Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED)

User Quick Guide

April 2019

Further information and maps, data, trends and publications can be found at www.acleddata.com or by contacting admin@acleddata.com

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User Quick Guide and Details

What does ACLED data cover?

ACLED collects realtime and historical data on political violence and protest events in nearly 100 countries. As of April 2019, ACLED covers Africa (from 1997 to real time), Middle East (from 2016 to real time), South and South-Eastern Asia (from 2010 to real time) and Europe (from 2018 to real time).

Where can you access ACLED data?

Data are published on ACLED's website (acleddata.com) with real-time updates. There are detailed instructions about how you can export the data you are interested in, including selecting by group, event type, country, or with a keyword.

How are the data disaggregated?

The ACLED dataset seeks to provide information about political violence and protest which is disaggregated by date (when the event happened); type of violence (what happened); actors (who is involved); and location (where the event happened). Reports of violence are broken down into individual, discrete events, determined by whether they took place at a different time, involved different types of violence or actors, or occurred in different locations. In practical terms, this means that events that take place on different days, involving different types of violence, with different types of actors or in a different location are all coded as separate events. Additional information on ACLED methodology can be found on the website.

How are these data collected?

ACLED data are collected by a range of experienced researchers who use information primarily from secondary sources and code it according to a process outlined in the codebook.

ACLED takes a variety of steps to help ensure that the data are both accurate as well as accessible for academics, policymakers, and practitioners to work with and integrate into their own research. ACLED data are collected each week after individual researchers have scrutinized information from available reports; they are then aggregated and revised by the first coding reviewer, investigated and cross-checked by the second reviewer and then event notes and details are inspected by the third and final reviewer.

In addition to weekly review of the real-time conflict data, an overarching cleaning and data management effort is undertaken on an annual basis, leading to the annually-

released dataset publication. See the website for additional information about data collection and review.

Can I use ACLED for my own research?

ACLED data are publicly available without charge. The data included is not confidential and so can be shared and analysed publicly. ACLED data can be used for academic and policy research, as well as analysis specific to organisations operating in target countries.

How do I cite ACLED data?

If you are a non-commercial entity (e.g. non-profit, government, academic institution) and seek to use ACLED data and/or analysis for non-commercial/non-profit purposes, you are permitted to do so free of charge provided you follow the attribution policy below. Use of ACLED data and/or analysis is contingent upon observation of this policy:

1. If using ACLED data in any way, direct or manipulated, the data must be clearly acknowledged. Acknowledgement should include **1)** a footnote with the full citation which includes a/the link to ACLED's website (see below for examples), **2)** in text citation/acknowledgement, stating where the data you use are from and that ACLED data are publicly available, and **3)** clear citation on any and all visuals making use of ACLED data

2. If generating a data file for public or private use, and presenting those data to another party, the ACLED data included must be directly acknowledged in a source column (ACLED's full name and a link: Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED); acleddata.com).

3. To reference the ACLED codebook, please cite: ACLED, (2019). "Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) Codebook".

4. If using ACLED data in an academic paper or article, please cite: Raleigh, Clionadh, Andrew Linke, Håvard Hegre and Joakim Karlsen. (2010). "Introducing ACLED-Armed Conflict Location and Event Data." Journal of Peace Research 47(5) 651-660.

5. If referring to figures or statistics published in ACLED analysis, infographics, working papers, etc., please cite the individual analysis piece or paper, including the author(s), as follows: *Hart, Tom, and Lauren Blaxter. (23 November 2018). "Ceasefire Divisions: Violations of the Truce with Gaza Lead to Rising Political Pressures in Israel." Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED).* If the

piece doesn't have an author recognized (often the case for pieces on ACLED methodology), you should include ACLED as the author.

6. If using ACLED data in a visual, graphic, map or infographic of your own, please attribute the source data prominently on the visual itself or within the key / legend.

7. If you wish to reproduce or publish an image, graph or map ACLED has already published (rather than creating an original image using raw data), please cite the individual analysis piece or paper, including the author(s), as follows: *Hart, Tom, and Lauren Blaxter. (23 November 2018). "Ceasefire Divisions: Violations of the Truce with Gaza Lead to Rising Political Pressures in Israel." Figure 1, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED).*

What do the specific columns mean in ACLED data?

In the ACLED dataset, each column contains specific information on the exact location, date, actors and other characteristics of politically violent events. Data about the specific columns are available in the Resources section of the website.

What is the difference between event types?

ACLED currently codes six types of events, both violent and non-violent, that may occur during a conflict. These include:

1. *Battles* (Violent interactions between two organised armed groups);
2. *Explosions/Remote violence* (One-sided violence events in which the tool for engaging in conflict creates asymmetry by taking away the ability of the target to respond);
3. *Violence against civilians* (Violent events where an organised armed group deliberately inflicts violence upon unarmed non-combatants);
4. *Protests* (A public demonstration against a political entity, government institution, policy or group in which the participants are not violent);
5. *Riots* (Violent events where demonstrators or mobs engage in disruptive acts or disorganised acts of violence against property or people);
6. *Strategic development* (accounts for often non-violent activity by conflict and other agents within the context of the war/dispute. Recruitment, looting and arrests are included).

In addition, twenty-five sub-event types were introduced to further disaggregate instances of violence within the wider event type categories. Additional information on event types in ACLED can be found online in our codebook.

Can I use ACLED data to find information about the number of people killed by a specific group?

ACLED does not code fatality figures according to which group suffered casualties because most source reports do not offer this level of detail. Instead, the events include, when available, the total number of deaths arising from a conflict event. The estimated number of fatalities associated with a single event is reported in the fatalities column.

For this reason, the data cannot generally be used to estimate the number of deaths *caused* by one actor or another in a conflict, as a single event may contain information on casualties suffered by both parties in a battle, for example. The only exception to this is in incidents of violence against civilians: because ACLED only codes events of violence against civilians where the targets were unarmed, non-combatants, the number of fatalities reported for each event of violence against civilians is taken to be the reported number of civilians killed.

All fatalities recorded are 'reported fatalities.' ACLED does not independently verify details of fatalities, and includes this information as an estimate only, reflecting the content of media reports. We further specify in our user guides and other resources that fatality data are particularly prone to manipulation by armed groups, and occasionally the media, for various reasons, and urge users to take this into account in their analysis of fatalities. As such, ACLED codes the death toll as it is reported; where a range of fatalities is reported, we code the lowest of that range, and seek to note in the 'Notes' section when there has been a dispute.

Can I use ACLED data to find information about the number of people injured by a specific group?

The fatalities column in our dataset refers to the estimated number of reported fatalities associated with a single event. ACLED does not collect casualty data, but such information may be in the notes.

What is the date format for ACLED events?

The data use a dd-mm-yyyy format (UK style) and for all future iterations of the dataset, the format will be consistently a dd-mmmm-yyyy format to alleviate any problems.

How can I make a comment, or pose a question, to the ACLED team?

Please contact us through our general email (admin@acleddata.com) or via twitter's direct message (@acledinfo).

ACLED Data Columns

ISO: A numeric code for each individual country.

EVENT_ID_CNTY: An individual event identifier by number and country acronym.

EVENT_ID_NO_CNTY: An individual event numeric identifier.

EVENT_DATE: Recorded as Day / Month / Year.

YEAR: The year in which an event took place.

TIME_PRECISION: A numeric code indicating the level of certainty of the date coded for the event (1-3).

EVENT_TYPE: The type of event.

SUB_EVENT_TYPE: The type of sub-event.

ACTOR1: A named actor involved in the event.

ASSOC_ACTOR_1: The named actor associated with or identifying with ACTOR1 in one specific event.

INTER1: A numeric code indicating the type of ACTOR1.

ACTOR2: The named actor involved in the event. If a dyadic event, there will also be an "Actor 1".

ASSOC_ACTOR_2: The named actor associated with or identifying with ACTOR2 in one specific event.

INTER2: A numeric code indicating the type of ACTOR2.

INTERACTION: A numeric code indicating the interaction between types of ACTOR1 and ACTOR2. Coded as an interaction between actor types, and recorded as lowest joint number.

REGION: The region of the world where the event took place.

COUNTRY: The country in which the event took place.

ADMIN1: The largest sub-national administrative region in which the event took place.

ADMIN2: The second largest sub-national administrative region in which the event took place.

ADMIN3: The third largest sub-national administrative region in which the event took place.

LOCATION: The location in which the event took place.

LATITUDE: The latitude of the location.

LONGITUDE: The longitude of the location.

GEO_PRECISION: A numeric code indicating the level of certainty of the location coded for the event.

SOURCE: The source(s) used to code the event.

SOURCE SCALE: The geographic scale of the sources used to code the event.

NOTES: A short description of the event.

FATALITIES: Number or estimate of fatalities due to event. These are frequently different across reports.

ACLED API

User Guide

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https://ampersandstudio.uk/

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ACLED API

Version 2.6

Introduction

The following document highlights the basic steps for interacting with the Acled API. The API is RESTful in nature and is accessed via Basic HTTP(S) authentication.

API Access Detail

The full URL for accessing the API is https://api.acleddata.com/{data}/{command}, where "data" represents the type of data to be collected and "command" represents the action to be executed. See below for details regarding possible data types and usages. **You must include a query acknowledging that you have read the terms and conditions of use below.**

Sample API Calls and Responses

API calls may be made in any standard browser or using any programmatic language that is capable of making HTTP requests. The samples below demonstrate the URL to be called to make the request.

The following points should be noted:

- All requests will be denied without accepting the terms.
- This API only uses the GET or POST request. A GET request is advised whereby all data sent will be contained within standard Query String parameter formats and URLencoded.
- All responses from the API shall be formatted as JSON unless specifically requested in either XML, CSV or TXT format.
- TXT format returns a plain text csv string.
- A limit of 500 lines of data (1000 rows for monadic) will be returned by default for ACLED and Actor data types. Larger requests may be made, however.
- All fields, specific to the data type, will be returned by default. Reduced field lists can be requested for some data types.
- ACLED data is returned in date order DESC (starting with the latest).

Response Format

By default the response is returned in JSON format but it's possible to return the response in XML, CSV and TXT format too. In order to return another format you simply add the relevant extension to the end of the command name so the query would look like the following:

Format	HTTP Request Format	MIME Type
JSON	https://api.acleddata.com/{data}/{command}	application/json
XML	https://api.acleddata.com/{data}/{command}.xml	text/xml
CSV	https://api.acleddata.com/{data}/{command}.csv	text/csv
TXT	https://api.acleddata.com/{data}/{command}.txt	text/plain

Terms & Conditions

Terms of Use and Attrition Policy

Background

Non-Commercial Licenses - ACLED's full dataset is available for use free of charge by non-commercial entities and organizations (e.g., non-profit organizations, government agencies, academic institutions) using the data for non-commercial purposes, subject to these Terms of Use. Non-commercial licenses may also be granted to for-profit media outlets or journalists citing ACLED's content in works of journalism; provided that such works are made available to the general public and benefit public discourse on the topic, subject to ACLED's prior, written approval.

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Regardless of the type of license, all rights to use or exploit ACLED data or analysis are conditioned on the licensee's adherence to the Attribution Requirements outlined below.

No user is permitted to (i) use ACLED's data or analysis in any manner that may harm, target, oppress or defame ACLED, the data subjects, or any group or population, or cause any of the foregoing to be harmed, targeted, oppressed or defamed; (ii) provide, permit or allow direct access to any of ACLED's original/raw data or analysis; (iii) use any of the data or analysis to create, develop, support or provide benchmarking for any dataset, product or platform similar to, or in competition with, or would create a

functional substitute for, any of ACLED content, products or platform; and (iv) provide, permit or allow access to any of the data or analysis by ACLED's competitors.

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1. **If using ACLED data in any way**, **direct or manipulated,** the data must be clearly acknowledged. Acknowledgement should include (1) a footnote with the full citation which includes a/the link to ACLED's website (see below for examples), (2) in text citation/acknowledgement, stating where the data you use are from and that ACLED data are publicly available, and (3) clear citation on any and all visuals making use of ACLED data.

2. **If generating a data file for public or private use, and presenting those data to another party**, the ACLED data included must be directly acknowledged in a source column, including ACLED's full name and a link: "Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED); https://www.acleddata.com."

3. **To reference the ACLED codebook, please cite as follows (substituting for the correct year):**

   "ACLED. (2017). "Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) Codebook, 2017.""

4. **If using ACLED data in an academic paper or article, please cite as follows:**

   "Raleigh, Clionadh, Andrew Linke, Håvard Hegre and Joakim Karlsen. (2010). "Introducing ACLED-Armed Conflict Location and Event Data." Journal of Peace Research 47(5) 651-660."

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   Hart, Tom, and Lauren Blaxter. (23 November 2018). "Ceasefire Divisions: Violations of the Truce with Gaza Lead to Rising Political Pressures in Israel." Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED). <https://www.acleddata.com/2018/11/23/ceasefire-divisions-violations-of-the-truce-with-gaza-lead-to-rising-political-pressures-in-israel/>.

