

Bangladesh

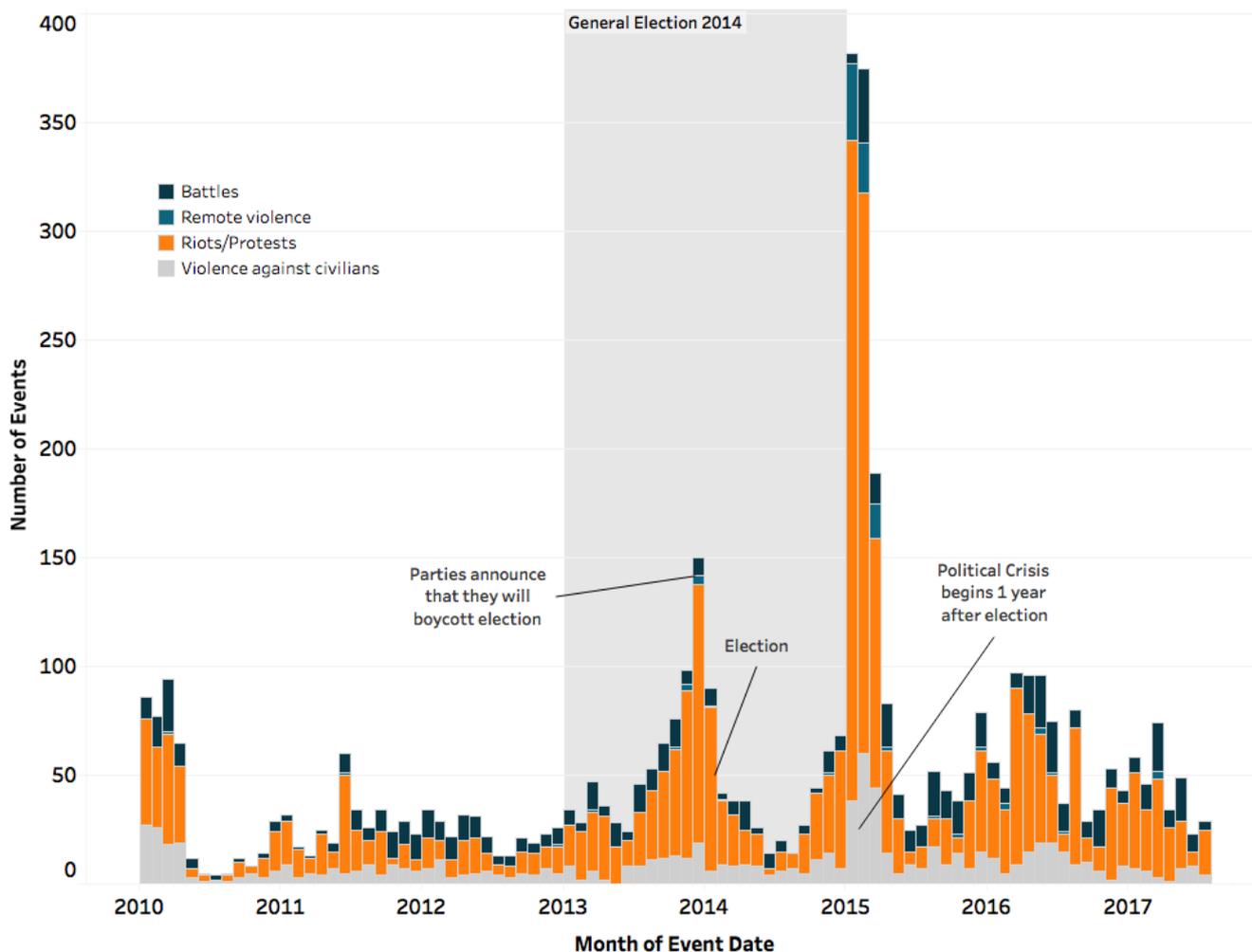
Bangladesh saw a significant increase in violence around the January 2014 elections. The increase began prior to election day (January 5, 2014), with the announcement that certain parties would boycott the elections, and continued in the months and years that followed. On election day alone, there were 20 election related fatalities reported. Twenty more election related fatalities occurred throughout the rest of January, followed by 71 fatalities related to political party violence throughout the rest of 2014. ([New York Times, 2014](#); [BBC, 2014](#))

ACLED data shows that the majority of the violence was spontaneous, as shown by the high incidence of riots. However, the violence was also targeted. The targeted events included attacks on polling stations, political party members and leaders. ([The Financial Express- Bangladesh, 2014](#); [The Daily Star, 2014](#)) In addition to the human and economic costs, the violence also affected the electoral

process: voter turnout was extremely low compared to previous election cycles, around 22% by some estimates. ([New York Times, 2014](#))

In January and February 2015, one year after the elections, there was another spike in violence. 104 fatalities related to political party violence occurred during those months. Much of the violence centered on hartal (strike) blockades that occurred throughout the country. Movement was shut-down throughout the country through violent means. Petrol bombs and arson attacks targeted auto rickshaw and truck drivers throughout the country. ([Daily Star, 2015](#)) While ACLED data does not track the number of arrests, some news outlets reported that around 7,000 people were arrested in January of 2015 alone. ([The Guardian, 2015](#)) The remainder of 2015 saw a large decrease in political violence.

Violence around Election Period in Bangladesh



CONFLICT TRENDS

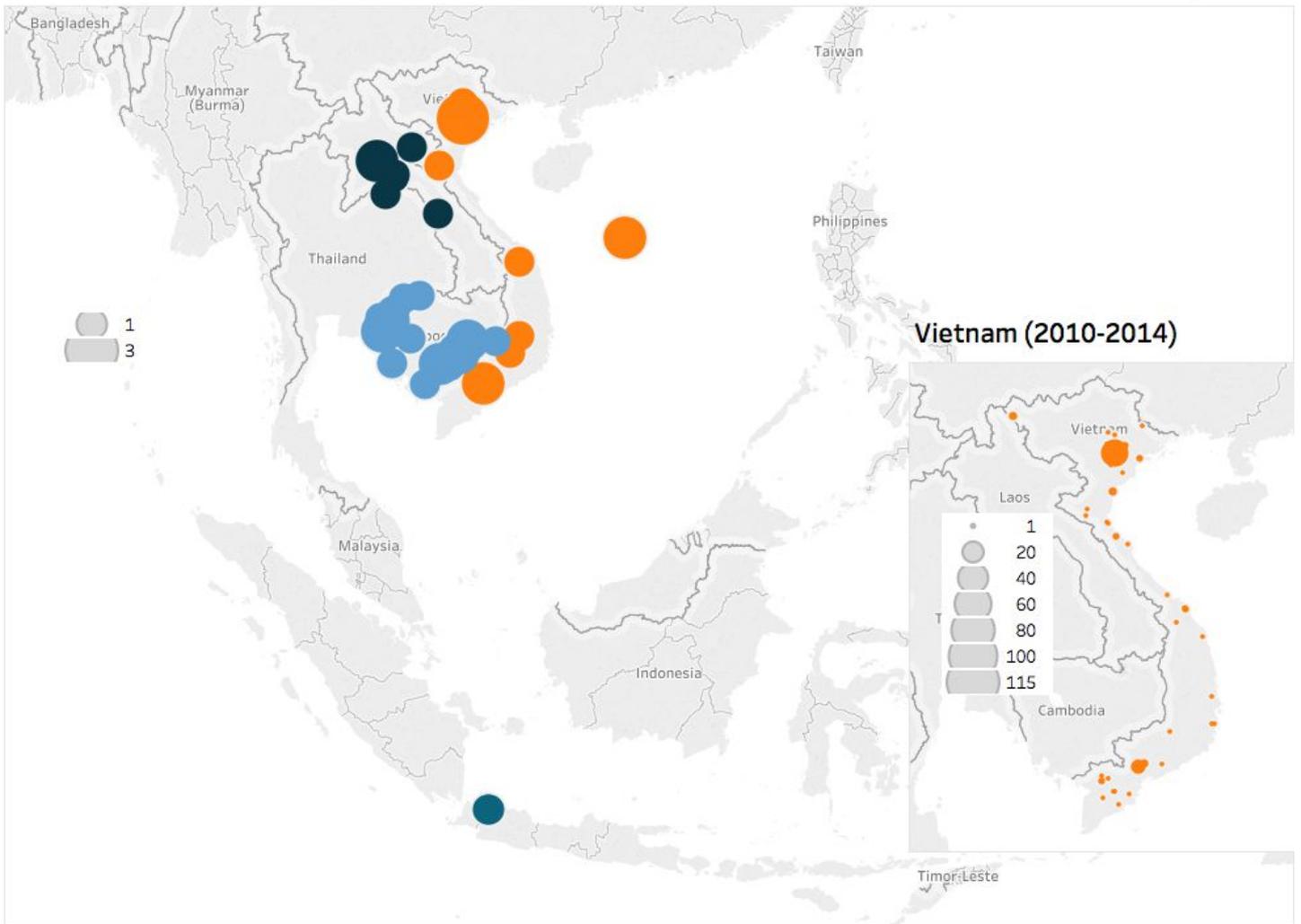
REAL-TIME ANALYSIS OF ASIAN POLITICAL VIOLENCE, AUGUST 2017

Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Vietnam

Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, and Vietnam all have the lowest political violence event counts in South and Southeast Asia. For the summer of 2017, Cambodia and Indonesia have both recorded 19 events total. Vietnam has recorded 14 events, while Laos has recorded two. It is not uncommon for Vietnam and Laos to record no events over the course of a month.

