**The Armed Conflict Location &
Event Data Project**

2021

ANNUAL
REPORT

ACLED

Bringing clarity to crisis

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) began as a PhD project in 2005, covering six central African states. It has since grown into the most trusted source for real-time data and analysis on conflict and instability globally. ACLED is composed of a team of 200 people collecting information on political violence and protest events from sources reporting in over 100 languages around the globe. ACLED's mission is to bring clarity to crisis. By making reliable, global real-time conflict data openly accessible, ACLED provides the tools necessary to support the critical efforts of communities, academics, journalists, practitioners, policymakers, and others around the world to better understand, monitor, and ultimately mitigate the threat of violence.

Last year, in addition to continuing real-time data coverage, ACLED launched a variety of new expansions, special projects, and initiatives to enable users to more closely monitor trends in political violence and protest. As a result of these projects, the ACLED dataset is more detailed, precise, and comprehensive than at any point in the organization's history — and the latest data shed new light on key trends in global conflict and instability.

ACLED's continued growth and success would not be possible without its hard working and dedicated team, as well as its many users and supporters. I would like to recognize the incredible contribution of ACLED's staff, as well as extend our appreciation to our user community for putting your trust and support in ACLED to provide objective information on political violence and protest. We would also like to thank our many donors and clients for investing in the sustainability of ACLED as an organization.

Clionadh Raleigh
Executive Director

INTRODUCTION

The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) is the highest quality and most widely used real-time data and analysis source on political violence and protest around the world. ACLED's mission is to produce disaggregated, locally informed data and analysis for use by academics, policymakers, practitioners, journalists, and the wider public. Our guiding principles of transparency, conflict sensitivity, reliability, and the prioritization of local data have guided the organization's coverage expansion from just six countries in central Africa to the entire world. To date, ACLED has recorded over a million political violence and protest events globally.
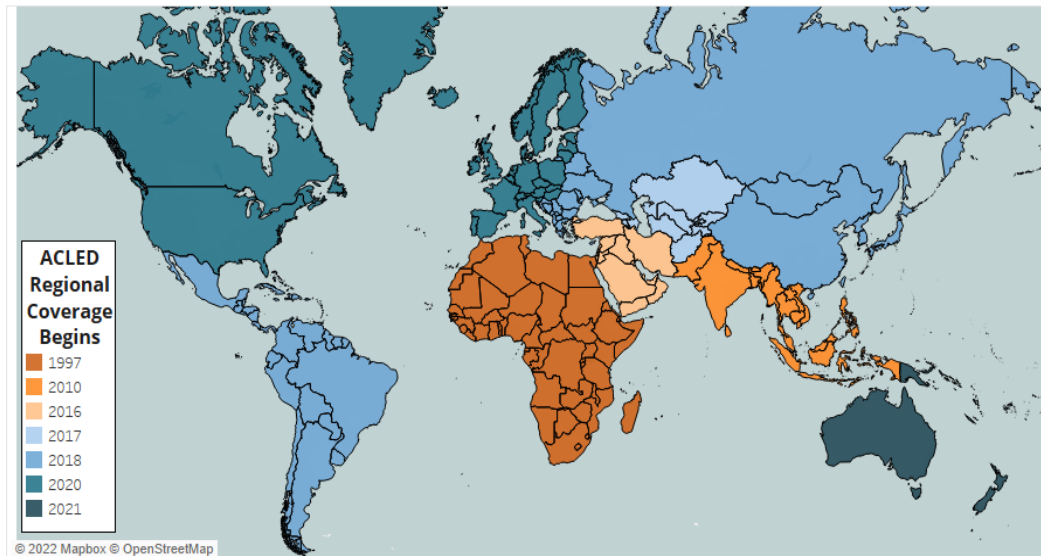
In addition to data collection, ACLED conducts analysis to describe, explore, and test conflict scenarios. ACLED analysis is informed by extensive academic research into the dynamics of political violence across the world and specific case studies of conflict agents, local trends, and intersections with domestic political contexts. Our analysis is unique due to its combination of theoretically informed frameworks and hypotheses with local-level empirical data.

This annual report highlights some of ACLED's main accomplishments from 2021 and provides an outlook for 2022.

HIGHLIGHTS

2021 marked a year of substantial growth for ACLED. We now collect global real-time data on the entire world, and publish weekly regional overviews for all regions.

Date Range of ACLED Data Coverage

ACLED has developed new methods and tools, produced new analysis, engaged more deeply with our user communities, and significantly expanded as an organization, growing from fewer than 20 team members in 2017 to over 200 by the end of 2021.

2021 was a record-breaking year for engagement with ACLED data and analysis. The project earned **8.8 million data downloads**, over **1.3 million website page views**, and nearly **18,000 media mentions**. Regular ACLED users included **government and military offices, INGOs and think tanks** (e.g. the International Committee for the Red Cross, International Crisis Group), **the United Nations** (e.g. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Action, United Nations Development Program), **the European Union, the World Bank, NATO**, and more.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

During the year, ACLED launched a range of new initiatives to broaden the scope and depth of coverage by spotlighting key conflicts and providing the public with new tools to better analyze the data. We launched our second conflict observatory, the Ethiopia Peace Observatory (EPO), to enhance local data collection and analysis on political violence and protest trends across Ethiopia. The launch of the EPO follows the launch of Cabo Ligado the year prior, in partnership with Zitamar News and MediaFax, to track the insurgency in Mozambique's northern Cabo Delgado province. ACLED has also undertaken a number of new initiatives to improve our methodology and launch new tools for our user community to further apply the data to their work, including through the Early Warning Research Hub, which continues to be expanded and improved. Specific tools include our Subnational Threat & Surge Trackers to map subnational conflict spikes; the Volatility & Risk Predictability Index to track the frequency and intensity of conflict surges; the Conflict Change Map to identify countries at risk of rising political violence; and the Emerging Actor Tracker to monitor the proliferation of new non-state actors.

ACLED also launched an initiative to enable the monitoring of political violence targeting women in politics (PVTWIP) in late 2021. This was built on an initial data release on political violence targeting women (PVTW) in partnership with the Robert Strauss Center for International Security and Law at The University of Texas at Austin in 2019.

Lastly, ACLED launched ACLED-Religion, a pilot project that built on ACLED's methodology to capture new event types related to religious conflict and repression while adding further information about religious dynamics and actors to existing ACLED data.

IMPACT

Individuals, media outlets, academics, policymakers, and practitioners around the world use ACLED data for a wide range of applications, from risk assessments and early warning initiatives to human rights advocacy and academic research. Access to comprehensive, reliable, and timely data on political violence is critical when engaging in complex conflict environments. Without this information, policies, programs, and analysis designed to respond to political violence and protest may not effectively take into account, or react to, realities on the ground.

ACLED DATA IN PRACTICE

ACLED data help organizations design and implement effective programming in some of the world's most challenging conflict contexts. Organizations and decision-makers in the fields of humanitarian aid, peacebuilding, development, and more frequently use ACLED data to inform activities like coordination, risk management, and needs assessments in order to respond to crises with objective, unbiased information on political violence and disorder in real time. In 2021, key users include the World Bank, the Council on Foreign Relations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, Amnesty International, Save the Children, the Danish Refugee Council, the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, the Pacific Institute, the Norwegian Refugee Council, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, International Crisis Group, and the International Displacement Monitoring Center, among many others.

ACLED continuously works to make the data even more accessible by: developing partnerships with key users across the international community; expanding the ACLED Network; active engagement with users from civil society organizations; and ensuring the dataset is available to the international community through platforms like the Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX), ReliefWeb, and ESRI's ArcGIS Living Atlas of the World. ACLED plans to continue to identify similar nexus points and collaborative data-sharing opportunities in order to better ensure actors working on conflict prevention and mitigation have access to the reliable, objective information they need in real time.

