regions of ACLED coverage. Specifically, labour groups, students, and the Indian National Congress (INC) political party in India were those engaged in demonstrating most often; labour groups in Iran and Pakistan specifically were also quite active in 2018.

The government was the most common non-demonstrator actor involved in demonstrations, involved in over 2,400 riots and nearly 2,000 protests across regions of ACLED coverage. Foreign or other actors were also involved in a large number of demonstrations involving both rioters and protesters. It is far less common for armed non-state actors - such as rebel groups or militias - to be involved with protesters or rioters in the course of a demonstration. This is similarly true for events involving excessive violent against protesters - state forces were by far involved in the highest number of such events, followed by foreign forces (i.e. state forces active outside of their home country).

The specific actors most involved in demonstrations in 2018 were, therefore, all state or foreign actors: the police forces of India topped the list, mostly due to the sheer volume of demonstrations that took place in India in 2018. Indian state forces were involved in only about 13.5% of demonstrations across India, which nevertheless consisted over over 1,000 events. The military forces of Israel were the second-most active participant in demonstrations in 2018 (apart from demonstrators themselves). This high involvement was largely due to the military's response to protests on the Gaza border. The Israeli military was involved in an astonishingly high percentage of demonstrations in Palestine, nearly 73%. Turkey saw far fewer demonstrations in 2018 than many other countries covered by ACLED; however, the police forces of Turkey were the third-most involved outside participant in demonstrations in 2018. This is primarily because Turkey broke up a high proportion of the country's demonstrations, nearly 56%.

THREATS TO CIVILIANS IN 2018

The conflicts covered by ACLED do not only affect armed groups and warring parties, but also have devastating effects on non-combatants and civilians. Civilians can be both directly and indirectly targeted by political violence -- directly, as an operational strategy, or indirectly, as collateral damage in ongoing conflict.

To explore civilian targeting trends, the analysis below accounts for events coded as 'Violence against civilians' in addition to those coded as 'Remote violence' in which civilians (or unarmed protesters) were the primary victim. These latter events help to capture events in which civilians were the primary targets of violence using remote tactics, such as air strikes, remote explosives, landmines, or missiles,[39] as well as direct attacks on civilians. While ACLED includes civilian fatalities which occur as collateral damage within the total fatality count for each event, civilian fatalities are not uniquely disaggregated in these counts. However, in events in which civilians are directly targeted, we can assume that the vast majority of fatalities stemming from such events are indeed *civilian* fatalities.[40]

Both the number of events and the number of reported fatalities from civilian targeting decreased in 2018. The number of events targeting civilians or protesters decreased from nearly 17,500 events in 2017, to just over 15,000 in 2018; all in all a difference of 2,211 events, or a decrease of about 13%. Similarly, the number of fatalities from civilian targeting decreased from just over 44,000 in 2017 to about 24,000 in 2018: about 20,000 fewer reported deaths, or a decrease of nearly 46%. These decreases were particularly prominent for remote violence targeted against civilians and protesters; the number of such events decreased by 37%, while reported fatalities from these events decreased by 60%. Direct targeting against civilians and protesters, on the other hand, actually increased in terms of the number of events by about 10% in 2018, though fatalities from these events simultaneously decreased by 29%.

Regardless of these decreases, violence targeting civilians nevertheless accounts for nearly 17% of all political violence and protest events in 2018, and about the same proportion of all conflict-related fatalities: in much of the world, civilians remain at risk.

THE MOST DANGEROUS PLACES FOR CIVILIANS IN 2018

WHERE ARE CIVILIANS MOST AT RISK OF BEING ATTACKED?