While ACLED only began recording events for Indonesia in May 2017, data collection for Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam began in January 2015. Most of the events recorded since then for these three countries were riots and protests, with low fatality rates per month (no more than 10). Laos has the lowest event count of the three countries, with 27 out of 30 months recording no activity at all.

Political Violence & Protests in Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam & Indonesia
(data from Jan 2015 - Jul 2017; data for Indonesia available May - Jul 2017)



CONFLICT TRENDS

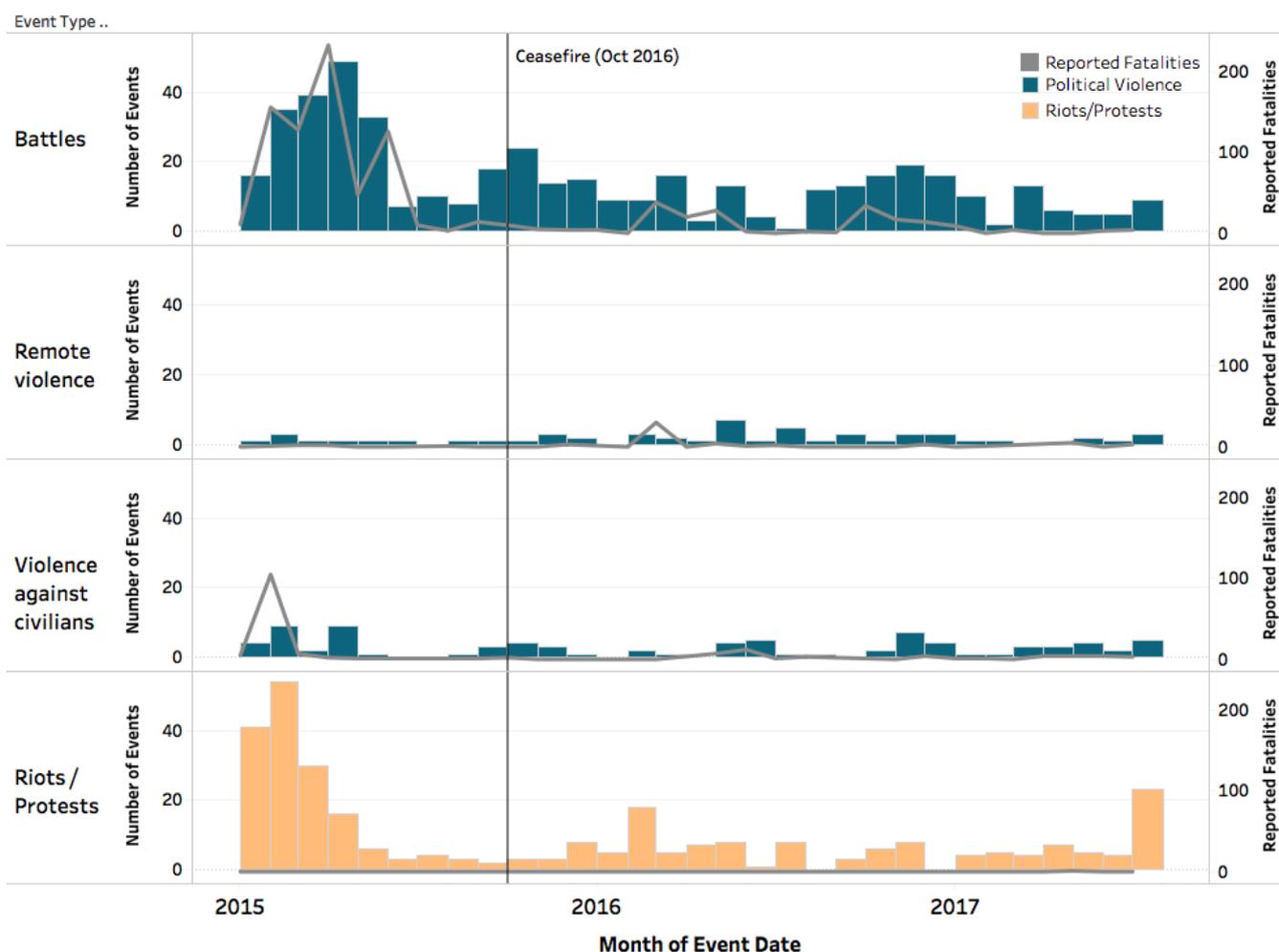
REAL-TIME ANALYSIS OF ASIAN POLITICAL VIOLENCE, AUGUST 2017

Myanmar

In October 2015, the Myanmar government and eight rebel groups (The All Burma Students’ Democratic Front (ABSDF), Arakan Liberation Party, Chin National Front (CNF), Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA), Karen National Liberation Army Peace Council, Karen National Union (KNU), Pa-O National Liberation Organization and Shan State Army-South (SSA-S)) signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA). Several other rebel groups either refused to sign the agreement or were not included by the government in the peace process (United Wa State Army, the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), Shan State Army-North (SSA-N), Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) and the Ta’ang National Liberation Army (TNLA)). The exclusion of these large rebel groups, and the terms under which the NCA was signed, has led to concern over the sustainability of the peace process in Myanmar.

But, despite such concern, political violence throughout the country has decreased since October 2015 and maintained low levels. It has also shifted slightly from the east to west. ACLED maps show that the conflict in 2015 occurred mainly in Kachin and Shan states in the west, with some events in Rakhine and Chin states in the east. (ACLED 2016) In 2016, after the NCA was signed, political violence decreased by 100 events in Shan state in the west and increased slightly in Rakhine state in the east. (Myanmar Peace Monitor 2016, Figure 4 a & b) More than half of all events that occurred in Rakhine state occurred in the final three months of 2016. This increase was due to multiple attacks on police outposts on October 9, 2016 and the Myanmar army’s response. (The Irrawaddy, 2016) Following the attacks, the Myanmar army launched a large-scale operation resulting in 25 casualties in total in 2016.

Political Violence & Protests by Event Type in Myanmar (2015-2017)



CONFLICT TRENDS

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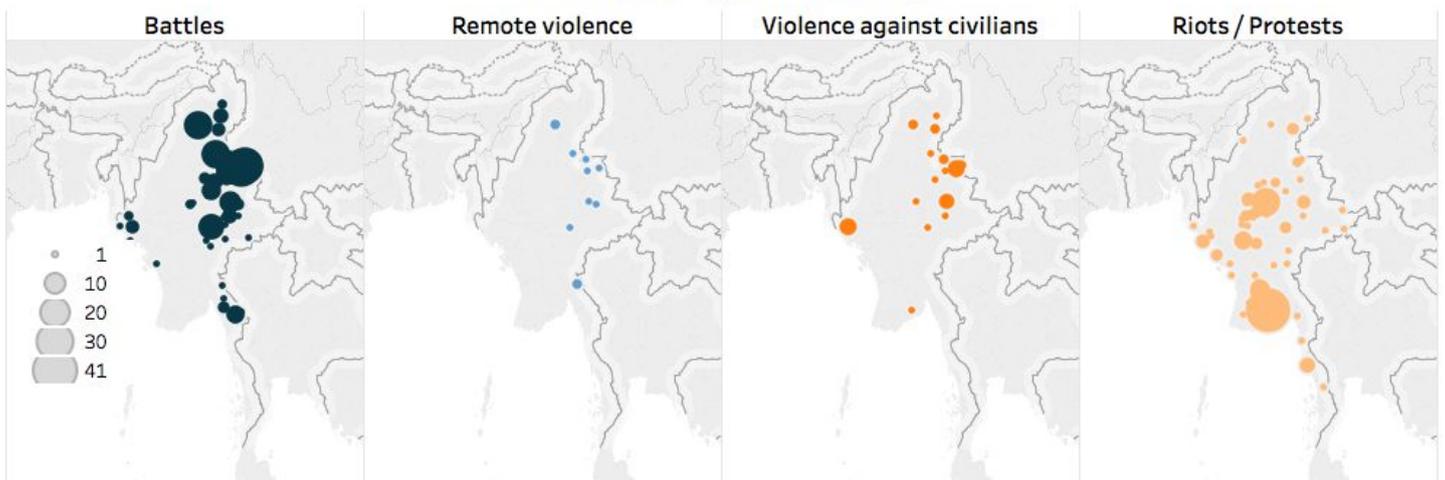
Myanmar