ACLED'S IMPACT ON POLICY

ACLED is a critical resource for data-driven policymaking and analysis aimed at preventing and resolving conflict around the world. In 2021, the data were used by a wide range of government agencies and intergovernmental organizations and offices, including the United Nations, the European Union, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the Government of the United States of America, the Government of Belgium, the Government of Germany, the Government of France, the Government of the United Kingdom, the Government of Canada, the Government of Ghana, the Government of Denmark, the Government of Ireland, and the Government of the Netherlands, among many others.

ACLED IMPACT ON EARLY WARNING

ACLED data are regularly used to support early warning initiatives across the fields of academia, policy, and programming. That data feed a wide range of early warning mechanisms and predictive tools, some of which include: the Horizon Scanning Program of the European Commission's Competence Centre on Foresight; the World Bank's Famine Early Action Mechanism; USAID's Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET); UNHCR's first Artificial Intelligence-led Predictive Analytics Project, Project Jetson; and the Water, Peace and Security global monitoring tool, produced in collaboration with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which makes extensive use of ACLED data to track conflict and to predict its impacts on water insecurity.

In addition to these tools, Genocide Watch uses ACLED's fatality data as a source for its risk model that measures susceptibility to genocide and mass atrocities. ACLED is also featured as a key source in emerging technologies surrounding early warning and early action at New York University's International Center for Cooperation. ACLED is a resource for the Anticipation Hub, which is a joint initiative between the German Red Cross (GRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre (Climate Centre), that brings together partners across the Red Cross Red Crescent movement, universities, research institutes, (i)NGOs, UN agencies, governments, donors, and network initiatives.

ACLED IN THE MEDIA

ACLED regularly works with journalists and media outlets to support data-driven reporting on political violence and protest trends around the world. ACLED data and analysis were cited by virtually every major international outlet in 2021, and new partnerships were formed with regional, national, and local media around the world. In total, ACLED earned nearly 18,000 media mentions over the course of the year. Key highlights from 2021 include features in BBC News, The Economist, The New Humanitarian, The Guardian, Reuters, National Geographic, Al Jazeera, NPR, Bloomberg News, FiveThirtyEight, Yahoo, Mail & Guardian, Financial Times, DW, Le Monde, USA Today, The Boston Globe, and The Atlantic, among many others.

EXPANSIONS

In 2021, ACLED set the stage to achieve global coverage in early 2022 by completing and advancing multiple expansion projects. In January, ACLED completed an expansion to Europe, and in February completed an expansion to the United States. For the United States, this included the release of historical data extending back to the beginning of 2020. In September 2021, ACLED further expanded coverage to 13 small states and territories in Africa and Asia. This expansion included eight countries and territories in Africa — Cape Verde; Comoros; Mauritius; São Tomé and Príncipe; Seychelles; Mayotte; Réunion; and Saint Helena, Ascension, and Tristan da Cunha — and five countries in Asia — Bhutan; Brunei; Maldives; Singapore; and East Timor.

ACLED reached full global coverage in early 2022, publishing data on Canada, Oceania, Antarctica, and all remaining small states and territories. The expansion added a total of more than 30 new countries and territories and more than 3,000 political violence and protest events to the dataset. This achievement was the culmination of over 10 years of work to expand the ACLED dataset from its initial coverage of six central African countries to a global project covering 243 countries and territories around the world.
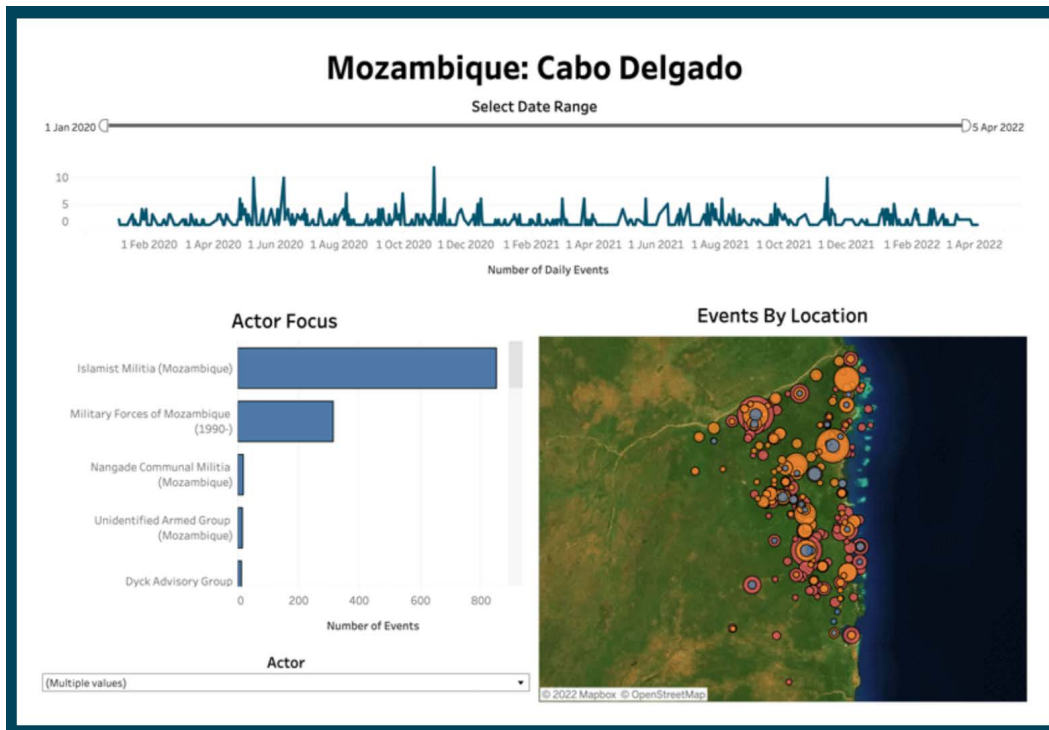
SPECIAL PROJECTS

In addition to coverage expansions, ACLED has launched special projects to improve and deepen our existing coverage of political violence and disorder in key conflict zones around the world. Special projects have helped track new thematic developments and emerging crises on a global scale, like the COVID-19 Disorder Tracker at the onset of the pandemic, as well as experiment with innovative new forms of data collection and conflict monitoring like the Early Warning Research Hub. These projects have produced regular analysis on trends and dynamics related to political violence and disorder, and generated significant external engagement. They have also played a vital role in providing an objective source of information on conflicts and dynamics that are under-reported.

ACLED LOCAL OBSERVATORIES

In countries or areas where there is no established local observatory collecting data on conflict and instability, ACLED seeks to create new observatories to better capture the local realities of political violence and protest. In 2020, ACLED launched a pilot project to develop an observatory in the Cabo Delgado region of Mozambique called Cabo Ligado, or 'connected cape.' In early 2021, ACLED launched a similar observatory in Ethiopia, the Ethiopia Peace Observatory (EPO), to deepen data collection for the country and provide weekly updates on the latest conflict developments.