The places where civilians are most often targeted vary from conventional conflicts - including Syria and Yemen - to countries in which civilians are targeted outside the context of war. The latter includes the Philippines, in which armed groups, and the government particularly, target civilians alleged to be drug users or dealers as a matter of policy.[41] Civilians also face substantial risks in India, particularly in Jammu and Kashmir, the Northeast, and the "Red Belt".[42] Syria had both the highest number of events targeting civilians in 2018, and by far the highest per-capita rate of civilian targeting, with over 2 events of civilian targeting per 10,000 Syrians.[43]

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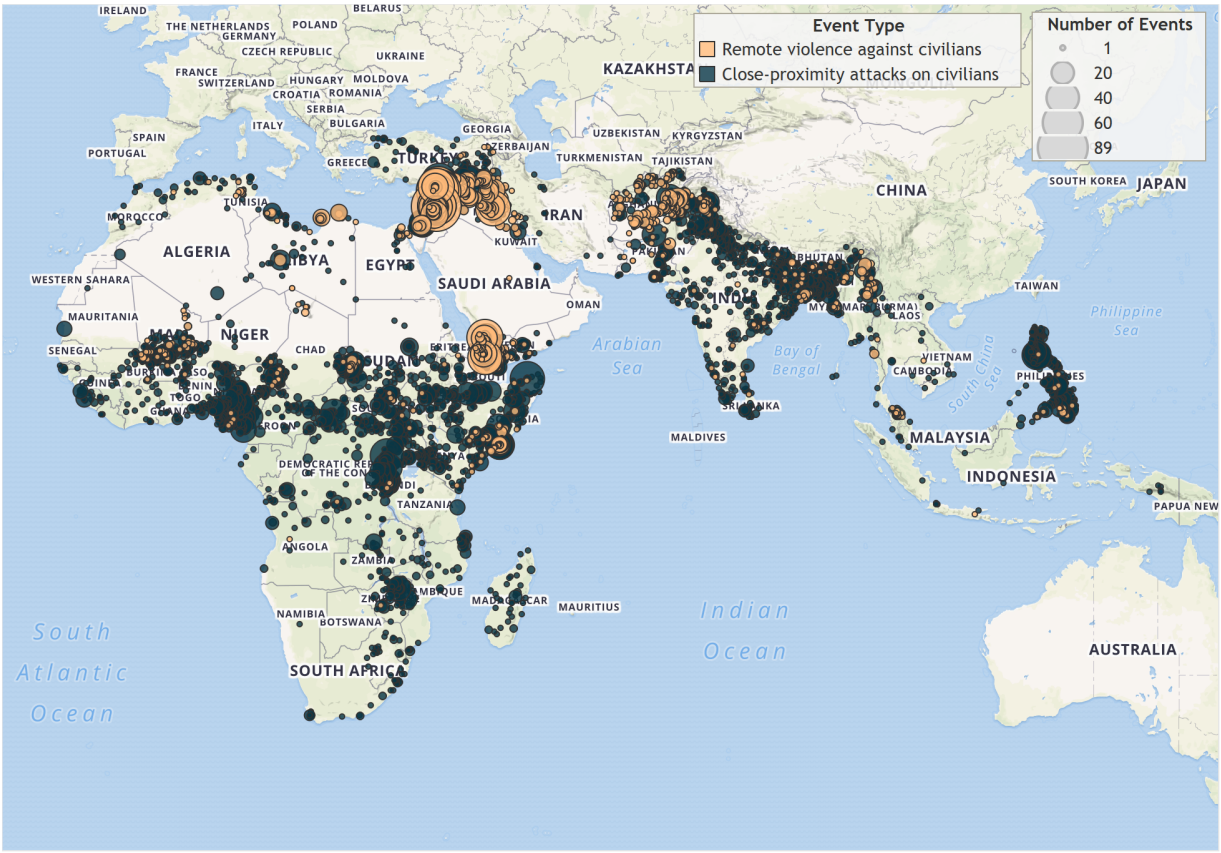
[39] ACLED offers an "Anti-civilian violence" data box for each download on the bottom of our data page which aggregates these various event types for users.
[40] The sole exception here are in suicide attacks in which the perpetrator fatality is also included in the total fatality count of the event.
[41] See ACLED Methodology and Coding Decisions Around the Philippines Drug War for more information on how ACLED codes this civilian targeting.
[42] See ACLED analysis piece The Complexity of Disorder in India for more information on these conflicts.
[43] This is distinct from saying that "2 civilians were targeted per 10,000 Syrians" as each event can entail the targeting of any number of civilians at one time (e.g. a sniper might target one civilian, while an airstrike may target hundreds).

