

Welcome to the October issue of the Armed Conflict Location & Event Dataset (ACLED) *Conflict Trends*. Each month, ACLED researchers gather, analyse and publish data on political violence in Africa in realtime. Realtime conflict event data is published through our research partners at [Climate Change and African Political Stability \(CCAPS\)](#) where it is updated monthly.

In addition, historical data from Volume III of the dataset, covering conflict in Africa from January 1997 to December 2012, is available online at [acleddata.com](#), along with previous *Conflict Trends* reports, country profiles for key conflict-affected states (including Somalia, Nigeria and DRC), thematic special features, and information on the data collection and publication process.

This month, the report looks at ongoing conflict in **Central African Republic** and **DR-Congo**; violence continues in **Egypt**, but at a reduced rate to July and August's upheaval.

In **Kenya**, we look at Al-Shabaab activity there in the wake of the attack on the Westgate shopping complex.

Sudan is in the spotlight again as deadly opposition protests mount and multiple, discreet crises threaten the stability of the state.



Conflict Trajectory, September 2013

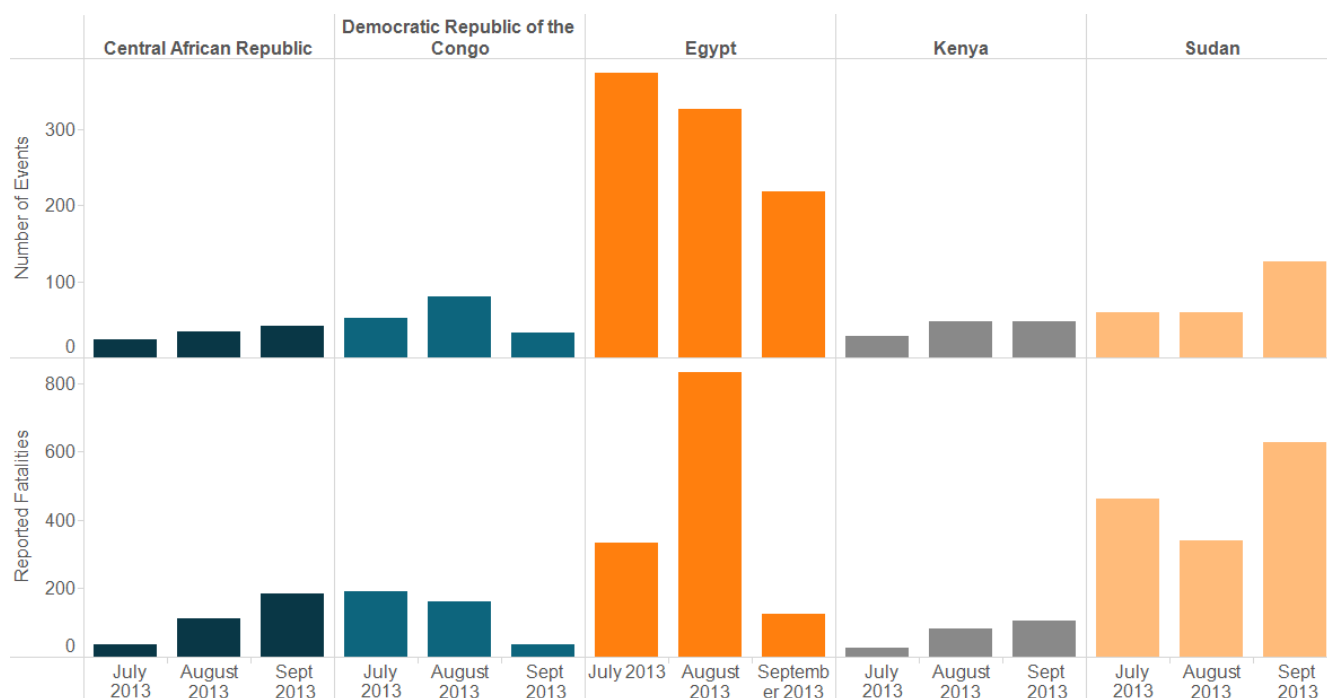


Figure 1: Conflict Levels and Associated Reported Fatalities in CAR, DR-Congo, Egypt, Kenya, Sudan, Jul - Sept 2013.

Central African Republic

September did not bring an end to the Central African Republic's free-fall into state failure. At the end of the month, President Michel Djotodia decided to dissolve the Seleka rebel coalition, the same one that brought him to power during December 2012. That rebellion led to the overthrow of then President Francois Bozizé. In turning his back on the group, Djotodia is following a well-established pattern of behavior by African leaders who ascend to power by force.

However, as reported in last month's *Trends* report, Seleka is a violent hydra, and its multiple factions operating across the state are proving uncontrollable. David Zounmenou of the Institute of Security Studies reports that the three main factions of Seleka have alternate goals and strategies. These include the UFDR: Union of Democratic Forces for Unity, CPJP: Convention of Patriots for Justice

and Peace, and CPSK: Patriotic Convention for the Salvation of Kodro (see Figure 2). The Seleka alliance allowed for these primarily northwestern groups to make some definite movement in their individual conflicts against Bozizé for his failure to honor the 2007 Birao Peace Agreement and 2008 Libreville Agreement. Since December, the alliance has proved very successful, especially for its front man Djotodia.