Cabo Ligado

In 2020, the human cost of the insurgency in Cabo Delgado was high and growing, as was its significance in Mozambican politics. At the same time, domestic and international media were both struggling to cover the conflict, and objective information was difficult to obtain. To meet this challenge, ACLED launched its first observatory, Cabo Ligado, to focus on tracking violence in Cabo Delgado. In partnership with Zitamar News, and MediaFax, the Cabo Ligado project produces data and analysis on a weekly basis, alongside weekly podcasts and in-depth reports reviewing conflict dynamics each month. Cabo Ligado has had a profound impact as an independent source of information on the conflict, and it has established valuable connections between journalists and security experts worldwide. Already the project has proven a critical resource for those seeking to understand conflict dynamics in the region and to assess counterinsurgency approaches and opportunities.
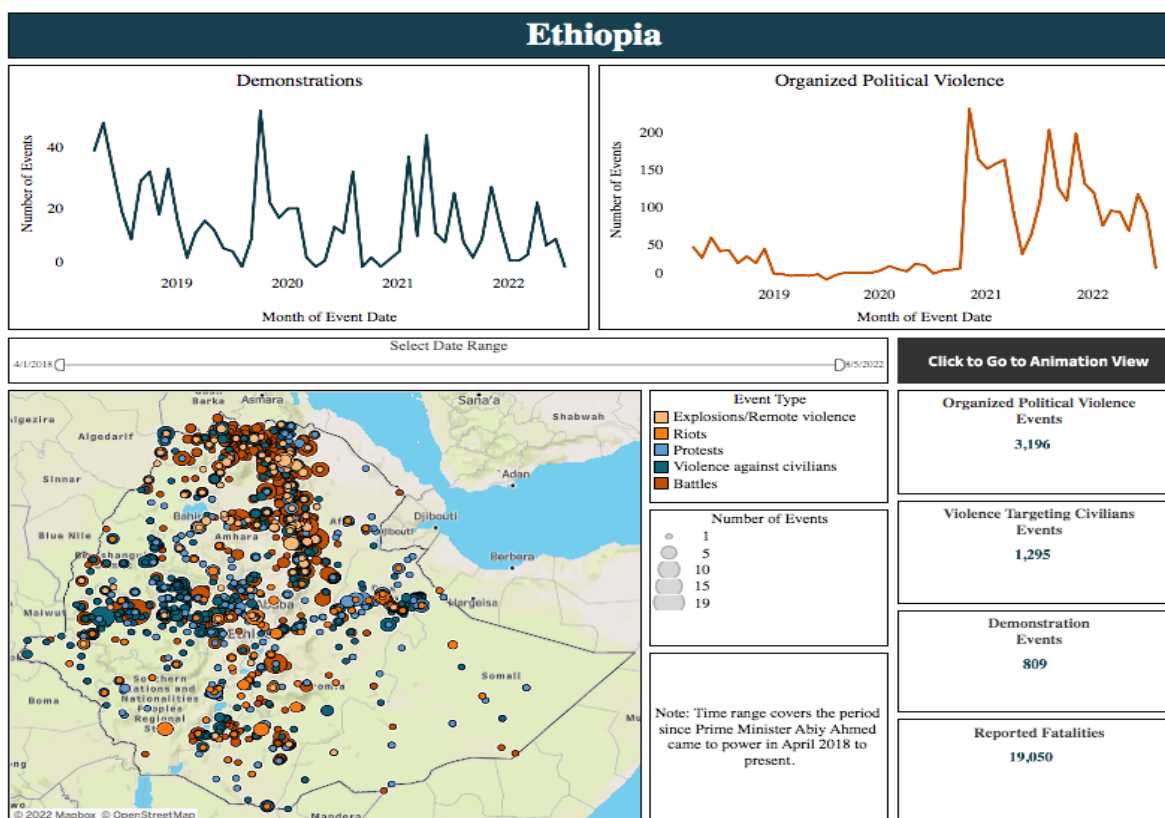

The interactive dashboard maps the latest conflict data for Cabo Delgado and is updated weekly.

The Cabo Ligado project continued to release weekly and monthly reports and infographics throughout 2021. Cabo Ligado analysts, representing various local and international organizations (including ACLED, Zitamar News, and MediaFax), collaborated to gather locally sourced data, including through the project's team of community reporters – Mozambicans trained and equipped to securely provide on-the-ground information about the conflict. The project's weekly and monthly reports are published in both English and Portuguese. The team also produces a podcast released twice weekly in Portuguese, Swahili, Emakwa, Shimakonde, and Kimwanithe (the five most spoken local languages in the Cabo Delgado region). Data gathered and verified by the team are added to the wider ACLED dataset.

Cabo Ligado data and analysis are some of the most widely used ACLED outputs, with over 169,500 page views, more than 7,100 media mentions, and nearly 1,400 new subscribers for the project in 2021. The data are regularly used by the media, think tanks, UN agencies, and others.

Ethiopia Peace Observatory (EPO)

Ethiopia is currently experiencing high levels of conflict and instability. After popular uprisings brought seismic changes to Ethiopian politics in 2021, the country was left at a crossroads, with intense debate over questions of identity and governance under Ethiopia's ethno-federalist system. The opening of political space led to multiple violent administrative contests as groups driven by ethno-regional nationalism competed for formal recognition, authority, and territory. Many of these conflicts only worsened ahead of the country's 2021 national election, even as accurate information on political violence and protest events became more difficult to acquire.

The interactive EPO dashboard maps the latest data on political violence and demonstration activity across Ethiopia.

