

Codebook

The Loss of Cross-border Sanctuary (LOCS) data

Version 1, April 2024

1 Overview

LOCS offers global coverage of all cross-border insurgencies active between 1989 and 2020.

The most recent iteration of LOCS can be downloaded from [the Sanctuary Politics repository](#).

2 Variable definitions

EventID

- Unique ID for the event.

ActorName

- The UCDP actor name of the group.

Note: Some actor names depart from UCDP names.

TargetName

- The name of the target state.

HostName

- The name of the host state.

ActorID

- The UCDP actor ID of the group.

Note: Data was originally pulled from the UCDP-GED Version 22.1.

TargetID

- The Gleditsch and Ward (GW) country code of the state which constitutes the warring party in the context of the event.

HostID

- The Gleditsch and Ward (GW) country code of the country serving as the rebel sanctuary's host in the context of the event.

DyadID

- The UCDP dyad ID of the group and target government.

Host_agency

- Where relevant, this variable indicates whether or not an act was conducted or authorised by the host state.

0 = Other actors than the host state were responsible for this event. The host state was not involved in the matter.

1 = The host state was responsible for this event.

2 = Other actors were responsible for this event but had the host state's explicit consent.

Event_type

- The type of event spell which began with this event.

Accession = The beginning of sanctuary for the group in the host country.

Pledge = An anti-rebel pledge.

Crackdown = The beginning of a crackdown campaign.

Crackdown_dislodged = The beginning of a crackdown campaign which dislodged the sanctuary.

Toleration = The end of a spell of anti-rebel policy (pledge or crackdown).

Dom_gain = The beginning of domestic territorial control.

Dom_loss = The end of domestic territorial control.

Year

- The year in which the event took place.

Month

- Where available, the month in which the event took place.

Day

- Where available, the day on which the event took place.

Quarter

- Where month is unavailable, the quarter in which the event took place (Q1-Q4).

Eventsummary

- Cites one or more statements corroborating the coding of, and summarising, the event.

Source

- Cites the source and page number where the statement is taken from.

Twelve_rule

- A dummy marking observations which are coded according to the the 12-month rule (see Section 3.3). For these events, the date variables refers to the start date of the event lagged by a year.

0 = Date coded based on observed event(s).

1 = Date coded based on twelve-year rule.

Announcementform

- For pledges, this variable defines the way in which the pledge was issued on the stated date.

1 = Head of Government speech/interview

2 = Head of Government signed pact

3 = Judicial organ passes law/bill/permit

4 = Parliament vote/Executive decree or ban

5 = Government plan or decision broadcasted in media

6 = Government plan or decision broadcasted directly to rebels

7 = Other form of announcement

Crackdownform

- For crackdowns, this variable defines the form in which the crackdown was carried out on the stated date.

1 = Arrests and/or extraditions: Rebel members are arrested and/or extradited to the target state.

2 = Facility raids (with or without ensuing arrests) by police or special police officers.

3 = Military operation: The violent pursuit of rebels by military agents that the host state controls.

4 = Deportation: Rebel members are arrested and deported to a third-party country (not the target state).

5 = Expulsion command: Rebel troops leave after being told to leave and/or threatened.

6 = Other form of crackdown

Crackdown_dislodged

- For crackdowns, indicates whether the rebel group was forced underground as a result of the operations (see below).

Crackdown_dislodged_justification

- Where positive, direct citations corroborating the coding of Crackdown_dislodged.

Crackdown_Leadershipdecapitation

- For crackdowns, indicates whether members of the group's top leadership were either killed or captured during the assaults (see below).

Crackdown_Leadershipdecapitation_summary

- Where positive, direct citations corroborating the coding of Crackdown_Leadershipdecapitation.

Crackdown_intrusive

- For crackdowns, indicates whether the target state's security forces were allowed to deploy from the host state's territory.

Crackdown_joint

- For crackdowns, indicates whether target and host state planned and executed operations together through a centralised command structure or close information sharing.

Crackdown_intrusive_joint_summary

- Where positive, direct citations corroborating the coding of Crackdown_intrusive or/and Crackdown_joint.