The ongoing atrocities are bad enough for the AU to consider a possible deployment of a Support Mission in the CAR (Mission internationale de soutien à la Centrafrique, or MISCA) as CAR's troops and factions are unable to adhere to the 2013 Libreville Agreement. Whatever the case, if CAR is not considered a vacuous and disintegrated state now, its current condition will certainly suffice until officially failed.

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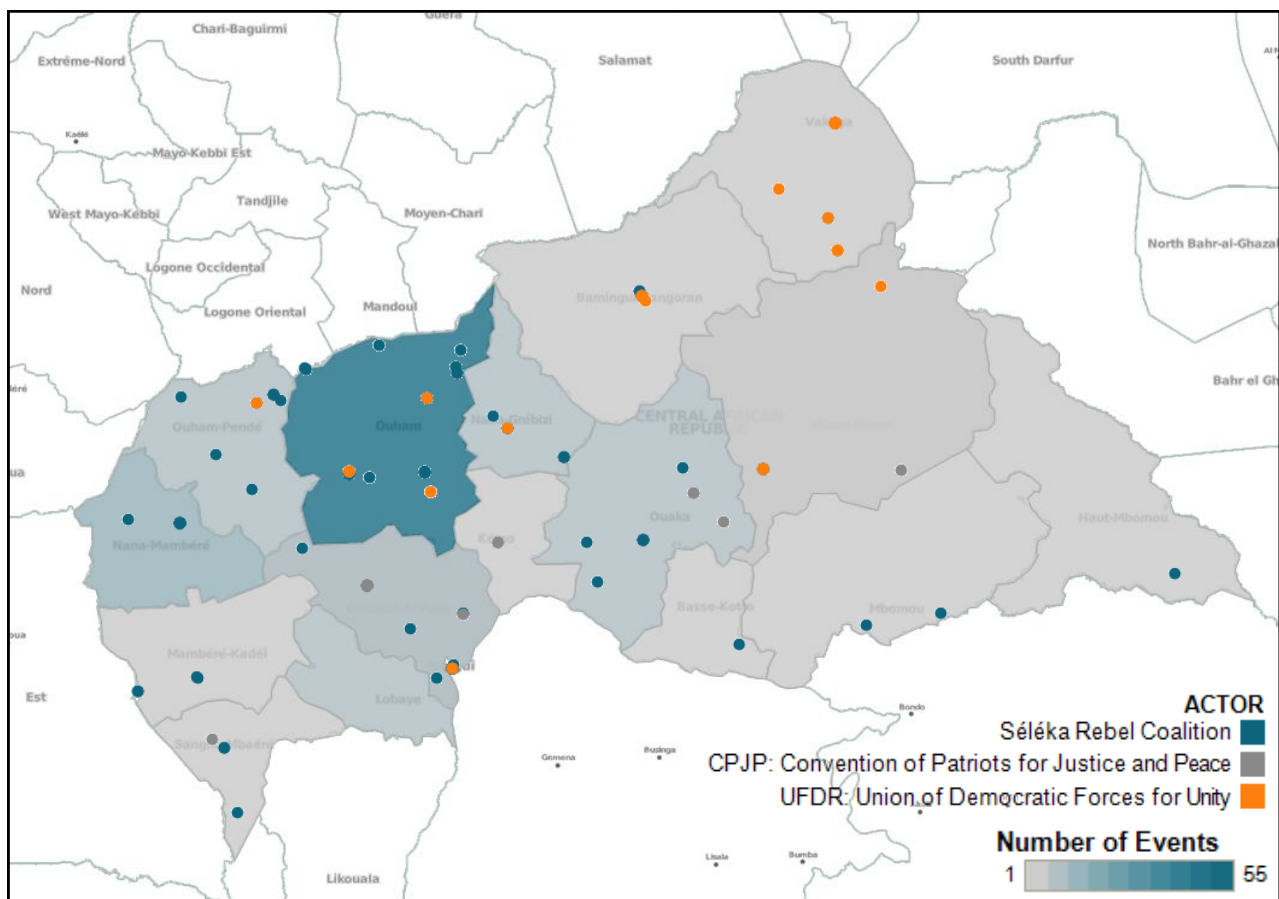


Figure 2: Violent Conflict Events by Actor and Administrative Zone, Central African Republic, Jan - Sept 2013.