With these challenges in mind, ACLED launched the Ethiopia Peace Observatory (EPO) in 2021 to serve as a dedicated platform for governments, media, civil society, and the public to access reliable information and analysis about conflict and instability across the country. The EPO works to support ACLED data collection in Ethiopia and produces a regular bulletin of conflict news in Amharic and English, weekly updates on all active
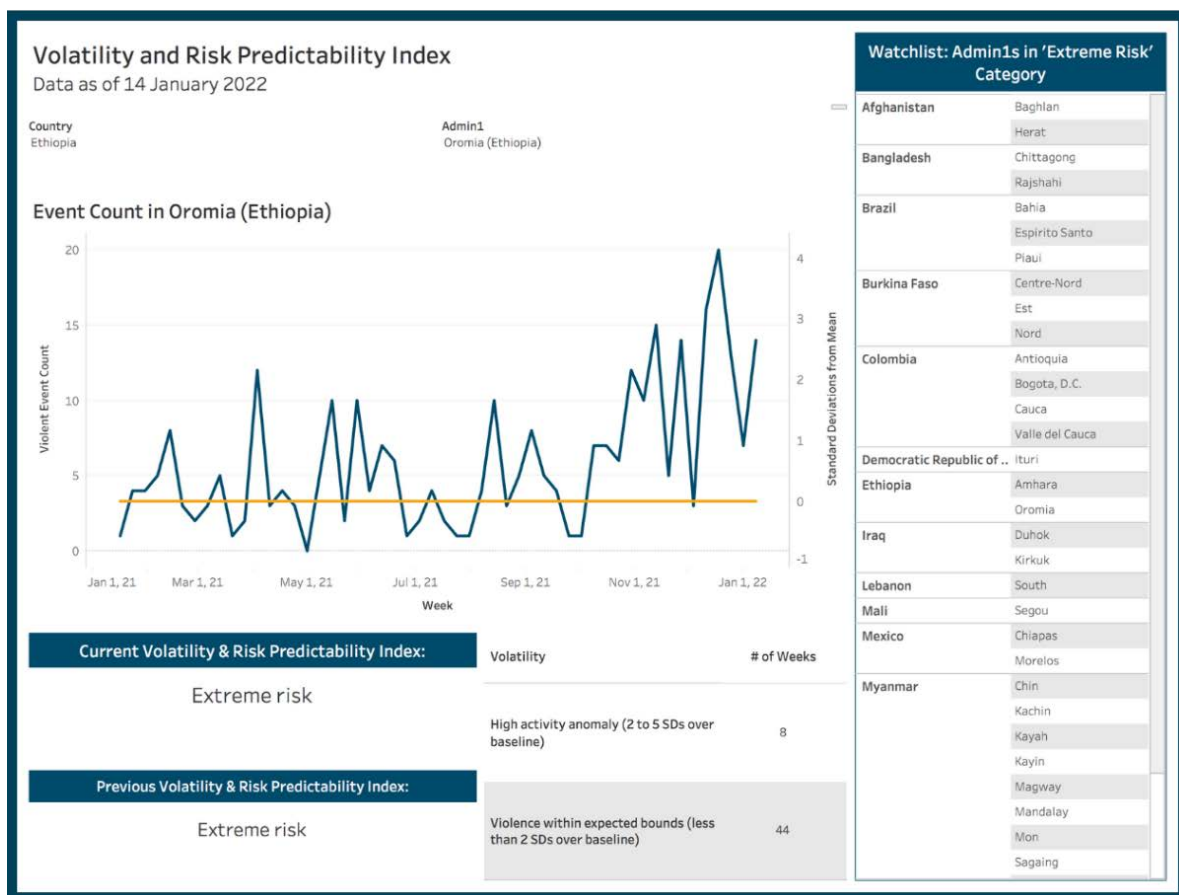
conflicts, monthly analysis of major developments, special reports on emerging trends and thematic issues, as well as actor profiles, conflict profiles, and regional summaries of political violence dynamics. Since the project began, the EPO has published 86 analysis pieces (43 in English and 43 in Amharic) and added 1,068 unique events to the ACLED dataset.
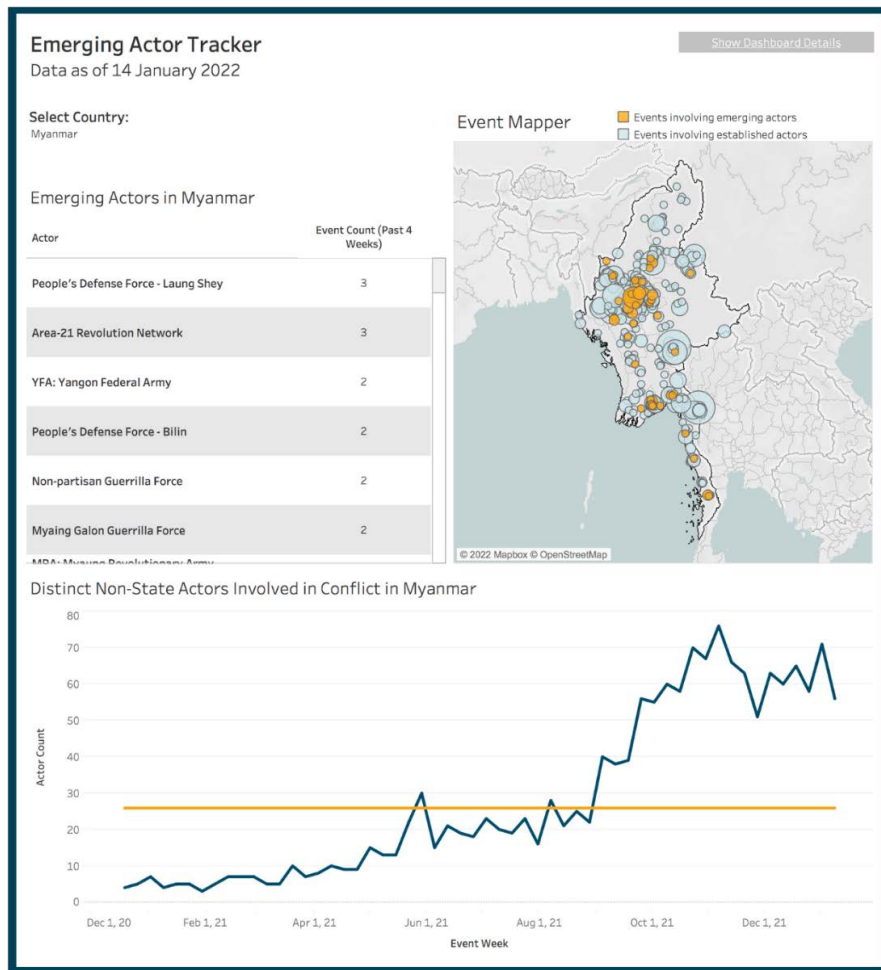
EARLY WARNING RESEARCH HUB

In June 2021, ACLED launched an updated and expanded version of the Early Warning Research Hub, a suite of interactive resources aimed at facilitating data-driven initiatives to anticipate and respond to emerging crises. The risks of rising political violence, and the early warning signs to predict these risks, are multifaceted — no single tool can identify every threat. By offering an array of interconnected tools, the Hub allows users to track a variety of different risk factors, across a range of contexts, in a way that meets their distinct needs. From practitioners mapping conflict trends in a specific country or region to global researchers looking to identify new hotspots to monitor each week, the Hub provides the necessary resources to track violent conflict.
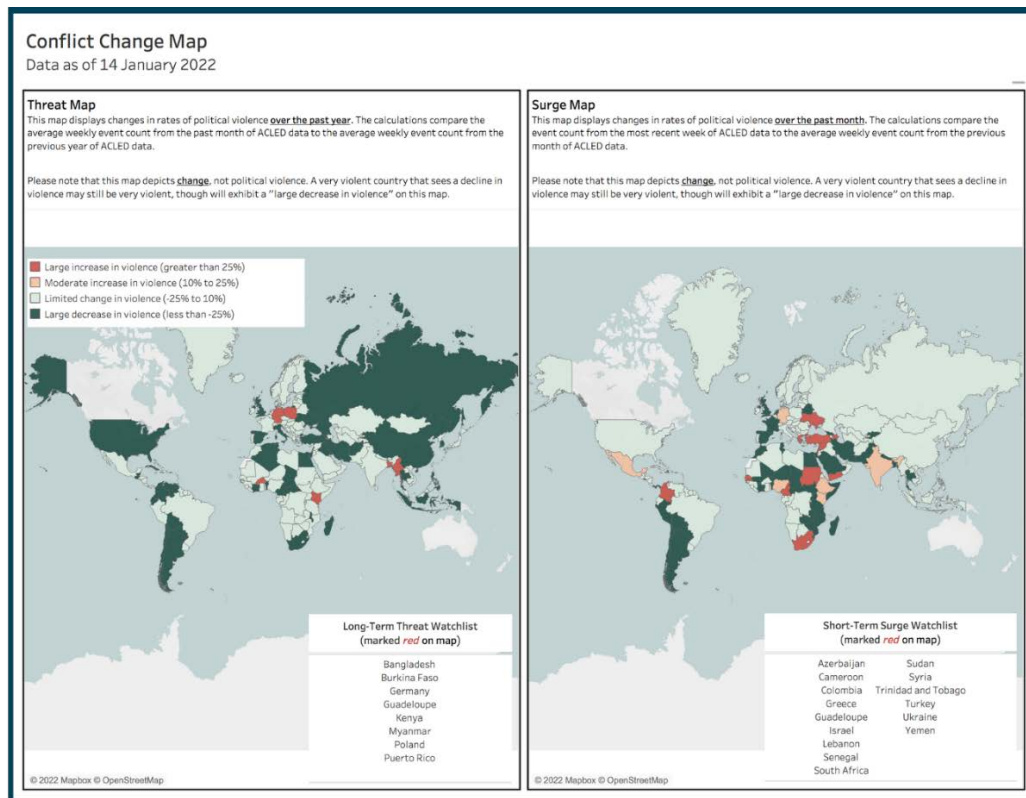
The Hub currently hosts four tools:

- *Volatility & Risk Predictability Index*, which supports early warning and risk management by tracking positive deviations from baseline violence levels to assess the frequency and intensity of conflict surges. the areas of greatest risk for civilians.

- *Subnational Threat & Surge Trackers*, which are tools for tracking and mapping local conflict spikes over short- and long-term intervals.