Generally, the decrease in political violence following the signature of the NCA is promising. However, many experts are still weary of the tenuous peace in Myanmar. In May 2017, a second session of the 21st Century Panglong Peace Conference convened to discuss enactment of the issues that the government and rebel groups addressed in the NCA. Two issues at the heart of the struggle for Myanmar's ethnic rebel groups are their desire for autonomy of

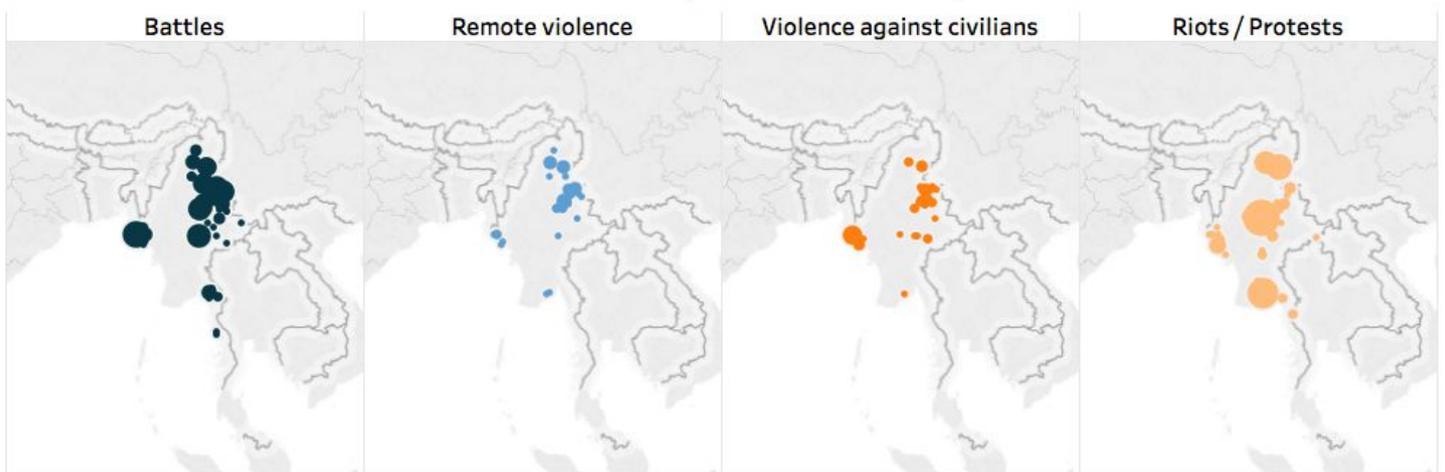
local militias under the federal army and the act of secession, if a state so decides. Ethnic rebel groups argue that enacting both will protect their minority rights in a majority Bama/Burma ethnic state. The lack of agreement on the enactment of these two central issues may erode the support that some of the rebel groups have for the NCA and the peace process in general. ([The Diplomat 2017](#))

How Have Political Violence & Protests Changed in Myanmar since the Ceasefire?

Pre-Ceasefire (Jan - Oct 2015)



Post-Ceasefire (Oct 2015 - Jul 2017)



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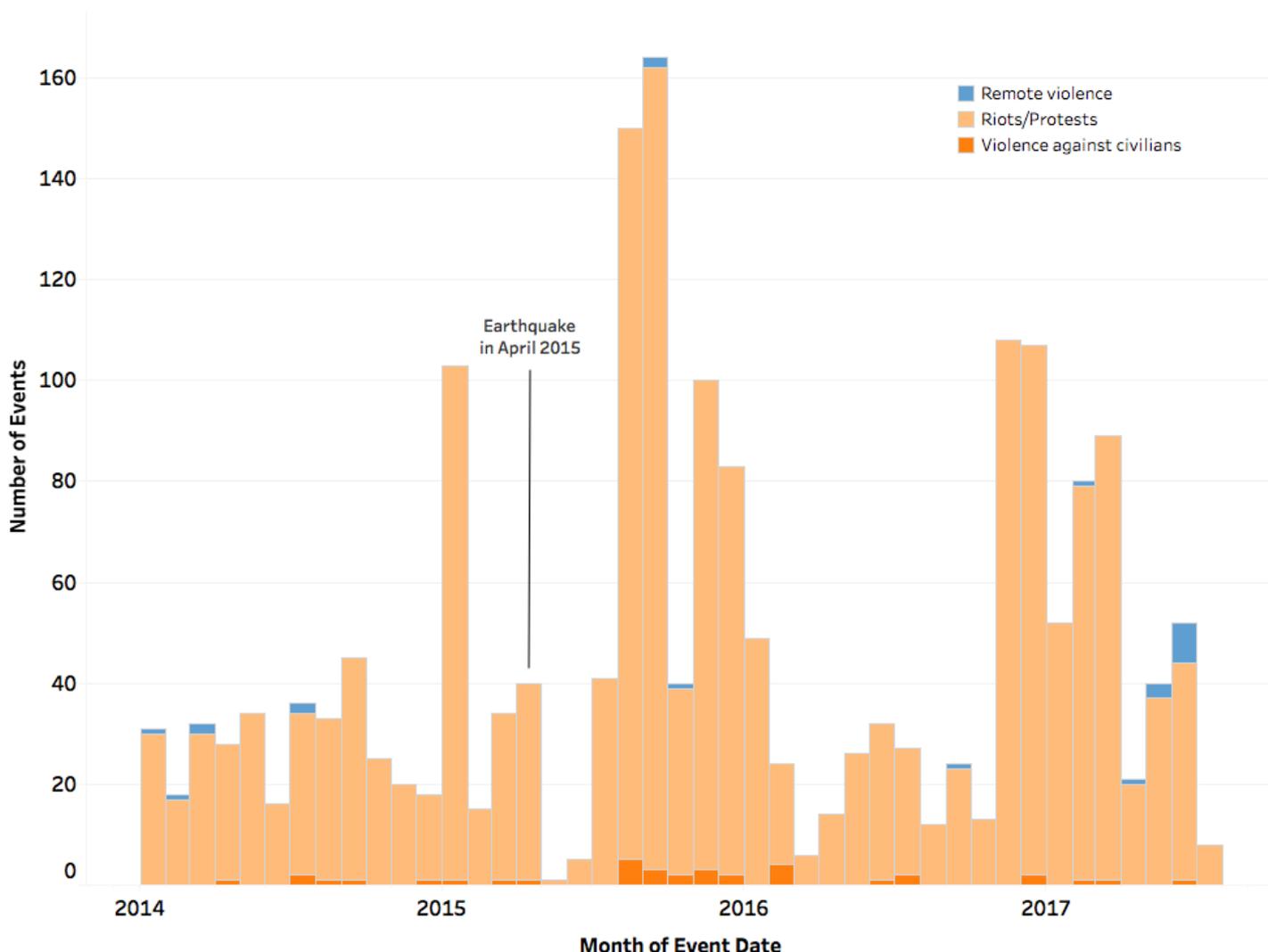
Nepal

The April 2015 earthquake in Nepal devastated the country, killing and injuring thousands. ([BBC, 2015](#)) Unfortunately, the earthquake also took a political toll. After the earthquake, political parties initiated a haphazard attempt to pass a new constitution. However, the constitution they proposed was missing key components of the 2006 peace agreement. In the 2006 peace agreement, political parties had pledged to change Nepal’s highly centralized system of government; this was not reflected in the proposed constitution. ([The Wire, 2016](#))