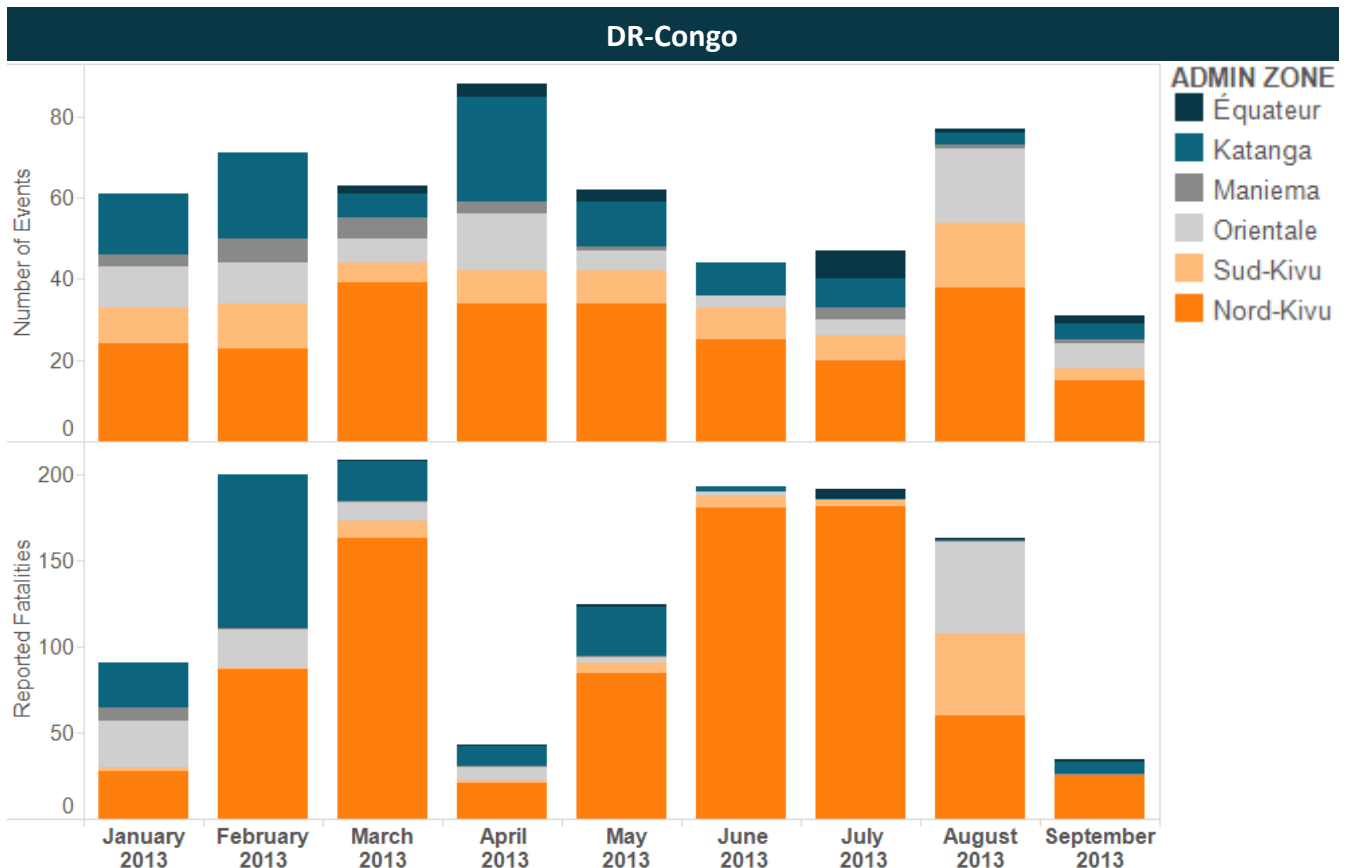


Figure 3: Conflict Events and Reported Fatalities, by Administrative Zone, DR-Congo, Jan - Sept 2013.

Conflict events fell very significantly this month in the DR Congo (see Figure 3), with fewer events in September than in any other month to date 2013. Although all event levels fell in September, the most significant decrease was a 64% drop in the number of battles occurring throughout the country compared to the previous month.

By contrast, the final week in August witnessed a surge in conflict in the eastern part of the country as M23 rebels clashed repeatedly with the Congolese military, supported by MONUSCO in the Kivu region. The last days of August saw intense shelling in urban areas, daily battles, a series of riots and mounting tensions between the DR Congo and its Rwandan neighbours (*African Arguments* 2013).

However by the start of September, Congolese troops,

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accompanied by UN peacekeepers and the new UN Intervention Brigade had forced back M23 rebels from the strategic city of Goma in North Kivu (*AFP* 2013).

The sharp decrease in conflict this month, alongside these strategic territorial gains in the Kivu regions would indicate that the unprecedented offensive mandate of the UN's Intervention Brigade has already had a notable impact on the military capabilities of the DR Congo's army and MONUSCO. By mid-September, these territory losses on the part of M23 rebels in the Kivu regions prompted the group to resume peace talks in Kampala with the government for the first time since May (*AFP* 2013).

While international attention has focussed primarily on the eastern Kivu region of the DR Congo, conflict also fell sharply in the Orientale province in September. Event levels in Maniema, however, remained

DR-Congo

relatively stable during August and September and events in Équateur increased slightly this month. There was a 78% decrease in fatalities across the DR Congo this month compared to August levels, which corresponds to the similarly steep fall in conflict events, particularly battles. Since January 2013, 71% of reported fatalities have occurred during battle events, while 28% have involved violence against civilians. This rate is largely in line with continental averages, where 65% of political violence fatalities are battle-related deaths; while 28% involve civilian targeting.