Figure 13:

Civilian Targeting in 2018



The below table examines the number of events involving the targeting of civilians by organized, armed groups.[44]

Table 14. *Countries with the highest number of civilian targeting events in 2018*

Country	***Number of events with civilian targeting***	***Events per capita (per 10,000)***[45]
Syria	3,979	2.19
India	1,135	0.02
Yemen	1,378	0.50
Philippines	933	0.09
Somalia	785	0.55

[44] This includes state forces, yet excludes spontaneous rioters/mobs.
[45] Population data from the World Bank Group at http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/all

WHERE ARE CIVILIANS MOST AT RISK OF BEING KILLED?

Reported fatalities resulting from civilian targeting decreased substantially in 2018; however, civilian targeting does not always result in civilian fatalities being reported, and the countries with the highest rates of civilian targeting do not necessarily have the highest numbers of reported civilian fatalities. In India, for example, where many events involve government intervention in protests with disproportionate force, fewer fatalities are reported. In other countries, however, where civilians are purposefully targeted or indiscriminately killed, the reported death toll is much higher. The countries in which there were the most civilian fatalities reported in 2018 were Syria, Nigeria, Yemen, Afghanistan, and the Philippines (see table below).

Table 15. *Countries with highest number of reported fatalities from events targeting civilians*

Country	***Reported fatalities from events targeting civilians***	***Reported fatalities per capita (per 10,000)***[46]
Syria	7,225	3.97
Nigeria	2,988	0.16
Yemen	2,330	0.83
Afghanistan	1,499	0.43
Philippines	1,089	0.10

Syria has both the highest rate of reported fatalities from civilian targeting, and the highest number of reported fatalities per capita, with nearly 4 civilian deaths stemming from targeted attacks per 10,000 Syrians in 2018. Nigeria and Afghanistan, neither of which had the highest rates of civilian targeting, both report immense fatality counts from this targeting, with nearly 3,000 and over 1,500 deaths respectively, pointing to the high lethality of events in these countries..

These fatalities from civilian targeting across three of the countries (Afghanistan, Syria, and Yemen) are largely due to ongoing conventional conflict, where civilians suffer inordinately from political violence. **Conventional warfare, however, is not the sole context of high civilian death counts.** Nigeria, for example, has higher levels of civilian fatalities stemming from direct civilian targeting than Yemen, largely due to violence by Fulani militias.[47] Similarly, the Philippines has similar levels of civilian fatalities stemming from direct civilian targeting as in Afghanistan, largely due to the government's War on Drugs.[48]

[46] Population data from the World Bank Group at http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/all
[47] For more on Fulani-related violence in Nigeria, see ACLED analysis piece Fulani Militias in Nigeria.
[48] For more on the government's War on Drugs in the Philippines, see ACLED analysis piece Duterte's War: Drug-Related Violence in the Philippines.