The decision to move forward with a constitution lacking

key elements of the peace agreement led to widespread protests. While immediately following the earthquake protests significantly decreased with only 1 protest in May 2015, soon after, protests increased dramatically. This spike culminated in 145 and 159 protests in August and September respectively. Amidst protest, the new constitution was adopted on September 20, 2015. In the months that followed, there were an average of 71 protests reported per month. Finally, in January 2016, the government began amending the constitution in response to the protests. ([ACLED 2016](#)) Protests, therefore, tapered off throughout 2016, but began to increase again at the end of

Political Violence & Protests in Nepal Pre- and Post- Earthquake



CONFLICT TRENDS

REAL-TIME ANALYSIS OF ASIAN POLITICAL VIOLENCE, AUGUST 2017

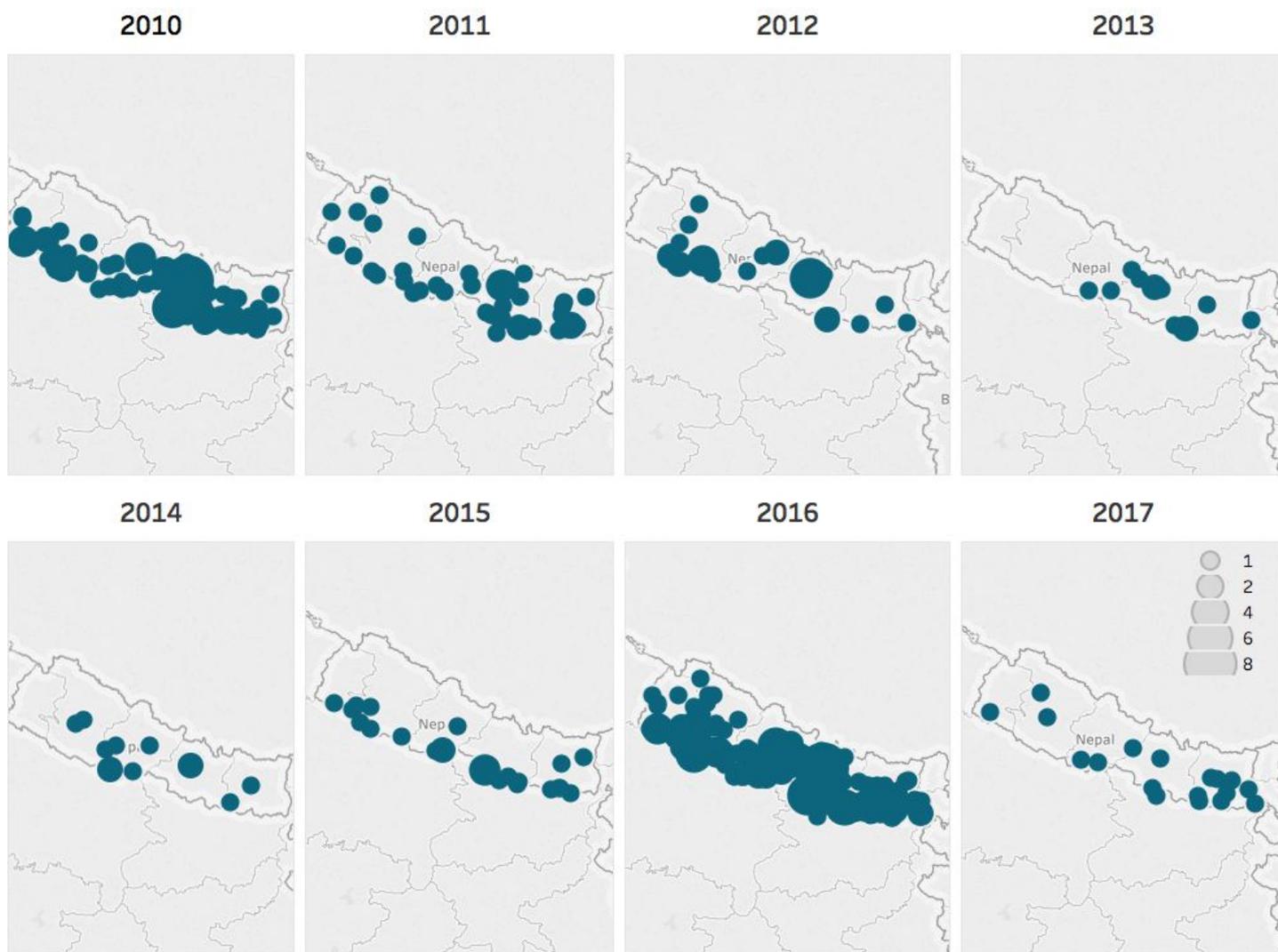
Nepal

the year, with 108 protests in November and 105 in December. Finally, 2017 protests have continued to center on opposition to the constitution and state autonomy under the constitution.

Overall, protest is an important part of the political land-

scape of Nepal. Protests occurred in 2010 over the constitution, 2012 over elections and again in late 2015, as seen in Figure 1 below. So far, 2017 has seen protests mostly about the constitution and state autonomy. Following through on these two components of the 2006 peace agreement is crucial to ending these protests.

Political Violence & Protests in Nepal, 2010-2017



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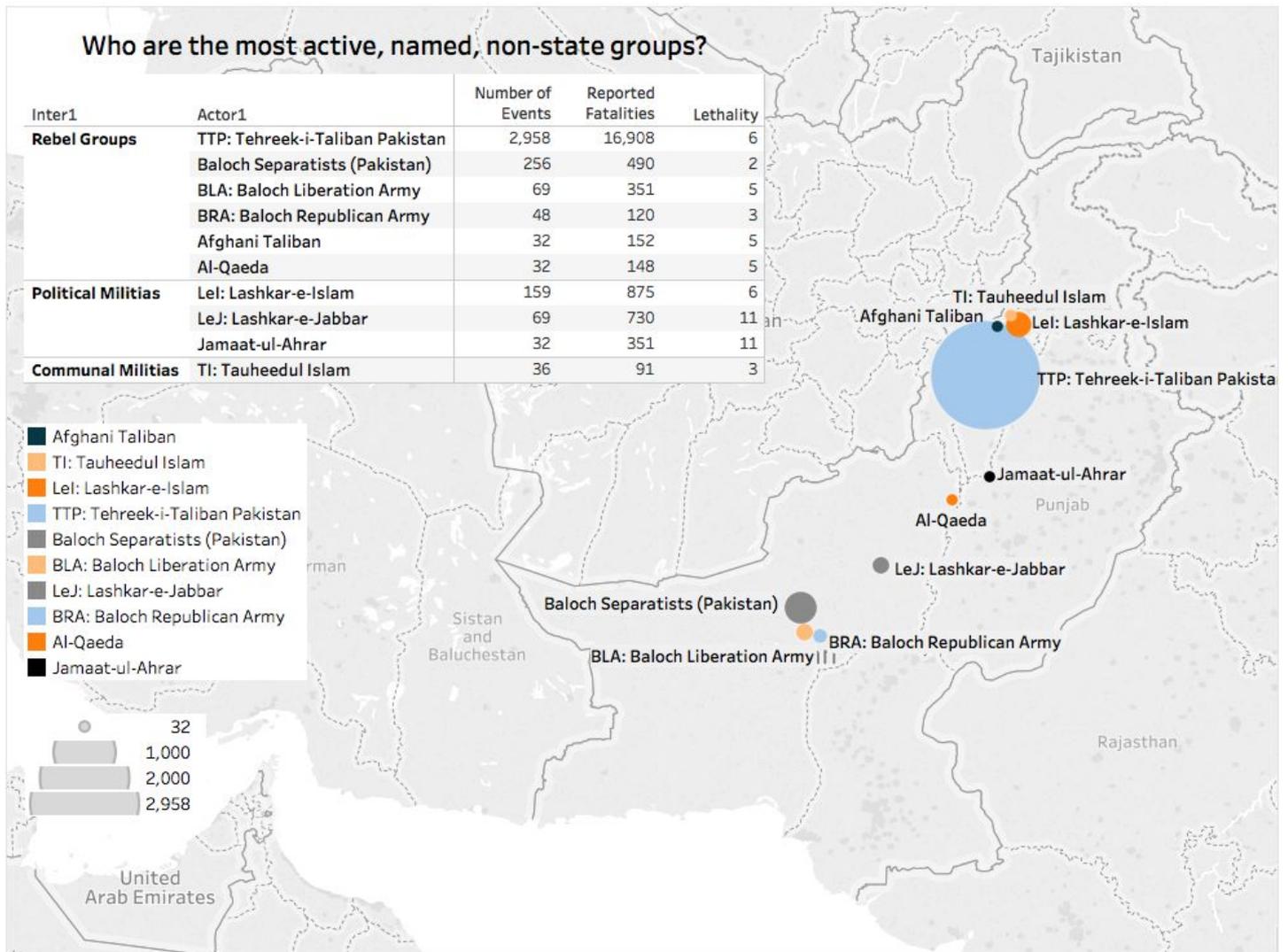
REAL-TIME ANALYSIS OF ASIAN POLITICAL VIOLENCE, AUGUST 2017