Dom_territoryname

- For domestic gains and losses, indicates the name of the domestic territory first gained or last lost control over by the rebel group at the stated date.

Accession_eventclarity

- For accession events, ordinal assessment (0-5) of clarity that the observation fits the variable definition.

0 = Not at all clear: Sources are few and/or ambiguous.

1 = Somewhat unclear: Only one source with questionable reliability describes the event.

2 = Questionable: Sources differ, though a majority of the most reliable sources lend support to the coding.

3 = Somewhat clear: One or more reliable source(s) lend(s) support to the coding.

4 = Clear beyond reasonable doubt: More than two independent and reliable sources lend support to the observation.

5 = Certain: The event is described consistently across a range of reliable sources.

Accession_dateclarity

- For accession events, ordinal assessment (0-5) of clarity that the incident took place on the date stated.

0 = Not at all clear: References to the date are few and/or highly ambiguous.

1 = Somewhat unclear: References to the date are few and/or somewhat ambiguous.

2 = Questionable: Sources differ, though a majority of the most reliable sources lend support to the coding.

3 = Somewhat clear: One or more reliable source(s) lend(s) support to the coded date.

4 = Clear beyond reasonable doubt: More than two independent and reliable sources lend support to the coded date.

5 = Certain: The stated date of the event is described consistently across a range of reliable sources.

Pledge_eventclarity

- For pledge events, ordinal assessment (0-5) of clarity that the observation fits the variable definition.

0 = Not at all clear: Sources are few and/or ambiguous.

1 = Somewhat unclear: Only one source with questionable reliability describes the event.

2 = Questionable: Sources differ, though a majority of the most reliable sources lend support to the coding.

3 = Somewhat clear: One or more reliable source(s) lend(s) support to the coding.

4 = Clear beyond reasonable doubt: More than two independent and reliable sources lend support to the observation.

5 = Certain: The event is described consistently across a range of reliable sources.

Pledge_dateclarity

- For pledge events, ordinal assessment (0-5) of clarity that the incident took place on the date stated.

0 = Not at all clear: References to the date are few and/or highly ambiguous.

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5 = Certain: The stated date of the event is described consistently across a range of reliable sources.

Crackdown_eventclarity

- For crackdown events, ordinal assessment (0-5) of clarity that the observation fits the variable definition.

0 = Not at all clear: Sources are few and/or ambiguous.

1 = Somewhat unclear: Only one source with questionable reliability describes the event.

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4 = Clear beyond reasonable doubt: More than two independent and reliable sources lend support to the coded date.

5 = Certain: The stated date of the event is described consistently across a range of reliable sources.

Dom_eventclarity

- For domestic-territory events, ordinal assessment (0-5) of clarity that the observation fits the variable definition.

0 = Not at all clear: Sources are few and/or ambiguous.

1 = Somewhat unclear: Only one source with questionable reliability describes the event.

2 = Questionable: Sources differ, though a majority of the most reliable sources lend support to the coding.

3 = Somewhat clear: One or more reliable source(s) lend(s) support to the coding.

4 = Clear beyond reasonable doubt: More than two independent and reliable sources lend support to the observation.

5 = Certain: The event is described consistently across a range of reliable sources.

Dom_dateclarity

- For domestic-territory events, ordinal assessment (0-5) of clarity that the incident took place on the date stated.

0 = Not at all clear: References to the date are few and/or highly ambiguous.

1 = Somewhat unclear: References to the date are few and/or somewhat ambiguous.

2 = Questionable: Sources differ, though a majority of the most reliable sources lend support to the coding.

3 = Somewhat clear: One or more reliable source(s) lend(s) support to the coded date.

4 = Clear beyond reasonable doubt: More than two independent and reliable sources lend support to the coded date.

5 = Certain: The stated date of the event is described consistently across a range of reliable sources.

3 Sources and coding procedures

3.1 Sources

Coding was done through desk research. Academic works, reports, and news articles were consulted to create a full timeline of events within the sampled dyads. This process was supplemented with structured searches in the New York Times' digitised archives and the World News Connection database. The latter translates non-English language (including local) newspapers, which ameliorates reporting-omission bias. Throughout, coding decisions are linked to word-for-word statements which corroborate my conclusions.