ACTORS MOST INVOLVED IN CIVILIAN TARGETING

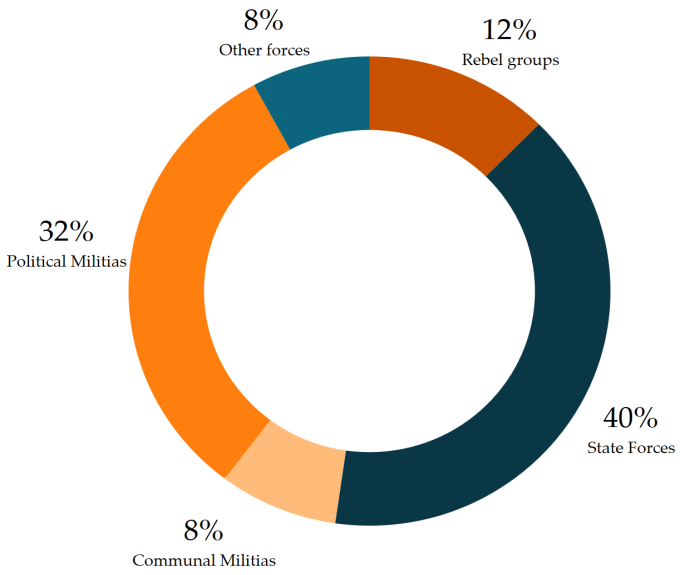
WHO ARE THE PRIMARY PERPETRATORS OF CIVILIAN TARGETING?

The actors targeting civilians vary across places as well; armed non-state actors will often inflict violence on civilians in areas they seek to bring under their control, particularly in more conventional conflicts, such as in Syria and Yemen. Communal groups or mobs, within and outside the context of war, may target civilians of different ethnic backgrounds, languages, castes, or genders, or in the interest of pursuing livelihoods, to punish perceived crimes or to defend their community, or for a variety of other reasons. State actors target civilians as a form of repression against dissent, as punishment for transgressions against the state, or as a demonstrative show of force, and may often contract out such violence to pro-government militias if not carrying it out themselves.[49]

The actors most responsible for civilian targeting were state forces (in navy) engaging in state repression followed by political militias (in orange), which includes pro-government militias.

Figure 14:

Type of Actor Responsible for Civilian Targeting in 2018



THE PREVALENCE OF STATE REPRESSION

While 'terrorism', defined as the use of 'terror tactics' by non-state actors against civilians, is touted as the largest threat to civilians, it is in fact state governments which pose the largest threat to civilians around the world (i.e. responsible for the most violence targeting civilians). Civilian targeting by the government is common in many countries covered by ACLED. The countries in which civilians were most at risk of government repression in 2018 are: Syria, India, the Philippines, Yemen, and Turkey.

[49] For more on pro-government militias, see Raleigh & Kishi (2018). For more on the strategy behind violence against civilians, see Raleigh (2012).

Table 16. *Countries with the highest level of government repression of civilians in 2018*

Country	***Number of events***	***Reported fatalities***	***Percent of events targeting civilians perpetrated by the government***
Syria	2,240	4,217	56%
India	1,050	31	51%
Philippines	559	698	59%
Yemen	514	638	37%
Turkey	480	7	91%