Pakistan

Pakistan has 114 distinct non-state actors operating within the country. This is significantly higher than Thailand with 24 and Myanmar with 25. Non-state actors include rebel groups, political militias, and communal militias. From 2015 to mid-2017, these 114 were reported to be involved in 1,329 politically violent events in Pakistan, resulting in 5,061 reported fatalities. The 24 and 25 actor groups in Thailand and Myanmar were involved in 480 and 469 events with 267 and 1,004 reported fatalities, respectively. Non-state actor groups in Pakistan, therefore, produce almost four fatalities per event; while in Thailand and Myanmar they produce only two and .5 fatalities per event, comparatively.

From 2010 to mid-2017 in Pakistan, rebel groups perpetrated the most events of political violence. Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) were involved in over 80% of politically violent events, resulting in almost 17,000 fatalities. The Afghani Taliban were active in Pakistan as well. They were reported to be involved in 32 events resulting in 152 fatalities. Baloch Separatists were involved in the second most events with 336. Baloch Separatists are both a general group and comprise the specific groups of the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) and the Baloch Republican Army (BRA). Unnamed militants involved in an event, and who are known to be fighting for an independent Balochistan, are categorized as “Baloch Separatists”.

Where is the activity of the most active, named, non-state groups centered?



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REAL-TIME ANALYSIS OF ASIAN POLITICAL VIOLENCE, AUGUST 2017

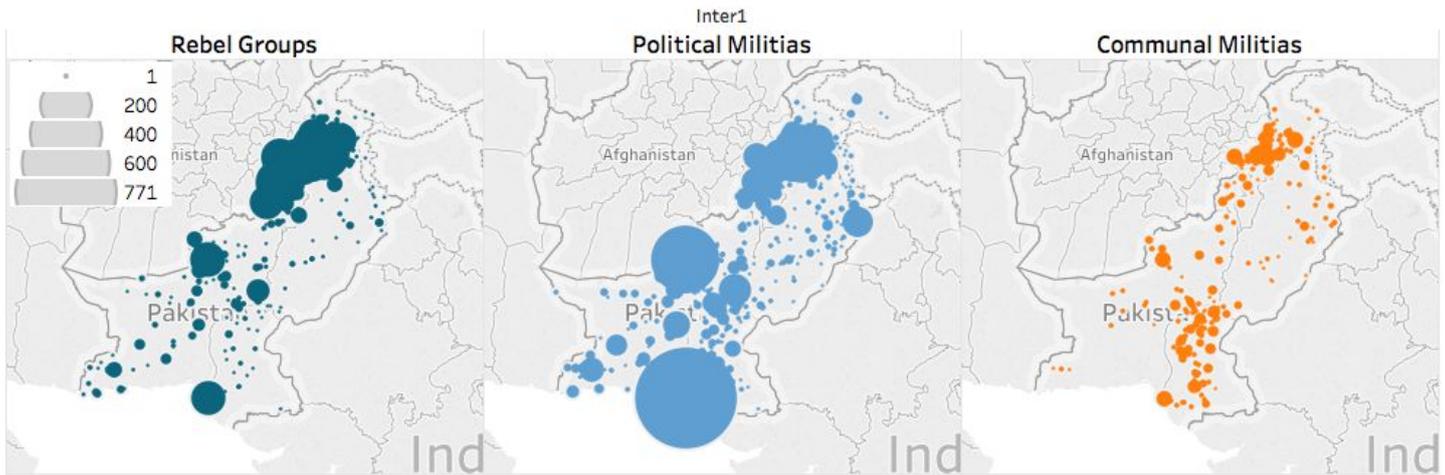
Nepal

There are four states in Pakistan where a large majority of the political violence occurs. Overall, 30%, 22%, 20%, and 19%, of events take place in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), Sindh, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkwa (KP), respectively. The events that occur in these areas are mostly battles between state forces and rebel groups, and violence against civilians perpetrated by

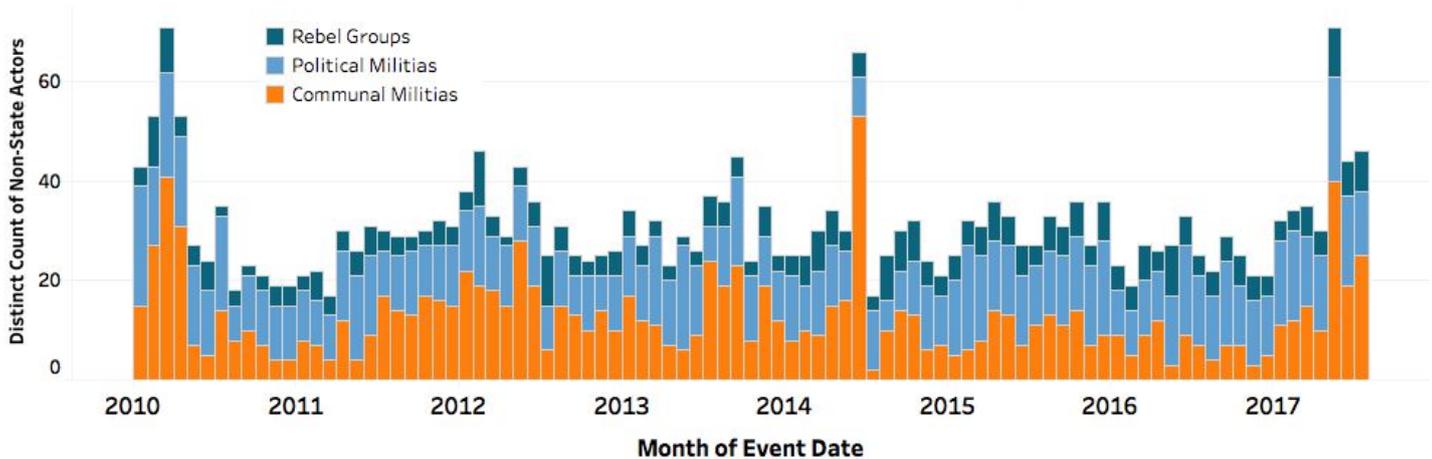
non-state groups. FATA, KP and Balochistan are all regions in which the most active non-state groups operate. Baloch Separatists and Lashkar-e-Jabbar (LeJ) are active in Balochistan, while the TTP, Afghani Taliban, Al Qaeda, Lashkar-e-Islam (LeI), and Jamaat-ul-Ahrar are mostly active in FATA and KP.

Activity by Non-State Groups in Pakistan

Where are the various non-state groups active in Pakistan?



How have non-state groups been proliferating?