- *Emerging Actor Tracker*, which is a tool for monitoring the proliferation of new and re-emergent non-state conflict actors within countries.
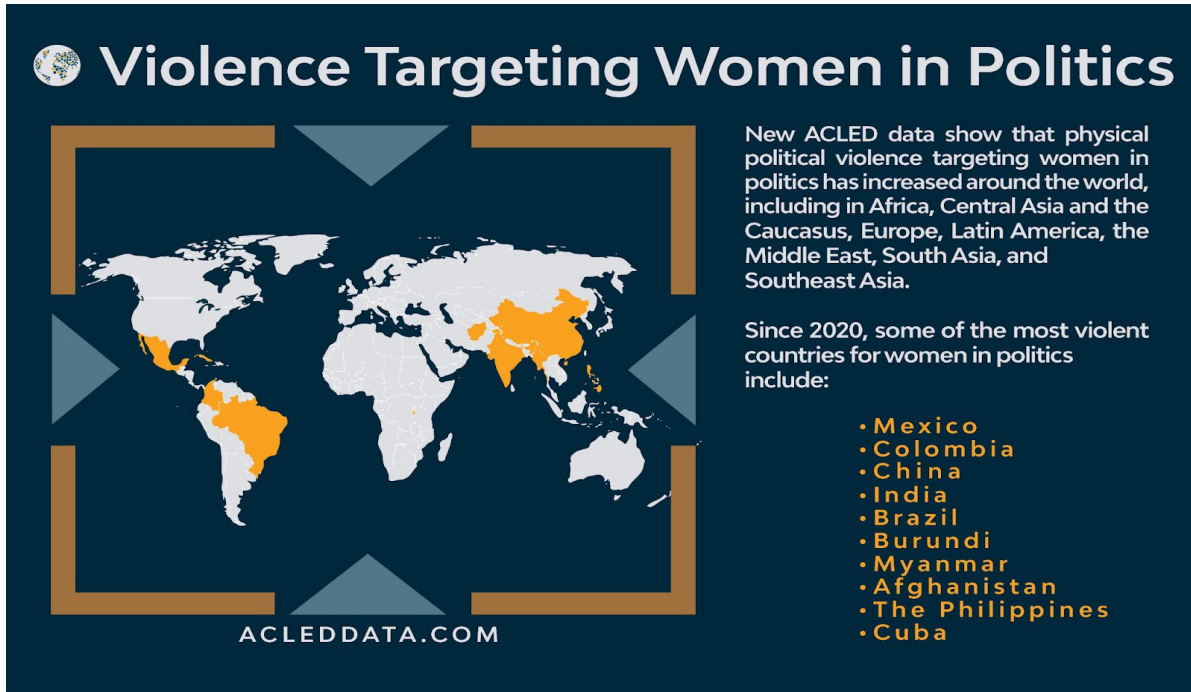
- *Conflict Change Map*, a global mapping tool that identifies countries at risk of rising political violence based on changes in conflict rates.

ACLED will continue to develop and build on the Early Warning Research Hub, refining existing tools and adding new resources to the platform over time.

POLITICAL VIOLENCE TARGETING WOMEN IN POLITICS (PVTWIP)

ACLED launched an initiative to enable the monitoring of political violence targeting women in politics (PVTWIP) in late 2021, building on an initial expansion of the dataset to capture political violence targeting women (PVTW) in partnership with the Robert Strauss Center for International Security and Law at The University of Texas at Austin in 2019. The new initiative introduces identity types for the targets of PVTW to the data, including further detail that allows for the tracking of PVTWIP for the first time. The new data and accompanying analysis show that PVTWIP is on the rise in nearly all regions of ACLED coverage.

This map depicts countries that have registered high levels of violence targeting women in politics.
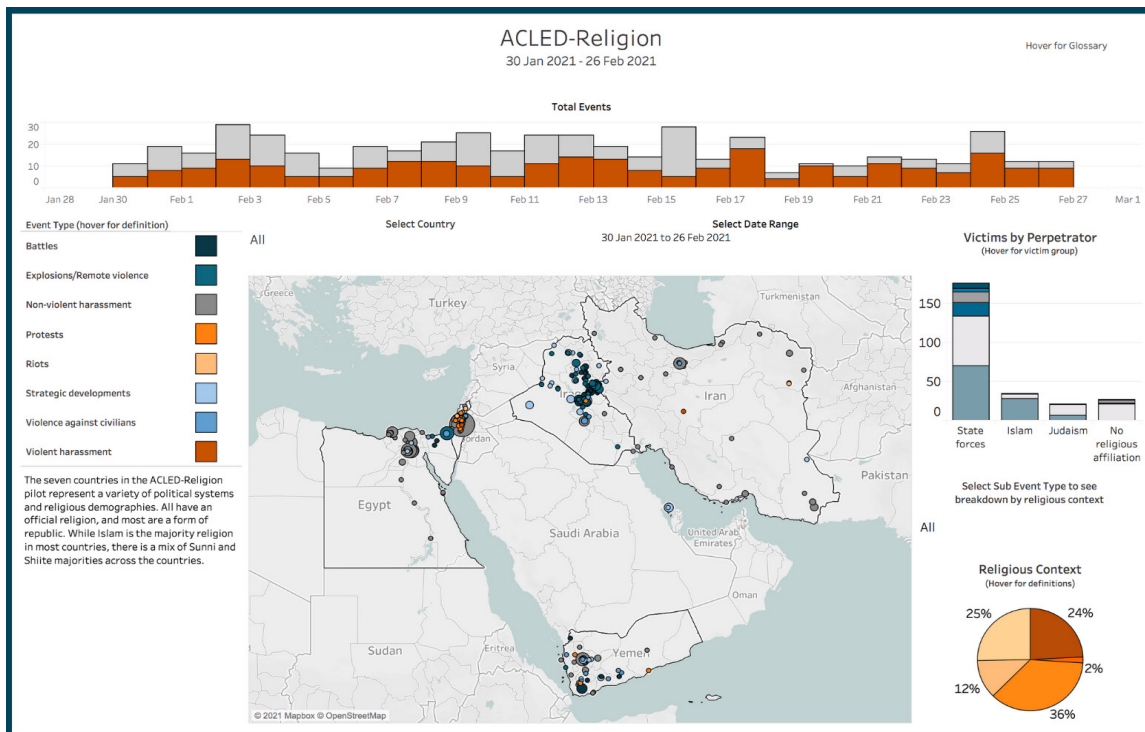
ACLED-RELIGION

Religion can be used to legitimize political institutions, mobilize social movements, and drive support for armed conflicts. This is true across religions and political systems. At the same time, religion and religious groups can also be the targets of political violence. Religious communities can be restricted in how they practice their religion, espouse their beliefs, or in the rights they are afforded. Despite these trends, there has been an absence of real-time, event-based data to track and measure religious violence across multiple countries and contexts.

The ACLED-Religion pilot project aimed to fill this gap. Building off ACLED's core methodology for monitoring global political violence and demonstration activity, ACLED-Religion introduced new event types to capture religion-related violence and harassment while adding further information about religious dynamics and actors to existing ACLED data. All event types in the ACLED dataset exist in the ACLED-Religion dataset — coded using the same methodology — making it possible to compare events across both datasets.

With coverage beginning in January 2020, this pilot project collected real-time data on seven countries in the Middle East and North Africa: Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Palestine, and Yemen. These countries repre-

sent a diverse set of religious landscapes in the region, including an active conflict involving religion-based actors, an established theocracy, and the region's only non-Islamic majority country. Data were derived from a wide range of local, subnational, national, regional, and international sources, and information was collected by trained researchers worldwide. ACLED-Religion produced weekly reports of the latest trends as well as info-graphics, special reports, and an interactive dashboard. The pilot was completed in 2022.