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7. **If you wish to reproduce or publish a graphic, graph or map ACLED has already published (rather than creating an original image using raw data)**, please cite the individual analysis piece or paper, including the author(s), using the following format:

    Hart, Tom, and Lauren Blaxter. (23 November 2018). "Ceasefire Divisions: Violations of the Truce with Gaza Lead to Rising Political Pressures in Israel." Figure 1, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED). <*https://www.acleddata.com/2018/11/23/ceasefire-divisions-violations-of-the-truce-with-gaza-lead-to-rising-political-pressures-in-israel/*>. © 2018 ACLED All rights reserved. Used with permission from ACLED.

If the ACLED piece does not have an author recognized (often the case for pieces on ACLED methodology), the citation should identify ACLED as the author.

If you intend to use ACLED data or analysis in a manner not described in these Attribution Requirements, contact us directly at admin@acleddata.com for instruction regarding the attribution requirements.

If you have any other questions about the Terms of Use or Attribution Policy, or their application, please feel free to contact us directly at admin@acleddata.com.

ACLED

This data call returns the main dataset

Commands

Read

In order to retrieve the data you must make a GET or POST request to the following URL:

https://api.acleddata.com/acled/read?terms=accept

Returned Data (json only)

Attribute Name	Type	Description
status	int	A number representing the request status
success	boolean	A boolean representation on the success of the call
last_update	int	The number of hours since the last update to the data
count	int	The number of data rows returned
data	array	The rows of data returned. For details of attributes returned in each row, see below.
filename	string	The filename that will be used for csv calls
error	array	The details of the error with a status as an integer and message as a string

Returned Data (json, xml, txt, csv)

Attribute Name	Type	Description
data_id	int	A unique id for the row of data
iso	int	A numeric code for each individual country. Referenced here - ISO Country List
event_id_cnty	string	An individual identifier by number and country acronym
event_id_no_cnty	string	An individual numeric identifier
event_date	date	The date the event occurred in the format: yyyy-mm-dd
year	int	The year the event occurred.
time_precision	int	A numeric code indicating the level of certainty of the date coded for the event

Attribute Name	Type	Description
event_type	string	The type of conflict event
sub_event_type	string	The type of conflict sub event
actor1	string	The named actor involved in the event
assoc_actor_1	string	The named actor allied with or identifying ACTOR1
inter1	int	A numeric code indicating the type of ACTOR1.
actor2*	string	The named actor involved in the event
assoc_actor_2*	string	The named actor allied with or identifying ACTOR2
inter2*	int	A numeric code indicating the type of ACTOR2.
interaction	int	A numeric code indicating the interaction between types of ACTOR1 and ACTOR2
region	string	The region in which the event took place
country	string	The name of the country the event occurred in
admin1	string	The largest sub-national administrative region in which the event took place
admin2	string	The second largest sub-national administrative region in which the event took place
admin3	string	The third largest sub-national administrative region in which the event took place
location	string	The location in which the event took place
latitude	decimal	The latitude of the location
longitude	decimal	The longitude of the location
geo_precision	int	A numeric code indicating the level of certainty of the location coded for the event
source	string	The source of the event report
source_scale	string	The scale of the source
notes	string	A short description of the event
fatalities	int	The number of reported fatalities which occurred during the event
timestamp	int / date	The unix timestamp this data entry was last updated
iso3		A 3 character code representation of each country

* These attributes will be returned as a new data row if export type is monadic.

Query Filters

Each field can be searched to filter the returned data. By default each field will search by = or LIKE based on the table below. This can be changed by sending a new query string name value pair, where the name has '_where' appended to it. The following table shows the default query type that will be used by each field. **The terms query must be included in all requests to indicate that you have read and accept the terms of use.**

Query Name	Type	Query String
terms	**=**	**accept**
data_id	=	?data_id={number}
iso	=	?iso={number}
event_id_cnty	LIKE	?event_id_cnty={text}
event_id_no_cnty	LIKE	?event_id_no_cnty={text}
event_date	=	?event_date={yyyy-mm-dd}
year	=	?year={yyyy}
time_precision	=	?time_precision={number}
event_type	LIKE	?event_type={text}
sub_event_type	LIKE	?sub_event_type={text}
actor1	LIKE	?actor1={text}
assoc_actor_1	LIKE	?assoc_actor_1={text}
inter1	=	?inter1={number}
actor2	LIKE	?actor2={text}
assoc_actor_2	LIKE	?assoc_actor_2={text}
inter2	=	?inter2={number}
interaction	=	?interaction={number}
region	=	?region={number}
country	LIKE	?country={text}
admin1	LIKE	?admin1={text}
admin2	LIKE	?admin2={text}
admin3	LIKE	?admin3={text}
location	LIKE	?location={text}

Query Name	Type	Query String
latitude	=	?latitude={number}
longitude	=	?longitude={number}
geo_precision	=	?geo_precision={number}
source	LIKE	?source={text}
source_scale	LIKE	?source_scale={text}
notes	LIKE	?notes={text}
fatalities	=	?fatalities={number}
timestamp	>=	?timestamp={number/yyyy-mm-dd}
export_type	=	?export_type={text}
iso3	=	?iso3={text}

References

For some attributes a number is required instead of text. The following reference tables provides the numeric code to be used for certain content.

inter 1 / inter 2	Numeric Code
State Forces	1
Rebel Forces	2
Militia Groups	3
Communal / Identity Groups	4
Rioters	5
Protesters	6
Civilians	7
Foreign / Others	8

region	Numeric Code
Western Africa	1
Middle Africa	2
Eastern Africa	3
Southern Africa	4

region	Numeric Code
Northern Africa	5
Southern Asia	7
Western Asia	8
South-Eastern Asia	9
South Asia	10
Middle East	11
Europe	12

- The ISO country list can be viewed here - ISO Country Link
- All LIKE queries will include a wildcard before and after the entered text.
- Multiple queries can be searched with name/value pairs separated by &. Each field will be searched using AND so all arguments must match for data to be returned.
- More complex queries can be searched to include the OR clause. See Complex Queries below.
- If export_type is not included it will by dyadic. For monadic export you will need to include the export_type query.

To change the default query type you can add an additional name/value pair using the query name and appending '_where' to the query name. The query value could be LIKE or %3D for '='. Additional types of '<', '>' and 'BETWEEN may also be used, representing less than, greater than and between. The between requires the query name value to separate the 2 values with a |.

Example:

?terms=accept&event_id_cnty={text}&event_id_cnty_where=%3D

?terms=accept&event_date={yyyy-mm-dd|yyyy-mm-dd}&event_date_where=BETWEEN

Limit Query & Pagination

By default there is a limit of 500 rows of data returned, 1000 rows if export_type = monadic. You can use the limit query name to change the default number. Setting limit as 0 will return all relevant data. It is likely returning all data will cause a timeout error and we therefore recommend using the page query instead. Each page will return 500 (1000 for monadic) rows of data.

Example:

?terms=accept&limit=100 will return 100 rows of data (200 for monadic).

?terms=accept&page=1 will return the first 500 rows of data (1000 for monadic)
?terms=accept&page=2 will return the next 500 rows of data (1000 for monadic)

Limit Fields Returned

By default all fields will be returned for each line of data. You can use the field query name to change the field items returned. Multiple fields can be requested by separating each one with a pipe (|).

Example:
?terms=accept&field=iso will return just the iso field.
?terms=accept&field=iso|fatalities will return the iso and fatalities data for each row.

Complex Queries

By default all fields must match for the data to be returned. In some instances more complex queries may be required to use the OR clause. This is possible by separating the fields to join, by OR, with :OR: text. The main query item will be the first item in the join, followed by the other items split with :OR: . These can be used with other queries too.

Example:
?terms=accept&field={text}:OR:field2={text2}:OR:field3={text3} will return data where field = text OR field2 = text2 OR field3 = text3.

?terms=accept&field={text}:OR:field2={text2}&country={country} will return data where field = text OR field2 = text2 AND country = country.

Actor

This data call returns the actors

Commands

Read

In order to retrieve the data you must make a GET or POST request to the following URL:

https://api.acleddata.com/actor/read?terms=accept

Returned Data (json only)

Attribute Name	Type	Description
status	int	A number representing the request status
success	boolean	A boolean representation on the success of the call
last_update	int	The number of hours since the last update to the data
count	int	The number of data rows returned
data	array	The rows of data returned. For details of attributes returned in each row, see below.
filename	string	The filename that will be used for csv calls
error	array	The details of the error with a status as an integer and message as a string

Returned Data (json, xml, txt, csv)

Attribute Name	Type	Description
actor_name	string	The name of the actor
first_event_date	date	The date the first event for this actor occurred in the format: yyyy-mm-dd
last_event_date	date	The date the last event for this actor occurred in the format: yyyy-mm-dd
event_count	int	The number of events that have occurred with this actor

Query Filters

Each field can be searched to filter the returned data. By default each field will search by = or LIKE based on the table below. This can be changed by sending a new query string name value pair, where the name has '_where' appended to it. The following table shows the default query type that will be used by each field. **The terms query must be included in all requests to indicate that you have read and accept the terms of use.**

Query Name	Type	Query String
terms	**=**	**accept**
actor_name	LIKE	?actor_name={text}
first_event_date	=	?first_event_date={yyyy-mm-dd}
last_event_date	=	?last_event_date={yyyy-mm-dd}
event_count	>=	?event_count={number}

- All LIKE queries will include a wildcard before and after the entered text.
- Multiple queries can be searched with name/value pairs separated by &. Each field will be searched using AND so all arguments must match for data to be returned.
- More complex queries can be searched to include the OR clause. See Complex Queries below.

To change the default query type you can add an additional name/value pair using the query name and appending '_where' to the query name. The query value could be LIKE or %3D for '='. Additional types of '<', '>' and 'BETWEEN may also be used, representing less than, greater than and between. The between requires the query name value to separate the 2 values with a |.

Example:

?terms=accept&actor_name={text}&actor_name_where=%3D

?terms=accept&last_event_date={yyyy-mm-dd|yyyy-mm-dd}&last_event_date_where=BETWEEN

Limit Query & Pagination

By default there is a limit of 500 rows of data returned. You can use the limit query name to change the default number. Setting limit as 0 will return all relevant data. It is likely returning all data will cause a timeout error and we therefore recommend using the page query instead. Each page will return 500 rows of data.

Example:
?terms=accept&limit=100 will return 100 rows of data.

?terms=accept&page=1 will return the first 500 rows of data
?terms=accept&page=2 will return the next 500 rows of data

Complex Queries

By default all fields must match for the data to be returned. In some instances more complex queries may be required to use the OR clause. This is possible by separating the fields to join, by OR, with :OR: text. The main query item will be the first item in the join, followed by the other items split with :OR: . These can be used with other queries too.

Example:
?terms=accept&field={text}:OR:field2={text2}:OR:field3={text3} will return data where field = text OR field2 = text2 OR field3 = text3.

?terms=accept&field={text}:OR:field2={text2}&event_count={number} will return data where field = text OR field2 = text2 AND event_count = number.

Actor Type

This data call returns the actor types

Commands

Read

In order to retrieve the data you must make a GET or POST request to the following URL:

https://api.acleddata.com/actortype/read?terms=accept

Returned Data (json only)

Attribute Name	Type	Description
status	int	A number representing the request status
success	boolean	A boolean representation on the success of the call
last_update	int	The number of hours since the last update to the data
count	int	The number of data rows returned
data	array	The rows of data returned. For details of attributes returned in each row, see below.
filename	string	The filename that will be used for csv calls
error	array	The details of the error with a status as an integer and message as a string

Returned Data (json, xml, txt, csv)

Attribute Name	Type	Description
actor_type_id	int	The id of the actor type
actor_type_name	string	The name of the actor type
first_event_date	date	The date the first event for this actor type occurred in the format: yyyy-mm-dd
last_event_date	date	The date the last event for this actor type occurred in the format: yyyy-mm-dd
event_count	int	The number of events that have occurred with this actor type

Query Filters

Each field can be searched to filter the returned data. By default each field will search by = or LIKE based on the table below. This can be changed by sending a new query string name value pair, where the name has '_where' appended to it. The following table shows the default query type that will be used by each field. **The terms query must be included in all requests to indicate that you have read and accept the terms of use.**

Query Name	Type	Query String
terms	**=**	**accept**
actor_type_id	=	?actor_type_id={number}
actor_type_name	LIKE	?actor_name={text}
first_event_date	=	?first_event_date={yyyy-mm-dd}
last_event_date	=	?last_event_date={yyyy-mm-dd}
event_count	>=	?event_count={number}

- All LIKE queries will include a wildcard before and after the entered text.
- Multiple queries can be searched with name/value pairs separated by &. Each field will be searched using AND so all arguments must match for data to be returned.
- More complex queries can be searched to include the OR clause. See Complex Queries below.

To change the default query type you can add an additional name/value pair using the query name and appending '_where' to the query name. The query value could be LIKE or %3D for '='. Additional types of '<', '>' and 'BETWEEN may also be used, representing less than, greater than and between. The between requires the query name value to separate the 2 values with a |.

Example:

?terms=accept&actor_type_name={text}&actor_type_name_where=%3D

?terms=accept&last_event_date={yyyy-mm-dd|yyyy-mm-dd}&last_event_date_where=BETWEEN

Complex Queries

By default all fields must match for the data to be returned. In some instances more complex queries may be required to use the OR clause. This is possible by separating the

fields to join, by OR, with :OR: text. The main query item will be the first item in the join, followed by the other items split with :OR: . These can be used with other queries too.