CONFLICT TRENDS

REAL-TIME ANALYSIS OF ASIAN POLITICAL VIOLENCE, AUGUST 2017

Philippines

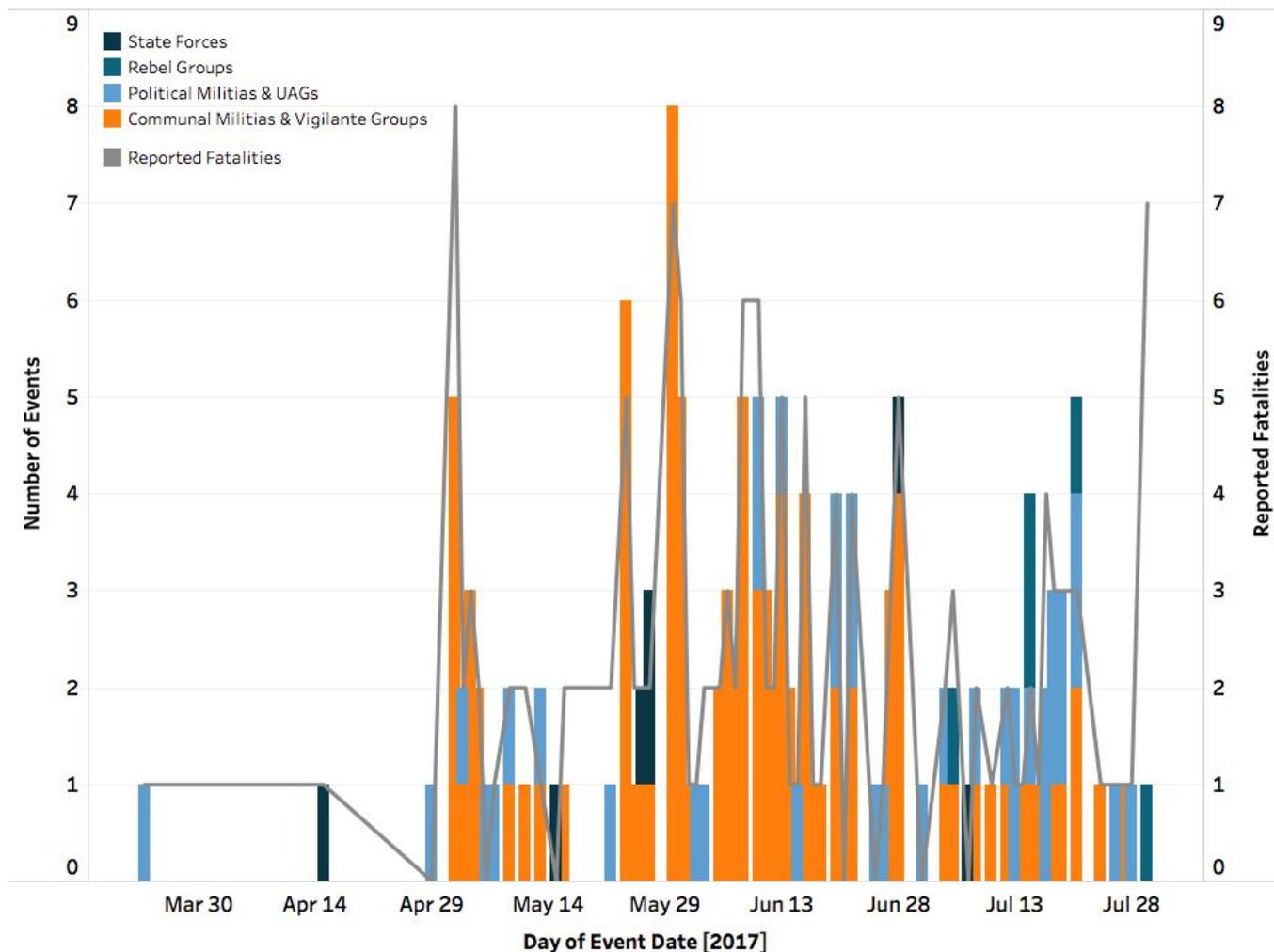
ACLED began covering political violence in the Philippines in May 2017. Since then, a large number of events of political violence and resulting fatalities have been recorded in the country. An average of 355 events and 690 fatalities were recorded per month in the summer of 2017. Overall, the average rate of fatalities per event is almost two. These averages mean the Philippines has the third highest event count in South and Southeast Asia, behind only India and Pakistan, and the highest fatality rate. Before May 2017, Pakistan had the highest fatality rate in the region.

Half of all political violence events in the Philippines are

battles. A large portion of these battles occur in the southern part of the country. Overall, 55% of all battles occur in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, a three-island chain in the south. Figure 1 shows the Islamist rebel groups that are active in these battles. Almost 20% of all battles recorded were between government forces and the New People’s Army (NPA), a Communist rebel group that operates throughout the country.

Violence against civilians (VAC) comprises 25% of all events in the Philippines. According to ACLED data and the sources used to collect the data, 66% of VAC is perpe-

Violence against Civilians by Perpetrator, Philippines, May - July 2017



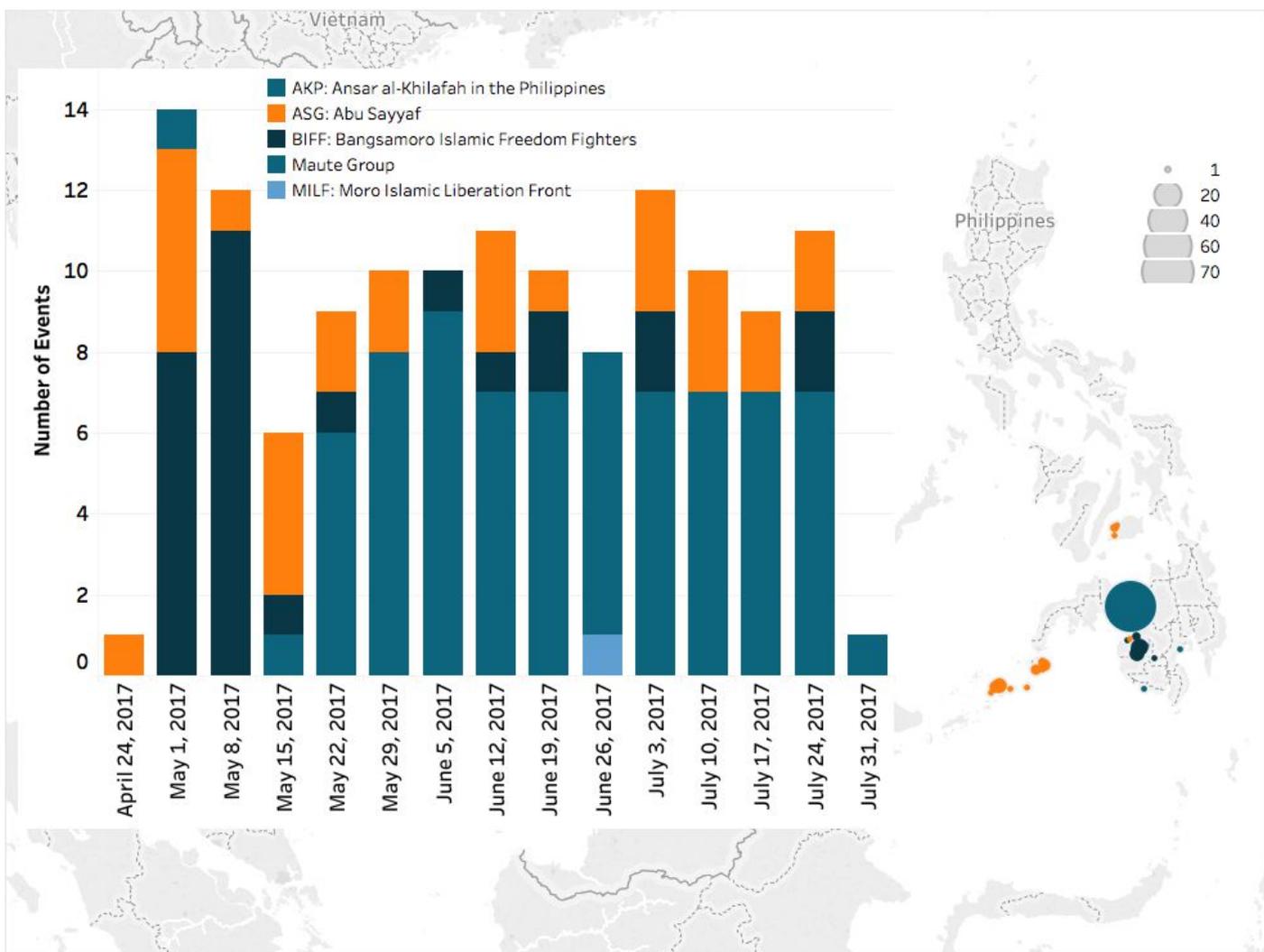
Philippines

trated by vigilante militias and only 6% is perpetrated by the state. However, Human Rights Watch (HRW) has published a report in which it asserts that many of these vigilante militias are actually the Philippine National Police (PNP), who are operating as part of President Duterte’s “war on drugs”. ([Human Rights Watch 2017](#); [Reuters 2017](#)) Whether these are covert operations by the state or actual citizen vigilantes, experts agree that while Duterte may not be explicitly responsible for the drug killings oc-

curing throughout the Philippines, he has certainly encouraged the violence. ([PhilStar 2017](#); [PhilStar 2016](#))

ACLED will be back coding the Philippines data to the beginning of 2017, which will give us a better idea of the scope of the Islamist insurgency in the south and the Communist insurgency and war on drugs throughout the country.