The interactive ACLED-Religion dashboard maps the full pilot dataset on religious repression and disorder in Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Palestine, and Yemen for January 2020-March 2022.

METHODOLOGY

Throughout 2021, ACLED worked to improve its coding processes, create new tools to support our data collection, and further refine our methodology. ACLED also produced additional publicly accessible methodology documents, guides, and other resources to help users understand how ACLED data are collected across regions and to support analysis.

UPDATES TO METHODOLOGY DOCUMENTATION

In 2021, the Resource Library on the ACLED website was redesigned to make documentation more accessible, and ACLED published and updated methodology documents on a wide range of countries, regions, actors, and types of violence.

Geographic Updates

For **Northern Ireland**, ACLED published a methodology brief explaining how actors and event types are coded in the context of the region's unique dynamics and history. This brief was released in January 2021, following the completion of ACLED's expansion to Europe in 2020.

For **Afghanistan**, ACLED worked with local partners to update our methodology after the Taliban seized power in August 2021. As a result of drastic shifts in the political landscape, significant changes to how ACLED sources

events and codes specific actors needed to be made in order to accurately capture political disorder events and reflect evolving dynamics on the ground.

For the **United States**, ACLED added additional indicators to the data in order to better capture the presence of firearms at demonstrations and the impact they have on wider trends. An explanation of this coding decision was included as an update to the US methodology brief and the US FAQs.

In March 2021, ACLED incorporated the **Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) into the Islamic State 'West Africa Province' (ISWAP)**, which necessitated changes to how ACLED codes Boko Haram and ISWAP factions in Africa. The changes and considerations this entailed were included in an update to the existing methodology brief detailing our approach to coding events involving Boko Haram and ISWAP.

Thematic Updates
In the wake of multiple geographic expansions throughout 2021, ACLED published a brief detailing how and when ACLED decides to **include new sources in the dataset** in May 2021.

ACLED also updated the guiding methodology to **Political Violence Targeting Women (PVTW)** in 2021. This update introduced new identity types for the targets of PVTW, including further detail that specifically enables the tracking of political violence targeting women in politics (PVTWIP).

IMPROVEMENTS TO ACLED CODING PROCESS

In 2021, ACLED established a dedicated Quality Assurance (QA) team to increase capacity to perform more frequent data quality checks. This increased capacity enabled ACLED to expand the monitoring of existing sourcing and expand the validation of new sources, as well as ensure more comprehensive research could be undertaken into sourcing biases. It also enabled ACLED to increase the frequency and scope of data reviews to improve methodological consistency and reliability across the dataset. The QA team conducts reviews focusing on the reliability of actor and location information, the comprehensiveness and quality of expansion and historical back coding projects, and continuous checks and regular reviews of published events. Through a combination of targeted and holistic source-monitoring and data reviews, the QA team ensures that ACLED continues to deliver comprehensive, high-quality data.

STANDARDIZATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS

In 2021, ACLED released a comprehensive update to the country administrative divisions coded in the data. In cooperation with Mapbox, ACLED reviewed administrative boundaries, hierarchies, and naming conventions and devised a process for systematic checks and updates.

PARTNERSHIPS

While ACLED data rely on many sources, from traditional media and government reports to select new media sources, partners on the ground producing locally informed data are the cornerstone of our sourcing methodology. Alongside these data-sharing partnerships, ACLED also forges strategic partnerships with mission-aligned organizations that do not collect data in order to develop mutually beneficial relationships based on in-kind exchanges of knowledge and services.

DATA COLLECTION PARTNERSHIPS

ACLED has over 50 local partners all over the world and integrates data from more than 1,200 non-English sources publishing in more than 100 languages. In recent years, our network of partners has been growing exponentially. In 2021 alone, we entered into partnerships with over 21 local organizations.

A reliance on traditional media, especially English-based media, by many conflict datasets means that information around coverage of certain types of violence are privileged over others. This is why integrating partner expertise and information into the ACLED dataset helps set it apart from other sources of conflict data. Through partnerships with local organizations, ACLED is able to collect information in hard-to-access contexts and integrate thematic, regional, and country-level expertise into our data collection. In 2021, the integration of local partner data resulted in the addition of over 18,600 events, improving our real-time coverage for over 49 countries.

ACLED's partnerships are based on mutual benefit. In addition to data exchanges, ACLED exchanges knowledge and expertise with its partners. Where relevant, ACLED offers training in data collection, management, visualization, and/or analysis to its partners. In 2021, ACLED trained nine partners, which included over 33 participants from organizations working on political violence in Afghanistan, Bahrain, Palestine, Yemen, and Iraq.
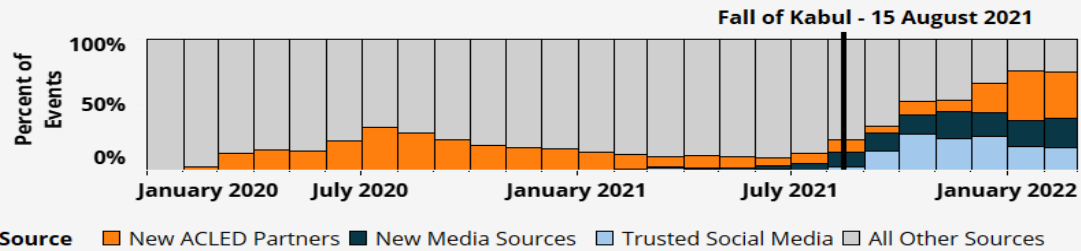
Partner Highlights

Afghan Peace Watch (APW)

Following the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021, ACLED undertook a methodological review to adapt to the evolving conflict landscape on the ground and enhance coverage of emerging trends. Data from ACLED's partner, APW, have been instrumental in offsetting the shift in reporting by traditional media outlets. APW collects information through a large network of reporters across all Afghan provinces and captures unique events like targeted assassinations. The initial integration of APW data added over 3,700 events to ACLED's Afghanistan dataset.

In April 2022, ACLED and APW released a joint report reflecting on the challenges of collecting data in repressive environments and analyzing political disorder trends in Afghanistan since the fall of Kabul.
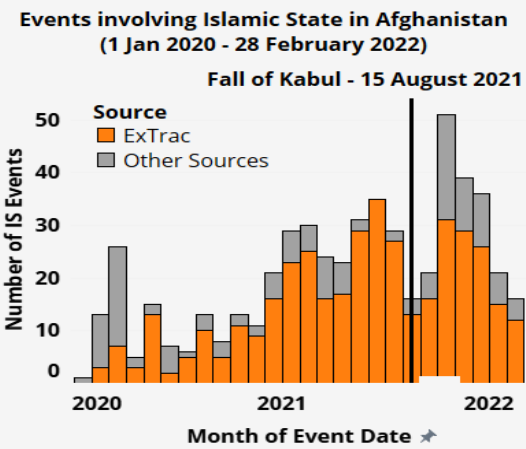
ACLED's Afghanistan Coverage:
Adapting Sourcing Strategy in an Evolving Context

Following the fall of Kabul, the reporting environment in Afghanistan changed drastically. Following a diligent methodological review,* ACLED adapted its sourcing strategy, integrating a number of new sources. The dataset has now been supplemented with data from two partner organizations, Afghan Peace Watch (APW) and ExTrac, in addition to reports from a number of new media outlets in local languages and trusted social media accounts. These updates add over 3800 unique events to the dataset.