Over the last three months, Congolese military forces have constituted by far the most violent group in the country (see Figure 4), active in 36% of conflict events across the country since July. M23 rebels are the next most violent group, active in 21% of events and they

are followed by the APCLS militia, as well as the combined activities of any unidentified armed groups.

As such, while M23 violence in the eastern DR Congo continues to represent the Congo's most significant conflict, there is also a breadth of on-going armed violence across the country, particularly in Katanga and Orientale.

In this way, while September's Ugandan peace talks have led certain commentators to speak of a 'window of opportunity' for the DR Congo's eastern region (African Arguments 2013), continuing low-intensity conflict across the country, as well as the kidnapping of a Congolese soldier by the Rwandan police in Goma (AFP 2013) in mid-September, suggest that both sub-national violence and inter-state tensions still constitute

significant threats to security and stability across the country.

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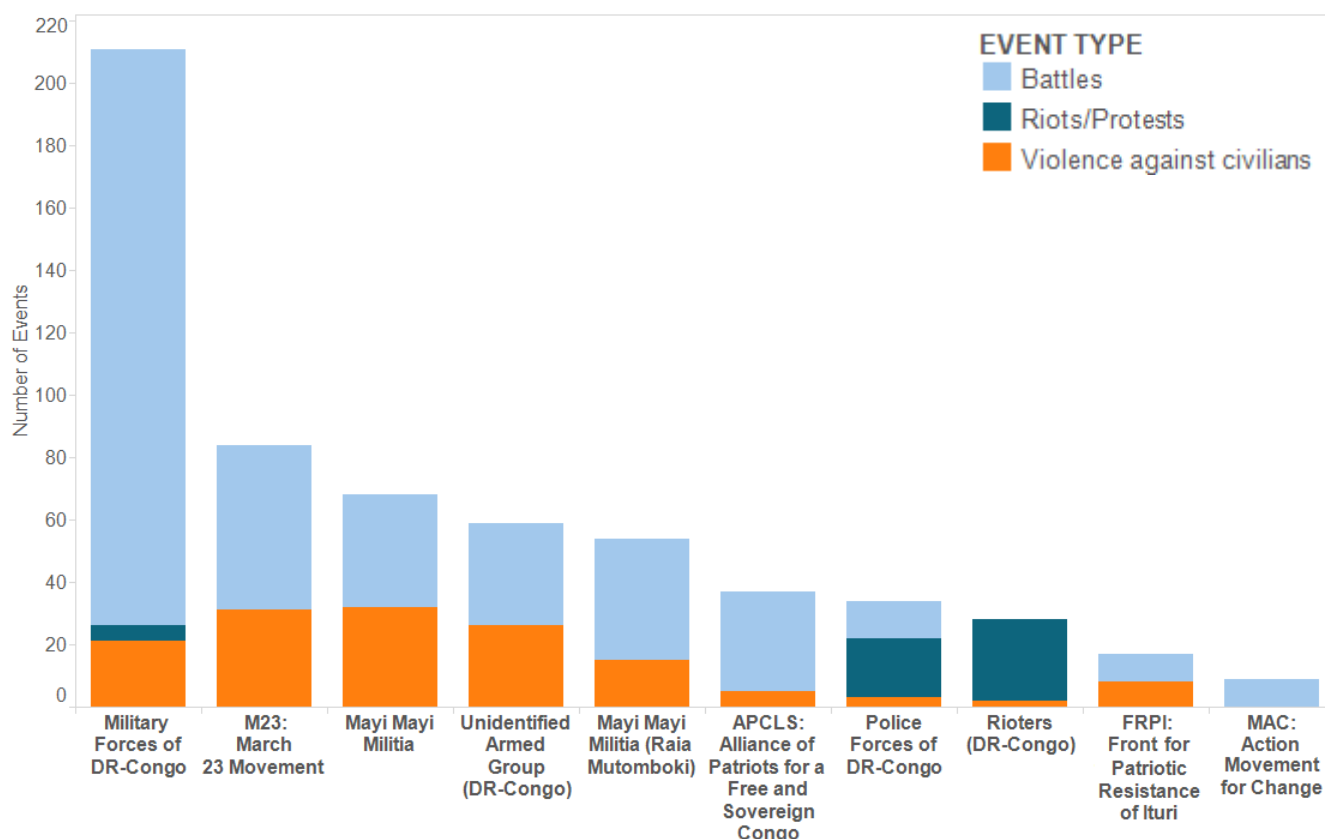


Figure 4: Conflict Events and Type, by Actor, DRC, Jan - Sept 2013.

Egypt

Following August's aggressive military clearance of protest camps in Cairo triggered by the ousting of democratically elected President Mohammed Morsi, conflict persisted in Egypt in September. Whilst the number of reported fatalities dropped significantly compared to August's spike, which according to the Egyptian Health Ministry saw 638 people killed on the 14th August alone (Daily News Egypt, 16 August 2013), the number of conflict events was significantly higher than levels surrounding the January 2011 overthrow of Hosni Mubarak.