3.2 Anti-rebel Pledges

3.2.1 Definition

Anti-rebel pledges are defined as public commitments to counteract a given rebel group made through speech or writing by a government representative of the host state.

3.2.2 Coding rules

To be included, the observed act must convey the host state's intention to stop the rebel group's cross-border operations and/or expel its troops. To enter the dataset, a policy announcement must also (i) convey new information about the future which deviates from the status quo, and (ii) be made publicly known. Conversely, speech-acts that merely reiterate previous speech-acts do not enter the dataset, nor do decisions (formal or informal) only known to state elites.

3.3 Crackdown campaigns

3.3.1 Definition

Crackdown Campaigns are defined as security operations whereby state security forces (military, police, or intelligence) restrict or harm members of the rebel group inside the host state's territory. The category comprises facility raids, arrests, extraditions, and military operations. As with all counterinsurgency operations, crackdowns on safe havens typically consist of chains of related assaults. Rather than treating each operation as singular events, LOCS aggregates crackdowns into spells ('campaigns') which are delineated by a first event ('campaign start') and the point at which operations cease ('campaign end').

3.3.2 Coding rules

Crackdown Start is coded for the first crackdown event in a spell of time where the rebels were targeted inside the host state. *Crackdown Stop* is coded in two scenarios, depending on context. Where crackdowns involve foreign troops, *Toleration Onset* is coded in the month that foreign troops were expelled (and no unilateral actions followed). Where crackdowns are conducted by host-state forces alone, *Toleration Onset* is coded when (i) there is evidence that anti-rebel actions stopped, or (ii) twelve months pass without new crackdown events.

Where crackdowns had no decisive end but no instances were found proving that operations continued, *Crackdown End* is coded one year after the last record. This 12-month rule, while arbitrary, is necessary in order not to extend crackdown campaigns indefinitely in the absence of direct evidence. LOCS marks these observations such that the time rule

can be modified (e.g. to 6 or 18 months) for sensitivity tests.¹

3.4 Bases Dislodged

3.4.1 Definition

This is a dichotomous variable coded for each crackdown campaign which indicates whether the rebel group was forced underground as a result of the operations.

3.4.2 Coding rules

The variable is positive if there is evidence that two criteria are met: (i) All of the group's base camps were destroyed or deserted and (ii) rebel troops remaining in the host state, if any, were henceforth unable to operate openly without pursuit. This conception is inspired by de la Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca ([forthcoming](#)), whose analytical treatment of rebel violence separates between, on the one hand, clandestine, covert, and ephemeral operations (e.g. planting explosives), and on the other hand, overt operations with longer build-ups designed to capture territory (e.g. armed patrolling). Similarly, rebels who are dislodged from their strongholds in neighbouring countries may be able to operate underground (as in the former category) but they are no longer able to operate overtly (as in the latter category). Each coding decision is corroborated with word-for-word statements, summarised in the data as well as in the Case Narratives file.

3.5 Leadership decapitation

3.5.1 Definition

This is a dichotomous variable coded for each crackdown campaign which indicates whether members of the group's top leadership were either killed or captured during the assaults.

3.5.2 Coding rules

For each campaign, I searched for evidence that a leader of the rebel group was arrested or killed. To be considered as such, individuals must either be the top commander in combat or a member of the executive committee. For example, whereas the Congolese crackdown on Rwandan Hutu militants of September 2002 led to the arrest of FDLR's Colonel Renzaho (Rafti 2007: 73), "no senior officers were captured" in DR Congo's more recent crackdown of 2015 (Florquin and Seymour 2016: 3). In addition to desk research, to minimise false negatives, the crackdowns were paired in time to K. G. Cunningham and Sawyer (2019)'s data on leadership transitions in rebel groups. LOCS includes word-to-word citations to corroborate each positive coding, which are also available in the Case Narratives file.

3.6 Territorial control

3.6.1 Definition

I define territorial control as the exercised ability to stop or deter state forces from entering a given area. This is in keeping with de la Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca ([forthcoming](#))'s conception. To operationalise the concept, the underlying question is thus: To what extent was rebel control uncontested and long-lasting? This is hard to measure directly.² Instead, I proxy sustained, uncontested control by searching for the creation of administrative or

¹For a similar coding strategy in conflict event data, see Huth and Allee (2002: Appendix).