Example:
?terms=accept&field={text}:OR:field2={text2}:OR:field3={text3} will return data where field = text OR field2 = text2 OR field3 = text3.

?terms=accept&field={text}:OR:field2={text2}&event_count={number} will return data where field = text OR field2 = text2 AND event_count = number.

Country

This data call returns the countries

Commands

Read

In order to retrieve the data you must make a GET or POST request to the following URL:

https://api.acleddata.com/country/read?terms=accept

Returned Data (json only)

Attribute Name	Type	Description
status	int	A number representing the request status
success	boolean	A boolean representation on the success of the call
last_update	int	The number of hours since the last update to the data
count	int	The number of data rows returned
data	array	The rows of data returned. For details of attributes returned in each row, see below.
filename	string	The filename that will be used for csv calls
error	array	The details of the error with a status as an integer and message as a string

Returned Data (json, xml, txt, csv)

Attribute Name	Type	Description
country	string	The name of the country
iso	int	The iso number of the country
iso3	string	The iso3 representation of the country
first_event_date	date	The date the first event for this actor type occurred in the format: yyyy-mm-dd
last_event_date	date	The date the last event for this actor type occurred in the format: yyyy-mm-dd
event_count	int	The number of events that have occurred with this actor type

Query Filters

Each field can be searched to filter the returned data. By default each field will search by = or LIKE based on the table below. This can be changed by sending a new query string name value pair, where the name has '_where' appended to it. The following table shows the default query type that will be used by each field. **The terms query must be included in all requests to indicate that you have read and accept the terms of use.**

Query Name	Type	Query String
terms	**=**	**accept**
country	LIKE	?country={text}
iso	=	?iso={number}
iso3	=	?iso3={text}
first_event_date	=	?first_event_date={yyyy-mm-dd}
last_event_date	=	?last_event_date={yyyy-mm-dd}
event_count	>=	?event_count={number}

- All LIKE queries will include a wildcard before and after the entered text.
- Multiple queries can be searched with name/value pairs separated by &. Each field will be searched using AND so all arguments must match for data to be returned.
- More complex queries can be searched to include the OR clause. See Complex Queries below.

To change the default query type you can add an additional name/value pair using the query name and appending '_where' to the query name. The query value could be LIKE or %3D for '='. Additional types of '<', '>' and 'BETWEEN may also be used, representing less than, greater than and between. The between requires the query name value to separate the 2 values with a |.

Example:

?terms=accept&country={text}&country_where=%3D

?terms=accept&last_event_date={yyyy-mm-dd|yyyy-mm-dd}&last_event_date_where=BETWEEN

Complex Queries

By default all fields must match for the data to be returned. In some instances more complex queries may be required to use the OR clause. This is possible by separating the fields to join, by OR, with :OR: text. The main query item will be the first item in the join, followed by the other items split with :OR: . These can be used with other queries too.

Example:
?terms=accept&field={text}:OR:field2={text2}:OR:field3={text3} will return data where field = text OR field2 = text2 OR field3 = text3.

?terms=accept&field={text}:OR:field2={text2}&event_count={number} will return data where field = text OR field2 = text2 AND event_count = number.

Region

This data call returns the regions

Commands

Read

In order to retrieve the data you must make a GET or POST request to the following URL:

https://api.acleddata.com/region/read?terms=accept

Returned Data (json only)

Attribute Name	Type	Description
status	int	A number representing the request status
success	boolean	A boolean representation on the success of the call
last_update	int	The number of hours since the last update to the data
count	int	The number of data rows returned
data	array	The rows of data returned. For details of attributes returned in each row, see below.
filename	string	The filename that will be used for csv calls
error	array	The details of the error with a status as an integer and message as a string

Returned Data (json, xml, txt, csv)

Attribute Name	Type	Description
region	int	The id of the region
region_name	string	The name of the region
first_event_date	date	The date the first event for this actor type occurred in the format: yyyy-mm-dd
last_event_date	date	The date the last event for this actor type occurred in the format: yyyy-mm-dd
event_count	int	The number of events that have occurred with this actor type

Query Filters

Each field can be searched to filter the returned data. By default each field will search by = or LIKE based on the table below. This can be changed by sending a new query string name value pair, where the name has '_where' appended to it. The following table shows the default query type that will be used by each field. **The terms query must be included in all requests to indicate that you have read and accept the terms of use.**

Query Name	Type	Query String
terms	**=**	**accept**
region	=	?region={number}
region_name	LIKE	?region_name={text}
first_event_date	=	?first_event_date={yyyy-mm-dd}
last_event_date	=	?last_event_date={yyyy-mm-dd}
event_count	>=	?event_count={number}

- All LIKE queries will include a wildcard before and after the entered text.
- Multiple queries can be searched with name/value pairs separated by &. Each field will be searched using AND so all arguments must match for data to be returned.
- More complex queries can be searched to include the OR clause. See Complex Queries below.

To change the default query type you can add an additional name/value pair using the query name and appending '_where' to the query name. The query value could be LIKE or %3D for '='. Additional types of '<', '>' and 'BETWEEN may also be used, representing less than, greater than and between. The between requires the query name value to separate the 2 values with a |.

Example:

?terms=accept&region_name={text}&region_name_where=%3D

?terms=accept&last_event_date={yyyy-mm-dd|yyyy-mm-dd}&last_event_date_where=BETWEEN

Complex Queries

By default all fields must match for the data to be returned. In some instances more complex queries may be required to use the OR clause. This is possible by separating the

fields to join, by OR, with :OR: text. The main query item will be the first item in the join, followed by the other items split with :OR: . These can be used with other queries too.

Example:
?terms=accept&field={text}:OR:field2={text2}:OR:field3={text3} will return data where field = text OR field2 = text2 OR field3 = text3.

?terms=accept&field={text}:OR:field2={text2}&event_count={number} will return data where field = text OR field2 = text2 AND event_count = number.

Strategic Developments in the ACLED Dataset

What are 'strategic developments'? How are they useful, and how should I use them?

'Strategic developments' are useful for understanding the *context of conflict and disorder*, and as such are a useful tool for ACLED users. This category is designed to capture contextually important events and developments that are not political violence outright. These events may, however, contribute to a state's political history and/or may trigger future political violence and/or protests.

The 'strategic developments' event type within the ACLED dataset is unique from other event types in that it captures significant developments beyond both physical violence directed at individuals or armed groups as well as demonstrations involving the physical congregation of individuals. *Because what types of events may be significant varies by context as well as over time, these events are, by definition, not systematically coded.* One action may be significant in one country at a specific time yet a similar action in a different country or even in the same country during a different time period might not have the same significance. This means that **'strategic developments' *should not* be assumed to be cross-context and -time comparable as other ACLED event types can be.**

Rather, **'strategic developments' ought to be used as a means to better understand analysis you are conducting as a user**. When used correctly, these events can be a useful tool in better understanding the landscape of disorder within a certain context. You can think of them as a way to annotate a graph: to make better sense of trends you see in the data.

For example, **'strategic developments' can shed light on why you might see a sudden increase in political violence or protests.** In this way, they could be used as potential **'early warning'** signs.

- In **Palestine**, ACLED codes the seizure of land and the demolition of Palestinian homes by Israeli forces and/or settlers. These events often contribute to spontaneous violence by crudely- or unarmed Palestinian groups in response. *These events are coded under sub-event type 'looting/property destruction'.*
- In **Somalia**, ACLED codes looting in the form of stealing animals, cars and other property. These infractions will often be triggers for communal or clan-based violence soon thereafter, primarily motivated by revenge, which can include the destruction of suspects' village and other related violence. *These events are coded under sub-event type 'looting/property destruction'.*

- In **Syria**, ACLED's coding of agreements has been important in tracking localized surrender and evacuation agreements. When the regime initiates talks with local rebels/reconciliation leaders, it indicates areas the regime/allies have identified as a strategic location to regain from rebels. If negotiations do not quickly result in a surrender agreement, it is nearly certain that there will be heavy violence/siege in these locations to force an agreement – a strategy which has been extremely effective thus far. *These events are coded under sub-event type 'agreement'.*
- In **Asia**, ACLED codes attacks on religious sites or the business establishments of minorities.[1] These attacks often trigger counter-protests and demonstrations. *These events are coded under sub-event type 'looting/property destruction'.*

'Strategic developments' can also help to clarify why you might see a decrease in political violence and protests. This is especially important so that a lack of events is not incorrectly interpreted to mean 'peace'.

- In **Ethiopia**, the state of emergency announced in late 2016 was coded as a security measure. It resulted in a sudden diminishing of events as state forces enforced security nationwide, imposing restrictions on the freedom of speech and access to information. *These events are coded under sub-event type 'change to group/activity'.*
- In **Yemen**, ACLED codes intercepted missiles and defused landmines, IEDs, and explosive-laden boats targeting warships. Each defusal results in one less remote violence event being recorded. Given the persistent threat that landmines pose for civilians especially, this has ramifications for the local population, as well as the conflict landscape. *These events are coded under sub-event type 'disrupted weapons use'.*

'Strategic developments' can be helpful in understanding shifts in dynamics or spatial patterns within a conflict. This can provide useful insight beyond the sheer number of conflict events or reported fatalities.

- In **Syria**, ACLED codes changes to armed groups, which sheds light on shifting dynamics within the war. This has been good way of understanding shifting rebel alliances within the Syrian Civil War – capturing rebel infighting, noting when new alliances arise, as well as tracking how major rebel alliances have formed even larger umbrella groups or joined forces in preparation for a possible regime/allied offensive. *These events are coded under sub-event type 'change to group/activity'.*
- In **Syria**, ACLED also codes the movement of forces, which is helpful in understanding changes to spatial patterns within the conflict. The movement of

[1] If there are reports of harm to civilians, these are coded as 'violence against civilians'; only cases in which civilians are not harmed, and destruction is carried out as intimidation are coded as 'strategic development' events.

forces is a good indicator of shifting battlefronts – specifically when specific groups/alliances are deployed to new areas or additional forces are deployed to a front in preparation for new or renewed offensives – and can help in understanding the territorial presence of difference groups and how groups may be used in offensives. *These events are coded under sub-event type 'change to group/activity'.*

- In **Myanmar**, ACLED coded the burning down of villages in the context of the Rohingya crisis.[2] As military forces would often enter a village, burn it down, and then move on, this became an unfortunate way to understand shifts in the spatial patterns of this conflict agent within the context of the crisis. *These events are coded under sub-event type 'looting/property destruction'.*

Lastly, **'strategic developments' can help the user to better understand the conflict environment through accounting for grievances and hostilities bubbling 'beneath the surface'.** Such nuance is not reported by other conflict datasets, especially those with thresholds based on casualties. These events can help to shed light on ongoing disorder that does not necessarily manifest as outright physical violence.

- In **Asia**, ACLED codes the destruction of the homes and offices of political opponents; this is especially common in the lead up to elections. Such events help to paint the picture of what a pre-election environment, for example, may look like and sheds light on election turnout and results, as well as violence before and after it. *These events are coded under sub-event type 'looting/property destruction'.*
- In **Zimbabwe**, similarly, ACLED coded the burning down of people's homes in the lead up to the 2008 election.[3] This intimidation strategy played a large role in impacting the pre-election environment in the country. *These events are coded under sub-event type 'looting/property destruction'.*
- In **Thailand**, ACLED codes the destruction of infrastructure, such as telecommunication towers, which is a commonly used strategy by Muslim separatists in the south. These attacks contribute to the separatists' strategies in engaging with the state, and point to the fact that disorder in that sub-region continues. This is similar to in **India**, where Naxal rebels use the destruction of public infrastructure as a retribution for losses in previous battles. *These events are coded under sub-event type 'looting/property destruction'.*
- In **Nepal**, property destruction and defusal help to better understand ongoing militant violence. Very few battles are recorded between Communist rebels and

[2] If there are reports of harm to civilians, these would be coded as 'violence against civilians'; only cases in which civilians were not harmed, and destruction was carried out as intimidation and/or to ensure displaced civilians would not return are coded as 'strategic development' events.

[3] If there were reports of harm to civilians, these were coded as 'violence against civilians'; only cases in which civilians were not harmed, and destruction was carried out as intimidation were coded as 'strategic development' events.

state forces in Nepal. However, attacks on infrastructure and the planting of bombs (which are often defused by state agents) are proof of ongoing militancy in the country. *These events are coded under sub-event type 'looting/property destruction' or 'disrupted weapons use', respectively.*

Understanding what 'strategic developments' can offer and how to use them (and not use them) can make use of the ACLED dataset even more helpful for users.

ACLED Definitions of Political Violence and Protest

ACLED aims to capture how disorder occurs in states. Disorder encompasses a range of activity from severe political violence, such as targeted attacks on civilians and battles, to spontaneous demonstrations, mass arrests and property destruction. Many of these actions can occur simultaneously in unstable countries. ACLED has devised a system to define disorder by its constituent events. The taxonomy allows for data users to compare across time periods, forms of disorder, countries, agents and events. It begins with robust and broad definitions of political violence and demonstrations.