Following the fall of Kabul, trusted social media accounts, and new media sources in local and regional languages, have offset the decline in coverage by international and national media.**
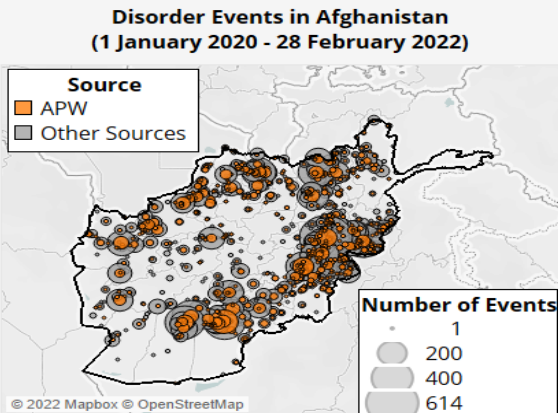
ExTrac

Events involving Islamic State in Afghanistan (1 Jan 2020 - 28 February 2022)

Violence involving the Islamic State (IS) has been on the rise. In Afghanistan, ExTrac documents IS attacks and claims through official IS communication channels. The integration of ExTrac data increases ACLED's coverage of IS activity in Afghanistan, adding over 310 events in which IS claims responsibility for attacks on the Taliban and civilians, largely through the use of remote violence and explosives, contributing to coverage of this trend.

APW

Violence across Afghanistan has been widespread. APW collects information through a large network of reporters across all Afghan provinces. 2020 and early 2021 data from APW help to offset the strategic shift in reporting by conflict actors following the Doha Agreement. Data from APW since the fall of Kabul have been integral in capturing unique events, especially targeted assassinations, given shifts in reporting by traditional media outlets. The integration of APW data adds over 3700 events to ACLED's Afghan coverage across all 34 provinces.

Disorder Events in Afghanistan (1 January 2020 - 28 February 2022)
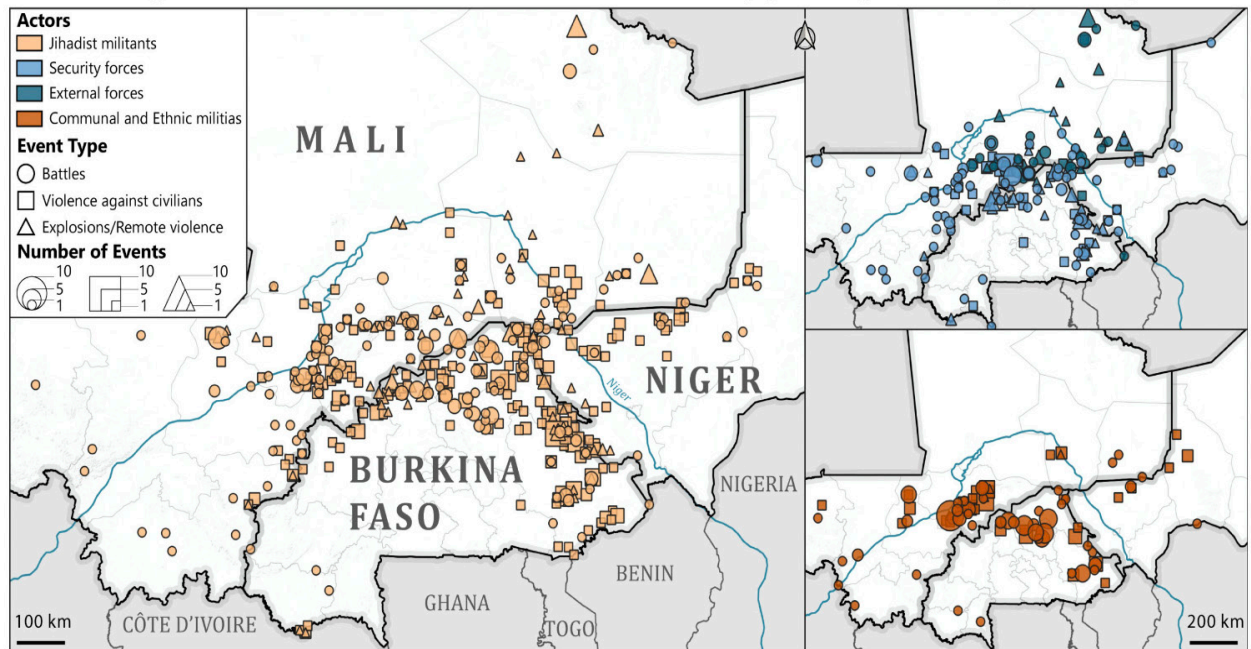

Yemen Data Project (YDP)

ACLED's partnership with YDP – an independent project focused on collating and disseminating data on the conduct of the war in Yemen with the purpose of increasing transparency and promoting accountability – is critical to our efforts to collect reliable information on the conflict. YDP is a key contributor to ACLED's Yemen dataset, and ACLED supports YDP's work to build capacity to collect, analyze, and visualize their data in order to achieve strategic goals.

MENASTREAM

MENASTREAM is an independent risk and research consultancy collecting data and conducting original analysis on political violence in Northwest Africa. MENASTREAM is a primary source of conflict data in hard-to-access areas in the Sahel, providing intelligence analysis and tailored services to assist clients in understanding their environment and analyzing their needs. The partnership between ACLED and MENASTREAM has yielded approximately 3,000 political violence events for the dataset. produced dozens of analytical pieces and media

engagements. MENASTREAM is invaluable to ACLED's coverage of the Sahel.

Map of ACLED/MENASTREAM data in the Sahel.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Alongside data collection partners, ACLED also forges strategic partnerships with mission-aligned organizations around the world. These partnerships deepen our connection with the work of key users and provide opportunities for further collaboration on shared priorities.

ACLED expanded its strategic partnerships in 2021, establishing relationships with ten new organizations in a range of fields, including peacebuilding; children, peace, and security; geolocation; humanitarian assistance; information security; and conflict research.