²Regarding our definition of long-lasting, any threshold is arbitrary. Asal et al. (2015: 117) code "strong control" where "police and military units [are deterred] from some defined geographic space over a period ≥6 months." Such time caps may be in disharmony with contextual factors that vary across conflict. Moreover, it will be extremely difficult to find enough reliable information to measure if the criterion is fulfilled.

“rebel governance” functions, such as tax collection, educational and judicial institutions.³ Conversely, a proxy of the continuation of the state’s repressive capacity, real or perceived, is whether camps are permanent or mobile. If rebels do not fear state entrance, they have no incentive to move camps routinely. Justifications for each coding, with direct quotes from scientific or news sources, are provided in the dataset.

3.6.2 Coding rules

To identify whether, when, and where a rebel group achieved territorial control domestically, I begin with three existing sources: (i) Asal et al. (2015)’s dataset,⁴ which includes 395 groups and which codes whether the rebels had territorial control during the 1988-2005 period; (ii) the UCDP Encyclopedia, which often notes in text whether, when, and where territory was held; and (iii) the NSA data (D. Cunningham et al. 2012), which aggregates territorial control to the conflict spell.

The NSA data makes this job easier; however, there are two issues with this source. First, it stops after 2011, and second, it aggregates temporal information to the conflict-level.⁵ To solve the latter problem, I introduce temporal variation. Where the NSA identifies an area of control, I research the start-date and end-date of their control of that area. To solve the former problem, and ensure that information is not missing, I consult case-specific literature to identify episodes of territorial control, with a special emphasis on the post-2011 period.

Where neither source indicates any episode of domestic territorial control, I conduct online string searches in academic studies. I search “[group name(s)]” AND “territorial control” OR “base” OR “camp.” If there is no study indicating a link between the group and the control of territory, I move to the next rebel group. If, however, there is a documented association with a controlled territory in the Asal et al. data, the NSA, the UCDP, or in scholarly articles, I conduct more research to pinpoint the sanctuary in time in place.

4 Sample definitions

4.1 Sample scope

4.1.1 Definitions

LOCS offers global coverage of all cross-border insurgencies active between 1989 and 2020. Drawing on the operationalisation of the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), an ‘insurgency’ is defined as a non-state actor fighting against a state’s government over either government and/or territory in a conflict which has resulted in at least 25 battle-related deaths in one calendar year (UCDP 2024).

4.1.2 Censoring

The sample begins in January 1989 mainly for pragmatic reasons. Since the UCDP’s monthly conflict data only exist from January 1989 onwards (S. Davies et al. 2023), most conflict dynamics cannot be measured at the monthly level of analysis before this time. Still, research was conducted on pre-1989 dyad-years in order to create complete timelines. In the LOCS

³Thus defined, my coding will usually (but need not) correspond to a coding of “high” on the *Efftercont* variable in the NSA.

⁴Available at Dataverse.

⁵The coders do sometimes break conflict spells into separate rows when conflict attributes, such as territorial control, change. However, compared to the historical record, only a small subset of true breaks are covered.

Case Narratives (Schram 2024), events that occurred before the sample (including the start of sanctuary access) are therefore included.

Next, LOCS ends in December 2020 because the conventional way to separate 'ongoing' and 'ended' conflict spells is through a two-year rule. As the latest version of the UCDP's conflict data stretches to December 2022, this crucial factor cannot be determined after December 2020. As above, however, data on host-policy shifts was often collected for the post-2020 period, though these records are likely incomplete.

4.2 Sampled dyads in LOCS

4.2.1 Sample rules and sampling procedure

The universe of cases spans rebel groups recorded in the UCDP/Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) system (N. P. Gleditsch et al. 2002; G. A. M. Davies 2002). A dyad is included if it meets the thesis's definition of sanctuaries – pockets of land located immediately across the state's terrestrial borders where a rebel group has a troop presence and has launched cross-border attacks (cf. Chapter 2.2.1).