September witnessed an overall decrease in the number of riots and protests comparatively with July and August coinciding with a nationwide clampdown on Muslim Brotherhood activity. A two month extension of the state of emergency granted security forces greater powers of arrest, while a court ordering the banning of all Brotherhood affiliations resulted in the confiscation of assets and a large number of detentions and arrests of influential leaders. Whilst concerns have been raised over the implications of further marginalisation of the Muslim Brotherhood for future stability, the conflict profile is generally consistent with the fluctuations observed since November 2012.

Increasing unrest in the Sinai Peninsula region has led to

daily clashes between suspected Islamic militants and state security forces there. Unlike the rest of the country, the Sinai Peninsula saw a slight increase in conflict events in September. Battles constituted 85.1% of all activity in the region in September, and has coincided with a marked increase in the level of military activity in the region (see Figure 5).

This shift saw Egyptian forces ramping up security and carry out the 'largest and most violent military operation yet' (Daily News Egypt, 7 September 2013). Similar operations occurred in Kerdasah, a bastion of Islamism, with military forces conducting violent raids as part of the wider campaign against pro-Morsi supporters..

Communal vigilante militia activity was largely absent this month, eclipsed by riots between Morsi supporters, dissidents and local residents which continued this month, albeit at a decreased intensity. These events were typically characterised by small-scale confrontations serving to polarise the population, further disrupting Egypt's political reconciliation. The tensions between Coptic Christians and Muslim communal groups that gripped Upper Egyptian villages in July and August have largely subsided, with fewer conflict events targeting civilians.

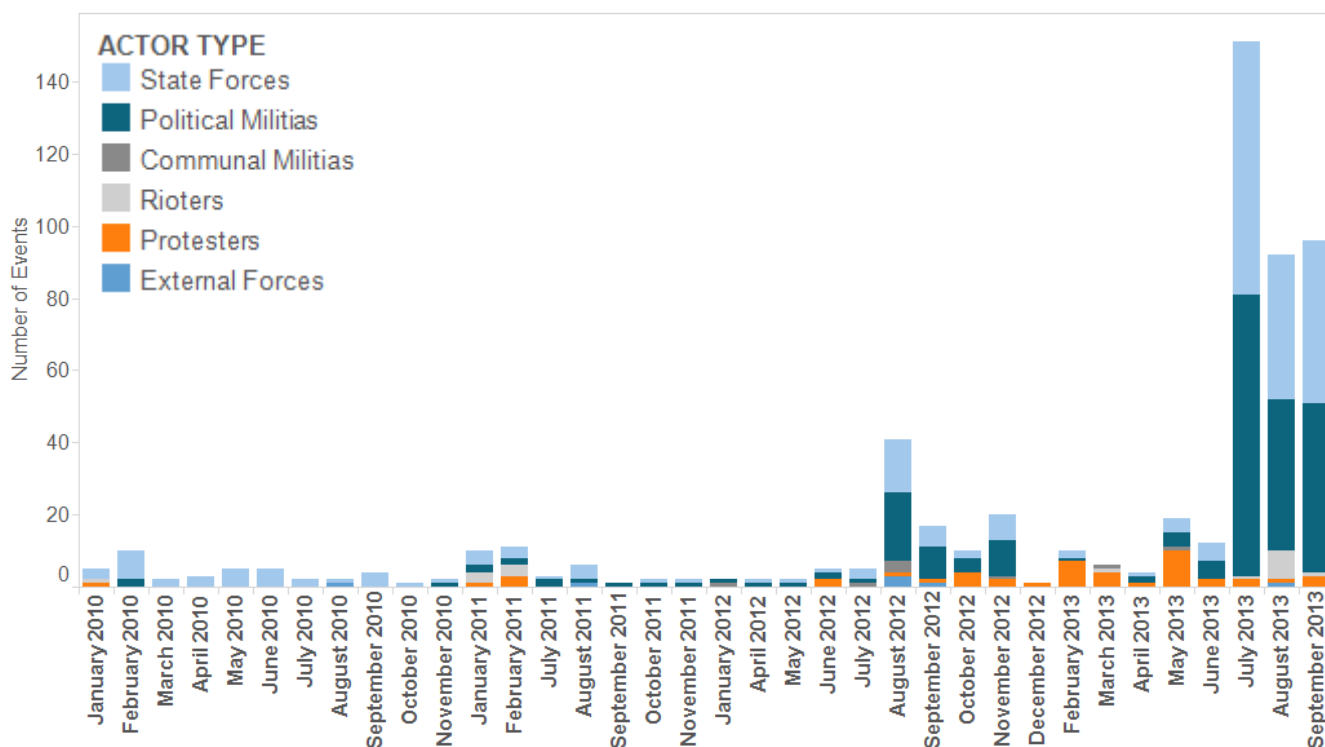


Figure 5: Conflict Events by Actor Type, Sinai Peninsula, Egypt, Jan 2010 - Sept 2013.