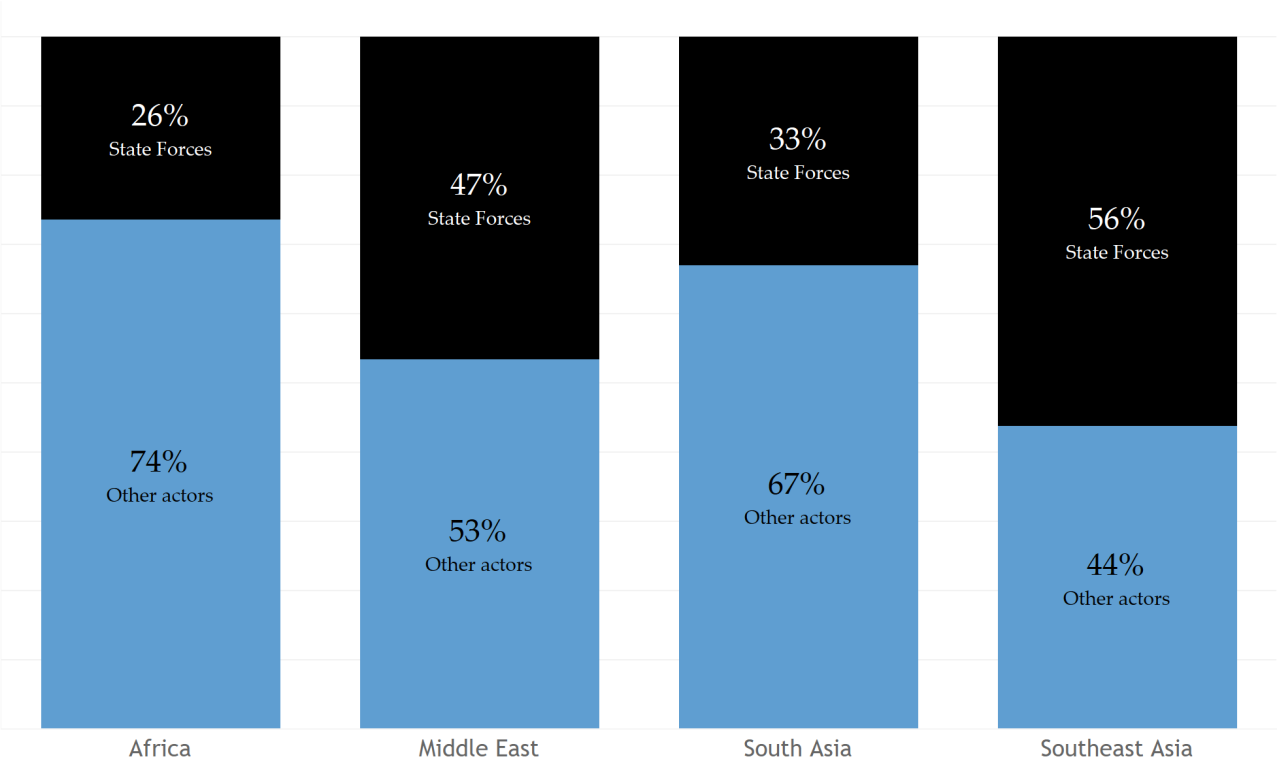
In Syria, government targeting of civilians often takes the form of remote violence, with the purpose of inflicting damage on civilian populations through often widespread bombing.[50] In India, most government repression is in engagement with unarmed protesters. Duterte's Drug War results in the majority of attacks on civilians in the Philippines. In Yemen, the targeting of civilians by both state forces results in attacks from 'both sides' on civilians. Lastly, in Turkey, the majority of government suppression came from government engagement with protesters.

The degree of government repression of civilians varies greatly across regions. It is highest in Southeast Asia, where the Philippine government's War on Drugs and high levels of authoritarianism contribute to this trend. Ongoing civil wars in the Middle East also result in high levels of state targeting of civilians, particularly in Syria. In Africa, proportionally fewer events of civilian targeting are perpetrated by states; not only do comparatively weaker governments with limited pockets of control result in different types of actors being more common perpetrators of civilian targeting across the continent, but also stronger governments may have the means to outsource this activity to pro-government militias to carry out this bidding on their behalf.[51]

[50] In reality, this is likely even higher given that 'arrests' by state forces (which many note ultimately result in disappearances), for which there are no reports of violence inflicted upon those arrested, are not coded as 'Violence Against Civilians' in the ACLED dataset; these are coded as 'Strategic Development" events. For more on "Strategic Development" events, see this methodology piece.
[51] For more on the use of pro-government militias as evidence of a strong state, see Kishi, Aucoin, and Raleigh, 2016.

Figure 15:

Proportion of Events Targeting Civilians Perpetrated by the State in 2018



CIVILIAN TARGETING BY REMOTE VIOLENCE

The use of remote violence tactics to target civilians (as well as unarmed, peaceful protesters) dramatically decreased between 2017 and 2018 at large, decreasing by 37%, from 8,356 events in 2017 to 5,232 in 2018.[52] Remote violence tactics include things like remote explosives, landmines, IEDs, air strikes, shelling, and missiles, amongst others; these are tactics in which the perpetrator of the violence is not physically present at the time of the attack. This decrease is almost entirely attributable to trends in the Middle East, especially as remote violence events targeting civilians have actually increased in every other region of ACLED coverage (i.e. Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia), while decreasing by about 42% in the Middle East.