ACLED does not pre-define what a 'conflict' is. Those decisions are left to the user. ACLED does not categorize clusters or campaigns of events into categories of 'state', 'non-state', 'terrorism', 'insurgency'; etc. This is because political violence, protest, conflict and disorder are, in reality, aggregations of multiple actors, attacks, goals, etc. To classify events into parts of a 'civil war', 'livelihood', 'religious' or 'election' conflict (to name a few common versions) is often a reductive choice, leaving out the complex ways in which conflict creates multiple scales of violence and intended outcomes within a territory. ACLED allows users to select on the type of event, type of actor, type of interaction, named actors, location or time period. ACLED does not dictate nor frame a series of conflict events for researchers, but allows users to determine how to aggregate as they see fit.

Access ACLED's codebook for a full explanation of our methodology.

Definitions of Political Disorder and Event Types

Political violence is the use of force by a group with a political purpose or motivation. ACLED defines political violence through its constituent events, the intent of which is to produce a comprehensive overview of all forms of political conflict within and across states. A politically violent event is a single altercation where force is often used by one or more groups to a political end, although some instances – including protests and non-violent activity – are included in the dataset to capture the potential pre-cursors or critical junctures in a period of disorder.

ACLED has six event types and 25 sub-event types.

Battles are violent clashes between at least two armed groups. Battle types are distinguished by whether control of a location is unchanged as a consequence of the event; whether a non-state group has assumed control of a location, or whether a government has resumed control of that location. Battles make up approximately one third of the dataset.

- **Armed clash**: Ghat local forces repelled an attempt by Libya Dawn to take over the Ghat airport. Some 25 armored vehicles carrying Libya Dawn forces were reported to have stormed the Ghat Airport on Friday night.

- **Armed clash:** Fighting flared between the Myanmar military and the SSA-South, with a member of the rebel group accusing government troops of staging an attack on its base in Shan State's Mauk Mae Township. No casualties were reported.
- **Government regains territory:** US-backed Iraqi military forces fought Islamic State fighters and captured the Mosul airport south of the city.
- **Government regains territory:** The Sudanese Army claims they killed between 41-100 rebel fighters (coded as 41) and took control of Angartu, near Kadugli, during fighting over the weekend, with assistance from the RSF.
- **Non-state actor overtakes territory**: AQAP took control of a Yemeni army checkpoint in Al-Rida area between Wadea district and Al-Maraqisha district, Abyan, after the soldiers fled during a 3am attack on Jan 09.
- **Non-state actor overtakes territory**: Hayat Tahrir al-Sham retook the village of Azmarin from Ahrar al-Sham as clashes broke out across Idleb governorate.

Explosions/Remote violence refers to events where an explosion, bomb or other explosive device was used to engage in conflict. They include one-sided violent events in which the tool for engaging in conflict creates asymmetry by taking away the ability of the target to engage or defend themselves and their location.

- **Chemical weapon:** Iraqi military reported that missiles carrying Chlorine gas were fired at Iraqi soldiers by IS militants advancing to Al Qayyarah of Mosul district, Ninewa. No fatalities or injuries reported by source.
- **Air/drone strike:** The SPLM-N has claimed the Sudanese aviation bombed the area southwest of Kurmuk, killing 2 civilians and wounding 4 others (2 seriously) between January 12-13.
- **Suicide bomb:** A suicide bomber detonated himself at a wedding ceremony in Beybahce area of Sahinbey town of Gaziantep city. 56 civilians and the suicide bomber were killed. Islamic State was blamed for the incident.
- **Shelling/artillery/missile attack**: Two policemen were wounded in Boumerdes, 50 km east of Algiers, when their vehicle came under mortar fire from militants who were hiding near a mosque.
- **Remote explosive/landmine/IED**: An RCIED detonated in the outskirts of Khadija Haji village (40km SW of Beled Xaawo) in the afternoon of January 8th. Reports indicate that the target was reportedly a SNG commander. The device seriously injured five civilians.
- **Grenade**: A hand grenade was thrown at a restaurant in Sibenik, Croatia, causing material damage.

Violence against civilians involves violent attacks on unarmed civilians. These acts comprise a third of the collected data.

- **Sexual violence:** A soldier from the Security Belt Forces was reportedly arrested after he kidnapped a girl and subsequently attempted to rape her in Al Maalla district of Aden port city, southwestern Yemen.

- **Sexual violence:** AFP reported that a Ukrainian activist was tortured by masked men and subject to sexual violence by Russian police in a detention centre in Sevastopol, Crimea. The man was put in jail for ten days for a social media post in connection to a case against a local anarchist.
- **Attack**: 8 people were killed in a revenge attack by Pagoor youth on Tieptiep payam in Cueibet county, allegedly due to the release of a Tieptiep clan member who killed one of the Pagoor community. 2 others were injured, including the paramount chief.
- **Attack**: A Communist Party of India (Marxist) activist was hacked to death by Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh activists at Chukku Bazaar, near Thrissur district, on Sunday night.
- **Abduction/forced disappearance**: Islamic State militants kidnapped 30 youths from Haweeja district near Kirkuk and took them to an unknown destination.
- **Abduction/forced disappearance**: LRA fighters abducted 3 civilians northwest of Mboki, Central African Republic. One of the hostages was given money to buy supplies in return for the release of the other two.

Riots are a violent demonstration, often involving a spontaneous action by unorganized, unaffiliated members of society.

- **Violent demonstration:** Two student unions affiliated with the ruling CPN-UML and main opposition UCPN (Maoist) clashed over the appointment of Campus Chief at Lainchour-based Amrit Science Campus. The students also vandalised the office of the Campus Chief.
- **Violent demonstration:** After three anti-slavery activists received prison sentences, dozens of their supporters stormed the courthouse and smashed police van windows. Police used tear gas to disperse them, leaving four injured. Clashes between police and anti-slavery activists expanded from the courthouse to the civil prison area, causing closure of the city market. Rioters surrounded police vehicles and police used tear gas to disperse them.
- **Mob violence:** In Prijedor, Bosnia and Herzegovina, two fractions of SDS political party got into a mass fight. There were no reports of injuries.
- **Mob violence**: Violence erupted in the Maadeed neighborhood in the Moroccan capital between dozens of inhabitants and Sub-Saharan African immigrants. Knifes, swords, iron rods and batons were used in the fight while stones were thrown from windows and rooftops.

Protests are non-violent demonstrations, involving typically unorganized action by members of society.

- **Peaceful protest:** Health workers at the PTS I Hastings Ebola Treatment Center in Freetown peacefully demonstrated against the non-payment of their December hazard incentives.
- **Peaceful protest:** More than 50 CNRP officials seeking the removal of lawmaker Ke Sovannaroth as the party's head in Siem Reap province, Cambodia,

demonstrated for two hours outside the opposition's headquarters in Meanchey district. The protesters accused Ms. Sovannaroth of nepotism and spending irregularities.

- **Protest with intervention**: More than 200 villagers stage a demonstration at Masvingo Central Police Station against failure by Chiefs Musara and Chikwanda to resolve a boundary dispute. 8 of the demonstrators are arrested.
- **Protest with intervention**: In Brest, Belarus, police arrested three activists during a demonstration where signatures were collected to stop the construction of a battery factory.
- **Excessive force against protesters**: Two demonstrators in Kufr Qaddum were severely injured during a protest in the village on Mar 4. A 12 year old boy and a Palestinian man were both shot by Israeli forces during the demonstration.
- **Excessive force against protesters**: A group of Bahraini students gathered outside their school on Sitra island to show solidarity with a prominent Shia cleric Sheikh Isa Qassim. Bahrain police forces intervened and a young boy was shot in the face during the chaos, injuring him severely.

ACLED includes some activity that can broadly be described as 'non-violent' but differs in its role within contexts of disorder. These events, named ***Strategic developments***, include incidences of looting, peace-talks, high profile arrests, non-violent transfers of territory, recruitment into non-state groups etc., and accounts for a small proportion of the total dataset. These common events suggest the context of disorder.

- **Agreement:** A peace conference has started in Mundri, South Sudan to resolve disputes between pastoralists and local farmers in the area following clashes which began in October 2014.
- **Arrests:** Rwandan genocide suspect Jean Paul Birindabagabo is arrested and extradited to the ICC.
- **Change to group/activity:** A new armed group was formed by remnants of the Islamic State between Kifri and Tuz Khurmato near Khanaqin, Iraq. The group is composed of around 70 members calling themselves Hazmiyoon.
- **Disrupted weapons use**: Police discover and dismantle a bomb targeting the Owerri Capital Development Authority (OCDA) office in Owerri, Nigeria.
- **Headquarters or base established:** UAE-backed Security Belt forces reportedly moved into the air defence base in Bir Fadl area of Aden port city, Yemen.
- **Looting/property destruction**: Israeli forces demolished a house in Jabal al-Mukabir neighborhood in Jerusalem. Neither injuries nor fatalities were reported.
- **Non-violent transfer of territory:** Al Shabaab forces take control of three Bay villages (Hagarko, Barbaare – near Qansadheer – and Buulo Barako) following the withdrawal of government forces.
- **Other**: On 15 May 2018, President of Russia Vladimir Putin inaugurates the newly constructed bridge that connects Russia with the Kerch City of Crimea, four years after the annexation of Crimea.

Both event types and sub-event types are hierarchical to accommodate for concurrent tactics within the same event, in order to avoid double-counting. This means that an Explosions/Remote violence event (e.g. an air strike) occurring within the same context as a ground Battle event would be coded as one Battles event. Or a Violence against civilians event (e.g. attack on a civilian) occurring with the same context as an Explosions/Remote violence event (e.g. use of a remote explosive) would be coded as one Explosions/Remote violence event. A similar structure holds for sub-event types. Shelling occurring simultaneously as an air strike being dropped would be coded as Air/drone strike as it is higher on the hierarchy than Shelling/artillery/missile attack. Or a civilian abducted and then killed would be coded as Attack because it is higher on the hierarchy than Abduction/forced disappearance. The event types and sub-event types noted above are presented in hierarchical order. It is important to keep these distinctions in mind when drawing interpretations of the data.

Fatalities

ACLED has several rules about fatalities numbers, sourcing and reporting.

1. ACLED does not have a fatality threshold for event inclusion. This means that conflict and demonstration events in ACLED do not have to produce any fatalities in order to be included as a valid event. We use no arbitrary number of deaths to define a conflict.
2. ACLED reports fatalities only when a reputable source has relayed that information. Further, researchers seek out information to triangulate – where and when possible – the numbers from any report.
3. ACLED uses the most conservative estimate available, and will revise and correct the totals – upward or downward – when better information comes available.

ACLED advises caution in using all fatality numbers from its, or any other conflict data source. Fatality information is the most biased, and least accurate, part of any conflict report and extreme caution should be employed when using any fatality number to show patterns.

For more details, please see this article.

Sourcing

ACLED collects information from a variety of primary and secondary sources. By aggregating local and international news sources using various databases, ACLED coders track reporting on events concerning political violence and protest in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Coders use local, state, and international media sources, plus private reports, to capture events ranging from protests to battles.

Overall, ACLED sources material in three ways: (1) information from local, regional, national and continental media is reviewed daily; (2) NGO reports are used to supplement media reporting in hard to access cases; (3) regionally focused news reports and analyses are integrated to supplement daily media reporting. The result is the most comprehensive and wide-reaching source material presently used in disaggregated conflict event coding.

Every ACLED event is composed from at least one source. The name, acronym, and/or website are noted in the source column. The publication details are sufficient to enable a data user to find the original source with ease. If more than two sources are used, the most thorough report is cited or both are noted in the source column.

ACLED also codes the "Source scale" of the source; whether it is local, regional, national or international. One scale over another does not guarantee more direct information, accuracy, or legitimacy, but ACLED supports gathering and using local sources whenever possible. ACLED has arrangements and partnerships with many local organizations for data exchange in pursuance of this goal.

Coding Review Process

ACLED takes a variety of steps to ensure that the data we publish are accurate, thorough and accessible. The vast majority of ACLED time is spent on three tasks:

(a) Sourcing and reviewing source materials
(b) Collecting and inputting data
(c) Cleaning and reviewing those data and sources

As of 2018, this process is repeated weekly for all regions ACLED covers. The sourcing and collecting decisions and instructions are available in several documents on the Methodology page of the website. The cleaning and reviewing procedures are discussed below.

The cleaning and reviewing procedure occurs both on a daily and weekly basis. On a daily basis, the researchers review, code and correct materials. Researchers often pose questions to the research managers or the ACLED researcher community to clarify difficult coding decisions. Researchers also use a coding platform to assure that current decisions on names, interactions, locations etc. conform to previous iterations for each group and location. Decisions on specific matters – such as a new active group – are flagged for review. ACLED coders maintain a list of conflict actors, noting the name and classification of actors based on their stated goals and objectives. Over time, these goals and objectives – and hence classification – can change, especially as groups grow or splinter. For example, what may at first be a part of a state military force may over time give way to a rebel movement, such as the mutiny of the military forces of South Sudan and the emergent SPLA/M-IO rebel movement. Or a political militia may take on a new goal of striving to overthrow a state, which would change their classification from a political militia to a rebel movement. Rebel groups may also splinter into new factions as different rebel leaders begin pushing varying agendas (e.g., the FDLR rebel group operating in Rwanda split into a number of different factions over time). These, and other decisions, are reviewed immediately.