Islamist Violence in the Philippines (May - July 2017)



CONFLICT TRENDS

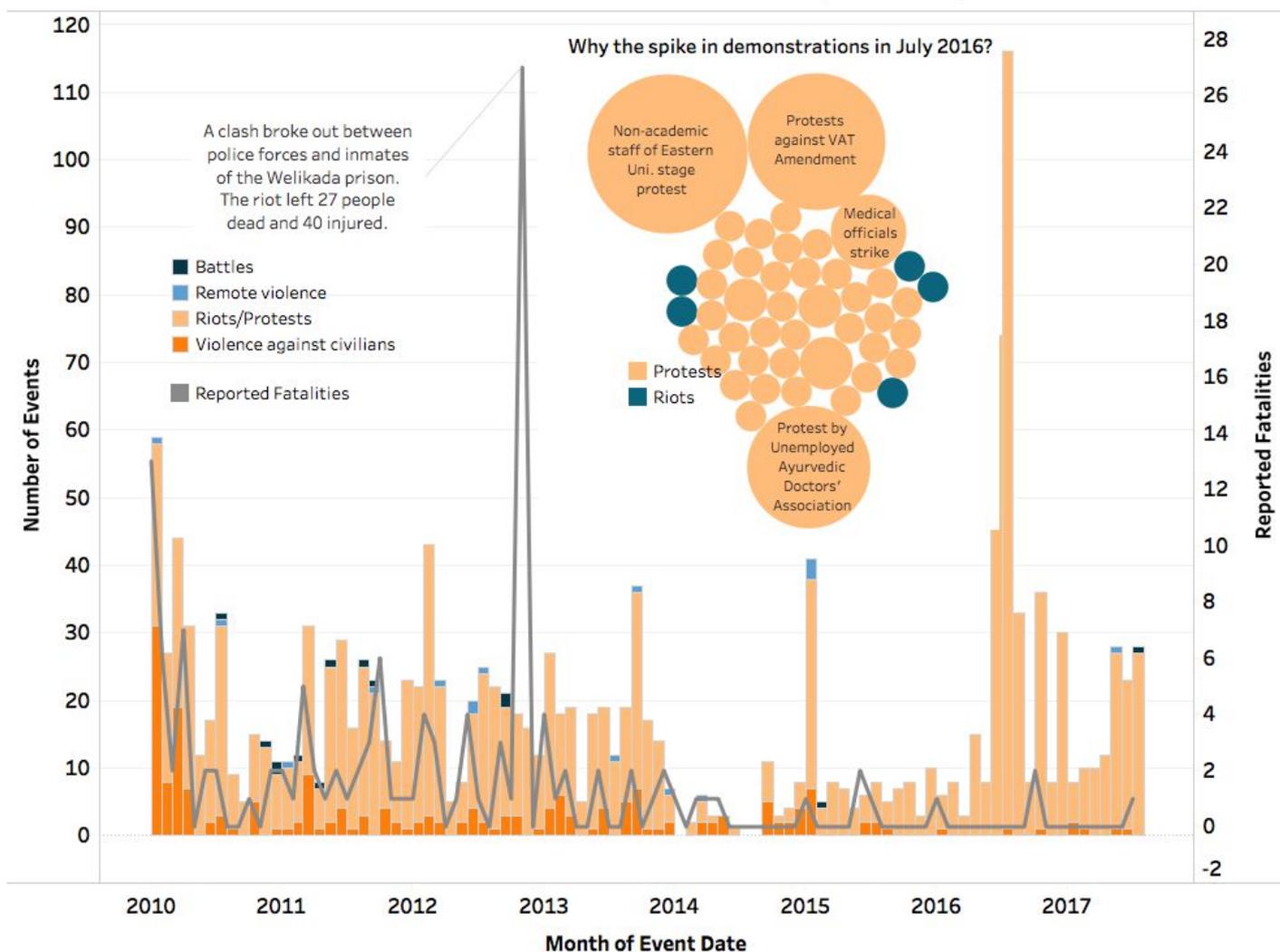
REAL-TIME ANALYSIS OF ASIAN POLITICAL VIOLENCE, AUGUST 2017

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka has one of the lowest rates of political violence and protest in South and Southeast Asia. The vast majority of events in Sri Lanka are riots and protests with low fatality rates. Since 2010, however, there have been several notable spikes in activity. In November 2012, Sri Lanka saw one of its deadliest riots. The Welikada prison erupted following a police raid on the prison to collect illegal substances and arms. Prisoners attacked police in response to abuse during the raid. The chaos created a vacuum of control and the prisoners overpowered prison personnel; the army was eventually called in to bring back order. The riot resulted in 27 fatalities and many more injuries. ([The Hindu 2012](#)) In July 2017, the Sri Lankan government began a criminal investigation into the riots and resulting deaths. ([Xinhua Net, 2017](#))

Another spike in activity occurred in June and July of 2016. From 2010 to the summer of 2016, Sri Lanka experienced an average of 13 riots and protests per month. In June 2016, 74 riots and protests were reported and 115 in July. As shown in Figure 1, the largest protests pertained to a proposed Value added tax (VAT) increase and demands by non-academic staff of higher education. There were 39 protests opposing the VAT increase throughout the country, which resulted in the suspension of the increase by the Supreme Court and an eventual amendment to the VAT bill. ([Colombo Page, 2016](#)) There were 28 protests throughout the country by non-academic staff of higher education, which reportedly included 13,000 staff members. ([News First Sri Lanka, 2016](#))

Political Violence & Protests in Sri Lanka (2010-2017)





CONFLICT TRENDS

REAL-TIME ANALYSIS OF ASIAN POLITICAL VIOLENCE, AUGUST 2017

Special Focus Topic: Islamist Insurgencies

South and Southeast Asia are home to a large number of differing insurgencies, including Communist, ethnic and Islamist. Each nation is concerned with and threatened by their own insurgencies, yet Islamist insurgencies have become of particular importance in recent years. Large scale attacks by Islamist groups such as the June 8th, 2014 attack in Pakistan that killed over 30 people and the July 2016 attack in Bangladesh that killed around 20 people, countries have implemented large scale operations or completely reversed course on long-standing policies in order to combat Islamist insurgencies within their borders.

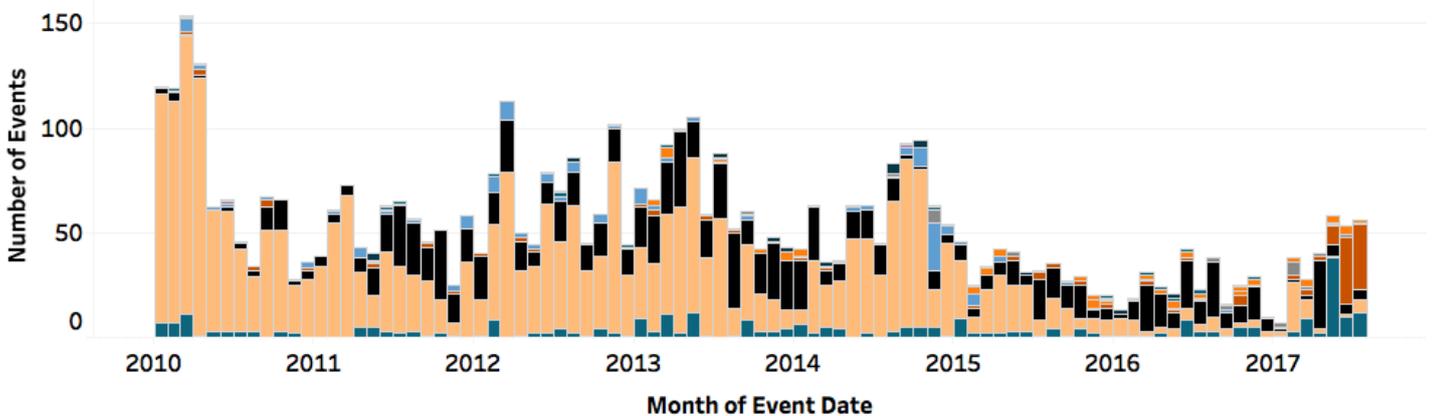
With a large Muslim population and Islamist insurgencies throughout South and Southeast Asia, some experts focus on the threat of recruitment by Islamic State (IS). Accord-

ing to reports, over 1,000 Southeast Asians have travelled IS territory in Syria and Iraq. Of those who have travelled to IS territory, it is estimated that hundreds have returned. ([Carnegie Council 2017](#)) South Asians are also targeted for recruitment by IS, for example, IS has used social media to try to recruit Pakistani youth. ([Deccan Chronicle 2017](#)) India is also worried about recruitment, though numbers in the country are still relatively low compared to Southeast Asia. ([Brookings 2017](#))