Reported civilian fatalities stemming from remote violence events decreased in every region except in Southeast Asia, though by the highest number in the Middle East (13,504 fewer reported fatalities, or a 61% decrease) and by the highest percentage in Africa (772 fewer reported fatalities, or a 62% decrease). Overall, reported civilian fatalities stemming from

[52] These include cases in which civilians were the primary target of attacks. It is important to note that civilians are also killed as 'collateral damage' in remote violence events (e.g. an airstrike targeting IS militants also kills a number of civilians nearby); in such cases, these civilian fatalities are included in the total event count for events, yet deaths are not specifically disaggregated by ACLED (e.g. in the example previously noted, we may only know that 12 fatalities occurred in total, yet would not know how many of those were IS militants and how many were civilians). Thus, it can be assumed that the impact of such violence on civilians is likely even worse as counting only civilian fatalities resulting from direct targeting here is a conservative estimate of the impact of such violence on civilians at large.

remote violence decreased by 60%, or 14,441 reported fatalities. Specifically, however, there were a number of countries which exhibited an increase in the number of civilian fatalities reported stemming from remote violence; the top five countries on this list include Yemen, by far, Mali, Libya, India, and Ethiopia.

CONCLUSION

Political violence in 2018 was wrought with contradictions. Organized violence decreased overall, but increased in more countries than it decreased. Demonstrations spiked, reported fatalities fell, and the number of conflict actors and locations - for demonstrations and for organized political violence - soared. Conventional conflicts were at once the most violent of the year, yet responsible for the largest decreases in the dataset. The Middle East witnessed twice as many demonstrations in 2018 as in 2017, but far fewer events of organized political violence at large.

These trends are difficult to understand concurrently in the absence of context. For those seeking easy answers - did conflict increase or decrease? Is the world more or less dangerous? - these trajectories fail to offer any simple, overarching conclusion. **If nothing else, 2018 emphasized the fact that political violence depends, unsurprisingly, on political circumstance; that different regions experience different types of conflict at different times, and that a peaceful past is no guarantee of a nonviolent future. And it also points to the importance of reliance on a number of varied measures and not solely one -- like the number of events, or the number of reported fatalities -- to understand conflict dynamics across regions.**

In general, disorder is increasing in more places than it is decreasing. Even as some of the most devastating conflicts in the world - such those as Syria and Iraq - edge towards new, less bloody stages, others - such as Yemen and Afghanistan - have escalated. The world's narrow focus on these infamously devastating conflicts, however, corresponds with public disregard for: the steadily ongoing suppression of civilians across many countries that are not seeing conventional warfare, proliferating communal conflict, and newly-erupted armed groups rearing in the rest of the world. Across Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, many underreported conflicts conspicuously emerge time and time again in ACLED data, demonstrating the need for more thoughtful attention than analysts usually provide. ACLED's provision of data covering these crises, published in near real-time on a weekly basis, without hindrance due to a fatality threshold, means that analysts can follow these competitions themselves to draw their own conclusions throughout the year.