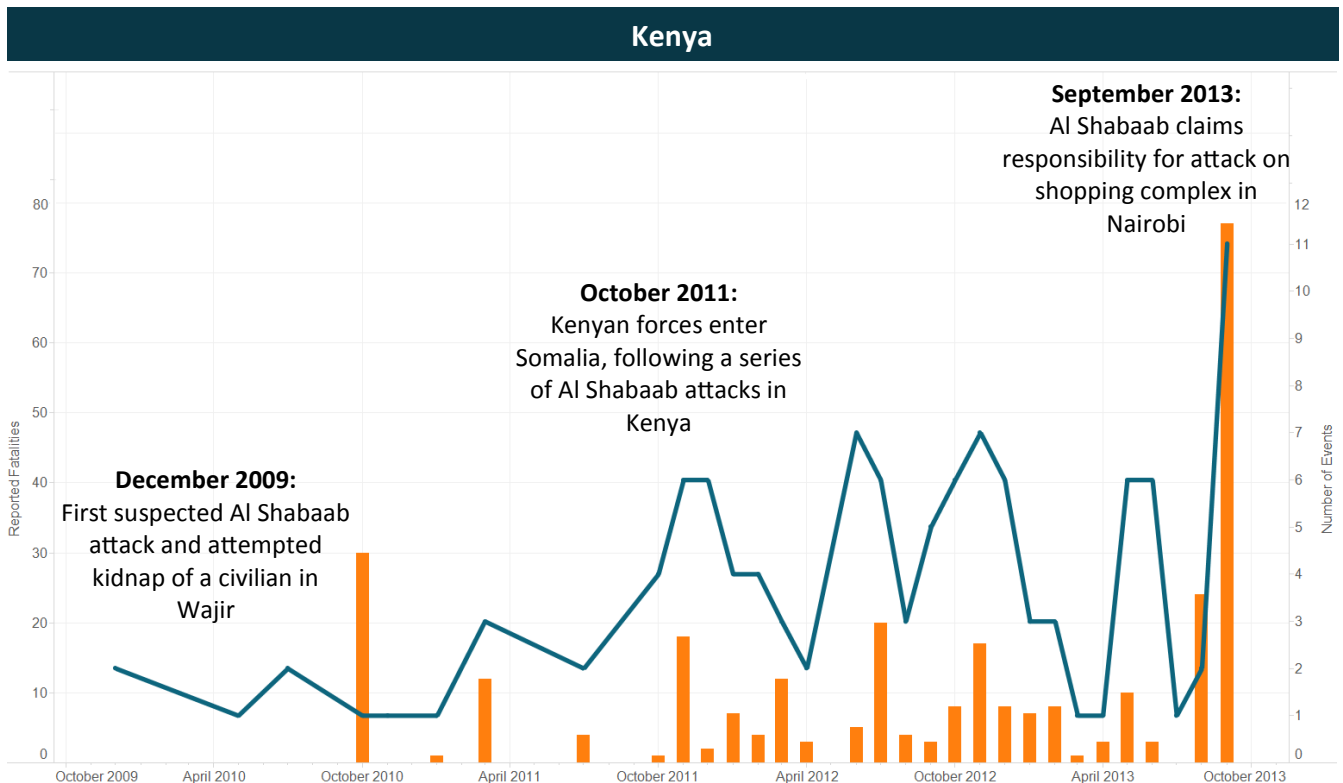


Figure 6: Al Shabaab Events and Associated Reported Fatalities, Kenya, Dec 2009 - Sept 2013.

Kenya made headlines worldwide in September, when Al Shabaab claimed responsibility for an attack on the Westgate shopping complex in Nairobi. The attack involved a four-day siege in the shopping centre, and claimed at least 67 lives before security forces declared the operation over. The scale and intensity of the attack has cast light on both immediate and longer-term threats to Kenya's security and response systems, with implications for Kenyan politics and policy both domestically and internationally.

There are obvious connections to be drawn to Kenya's intervention in Somalia, which began in October 2011 as little more than a unilateral incursion, and which has retrospectively been legitimised by the African Union as part of multilateral backing for the federal government. While Al Shabaab has been active in Kenya prior to

its intervention - and indeed, attacks attributed to Al Shabaab in the run-up to October 2011 were cited as a justification for incursion - the frequency and scale of attacks

has increased dramatically in the aftermath. Between the first suspected Al Shabaab attack in Kenya in December 2009, and the military's intervention in Somalia, 13 attacks were attributed to Al Shabaab, an average of one event every 7 weeks. Since mid-October 2011, over 103 events have been attributed to Al Shabaab in Kenya, an average of over one event per week.

Between 2009 and Kenya's intervention in Somalia in Oct 2011, 13 attacks were attributed to Al Shabaab in Kenya - or roughly one every 7 weeks. Since Oct 2011, 103 attacks have been attributed to the group, or an average of over one a week.

The nature of Al Shabaab violence has also changed: of 116 events attributed to Al Shabaab in Kenya, 40% have involved the deliberate targeting of civilians (see Figure 7). This figure has increased sharply since 2010 and early 2011, when attacks on civilians constituted 20 - 22% of the group's activities respectively, to constituting 38% of violence in 2013, and 56% of the group's reported fatalities. This type of violence differs from the nature of the group's activities within Somalia where, holding territory, 86% of the group's activities involved conflict with other armed actors.