Following the data collection, each week every researcher sends their data and source materials to their research manager, who proceeds to review these data for intra-code, inter-code, intra-coder and inter-coder reliability. Once this cleaning and review are complete, these data are then passed to another reviewer, who reviews the notes and details to assure that the intra-country and inter-country standards are met, and that the dataset standards are met. Brief notes are included with each conflict event to offer additional details about each event; these notes are also checked and updated to reflect the most accurate information. After reviewing these weekly datasets, the data are then sent to a final person for configuration, correct country codes and formatting. Those data are then uploaded for public use.

Following this process, researchers receive detailed feedback as to their coding decisions and alerts going forward.

In addition, the weekly real-time coding, two other processes are ongoing: (1) a list of active conflicts to review and/or 'backdate' are assigned to researchers, and (2) a constant search and identification for events to review, revisit or question. Details of the active reviewed conflicts are available on the methodology page, and updates to these conflicts are reviewed, cleaned and uploaded as they are completed. These reviews are crucial because as time passes more information may surface about additional conflict events (e.g., an additional conflict location or date of conflict). These conflict events are added in order to be able to most accurately understand conflict patterns.

The second process is a response to the often-vague details that immediately emerge from a conflict event. ACLED may update the details of events once new information comes to light, and those details are changed in the dataset and those altered data are then uploaded. For example, a group may not claim responsibility of an event until sometime after the conflict event. Given ACLED's real-time coding of conflict, when information about the group is not known, ACLED will code the group as an unidentified armed group, and revise accordingly with new information as it becomes available. If new information about the group surfaces at a later date – e.g., a group comes forward claiming responsibility for an attack – then the event is updated to reflect the new information. Another example may be inconsistent reports in the aftermath of a conflict event, especially with regards to the number of fatalities. Over time, more in-depth reports may surface, such as those by human rights organizations. These details are updated in the already-existing events in order to ensure the most accurate conflict coding is presented.

Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED)

Codebook

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Introduction and Brief Description

The ACLED project codes reported information on the type, agents, location, date, and other characteristics of political violence events, demonstrations and select politically relevant non-violent events. ACLED focuses on tracking a range of violent and non-violent actions by political agents, including governments, rebels, militias, identity groups, political parties, external actors, rioters, protesters and civilians. The full list of the columns in ACLED is available in Table 1 below.

ACLED concentrates on:

- Tracking rebel, militia and government activity over time and space;
- Recording violent acts between and across non-state groups, including political and identity militias;
- Recording political violence by unnamed agents, as violent groups may remain unnamed for strategic reasons;
- Recording attacks on civilians by all violent political agents;
- Distinguishing between territorial transfers of military control from governments (and their affiliates) to non-state agents and vice versa;
- Collecting information on rioting and protesting; and
- Tracking non-violent 'strategic developments' representing crucial junctures in periods of political violence (e.g. recruitment drives, peace talks, high-level arrests).

ACLED data are derived from a wide range of local, regional and national sources and the information is collected by trained data experts worldwide. An updated overview of ACLED's current coverage is available on the ACLED website.

ACLED data are available to the public and are released in real-time. Data can be downloaded through the data export tool on the ACLED website or can be accessed through the API (a manual is available online). Curated data files – such as regional data files, or aggregate country-year files – can also be accessed online on the ACLED website. Further information on ACLED's coding choices are available on the methodology page of the ACLED website.

Table 1: ACLED Data Columns

Column Name	**Content**
ISO	A numeric code for each individual country
EVENT_ID_CNTY	An individual identifier by number and country acronym (updated annually)
EVENT_ID_NO_CNTY	An individual numeric identifier (updated annually)
EVENT_DATE	The day, month and year on which an event took place
YEAR	The year in which an event took place
TIME_PRECISION	A numeric code indicating the level of certainty of the date coded for the event
EVENT_TYPE	The type of event
SUB_EVENT_TYPE	The type of sub-event
ACTOR1	The named actor involved in the event
ASSOC_ACTOR_1	The named actor associated with or identifying ACTOR1
INTER1	A numeric code indicating the type of ACTOR1
ACTOR2	The named actor involved in the event
ASSOC_ACTOR_2	The named actor associated with or identifying ACTOR2
INTER2	A numeric code indicating the type of ACTOR2
INTERACTION	A numeric code indicating the interaction between types of ACTOR1 and ACTOR2
REGION	The region of the world where the event took place
COUNTRY	The country in which the event took place
ADMIN1	The largest sub-national administrative region in which the event took place
ADMIN2	The second largest sub-national administrative region in which the event took place
ADMIN3	The third largest sub-national administrative region in which the event took place
LOCATION	The location in which the event took place
LATITUDE	The latitude of the location
LONGITUDE	The longitude of the location
GEO_PRECISION	A numeric code indicating the level of certainty of the location

	coded for the event
SOURCE	The source of the event report
SOURCE SCALE	The scale (local, regional, national, international) of the source
NOTES	A short description of the event
FATALITIES	The number of reported fatalities which occurred during the event

Definitions of ACLED Event and Sub-Event Types

ACLED collects and codes reported information on political violence, demonstrations (rioting and protesting) and select non-violent, politically important events. It aims to capture the modes, frequency and intensity of political violence and opposition as it occurs.

Political violence is defined as the use of force by a group with a political purpose or motivation. ACLED records political violence through its constituent events, the intent of which is to produce a comprehensive overview of all forms of political disorder, expressed through violence and demonstrations, within and across states. A politically violent event is a single altercation where often force is used by one or more groups toward a political end, although some non-violent instances – including protests and strategic developments – are included in the dataset to capture the potential pre-cursors or critical junctures of a violent conflict.

The fundamental unit of observation in ACLED is the *event*. Events involve designated actors – e.g. a named rebel group, a militia or state forces.[1] They occur at a specific named location (identified by name and geographic coordinates) and on a specific day. Researchers work to ensure that the most specific location and time possible are recorded. ACLED currently codes for six types of events and twenty-five types of sub-events, both violent and non-violent, that may occur during a period of political violence and disorder. Table 2 displays ACLED's event and sub-event types.

[1] With the sole exception of 'unidentified armed groups' and generic categories including rioters, protesters, and civilians.

Table 2: ACLED Event Types

General	Event Type	Sub-Event Type
Violent events	**Battles**	*Armed clash*
		Government regains territory
		Non-state actor overtakes territory
	Explosions/Remote violence	*Chemical weapon*
		Air/drone strike
		Suicide bomb
		Shelling/artillery/missile attack
		Remote explosive/landmine/IED
		Grenade
	Violence against civilians	*Sexual violence*
		Attack
		Abduction/forced disappearance
Demonstrations	**Protests**	*Peaceful protest*
		Protest with intervention
		Excessive force against protesters
	Riots	*Violent demonstration*
		Mob violence
Non-violent actions	**Strategic developments**	*Agreement*
		Arrests
		Change to group/activity
		Disrupted weapons use
		Headquarters or base established
		Looting/property destruction
		Non-violent transfer of territory
		Other

Violent Events

Battles

ACLED defines a battle as "a violent interaction between two politically organized armed groups at a particular time and location." Battles can occur between armed and organised state, non-state, and external groups, and in any combination therein. *There is no fatality minimum necessary for inclusion.*

Although the term "battle" may be used here to describe various kinds of encounters between parties – e.g. "the ceasefire is broken" – battles must be violent events involving at least two armed and organized actors. One-sided interactions – e.g. reports of shots fired into the air without a target – are categorized as 'Strategic developments' (see

below). Violence against unarmed civilians is categorized as 'Violence against civilians',[2] although civilians can also be harmed as "collateral damage" in 'Battles' or 'Explosions/Remote violence' events. When harmed in the event of a battle or explosions, a separate civilian-specific event is not recorded, but the fatalities, if any, are aggregated in the "Fatalities" column.

The specific elements of that definition therefore are as follows:

(1) A violent interaction is the exchange of armed force, or the use of armed force at close distance, between armed groups capable of inflicting harm upon the opposing side.

(2) Organized armed groups are collective actors assumed to be operating cohesively around an agenda, identity, or political purpose, using weapons to inflict harm. These groups frequently have a designated name and stated agenda.

The following sub-event types are associated with the 'Battles' event type and are designated according to the outcome of the battle event: 'Armed clash', 'Government regains territory', and 'Non-state actor overtakes territory'.

Armed clash

If armed, organized groups engage in a battle, and no reports indicate a change in territorial control, the correct sub-event type is an 'Armed clash'.

Non-state actor overtakes territory

When a non-state actor wins control and/or subdues government forces, and/or has won territory in which they can now act with impunity and are regarded as having a monopoly of force within that territory, 'Non-state actor overtakes territory' is the correct sub-event type. Short-lived territorial exchanges that do not last for more than one day are coded as 'Armed clash'.

In cases where government and non-state forces fight many times in a location before a non-state group gains control, only the final territorial acquisition is coded as 'Non-state actor overtakes territory'. All other battles in that location are coded as 'Armed clash'.

[2] Contrary to previous versions of ACLED, violence targeting peaceful protesters is coded under the new 'Protests' event type, with 'Excessive force against protesters' as sub-event type.

This sub-event can also be used to note the transfer of control from one non-state group to another by violence.

Government regains territory

This sub-event type is used to describe cases where government forces or their affiliates fighting against competing state forces or against a non-state group regain control of a location. This code is only used for re-establishment of government control and not for dual non-state violence. Short-lived territorial exchanges that do not last for more than one day are coded as 'Armed clash'.

Explosions/Remote violence

ACLED defines 'Explosions/Remote violence' as "one-sided violent events in which the tool for engaging in conflict creates asymmetry by taking away the ability of the target to respond". The tools used in instances of 'Explosions/Remote violence' are explosive devices, including, but not limited to, bombs, grenades, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), artillery fire or shelling, missile attacks, heavy machine gun fire, air or drone strikes, or chemical weapons. Suicide attacks implicating the use of bombs also fall under this category. When any instance of 'Explosion/Remote violence' is reported in the context of an ongoing battle, they are merged and coded as a single battle event. 'Explosions/Remote violence' can be waged on both armed agents or on civilians. *When accounting for all attacks on civilians, explosions/remote violence with civilian targets should be included.*

The following sub-event types are associated with the 'Explosions/Remote violence' event type: 'Chemical weapon', 'Air/drone strike', 'Suicide bomb', 'Shelling/artillery/missile attack', 'Remote explosive/landmine/IED', and 'Grenade'.

Chemical weapon

This sub-event type is coded whenever chemical weapons are used in warfare in the absence of any other engagement. ACLED considers chemical weapons all substances listed in the Schedule 1 of the Chemical Weapons Convention, including sarin gas, mustard gas, chlorine gas, and anthrax. Napalm, white phosphorous, as well as tear gas and other non-lethal crowd control substances, are not considered to be chemical weapons within this sub-event type.

Air/drone strike

This sub-event type is coded whenever air or drone strikes have occurred in the absence of any other engagement. Please note that any air-to-ground attacks fall under this sub-event type, including attacks by helicopters that do not involve any exchange of fire with forces on the ground.

Suicide bomb

This sub-event type is coded whenever a suicide bombing occurs in the absence of any other engagement (other engagement could include gun fire against other armed groups or civilians). It also includes suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (SVBIED) attacks.

Shelling/artillery/missile attack

This sub-event type is coded whenever a long-range artillery or missile system is used in the absence of any other engagement. It also includes attacks described as shelling, the use of artillery either stand-alone or tank based, mortars, or guided missiles. Planes shot down by rockets or artillery fall under this sub-event type; unmanned drones shot down, however, given no human targets, are coded as an interception under 'Disrupted weapons use' (see below). Similarly, while planes shot down using rockets or artillery fall under this sub-event type, an interception of a strike itself (such as by the Iron Dome of Israel) are coded as 'Disrupted weapons use' as well given no human targeting. Rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) are coded under the 'Shelling/artillery/missile attack' sub-event type as opposed to 'Grenade' given their similarities to artillery.

Remote explosive/landmine/IED

This sub-event type is coded whenever remotely- or victim-activated devices are detonated in the absence of any other engagement. Examples include landmines, improvised explosive devices (IEDs) whether alone or attached to a vehicle, or any other sort of remotely detonated or triggered explosive. Unexploded ordinances (UXO) also fall under this category.

Suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (SVBIED) are coded as 'Suicide bomb' (see above), while the safe defusal of an explosive or its accidental detonation by the actor who planted it (with no other casualties reported) are coded under 'Disrupted weapons use' (see below).

Grenade

This sub-event type is used when a grenade or another explosive is thrown in the absence of any other engagement. Events involving "crude bombs" (such as Molotov cocktails, firecrackers, cherry bombs, petrol bombs, etc.) as well as 'stun grenades' are not coded in this category but are included under either 'Riots' or 'Strategic developments' depending on the context where they occurred.

Violence against civilians

ACLED defines 'Violence against civilians' as violent events where an organised armed group deliberately inflicts violence upon unarmed non-combatants. By definition, civilians are unarmed and cannot engage in political violence. The perpetrators of such acts include state forces and their affiliates, rebels, militias, and external/other forces.