The Philippines, for example, while not facing a conventional war on the scale of Afghanistan or Syria, is one of the deadliest places in the world to be a civilian. President Duterte's War on Drugs, while past its initial, deadly climax, continues unchecked as the world stands by. Nigeria, though briefly in the limelight in previous years for violence perpetrated by IS-affiliate Boko Haram, continues to face a multitude of crises which fail to garner the attention of the world at large. The threat posed by Boko Haram continues; communal violence, especially that involving Fulani militias, spiked; and election-related violence has begun to bubble up as the February elections in Nigeria draw closer. While violence in Mali was at a 20-year high at the end of 2017, things further deteriorated in 2018 with an over 40% increase in the number of violent events beyond 2017 levels. Armed groups associated with different communities shifted towards increased targeting of civilians. In fact, Mali was one of only a few countries in which the use of remote violence tactics targeting civilians increased in 2018, pointing to the increasingly dangerous landscape for local populations. These are just a few of the countries experiencing significant political violence that go under-noticed as headlines prioritize only 'the largest numbers'. **Relying only on select aggregate indicators to understand conflict results in monitoring of the conflict environment for only the 'usual suspects'. While the conflict landscape in the countries topping the list of 'most violent events' or 'most conflict-related fatalities' are truly devastating, many of the other important conflict dynamics across regions remain overlooked, only to be noticed once they have already reared their heads to truly devastating levels.**

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APPENDIX 1: LIST OF COUNTRIES COVERED BY ACLED AS OF JANUARY 2019[53]

Country	Time period
Middle East	
Syria	1/2017-Present
Iraq	1/2016-Present
Turkey	1/2016-Present
Iran	1/2016-Present
Saudi Arabia	1/2016-Present
Yemen	1/2016-Present
United Arab Emirates	1/2016-Present
Israel	1/2016-Present
Jordan	1/2016-Present
Palestine	1/2016-Present
Lebanon	1/2016-Present
Oman	1/2016-Present
Kuwait	1/2016-Present
Qatar	1/2016-Present
Bahrain	1/2016-Present
Asia	
India	1/2016-Present
Pakistan	1/2010-Present
Sri Lanka	1/2010-Present
Bangladesh	1/2010-Present
Nepal	1/2010-Present
Afghanistan	1/2017-Present
Cambodia	1/2010-Present
Indonesia	1/2016-Present
Laos	1/2010-Present
Malaysia	1/2018-Present
Myanmar	1/2010-Present
Philippines	1/2016-Present
Thailand	1/2010-Present
Vietnam	1/2010-Present
Africa	

[53] For a consistently updated list, see ACLED Coverage to Date.

Algeria	1/1997-Present
Angola	1/1997-Present
Benin	1/1997-Present
Botswana	1/1997-Present
Burkina Faso	1/1997-Present
Burundi	1/1997-Present
Cameroon	1/1997-Present
Central African Republic (CAR)	1/1997-Present
Chad	1/1997-Present
Democratic Republic of the Congo	1/1997-Present
Republic of the Congo	1/1997-Present
Cote d'Ivoire	1/1997-Present
Djibouti	1/1997-Present
Egypt	1/1997-Present
Equatorial Guinea	1/1997-Present
Eritrea	1/1997-Present
Eswatini	1/1997-Present
Ethiopia	1/1997-Present
Gabon	1/1997-Present
Gambia	1/1997-Present
Ghana	1/1997-Present
Guinea	1/1997-Present
Guinea-Bissau	1/1997-Present
Kenya	1/1997-Present
Lesotho	1/1997-Present
Liberia	1/1997-Present
Libya	1/1997-Present
Madagascar	1/1997-Present
Malawi	1/1997-Present
Mali	1/1997-Present
Mauritania	1/1997-Present
Mauritius	1/1997-Present
Morocco	1/1997-Present
Mozambique	1/1997-Present
Namibia	1/1997-Present
Niger	1/1997-Present
Nigeria	1/1997-Present
Rwanda	1/1997-Present
Senegal	1/1997-Present
Sierra Leone	1/1997-Present
Somalia	1/1997-Present
South Africa	1/1997-Present

South Sudan	1/1997-Present
Sudan	1/1997-Present
Tanzania	1/1997-Present
Togo	1/1997-Present
Tunisia	1/1997-Present
Uganda	1/1997-Present
Zambia	1/1997-Present
Zimbabwe	1/1997-Present

