

# The Political Terror Scale (PTS) Codebook

Version 0.25

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<http://www.politicalerrorscale.org/>

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## Data and Citation:

The **PTS** dataset and this codebook can be found at <http://www.politicalterroryscale.org/>. Please cite this codebook when appropriate. When using the **PTS** data, please cite:

Gibney, Mark, Linda Cornett, Reed Wood, Peter Haschke, and Daniel Arnon. 2015. The Political Terror Scale 1976-2016. Date Retrieved, from the Political Terror Scale website: <http://www.politicalterroryscale.org/>.

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# The Political Terror Scale (PTS)

## Introduction

This document describes the Political Terror Scale (**PTS**) dataset, a data collection project housed by the Political Science Department at the University of North Carolina, Asheville. The dataset is described in detail in [Wood and Gibney \(2010\)](#). The **PTS** measures violations of physical integrity rights carried out by states or their agents – covering some 200 countries or territories from 1976 to 2015. The dataset is available for download at: <http://www.politicalterror scale.org/>.

## Definition of “Political Terror”

The **PTS** seeks to measure *political terror*. We define political terror as *violations of basic human rights to the physical integrity of the person by agents of the state*. It is important to note that political terror as defined by the **PTS** is not synonymous with *terrorism* or the use of violence and intimidation in pursuit of political aims. The concept is also distinguishable from terrorism as a tactic or from criminal acts.

## Violations of Physical Integrity

Violations of physical integrity rights – also referred to as *violations of personal integrity or security* – constitute the scope of violence that is captured by the **PTS**. Violations of physical integrity rights include:

- torture and cruel and unusual treatment and punishment;
- beatings, excessive use of force, brutality;
- rape and sexual violence;
- killings and unlawful use of deadly force;
- summary or extra-judicial executions;
- political assassinations and murder;
- political imprisonment, arbitrary arrest and detention;

- incommunicado and clandestine imprisonment and detention;
- forced disappearances;
- kidnappings, forced relocations and removal;

Not considered are corporal and capital punishment in the context of legal proceedings conforming to international standards.

### **Agents of the State**

Physical integrity rights violations are only captured *if* they are perpetrated, sanctioned, or ordered by *agents of the state*. Domestic, societal, or criminal violence, or violence ascribed to insurgent groups or criminal syndicates are not considered. Examples of state agents or actors acting on the behest, or on the authority or with implicit consent of agents of the state, include:

- police, law enforcement, guards, and security personnel
- military and paramilitary organizations
- executives and members of executive agencies and bureaucracies
- members of the criminal justice and penal systems (e.g. prison guards)
- intelligence agents
- militias
- death squads
- political parties and their organizations
- mercenaries and private military contractors
- foreign personnel such as peace-keepers supplementing domestic capacity

Identifying agents of the state and distinguishing them from non-state actors is often difficult. Where violations cannot be attributed to state agents, these violations are not coded.

### **Motivations**

It is important to note that the **PTS** does not exclude “non-politically motivated violations” of physical integrity rights by state agents. The **PTS** captures any violation of physical integrity rights by state agents, regardless of reasons or motivation for the violation. The assassination of a political challenger, for example, is counted the same way as the killing of a suspected criminal or a random by-stander.

General police brutality, for instance, will be taken into account even in the absence of explicit repressive policies.

As such, it is worth to point out that the **PTS** does not exclusively measure repression. Repression as understood in the literature is the use of violence and intimidation in pursuit of political aims (Tilly, 1978; Goldstein, 1978; Gurr, 1986; Haschke, 2014). The **PTS** captures the use of violence by state agents for any aim – political, personal, or monetary.

## **Sources**

## **Unit of Observation**

## **Scaling**

## **Intensity**

## **Range**

# General and ID Variables

## Country

Name of country or entity covered in human rights reports. In most cases names refer to independent states. Technically, the unit of analysis of the **PTS** data is the *report-year* and not the *country-year*. As such, some entities covered are not independent states or UN members. Potentially controversial examples of “non-states” covered include: Western Sahara, Taiwan, Kosovo, the Occupied Territories, Gaza, the European Union, and Puerto Rico.

## Country\_OLD

Name of country or entity covered in human rights reports as used in previous data releases.

## Year

Year of observation. Note that this is not the year of publication but the year of events covered in reports. For example, the “World Report 2016” published by Human Rights Watch in 2016 covers events that took place in 2015.

## COW\_Code\_A

The Correlates of War Project (CoW) alphabetic country codes. Details can be found here: <http://www.correlatesofwar.org/data-sets/cow-country-codes>.

## COW\_Code\_N

The Correlates of War Project (CoW) numeric country codes.

## WordBank\_Code\_A

World Bank three letter country codes (ISO 3166-1 alpha-3). Details can be found here: <http://data.worldbank.org/developers/api-overview/country-queries>.

## UN\_Code\_N

United Nation three digit numeric country codes (ISO 3166-1 numeric-3). Details can be found here: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/m49/m49alpha.htm>.

## GW\_Code\_A

Gleditsch and Ward (1999) alphabetic country codes. Details can be found here: [http://privatewww.essex.ac.uk/~ksg/data/iisyst\\_casedesc.pdf](http://privatewww.essex.ac.uk/~ksg/data/iisyst_casedesc.pdf).

## GW\_Code\_N

Gleditsch and Ward (1999) numeric country codes.

## Region

OECD region identifier.

- eap – East Asia and Pacific
- eca – Europe and Central Asia
- lac – Latin America and Caribbean
- mena – Middle East and North Africa
- na – North America
- sa – South Asia
- ssa – Sub-Saharan Africa



# PTS Variables

## **PTS\_A   PTS Amnesty International (PTS-A)**

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## **PTS\_S   PTS State Department (PTS-S)**

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## **PTS\_H   PTS Human Rights Watch (PTS-H)**

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# New PTS Variables

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## NoReport\_A\_Beta

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