In cases where the identity and actions of the victims are in question (e.g. the target may be employed as a police officer), ACLED determines that if a person is harmed or killed while unarmed and unable to either act defensively or counter-attack, this is an act of 'Violence against civilians'. There is no minimum number of civilian fatalities needed to qualify as an ACLED event.

'Violence against civilians' includes attempts at inflicting harm (e.g. beating, shooting, torture, rape, mutilation, etc.) or forcibly disappearing (e.g. kidnapping and disappearances) civilian actors.

The following sub-event types are associated with the 'Violence against civilians' event type: 'Sexual violence', 'Attack', and 'Abduction/forced disappearance'.

Sexual violence

This sub-event type is used when any individual (regardless of gender) is targeted with sexual violence. 'Sexual violence' is defined largely as any action that inflicts harm of a sexual nature. This means that it is not limited to solely penetrative rape, but would also include actions like public stripping, sexual torture of men, etc.

Attack

This sub-event type is used when civilians are targeted with any violence by an organised armed actor. Attacks of sexual nature are coded as 'Sexual violence'.

Abduction/forced disappearance

This sub-event type is used when an actor engages in the abduction or forced disappearance of civilians, without reports of further violence. If fatalities or serious injuries are reported as a consequence of the forced disappearance, the event is coded as 'Attack' instead.

Note that this sub-event type does not cover state-sanctioned arrests, unless they are reported to have been conducted extra-judicially. By contrast, non-state groups can never engage in arrests, and their activity engaging in "arresting" is typically coded using this sub-event type.[3]

Demonstration Events

Protests

A protest is defined as a public demonstration in which the participants do not engage in violence, though violence may be used against them. Events include individuals and groups who peacefully demonstrate against a political entity, government institution, policy, group, tradition, businesses or other private institutions. Events that are not coded as protests are symbolic public acts such as displays of flags or public prayers (unless they are accompanied by a demonstration), protests in legislatures such as parliamentary walkouts or MPs staying silent, strikes (unless they are accompanied by a demonstration), and individual acts such as self-harm actions (e.g. individual immolations or hunger strikes).

Protesters are noted by generic terms (e.g. 'Protesters (Country)'); if representing a group, the name of that group is recorded in the respective associated actor column.

The following sub-event types are associated with the 'Protests' event type: 'Peaceful protest', 'Protest with intervention', and 'Excessive force against protesters'.

[3] In rare cases where non-state groups are able to able to maintain some level of judicial/penal system, they would also be able to engage in 'Arrests', and these actions would not be coded as 'Abduction/forced disappearance' and would instead be coded under the 'Arrests' sub-event type.

Peaceful protest

This sub-event type is used when demonstrators are engaged in a protest while not engaging in violence or other forms of rioting behaviour and are not faced with any sort of force or engagement. Interaction terms here include: 60, 66, or 67.

Protest with intervention

This sub-event type should be used when individuals are engaged in a peaceful protest during which there is an attempt to disperse or suppress the protest without serious/lethal injuries being reported or the targeting of protesters with lethal weapons. Additionally, this sub-event type should cover any instance where armed groups or rioters interact with peaceful protesters without resulting in serious/lethal injuries. Interaction terms here include: 16, 26, 36, 46, 56, 68.

Excessive force against protesters

This sub-event type should be used when individuals are engaged in a peaceful protest and are targeted with violence by an actor leading to (or if it could lead to) serious/lethal injuries. Interaction terms here include: 16, 26, 36, 46, 56, 68.

Riots

'Riots' are violent events where demonstrators or mobs engage in disruptive acts, including but not limited to rock throwing, property destruction, etc. They may target other individuals, property, businesses, other rioting groups or armed actors. Rioters are noted by generic terms (e.g. 'Rioters (Country)'); if representing a group, the name of that group is recorded in the respective 'Associated actor' column. Rioters may begin as peaceful protesters, or may be intent on engaging in spontaneous and disorganized violence from the beginning of their actions. Contrary to armed groups, rioters do not use sophisticated weapons such as guns, knives or swords. "Crude bombs" (e.g. Molotov cocktails, petrol bombs, firecrackers) may be used in rioting behaviour.

The following sub-event types are associated with the 'Riots' event type: 'Violent demonstration' and 'Mob violence'.

Violent demonstration

This sub-event type is used when a group of individuals engages in a demonstration involving violence. Examples of rioting behaviour include vandalism; road-blocking

using barricades, burning tires, or other material; other types of violent and/or destructive behaviour are also included here.

Mob violence

This sub-event type is used when rioters violently interact with other rioters, another armed group or civilians, outside of demonstrations and without the use of lethal weapons like guns, knives, swords, etc. A mob is defined as "a large crowd of people, especially one that is disorderly and intent on causing trouble or violence." Note that this type of violence can also include (unarmed or crudely armed) vigilante mobs clashing with other armed groups or attacking civilians. Vigilante groups that are more than crudely armed are not considered to be spontaneous mobs and rather are assumed to be organized and would hence not be included here.

Non-Violent Actions

Strategic developments

This event type captures contextually important information regarding the activities of violent groups that is not itself recorded as political violence, yet may trigger future events or contribute to political dynamics within and across states. The inclusion of such events is limited, as its purpose is to capture pivotal events within campaigns of political violence. They typically include a disparate range of events, such as recruitment drives, looting, incursions, as well as the location and date of peace talks and the arrests of high-ranking officials or large groups. While it is rare for fatalities to be reported as a result of such events, they can occur in certain cases – e.g. the suspicious death of a high-ranking official, accidental detonation of a bomb resulting in the bomber being killed, etc.

The following sub-event types are associated with the 'Strategic developments' event type: 'Agreement', 'Arrests', 'Change to group/activity', 'Disrupted weapons use', 'Headquarters or base established', 'Looting/property destruction', 'Non-violent transfer of territory', and 'Other'.

Agreement

This sub-event type is used to record any sort of agreement between different actors (such as governments and rebel groups). Examples include peace agreements/talks,

ceasefires, evacuation deals, prisoner exchanges, negotiated territorial transfers, prisoner releases, surrenders, repatriations, etc.

Arrests

This sub-event type is used whenever state forces or other actors exercising de facto control over a territory either detain a particularly significant individual or engage in mass arrests.

Change to group/activity

This sub-event type is used to code significant changes in the activity or structure of armed groups. It can cover anything from the creation of a new rebel group or a paramilitary wing of the security forces, "voluntary" recruitment drives, movement of forces or any other non-violent security measures enacted by armed actors. This sub-event type can also be used if an armed group is absorbed into a different (existing) armed group or to track large-scale defections.

Disrupted weapons use

This sub-event type is used to capture all instances in which an event of 'Explosions/Remote violence' is prevented from occurring, or whenever armed actors seize significant caches of weapons. It includes the safe defusal of an explosive, the accidental detonation of explosives by the alleged responsible of planting it, the interception of explosives in the air, as well as the seizure of weapons or weapon platforms such as jets, helicopters, tanks, etc. Note that in cases where a group other than the one who planted an explosive is attempting to render an explosive harmless and it goes off, this is coded under the event type 'Explosions/Remote violence', as the explosive has harmed someone other than the group that planted it.

Headquarters or base established

This sub-event type is used when a violent group establishes a permanent or semi-permanent base or headquarters. There are few, if any, cases where opposition groups other than rebels can also establish a headquarters or base (e.g. AMISOM forces in Somalia).

Looting/property destruction

This sub-event type is used when organised armed groups engage in looting or seizing goods or property other than weapons or weapon systems (in which case the sub-event type 'Disrupted weapons use' should be used). This can occur during raiding or after the capture of villages or other populated places by armed groups that occur without reported violence.

Non-violent transfer of territory

This sub-event type is used in situations in which rebels, governments, or affiliates of both acquire control of a location without engaging in a violent interaction with another group. Rebels establishing control of a location without any resistance is an example of this event.

Other

This sub-event type is used to cover any significant development that does not fall into any of the other 'Strategic developments' sub-event types. Examples include the occurrence of a coup, the displacement of civilian population as a result of fighting, or the discovery of mass graves.

Important Notes Regarding Event Type Codes

One or more events can occur in the same location on the same day. If two events between the same actors in the same location are reported, they are typically noted as a single aggregate event. For example:

(1) a rebel group fights with government forces in a town and wins control. Rebel artillery strikes are reported throughout the day. In this case, only a single battle event between the rebels and the government forces is recorded;

(2) on the same day, demonstrators stage peaceful protests and also engage in clashes with the security forces. In this case, a single riot event is recorded.

ACLED researchers do not 'double count' events. For example, if civilians are killed in the context of a battle, then their reported fatalities will be added to the total number of fatalities reported for the event and this will be noted in the 'NOTES' section, but it will not constitute a separate event. In battle events, civilians are never coded as associate actors as both parties are assumed to engage in violence.

Further, if an attack – such as an air strike - is meant to target militants, but does also hurt civilians, civilians are coded as associate actors, and again the fatalities, if mentioned, are aggregated together. In cases where a bombing occurs with a vague and unspecified military target (e.g. a bombing occurs in a city that has some militants in it, rather than an area controlled and actively used by militants), but civilians are the main group affected, they will be coded in the 'ACTOR 2' column. Militants may appear in the 'ASSOC_ACTOR_1' and 'ASSOC_ACTOR_2' columns.

However, if another event type involving different actors occurs, it is coded separately. Hence, it is possible to have multiple events--involving distinct actors--occur in the same location on the same day. For example, if armed violence purposely targets civilians and is separately reported on the same day and location of a battle, two events are coded to accurately capture the battle and the distinct civilian attack.

In most cases, an event requires two actors, noted in columns 'ACTOR1' and 'ACTOR2'. However, event types 'Explosions/Remote violence', 'Riots', 'Protests', and 'Strategic developments' can include one-sided events. If more than two actors are reported, only the most important engagement is coded, and the additional groups may be coded as associated actor depending on the context (for example, police forces intervening to disperse rioters). *The order of actors has no meaning in the ACLED system*, barring cases of 'Violence against civilians', in which the victim is always coded as Actor2.

Coding detail: The event and sub-event types as noted above will appear in 'EVENT_TYPE' and 'SUB_EVENT_TYPE' columns for each event.

ACLED Actors

ACLED recognizes a range of actors including state forces, rebels, militias, identity groups, demonstrators, civilians, and external and other forces.

In ACLED, politically violent actors include government forces and its affiliates, rebel groups, militias, external or private forces (e.g. UN missions) and other political groups who interact over issues of political authority (e.g. territorial control, government control, access to resources, etc.). All organised actors have an official name[4] and a political purpose, and use violence for political means. For inclusion as agents of political violence, organizations must be cohesive and not assembled for single events, with the exception of riots and protests. Further, the events of organizations must be connected to each other as a means to achieve a larger political purpose. This necessary and sufficient definition of actors allows for the establishment of campaigns and trajectories of movements. Protesters, rioters and civilians are actors whose inclusion deviates from the organization and armed group rules. Rioters and protesters involve spontaneous, atomic acts of organization that may, or may not, continue beyond a discrete event. Civilians are those who do not actively choose to be involved in an event.

The name of each actor is noted in the 'ACTOR1' and 'ACTOR2' columns of the dataset. The group *type* is recorded in the 'INTER1' and 'INTER2' columns, while their dual engagement is noted in the 'INTERACTION' column.

The 'ASSOC_ACTOR_1' and 'ASSOC_ACTOR_2' columns record the associated groups for specific events as well as the identity of specific actors. In the former case, an associated group may be allies in actions, like two armed organized groups that are engaging in attacks against a common enemy. In the latter case, the 'ASSOC_ACTOR_1' and 'ASSOC_ACTOR_2' columns may record additional information concerning the victims of an attack or the socio-political affiliation of demonstrators or ethno-religious identity of a civilian victim. An 'Explosions/Remote violence' event that is intended for an armed, organized group, but also affects civilians, will have both groups noted – the primary

[4] Barring the "unidentified" category.

actor will be the ostensibly intended target, while civilians (the collateral damage in this case) would be the associated actor.[5]

Actor Names, Types and Inter Codes

ACLED records the recognized name of groups as reported, whenever possible. In exceptional circumstances described in detail below, the name of a group is generated to reflect their origins and composition.

Each named actor is also designated as a type of organization. There are thousands of individually named groups within the ACLED dataset, and the Inter code groups organizations by whether they have similar organizational structures, goals and practices. Group type designates all groups into one of eight ACLED categories and assigns a number in the 'INTER' column to that categorization.

These categories offer a way to distinguish between actors and determine how patterns of activity conform to goals and organizations. ACLED does not use a pattern of activity to designate what kind of agent a group is: *it specifically observes the goals and structure of an organization, where possible, its spatial dimension and its relationships to communities.*

As such, the Inter code of a group can change over time. For example, if a rebel group is successful in overthrowing a regime or seceding from a state, its armed agents may then become the armed wing of a political party within the new regime structure (this would be a change in Inter code from 2 to 3, e.g. the Imbonerakure militia in Burundi) or the government forces of the new state (this would be a change in Inter code from 2 to 1, the SPLA rebels in Sudan turned into South Sudan's state forces).