APPENDIX 2: GUIDE TO ACLED RESOURCES

ACLED Codebook: The codebook is for coders and users of ACLED to better understand the data and methodology
Terms of Use and Attribution Policy: Guidelines for proper use and citation of ACLED material
ACLED User Guide & Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): How to use ACLED data
ACLED Event Definitions: A discussion of how ACLED defines political violence and protest
ACLED Country and Time Period Coverage: A list of countries and time periods covered by ACLED
Quick guide to ACLED data columns: A brief guide explaining each column in ACLED datasets
ACLED Actors and Interactions: A discussion of how ACLED groups and defines its actors
Methodology Overview: A discussion of how ACLED collects and codifies information
Fatalities in ACLED Data: A note on using fatalities in ACLED data
Coding: Indirect killing of civilians: A brief discussion on the ACLED coding of events where civilians are killed indirectly

For more information on ACLED methodology, including discussions of specific event types and country case studies, see the resources collection Methodology on our website:
https://www.acleddata.com/resources/methodology/

For more resources, data release schedules, and updates, see the resources collection General Guides on our website:
https://www.acleddata.com/resources/general-guides/

For more user guides, analysis, or information please see ACLED's website: www.acleddata.com
For any questions, please contact admin@acleddata.com
For all media inquiries, please contact communications@acleddata.com

APPENDIX 3: 2018 STATISTICS AT A GLANCE

Question	Answer
All political violence and protest events	
How many total political violence and protest events took place in 2018?	91,672 events
How many reported fatalities resulted from all political violence and protest events in 2018?	146,431 fatalities
How many total distinct, named conflict actors were involved in all political violence and protest events in 2018?	2,323 actors
Across how many locations did all political violence and protest events take place in 2018?	17,389 locations
In which country did the highest number of all political violence and protest events take place in 2018?	Syria (with 17,159 events)
What was the event type with the highest number of all political violence and protest events in 2018?	Riots and protests
What was the interaction type with the highest number of all political violence and protest events in 2018?	Sole protester activity
What was the rate of change in the total number of all political violence and protest events in from 2017 to 2018?	Decrease of 2%
What was the rate of change of fatalities from all political violence and protest events from 2017 to 2018?	Decrease of 22%
Which country saw the biggest difference in terms of number of events across all political violence and protest events from 2017 to 2018?	Syria (with 12,466 fewer events)
Organized Political Violence	
How many total organized political violence events took place in 2018?	56,564 events
How many reported fatalities resulted from organized	145,531 reported fatalities

political violence events in 2018?	
How many total distinct, named conflict actors were involved in organized political violence in 2018?	2,278 actors
Across how many locations did organized political violence take place in 2018?	11,832 locations
In which country did the highest number of organized political violence events take place in 2018?	Syria (with 16,618)
What was the event type with the highest number of organized political violence events in 2018?	Remote violence
What was the interaction type with the highest number of organized political violence events in 2018?	Government interaction with rebel groups
What was the rate of change in the total number of organized political violence events in from 2017 to 2018?	16% decrease
What was the rate of change of reported fatalities from organized political violence events from 2017 to 2018?	23% decrease
Which country saw the biggest difference in terms of number of events across organized political violence events from 2017 to 2018?	Syria (12,280 fewer events)
Demonstrations	
How many total demonstration events took place in 2018?	35,736 events
How many reported fatalities resulted from demonstrations in 2018?	1,229 fatalities
In which country did the highest number of fatalities resulting from demonstrations occur?	Ethiopia (with 238 fatalities)
Across how many locations did demonstrations take place in 2018?	7,939 locations
In which country did the highest number of demonstrations take place in 2018?	India (with 14,784)

What was the interaction type with the highest number of fatalities from demonstrations in 2018?	Government engagement with rioters
What was the interaction type with the highest number of demonstration events in 2018?	Sole protester action
What was the rate of change in the total number of demonstration events in from 2017 to 2018?	33% increase
What was the rate of change of fatalities from demonstrations from 2017 to 2018?	34% increase
Which country saw the highest rate of change across demonstration events from 2017 to 2018?	India (3,138 more demonstrations)