The Bangladeshi government has denied that IS is active within its borders. However, IS claimed responsibility for the attack in Dhaka that left 20 hostages dead. The attack, which was publicized and condemned worldwide, seemed to light a fire under the Bangladeshi government to tighten

Islamist Groups in South & Southeast Asia

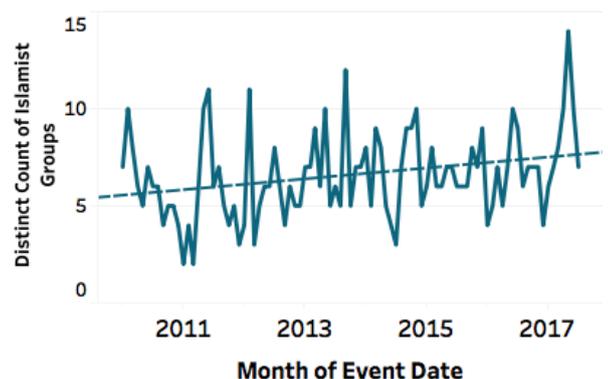
Political Violence Involving Islamist Groups across South & Southeast Asia (top 10 most active groups labeled)



Top 10 Most Active Islamist Groups across South & Southeast Asia

Top 10 Islamist Actors	Number of Events	Reported Fatalities	Lethality
TTP: Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan	2,924	16,908	6
Southern Muslim Separatists (Thailand)	1,152	832	1
Lel: Lashkar-e-Islam	153	875	6
Maute Group	72	671	9
LeJ: Lashkar-e-Jabbar	69	730	11
Jel: Jamaat-e-Islami & Jel: Jamaat-e-Islami Militia	44	32	1
IS: Islamic State	39	282	7
Afghani Taliban	31	152	5
Jamaat-ul-Ahrar	31	351	11
Al-Qaeda	30	148	5

How have Islamist groups been proliferating across South & Southeast Asia?



CONFLICT TRENDS

REAL-TIME ANALYSIS OF ASIAN POLITICAL VIOLENCE, AUGUST 2017

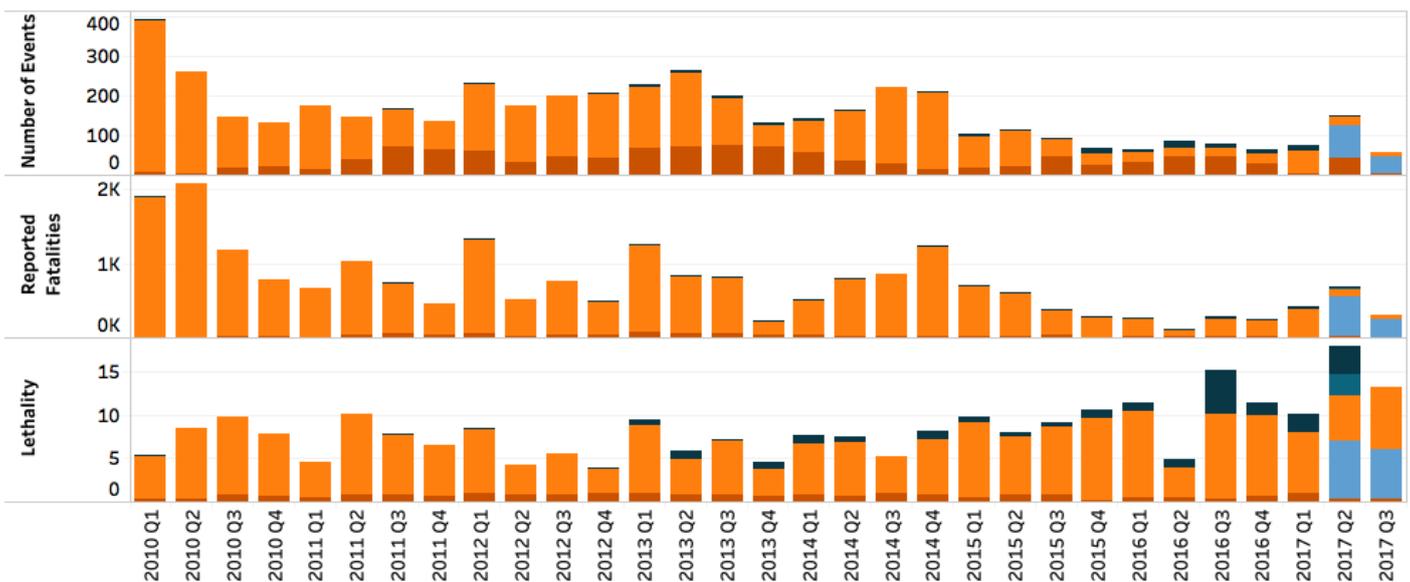
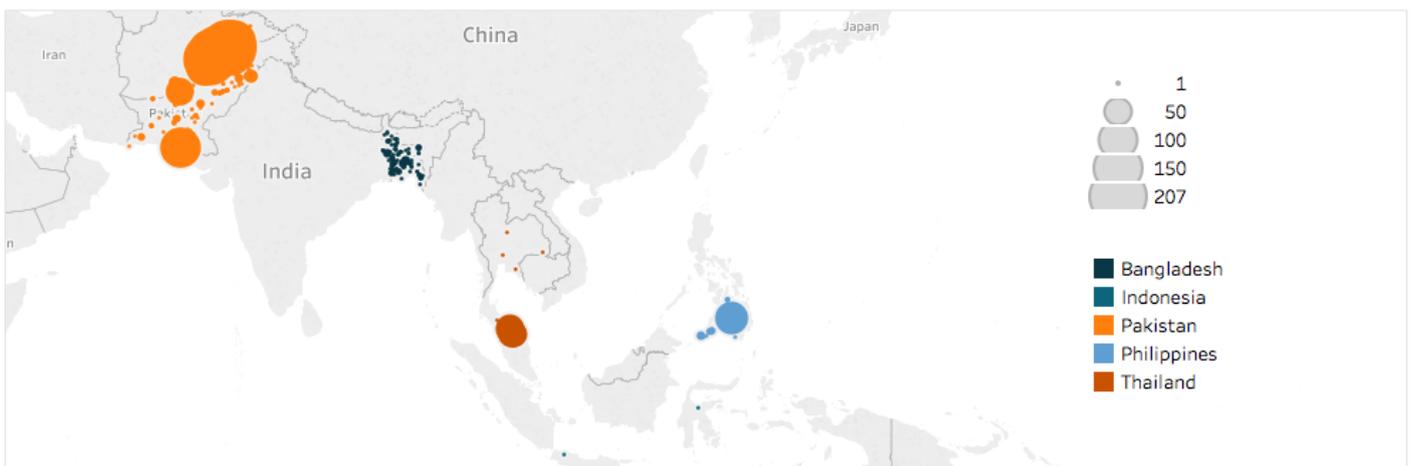
Special Focus Topic: Islamist Insurgencies

security. (ACLED 2016). ACLED recorded 17 events involving IS leading up to the July 2016 attack, yet only 3 events from July 2016-July 2017.

While 22 out of 42 event in South and Southeast Asia involving ACLED occurred in Bangladesh, 20 events occurred in Pakistan. In Pakistan 17 out of the 20 events were violent. Only 3 events involved the non-violent exposure of IS cells and arrest of IS militants. The 17 politically violent events led to 226 fatalities. In February 2017 the deadliest attack killed 90 people, as IS targeted Sufis on pilgrimage to the Sehwan Shrine in Peshawar. ([Al Jazeera](#))

Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) is by far the deadliest insurgency group throughout South and Southeast Asia, with almost 17,000 fatalities occurring between 2010-present. In June 2014 the Pakistani military began operation Zarb-e-Azb in response to a TTP attack that killed 30 people. So far, Zarb-e-Azb has been hailed as a success. Events of political violence involving TTP in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) steadily declined after June 2014. In July 2017, only 5 battles and 1 event of remote violence occurred involving the TTP. This in comparison to July 2014 where 16 battles and 14 events of remote violence involved TTP.

Islamist Violence in South & Southeast Asia



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Sources

Conflict Trends reports are compiled from ACLED data and draw on news sources, civil society reports, and academic and policy analyses. Full details of sources and coding processes are available online on the [ACLED website](#).