Certain types of violent agents may appear to fall outside of this categorization, but ACLED has designed these classifications to flexibly fit the universe of agents operating in conflict. For example, militant religious organizations can have various goals (e.g. Taliban), including overtaking the state, influencing political processes and supporting

[5] While civilians are coded as an associated actor when they are collateral damage in 'Explosions/Remote violence' attacks, they are not coded as such in 'Battles' events. This is because events under the former involve one-side not engaging in any violence within the course of the event; in 'Battles' events, both side, by definition, are engaging in violence, and it would hence be incorerct to denote that civlians are associated with either side here.

regional political elites, and engaging in communal contests over access to religious sites. In choosing to categorize actors as rebels, militias, communal organizations, protesters, etc., *ACLED does not allow for "insurgents" or "terrorists" as types of agents.* Many violent organizations may use insurgency tactics or commit acts against civilians with intended high fatality levels as part of their violent repertoire. *Instead, ACLED considers the goal and organization of each group to be the basis for their classification.*

Inter Code 1: State Forces

State forces are defined as collective actors that are recognised to perform government functions, including military and police, over a given territory. Government actors are named by ACLED as a series of separate regimes rather than a uniform body (e.g. Congo/Zaire (1965-1997), Democratic Republic of Congo (1997-2001), and Democratic Republic of Congo (2001-2019) as opposed to Congo/Zaire (1962-present)). As the strength, capacity and policies of governments can vary widely from one regime to the next, ACLED designates governments by their leading regimes. This enables researchers to capture the differences in government involvement and reaction to violence.

As militaries and police forces are a direct arm of the government, these actors are noted as 'Military Forces of State (20xx-20xx)' or 'Police Forces of State (20xx-20xx)'.[6] Mutinies of militaries are coded as 'Mutiny of Military Forces of State (20xx-20xx)'. Various units of these state forces are coded distinctly as well – such as 'Police Forces of India (2014-) Assam Rifles' or 'Police Forces of the Philippines (2016-) Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operations Task Force' – given that such units can engage in distinct patterns of behaviour; pro-government militias with *indirect* links to the state are not included under 'state forces' here given their deliberate distance from formal ties to the state.

It is important to note that this classification of state forces does not imply legitimacy, but rather acknowledges the de facto exercise of state sovereignty over a territory. This is why, *in a limited number of cases*, ACLED records government actors in states with limited or no recognition as 'state forces'; these states are not recorded separately in the 'COUNTRY' column, but their government forces are coded as distinct state actors. For

[6] Branches of the military or police forces are coded as, for example, "Military Forces of State (20xx-20xx) Special Presidential Division".

example, the 'Military Forces of Somaliland (1991-)' are coded though their 'COUNTRY' of activity is noted as Somalia not Somaliland.

In cases where the authority of a government is severely challenged, or where two or more groups have a claim to be the government (with an associated military), a distinct choice is made about how to proceed with coding – often resulting in both forces being coded as 'state forces'. For example, there are competing state forces coded as active in Libya from 2014 onwards or in Yemen from 2015 onwards.[7]

Inter Code 2: Rebel Groups

Rebel groups are defined as political organizations whose goal is to counter an established national governing regime by violent acts. Rebel groups are named according to the title they publicly use to represent themselves. The designation as a rebel group means that the group has a stated political agenda for national power (either through regime replacement or separatism), are acknowledged beyond the ranks of immediate members, and use violence as their primary means to pursue political goals.

Rebel forces are known by a specific chosen name, the groups are open and transparent about their intentions and leadership; they typically operate within and across states, and conduct activity against the central governments and their associates. Rebel groups often have predecessors and successors due to diverging goals within their membership. If splinter groups or factions within a group emerge, these are recorded as distinct actors.

In cases where aggregate groups are contesting the government, we often use an overarching name rather than factions (e.g. Hutu Rebels active in Burundi; Southern Muslim Separatists active in Thailand; Opposition Rebels in Syria).

Inter Code 3: Political Militias

Political militias are a more diverse set of violent actors, who are often created for a specific purpose or during a specific time period (i.e. Janjaweed largely active in Sudan) and for the furtherance of a political purpose by violence. Political militias are recorded by their stated name. These organizations are defined by their political goals of

[7] Examples of split states include Libya from 2014 onwards and Yemen from 2015 onwards.

influencing and impacting governance, security and policy. However, these groups are not seeking the removal of a national power, but are typically supported, armed by, or allied with a political elite and act towards a goal defined by these elites or larger political movements. Political militias operate in conjunction, or in alliance, with a recognized government, governor, military leader, rebel organization, political party, business elite, or opposition group. Whereas opposition parties will often have a militia arm, groups such as the Sudanese Janjaweed or Serbian Tigers are pro-government militias that work as supplements to government power yet maintain *indirect* links to such power.

These groups are not subsumed within the category of government or opposition, but are noted as an armed, distinct, yet associated, wing given their purposeful indirect ties to the state. These political militias may be associated with defined ethnic, regional or other identity communities, but they also operate outside of ethnic homelands and for goals other than the promotion of ethnic interests and as such are coded as 'political militias' as opposed to 'identity militias' (more on that below). The Mungiki of Kenya, War Veterans Group in Zimbabwe, and Mayi-Mayi of DR-Congo are examples of these groups.

In some cases, an "unidentified armed group" perpetrates political violence. These groups often operate like political militias as they can be used by elites under the guise of anonymity. The use of the UAG category is due to two reasons: the first is a lack of information about the group from reports received; however, the second reason may be more common: groups benefit from being unidentified to the larger public, as they can pursue violent actions without liability. Their activity is coded using the name 'Unidentified Armed Group (Country)'.[8]

Inter Code 4: Identity Militias

ACLED includes a broad category of "identity militias" that signifies armed and violent groups organized around a collective, common feature including community, ethnicity, region, religion or, in exceptional cases, livelihood. Therefore, for ACLED's purposes, identity militias include those reported as "tribal", "communal", "ethnic", "local", "clan",

[8] An "Unidentified Armed Group" is coded with Interaction 3, unless they are an "Unidentified Military" (a rare case that has an interaction of '1' of '8', depending on the context) or "Unidentified Ethnic/Communal/Clan/Tribal Militia" which is noted as a '4', as discussed below.

and "religious" and "caste" militias. Events involving "identity militias" are often referred to as "communal violence" as these violent groups often act locally, in the pursuance of local goals, resources, power, security, and retribution.

An armed group claiming to operate on behalf of a larger identity community may be associated with that community, but not represent it (i.e. Luo Ethnic Militia in Kenya or Fulani Ethnic Militia in Nigeria). Recruitment and participation are by association with the identity of the group. Identity militias may have a noted role in the community, such as the long-term policing units common among Somali clans. When an unidentified group that is armed perpetrates local political violence, their activity is coded using the name 'Unidentified Communal Militia (COUNTRY)'[9] in the 'Actor' columns, and a "4" in the interaction – rather than as an "Unidentified Armed Group' with "3" in the interaction columns given the localized nature of their activity.

Inter Code 5: Rioters

Rioters are individuals or 'mobs' who either engage in violence during demonstrations or in spontaneous acts of disorganised violence, and are noted by a general category of 'Rioters (Country)'. If a group is affiliated or leading an event (e.g. ZANU-PF political party), the associated group is named in the respective associated actor category. Rioters are by definition violent, yet are unarmed (or crudely armed at most) and not organized mobs, and may engage in a wide variety of violence, including property destruction, engaging with other armed groups (e.g. security forces, private security firms, etc.) or in violence against unarmed civilians.

Inter Code 6: Protesters

Protesters are peaceful, unarmed demonstrators[10], noted by a general category of 'Protesters (Country)'; if a group is affiliated or leading an event (e.g. MDC political party), the associated group is named in the respective associated actor category. Although protesters are nonviolent, they may be the targets of violence by other groups (e.g. security institutions, private security firms, or other armed actors).

[9] Or 'Unidentified Caste Militia', 'Unidentified Clan Militia', etc. depending on the country-context.
[10] Though non-violent, protesters may engage in disruptive behaviour like burning effigies or shoe-throwing.

Inter Code 7: Civilians

Civilians, in whatever number or association, are victims of violent acts within ACLED as they are, by definition, unarmed and, hence, vulnerable. They are noted as 'Civilians (Country X)'. Some normally armed actors may be coded as civilians if they are targeted with violence in situations where they are caught unarmed. Examples include off-duty state soldiers targeted in their home or members of armed groups subject to violence/execution while imprisoned.

Inter Code 8: External/Other Forces

Small categories of "other" actors include international organisations, state forces active outside of their main country of operation, private security firms and their armed employees, and hired mercenaries acting independently. They are noted by their name and actions. The military forces of states are coded as 'other' when active outside of their home state (e.g. the military of Kenya active in Somalia).

Interaction codes

The joined interaction code is the combination of the two 'INTER' codes associated with the two main actors. Single actor type codes are recorded in 'INTER1' and 'INTER2' columns, and the compounded number is recorded in the 'INTERACTION' column. For example, if a country's military fights a political militia group, and the respective 'INTER1' and 'INTER2' codes are "1" and "3", respectively, the compounded Interaction is recorded as "13".

Interaction numbers are always the smallest possible number (for example, 37 instead of 73), regardless of the order of 'ACTOR1' and 'ACTOR2'. Interaction codes are recorded for all events, including non-violent activity. For one-sided events, the empty second actor category is coded as "0". If a non-violent rebel event occurs where only 'INTER1' is noted with a "2", "20" is coded in the 'INTERACTION' column. Only the main actors recorded in the 'ACTOR1' and 'ACTOR2' columns are the basis for the interaction codes.

The following interaction codes translate to:

10- SOLE MILITARY ACTION (e.g. base establishment by state forces; remote violence involving state military with no reported casualties; non-violent military operations)

11- MILITARY VERSUS MILITARY (e.g. military in-fighting; battles between a military and mutinous forces; arrests of military officials)

12- MILITARY VERSUS REBELS (e.g. civil war violence between state forces and a rebel actor)

13- MILITARY VERSUS POLITICAL MILITIA (e.g. violence between state forces and unidentified armed groups; violence between police and political party militias)

14- MILITARY VERSUS COMMUNAL MILITIA (e.g. military engagement with a communal militia)

15- MILITARY VERSUS RIOTERS (e.g. suppression of a demonstration by police or military)

16- MILITARY VERSUS PROTESTERS (e.g. suppression of a demonstration by police or military)

17- MILITARY VERSUS CIVILIANS (e.g. state repression of civilians; arrests by police)

18- MILITARY VERSUS OTHER (e.g. inter-state conflict; state engagement with private security forces or a UN operation; strategic developments between a regime and the UN or another external actor)

20- SOLE REBEL ACTION (e.g. base establishment; remote violence involving rebel groups with no reported target; accidental detonation by a rebel group)

22- REBELS VERSUS REBELS (e.g. rebel in-fighting; violence between rebel groups and their splinter movements)

23- REBELS VERSUS POLITICAL MILIITA (e.g. civil war violence between rebels and a pro-government militia; violence between rebels and unidentified armed groups)

24- REBELS VERSUS COMMUNAL MILITIA (e.g. violence between rebels and local security providers)

25- REBELS VERSUS RIOTERS (e.g. spontaneous violence against a rebel group; a violent demonstration engaging a rebel group)

26- REBELS VERSUS PROTESTERS (e.g. violence against protesters by rebels)

27- REBELS VERSUS CIVILIANS (e.g. rebel targeting of civilians [a strategy commonly used in civil war])

28- REBELS VERSUS OTHERS (e.g. civil war violence between rebels and an allied state military; rebel violence against a UN operation)

30- SOLE POLITICAL MILITIA ACTION (e.g. remote violence by an unidentified armed group with no reported target; accidental detonation by a political militia; strategic arson as intimidation by a political party)

33- POLITICAL MILITIA VERSUS POLITICAL MILITIA (e.g. inter-elite violence)

34- POLITICAL MILITIA VERSUS COMMUNAL MILITIA (e.g. violence between communal militia and an unidentified armed group; violence between political militia and local security providers)

35- POLITICAL MILITIA VERSUS RIOTERS (e.g. violent demonstration against a political party; spontaneous violence against a political party)

36- POLITICAL MILITIA VERSUS PROTESTERS (e.g. peaceful demonstration engaging a political party)

37- POLITICAL MILITIA VERSUS CIVILIANS (e.g. out-sourced state repression carried out by pro-government militias; civilian targeting by political militias or unidentified armed groups)

38- POLITICAL MILITIA VERSUS OTHERS (e.g. violence between private security forces and unidentified armed groups; violence between pro-government militia and external state military forces)

40- SOLE COMMUNAL MILITIA ACTION (e.g. destruction of property by a communal militia; establishment of a local security militia)

44- COMMUNAL MILITIA VERSUS COMMUNAL MILITIA (e.g. intercommunal violence)

45- COMMUNAL MILITIA VERSUS RIOTERS (e.g. violent demonstration against an identity militia; spontaneous violence against an identity militia)

46- COMMUNAL MILITIA VERSUS PROTESTERS (e.g. peaceful demonstration engaging an identity militia)

47- COMMUNAL MILITIA VERSUS CIVILIANS (e.g. civilian targeting, especially in the context of intercommunal violence)

48- COMMUNAL MILITIA VERSUS OTHER (e.g. external state military engaging in violence against a communal militia)

50- SOLE RIOTER ACTION (e.g. 1-sided violent demonstration; spontaneous arson)

55- RIOTERS VERSUS RIOTERS (e.g. 2-sided violent demonstration in which both sides engage in violence)

56- RIOTERS VERSUS PROTESTERS (e.g. 2-sided demonstration in which only 1 side engages in violence)

57- RIOTERS VERSUS CIVILIANS (e.g. violent demonstration in which civilians are injured/killed; spontaneous violence in which civilians are targeted by a mob)

58- RIOTERS VERSUS OTHERS (e.g. mob violence against regional or international operation)

60- SOLE PROTESTER ACTION (e.g. 1-sided peaceful protest)

66- PROTESTERS VERSUS PROTESTERS (e.g. 2-sided peaceful protest)

67- PROTESTERS VERSUS CIVILIANS (e.g. peaceful protesters engaging civilians)

68- PROTESTERS VERSUS OTHER (e.g. peaceful demonstration engaging private security forces)

78- OTHER ACTOR VERSUS CIVILIANS (e.g. regional or international operation targeting civilians; private security forces targeting civilians)

80- SOLE OTHER ACTION (e.g. strategic developments involving international or regional operations; remote violence by external military forces with no reported target; non-violent external military operations)

Further notes on interactions

a) Civilians cannot attack other civilians or engage in violence
b) An ethnic identity militia is associated with a direct ethnic community and no other identifier. For example, the Turkana, Pokot, or many Somali militias are described as armed units for ethnic group contest and protection.
c) For ACLED's purposes, identity militias include those reported as "tribal", "communal", "ethnic", "local", "clan", and "religious" and "caste" militias.