This strategic evolution over time and space notwithstanding, the Westgate attack was an unusual and unchar-

Kenya

acteristic attack for the organisation for several reasons: it is the first reported instance of Al Shabaab engaging in a long-standing siege and taking hostages and it is the first very high-profile and high-tech attack it has carried out within Kenya, as most attacks to date have been sporadic, low-grade attacks involving grenades and explosives, but with far fewer casualties and a much lower profile.

Beyond international considerations, there are also important lessons and implications of the Westgate attack on the domestic front. As with governments elsewhere in Africa, Kenya may seek to frame September's attack entirely in terms of trans-national militants operating in Kenya with limited connections to local communities, populations or grievances. But Islamist mobilisation and militancy in Kenya is profoundly shaped by local conditions.

In the domestic context in the immediate aftermath, it is clear that jurisdictional issues, inter-agency rivalry and a lack of clear command lines hampered the response efforts of the security forces, and contributed to the siege lasting as long as it did. Revelations of store looting by security forces during the rescue operation (*Daily Nation*, 29 September 2013) have also revealed a high level of indiscipline among the security forces, in the context of which, a coordinated response and preventive measures are highly implausible. Ken Menkhaus has argued that the attack reveals the group's weakness, rather than its in-

creased capacity (*Think Progress*, 22 September). This is certainly true, as the group struggles to maintain its foothold in Somalia. But as it struggles and is weakened, Al Shabaab also evolves and has shown time and again that even in a much weakened state, it retains the organisational and logistical ability to inflict massive devastation on civilian and security targets, and remains a force to be reckoned with.

Kenya's restive North-East, where the country's ethnically Somali population is concentrated, has long witnessed and persistent high levels of violence, much of which has been attributed to Al Shabaab. Of the 116 conflict events attributed to Al Shabaab since 2009, 73 (63%) have taken place in the country's North-East, where at least 171 associated fatalities have also been reported.

Similarly, Islamist violence in the Coastal region, where 15 attacks have been attributed to Al Shabaab in recent years, is shaped by local and national concerns. Recent violent rioting in Mombasa following the killing of a Muslim cleric and three associates in the city claimed at least four lives. The unrest mirrored rioting which followed the killing of cleric Aboud Rogo Mohammed in the city last year. In both cases, residents attributed the deaths to assassinations by the security forces (*BBC News*, 4 October 2013), revealing a profound breakdown in trust in the country's institutions.

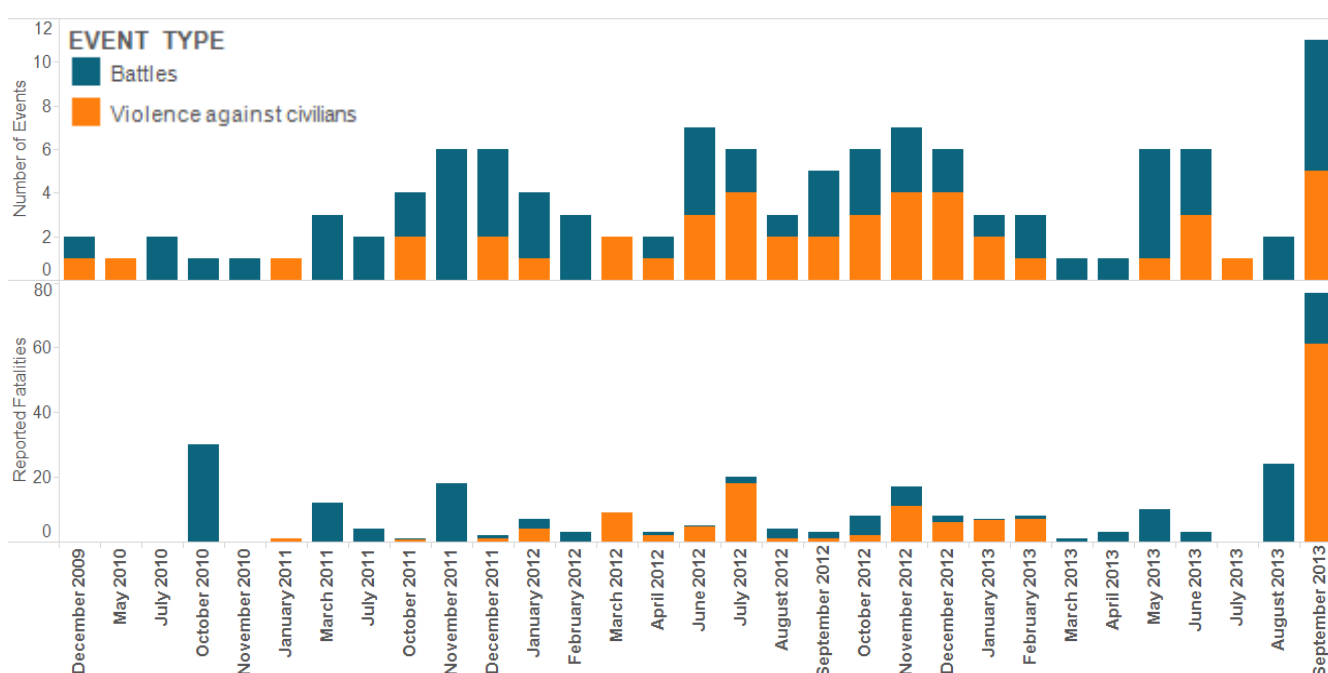


Figure 7: Al Shabaab Activity and Reported Fatalities in Kenya by Event Type, Dec 2009 - Sept 2013.