To aid the sampling process, I drew on two datasets: the Non-State Actor (NSA) data, and the UCDP External Support Data (ESD). The NSA identifies which UCDP/PRIO rebel groups had "troop presence" in external countries up until 2011 (D. Cunningham et al. 2012). Extending to 2017, the ESD provide annual records of which states offered their territory to rebel groups (Meier et al. 2022). I draw on both sources but extend the sample to December 2020. Furthermore, since my definition of sanctuaries is slightly different to theirs, requiring that the rebels (1) had troops stationed in and (2) launched attacks from the neighbouring state's territory, the case population was selected in three steps.

First, for the 91 rebel-host dyads where the NSA codes "extensive troop presence" in neighbouring states, I looked for evidence in scholarship and news reports that the border had been used in combat operations, thus satisfying criterion 2. Such evidence was found for 48 dyads. Second, for the 70 triads where the NSA codes "some troop presence" abroad, I looked for evidence of both criteria, adding 15 cases to the sample. Lastly, drawing on desk research and the ESD, I researched the remaining rebel groups active in the 1989-2019 period, finding evidence of troop presence and cross-border attacks from neighbouring countries in 21 cases.

A detailed overview of the sampled dyads in LOCS, including a comparison with the NSA sample, is found in the supplementary materials to the article "Sanctuary Lost: How neighbouring states shape cross-border insurgencies."

4.3 Special cases

4.3.1 The Islamic State (Daesh)

The Islamic State (IS) – also known as ISIS, ISIL, or Daesh – is a special case due to three factors. First, several rebel groups that existed before the rise of IS became IS-affiliated (e.g. the Allied Democratic Forces in Uganda), and are sometimes coded as "IS" by the UCDP thereafter even though changes on the ground were typically only aesthetic. Second, a multitude of different actors in different places are captured by the UCDP's IS-attributed dyads, and it is accordingly difficult to tie outcome variables of interest (e.g. rebel violence) to changes in context-specific independent variables (e.g. crackdown campaigns in host state *i*) without inviting measurement error. This is especially damning considering the comparatively large number of conflict events attributed to IS since 2014. Third, whereas IS

without doubt had a permanent troop presence and engaged in cross-border attacks between Iraq and Syria (Azman 2022: 113-114), it would be conceptually dubious to thus create two dyads for IS in Syria and Iraq respectively. In ISIL's case, the target state was never singular: rather, the same rebel group faced Iraq and Syria as target states simultaneously while also using both countries for sanctuary. Based on these reasons, I exclude all rebel-target dyads comprising the Islamic State from LOCS.

4.3.2 *Hezbollah*

Hezbollah, the Shiite Muslim organisation based in Lebanon, has fought with the military of Israel from across Israel's border, notably during the 2006 Lebanon War. However, it would be dubious to define Hezbollah as an Israeli rebel group with sanctuary in Lebanon; rather, it is a Lebanese rebel group whose incompatibility with Israel primarily concerns "ending Israeli occupation and recovering 'lost' lands in the Lebanese south" (Encyclopedia 2022: Actor 366). As such, LOCS excludes Hezbollah from the sample, categorising the group as having Lebanon, not Israel, as its home – and Israeli forces in Lebanon as its target.

4.3.3 *The Yugoslav wars*

The separatist conflicts between ethnic Serbs, Slovenes, Croats, Kosovar Albanians, Bosniaks, and Macedonians in then-Yugoslavia during the 1990s offer an interesting case from a coding perspective. That is because the transition from sub-state regions to states can be pinpointed at different times depending on which criteria one uses for statehood. For example, did the Bosnian Serbs use Serbian territory for sanctuary to launch cross-border attacks in Bosnia? The answer boils down to when we start considering "Bosnia" and "Serbia" as states rather than Yugoslav regions. Tellingly, the Correlates of War and Gleditsch and Ward arrive at different time points when coding the countries (K. S. Gleditsch and Ward 1999; Stinnett et al. 2002). I resolve the tension by treating the Yugoslav wars as an internal rather than international conflict. That is, I treat the borders separating regions in Yugoslavia as internal rather than external borders. Hence, the dyads that the UCDP affiliate with this conflict are excluded from LOCS.

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