Coding detail: In the dataset, a group's name will appear in the Actor 1 or Actor 2 column. Associated actors in the event to Actor 1 will appear in 'ASSOC_ACTOR_1' column, and associated actors for Actor 2 will appear in 'ASSOC_ACTOR_2' column. Each Actor 1 and Actor 2 category has a corresponding 'INTER1' and INTER2' category, respectively. If an event has two actors, both Inter 1 and Inter 2 are recorded in reference to both actors; if an event has only one actor, Inter1 is recorded along with a 0 (in reference to there being no Actor 2). The interaction codes refer to the main actors, and not associated actors.

Event Geography

There are up to six different types of spatial information recorded for each ACLED event:

1. the continental sub-region in which the event occurred;
2. the country in which the event occurred and its associated ISO code;
3. the name of the *first*, *second* and *third* level administrative zones that the specific location is found in according to GIS-based assessments and updated administrative codes;
4. the name of the specific location of an event;
5. the geographic coordinates of that specific location; and
6. a spatial precision code.

The most specific location for an event is sought for each ACLED code, using multiple sources to triangulate better location information.

Spatial precision codes

If the report notes a particular town, and coordinates are available for that town, the highest precision level "1" is recorded. If the source material notes that activity took place in a small part of a region, and notes a general area, a town with georeferenced coordinates to represent that area is chosen and the geo-precision code will note "2" for "part of region". If activity occurs near a town or a city, this same precision code is employed. If a larger region is mentioned, the closest natural location noted in reporting (like "border area", "forest" or "sea", among others) is chosen to represent the region – or a provincial capital is used if no other information at all is available – and is noted with precision level "3". No ACLED event is associated with the "country" as the smallest location unit available.

Coding detail: The columns that provide spatial information include 'REGION', 'COUNTRY', 'ADMIN1' (administrative unit that corresponds to provincial level, or similar); 'ADMIN 2' (administrative unit that corresponds to county level, or similar); 'ADMIN3' (administrative unit that corresponds to district level, or similar); 'LOCATION' (the village or town name); 'LATITUDE' (in decimal degrees); 'LONGITUDE' (in decimal degrees); and 'GEO_PRECISION' (coded as either 1, 2, or 3).

When events occur in neighbourhoods of large cities and distinct neighbourhood/district coordinates are available, these are used to identify the sub-urban area. This location is coded as: "City Name [hyphen] district name" (e.g. 'Mosul-Old City') in the 'LOCATION' column. If information about the specific neighbourhood/district is not known, the location is coded at the city level (e.g. 'Mosul'). In both cases, geo-precision 1 is used. The hyphenate feature allows for users to aggregate events by city if needed.

Event Time

Three forms of temporal information are found in each ACLED code:

1. the date of each event;
2. the year; and
3. the temporal precision.

Dates are a necessary component of each ACLED event. ACLED events are atomic as events are coded by day; if a military campaign in an area starts on March 1, 1999 and lasts until March 5, 1999 with violent activity reported on each day, this is coded as five different events in ACLED, with a different date for each entry. This episode would not be entered as a single campaign of violence. This allows ACLED to record the exact number of active days. Events which source material note occurred in the space of three months – like long-running protests – are only coded for the days in which reported activity took place (not as 90+ days). This avoids over-counting event occurrence.

Time precision codes

If sources include an actual date of an event, a time precision code of "1" is entered. If sources note that an event happened during a specific week or in the weekend, "2" is noted in the time precision field and the middle of that week (or of the weekend) is used as the reference date. If sources note only that an event took place within a particular month, without reference to the particular date, the month mid-point is chosen unless the beginning or end of the month is noted (in which case, the first and last date are used, respectively) and "3" is noted as the time precision level. ACLED does not include events with less temporal information.

Coding detail: Dates are recorded as Day, Month, Year. Time precision is recorded as 1, 2 or 3.

Notes and Reported Fatalities

Notes

The 'NOTES' column records any additional important details surrounding the event. Notes are kept short to only report significant details about the specific event. In rare cases, additional relevant information is added to provide context to the event.

Reported fatalities

Events coded by ACLED do not have to meet a minimum fatality level for inclusion. ACLED only codes estimated fatalities when reported by source materials. It cannot verify the numbers reported from sources and does not use fatalities as the basis for event inclusion. Fatality data are typically the most biased, and least accurate, component of any conflict data. They are particularly prone to manipulation by armed groups, and occasionally the media, which may overstate or underreport fatalities for political purposes. As such, all figures recorded by ACLED should be treated as '*reported* fatalities'.

The fatality number is found in the 'FATALITIES' column. If source reports differ or a vague estimate is provided, the lowest number of fatalities is reported unless a more reliable or corroborated estimate has become available. If reports mention "several", "many", "few" or plural fatalities, yet the exact number is unknown, "10" is recorded as the total.[11] If a report mentions "dozens", this is recorded as "12" fatalities. If a report mentions "hundreds", this is recorded as "100" fatalities. If a note mentions "massacres", a default number of 100 fatalities is recorded. If there is no reference made to fatalities in the report, or if it is unclear whether fatalities occurred at all (for example, when "casualties" are mentioned, which, by definition, means 'injuries and/or fatalities'), "0" fatalities are recorded.

When summarized fatalities are reported, but events occur across several days or in multiple locations simultaneously (e.g. "12 fatalities result from fighting over a span of 3 days"), the total number of fatalities is divided and that fraction is recorded for each day of the event (4 fatalities per battle day, in the example above). If an odd number

[11] Or 3 if there is evidence that the number is lower than 10 – such as the bombing of a motorcycle, which could not have housed 10 individuals. Ten is chosen as this was the approximate average fatality rate across fatal events for an earlier subset of ACLED data.

(including 1), the proportion of fatalities is divided by assigning the first day the additional fatality and distributed as evenly as possible. Such disaggregation of fatalities is recorded in the 'NOTES' column.

> ***Coding detail:*** ACLED does not use a fatality threshold for its inclusion of events. The number used is conservative, in that it is the most reliable, smallest number reported

Information Sources

ACLED tracks reported political violence from four main types of sources:

1. local, regional, national and continental media reviewed on a daily basis;
2. reports from NGOs or international organisations used to supplement media reporting;
3. selected social media accounts, including Twitter and Telegram; and
4. information and data provided through partnerships with local conflict observatories in hard-to-access cases.[12]

ACLED researchers use thousands of distinct sources in more than twenty different languages. The result is the most comprehensive and wide-reaching source material presently used in disaggregated conflict event coding. Every ACLED event is composed from at least one source. Their names or acronym are noted in the source column. With the exception of local sources who aim to remain anonymous, the publication details are sufficient to enable a data user to find the original source name with ease. If more than two sources are used, the most thorough report is cited, or all are noted in alphabetical order in the 'SOURCE' column. Researchers may often refer to more than one report to confirm the details of an event but will note the source with the most thorough and unbiased information in the 'SOURCE' column. If that event has additional information taken from more than one source, both report sources are noted in the 'SOURCE' column.

The 'SOURCE SCALE' column describes whether the sources used for coding an event operate at the local, subnational, national, regional, international, or at another level. One scale over another does not guarantee more direct information, accuracy, or legitimacy, but ACLED supports gathering and using local sources whenever possible. ACLED has arrangements and partnerships with many local organizations for data exchange in pursuance of this goal.

[12] For safety reasons, some partners that wish to remain anonymous are noted as 'Local Sources' in the 'SOURCE' column.

Relationships to Other Datasets

The conflicts coded in ACLED are generally compatible with other conflict data collections. ACLED information may be joined with many, if not all, other conflict datasets by country, year, actor or specific locality. *ACLED data are event data, and as such, care should be given in joining its information with other datasets using different units of analysis (e.g. campaigns of violence instead of violent events by day).*

As ACLED codes a wide range of constituent events for periods and areas affected by political violence and disorder, the information collected is far more numerous than datasets that focus on specific forms of violence (e.g. civil war, terrorism as defined by targeting of civilians by non-state actors alone, or those with fatality thresholds for inclusion) or only campaigns of violence instead of events.

Generally, ACLED disaggregates civil wars into their constituent events. However, the threshold for inclusion as an ACLED event is lower than most "civil war" datasets. As a result, ACLED records some events that are not recorded in other datasets.

Versions 1-7 of the ACLED dataset covered African states. Version 8 expanded to also include South and Southeast Asia and the Middle East. Codebooks for earlier versions of the ACLED dataset are available upon request. Following Version 8, ACLED moved towards a system of updating events with corrections and appending supplemental data as necessary in real-time and hence no longer releases formal 'Versions'.

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3. **To reference the ACLED codebook, please cite:** ACLED, (2019). "Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) Codebook."

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5. **If referring to figures or statistics published in ACLED analysis, infographics, working papers, etc.,** please cite the individual analysis piece or paper, including the author(s), as follows: *Hart, Tom, and Lauren Blaxter. (23 November 2018). "Ceasefire Divisions: Violations of the Truce with Gaza Lead to Rising Political Pressures in Israel." Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED).* If the piece doesn't have an author recognized (often the case for pieces on ACLED methodology), you should include ACLED as the author.

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ACLED Methodology

ACLED's aim is to capture the forms, agents, dates and locations of political violence and protest as it occurs within developing states. This brief note contains information about how the ACLED team collects, cleans, reviews and checks event data, with a focus on what makes ACLED unique and compatible with other data. The process of ACLED coding assures that it is accurate, comprehensive, transparent and regularly updated. Data are posted as they are complete, although there are ongoing checks to ensure the thoroughness of previously collected events.

ACLED data are coded by a range of experienced researchers who collect information primarily from secondary source information and apply the guidelines outlined in the codebook to extract information from news reports. ACLED data are collected each week after individual researchers have scrutinized the information from reports; they are then aggregated and revised by the first coding reviewer, investigated and cross-checked by the second reviewer and then event notes and details are inspected by the third and final reviewer. The process is designed to assure:

1. Validity through intra- and inter-coder checks;
2. Accuracy to correct mistakes in coding; and
3. Relevance by determining whether each compiled event constitutes an act of political violence or protest.

Details of the review process can be found on the Resources page of the website.

Every event is coded using the same rules on who, what, where, and when, to maximize comparability and validity, thorough information. Additional information, such as event ID numbers, precision scores for location and time, notes to give the context of the event, fatality numbers if reported, codes to distinguish between the types of actors, and additional spatial information are also provided in each row of information. The most recent version of the dataset is available on the Data page of the website.

ACLED data are unique in several ways: ACLED collects and processes information by date, location, agent and event type. This is an 'atomic' unit which means that a battle occurring over the course of a weekend will be recorded as two events, one on each day. Further, if two distinct events (e.g. an act of violence against civilians and a riot) occur in Mogadishu on January 2nd, both events are discrete observations in the dataset. This is useful because events are then directly comparable across time periods, event types, locations, countries, or agents because the same collection and unit rules are used to collect the information.

Further, we aim to capture how disorder occurs within states, so events are included regardless of whether they generate fatalities or not. Finally, the ACLED project often reviews specific periods of conflict or instability to assure that all reported information has been accurately and completely included in our data and analysis. A list of times and

places that ACLED plans to review can be found on the Resources page. All data are immediately processed, cleaned, reviewed and made available for public download as part of the overall data. This means that users may find changes to the data in their selected countries or targeted conflicts throughout the year. We notify users of such changes on the Resource page and the Data page of the website.