Sudan

In September, Sudan was rocked by deadly protests beginning in Wad Madani, and spreading to other locations, including Khartoum. The protests were instigated due to the removal of a national fuel subsidy. Demonstrators were met with brutal force; the government's official figures suggest at least 33 were killed, although that number is suspiciously low. Given the use of live ammunition, the suggested total by activists - of more than 150 deaths overall - is likely closer to reality. In typical fashion, the government denied responsibility for murdering its citizens, accusing 'outside elements' of shooting.

The fuel subsidy repeal is a consequence of other conflicts: after the secession of South Sudan and ongoing conflict with that state, a large proportion of Sudanese oil revenue was lost. The economic fragility of the state led to the repeal decision, and has underscored the condition of the overworked and underpaid military. These protests come fifteen months after a spate of anti-government demonstrations in June 2012. No effective reform resulted from previous attempts to seize the moment during the Arab spring, but there is reason to believe that the regime cannot take these frequent public outbursts and ongoing instability for long more. See Figure 7 for where (and what kinds) of instability permeate the state. There are a few

critical points to take away from this recent upset. First, the timing and implementation of the fuel subsidy repeal suggests that the elite are largely ignorant of the challenges faced by the average Sudanese citizen. The government talking points on how the protests were driven by a terrorist agenda are not credible. Terrorists don't often bother with public protests to get attention. Allowing the protests to be the result of citizen anger is not possible for the fragile leadership, especially as they see what has happened to their neighbors. Given the groundswell, the opposition is growing bolder in calls for Bashir to step down, and the ruling National Congress Party is cracking under the weight of defending him.

Finally, Sudan operates like a patchwork of fiefdoms, with multifaceted violence of varying intensities, agendas and agents across the state (see Darfur, South Sudan in ACLED trends January & May 2013). That these conflicts are separate, with disparate agents engaged in largely localized contexts, is beneficial to the regime: it is easy to be stronger than a local threat. But it has consistently faced the problem of spreading military power too thin. The regime may be quite weak if confronted by a unified threat. Nonetheless, before that can happen, Bashir will have exited most likely by the direction of his own party.

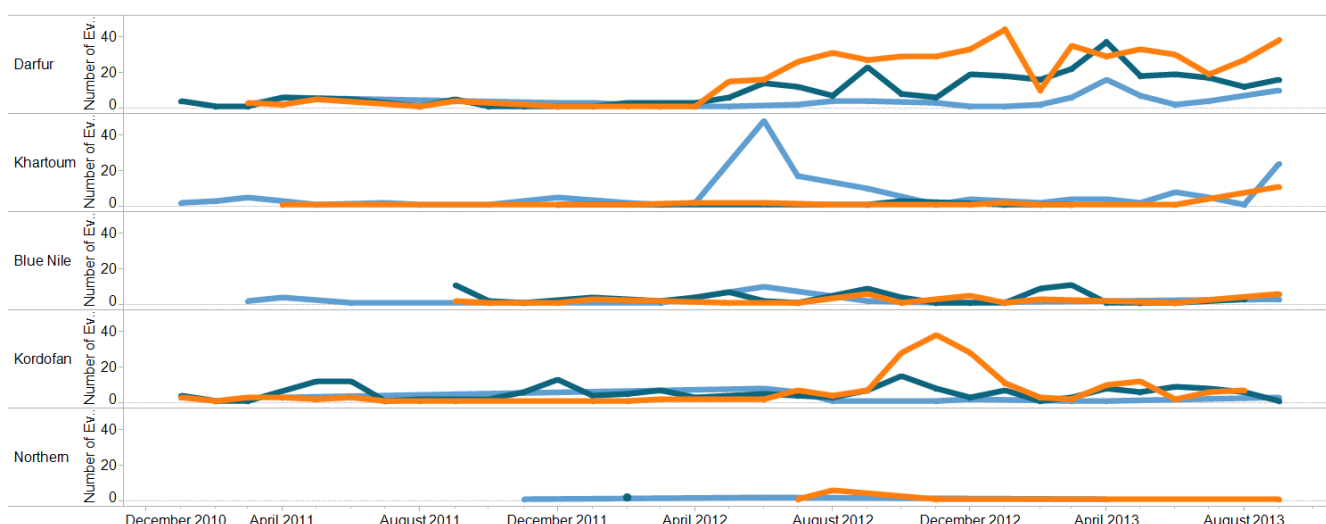


Figure 7: Conflict Events by Region, Sudan, Jan 2011 - Sept 2013.

Support

This material is based upon work supported by, or in part by, the U.S. Army Research Office grant number W911NF-09-1-0077 under the Minerva Initiative of the U.S. Department of Defense.

Sources

Conflict Trends reports are compiled from ACLED data and draw on news sources, civil society reports, and analysis. Full details of sources and coding processes are available online at acleddata.com.