With these partnerships came a number of collaborative achievements. ACLED published a joint report with the Clingendael Institute on violent extremism in northern Benin, which reviewed the integration of new data for the country. In collaboration with the Dallaire Institute, ACLED participated in a roundtable on data tracking non-state armed groups, which provided a space to share best practices and future outlooks with key organizations working in the conflict data space. ACLED also recently entered a partnership with Columbia International Affairs Online, one of the world's largest online resources for research on international politics to facilitate the dissemination of ACLED resources on their platform.
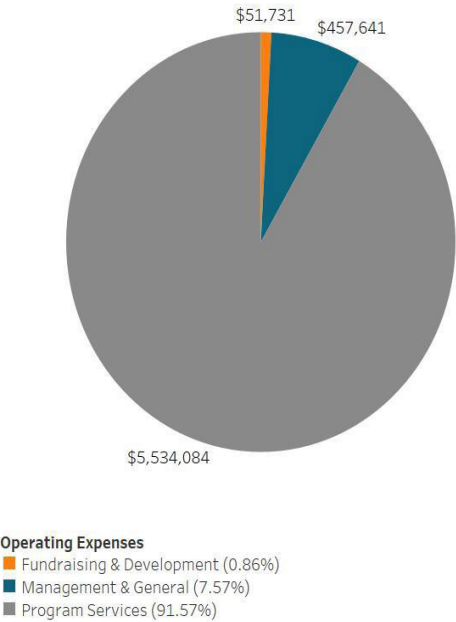
ACLED Network
Alongside our strategic partners, ACLED also launched a new initiative in 2021 called the ACLED Network. The ACLED Network is an initiative aimed at allowing us to better connect with our user community by creating opportunities to interface on best practices, exchanges of data and in-kind support like testimonials and insights into data applications, and participation in events. With 39 members joining in 2021, the ACLED Network has played a vital role in ensuring the sustainability of ACLED and providing important insights into the dataset's impact and use cases.
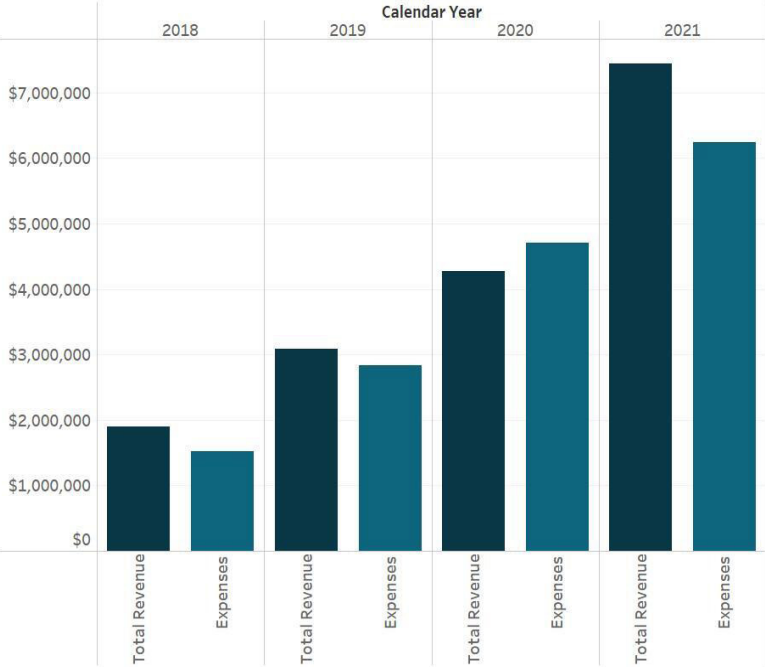
ACLED grew significantly in 2021. ACLED's revenue grew over 70% and expenses over 30% from 2020. The increase in expenses flowed from ACLED's increased scope of work, as each new region of coverage required new staff and consultants to produce the data. ACLED strengthened operational capacity to support the expanding team, which also contributed to higher expenses in 2021.

Calendar Year 2021 Efficiency

$51,731 $457,641

$5,534,084

Operating Expenses
- Fundraising & Development (0.86%)
- Management & General (7.57%)
- Program Services (91.57%)

Financials by Calendar Year

The figure represents annual finances from calendar year 2021.

SUPPORT FROM DONORS

During 2021, ACLED received financial support from the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO) at the United States Department of State, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DFM), the German Federal Foreign Office (FFO), Bridging Divides Initiative - Princeton University, the Tableau Foundation, the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO), and DAI Global. ACLED also partners with Mapbox for support on the latest location data and mapping tools. ACLED greatly appreciates the contribu-tions of each of our donors, without which the production of publicly accessible data and analysis would not be possible.

THE COMPLEX RISK ANALYTICS FUND (CRAF'D)

In 2021, ACLED participated in the development of the Complex Risk Analytics Fund (CRAF'd), managed by the UN Development Programme's Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTFO). CRAF'd is a new multilateral financing instrument intended to support a stronger data ecosystem and expand shared capabilities for using data among many of ACLED's core users.

PROGRAM SERVICE REVENUE

At the end of 2020, ACLED implemented a new access and registration system which laid the foundation for a more sustainable funding model for the organization. By developing a new program service revenue stream, ACLED began to take the first steps towards establishing greater self-sufficiency and ensuring the long term reliability of our data production. The data subscription revenue ACLED has begun generating, which supplements existing grant revenue, affords ACLED greater financial stability by expanding the burden of supporting ACLED's operating costs more widely across our user community.

OUTLOOK FOR 2022

ACLED finally reached global coverage in early 2022. This milestone marked the culmination of over 10 years of work to expand the ACLED dataset from initial coverage of six central African countries to a global project covering 243 countries and territories around the world.

In the next phase of ACLED's growth, the organization plans to invest in new initiatives that will improve data and analysis and make ACLED resources more accessible.

REGIONAL FOCUS ON THE HORN OF AFRICA

Over the coming year, ACLED plans to engage in improvements to data and analysis across a number of regions, with a particular focus on the Horn of Africa. With high levels of ongoing political violence and instability in Ethiopia, 2022 elections in Kenya and Somalia, and Sudan still in a period of uncertainty following the October 2021 coup, the region requires particular focus. ACLED will seek to improve the quality of the data for the region, and increase the frequency of analysis published on Kenya, Somalia, and Sudan, while maintaining and improving the existing work of the Ethiopia Peace Observatory, to support practitioners and policymakers in better understanding the political and conflict dynamics of these countries.

DATA LITERACY

A key area of focus for 2022 will be expanding ACLED's capacity to promote data literacy in our existing user community, as well as new audiences. ACLED has a three-pronged strategy for achieving this goal: 1) expanding the quantity and quality of trainings provided to **partners**; 2) direct engagement with **stakeholders**, including workshop series, tailored analysis tools, and resources; and, 3) bolstering **internal data literacy** at ACLED, with a focus on strengthening the analytical skills of subject-matter experts in particular to improve the quality of analytical products ACLED creates and from which stakeholders benefit. Alongside these efforts, ACLED will use surveys, interviews, and other data collection methods to further tailor our data literacy activities to the needs of these groups.

ACLED will build on existing partner training materials that explain how to use ACLED data specifically, and how to analyze, visualize, and present data more generally. ACLED will engage with partners more proactively to determine with them if they could benefit from additional training, including more advanced training on Tableau to help them visualize their data in new and interesting ways for their own stakeholders. ACLED will also begin offering training that will be open to the broader user community, allowing a larger number of users and organizations to attend compared to the more traditional training targeted towards partners, specifically.

ACLED has already started developing resources to support the team internally, including the ACLED Crash Course in Conflict Research. This five-day course on data literacy, which includes a syllabus with readings, exercises, and quizzes, was piloted successfully in 2021 and has provided useful insights for ACLED's broader data literacy work. Based on an evaluation of the pilot, this course provided useful insights to all those who attended and has improved the analytical skills and techniques available to the participants. ACLED plans to build on this success, along with other existing resources and modules, such as our standard Tableau training, to further expand internal data literacy and improve the analytical depth of the content produced by ACLED's subject-matter experts and made available to ACLED users.

DATA SCIENCE & EARLY WARNING

In 2022, ACLED will refine the Early Warning Research Hub tools by developing further assessments of specific conflicts and cases, as well as general guides to patterns of early warning. Some specific refinements include:

Expanding on the impact of different conflict actors on the trajectory of violence more generally, and the populations involved. Previous research by the ACLED team has suggested that the impact of new armed, non-state actors into an ongoing conflict leads to an immediate increase in violence against civilians. This project will further that type of inquiry by assessing things like: how many people are likely to be affected, which populations are likely targets, and how many locations will be new sites of violence.

Integrating similar real-time disaggregated measures, including food security forecasts, proximate relief areas, other conflicts, and extenuating considerations for specific and more accurate conflict impact measurements.

Conducting more rigorous pattern analysis. Accumulated real-time patterns such as those exposed by the tools included in the Early Warning Research Hub display their own propensity to create trajectories and variations. ACLED considers the change rate from different risk categories to project with confidence how likely new risk spaces will emerge based on a rigorous quantitative and qualitative assessment of in-situ factors. This will help refine what constitutes an elevated risk which will tailor things like relief, planning, and responses by the international community to be more successful in meeting their objectives.

ANNEX 1: ACLED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

ACLED ANALYSIS INCORPORATED
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2021

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
REVENUE AND SUPPORT			
Contributions	$ 627,813	$ -	$ 627,813
Federal grants	2,510,915	-	2,510,915
Other grants	1,991,203	-	1,991,203
Data subscription	544,698	-	544,698
In-kind	201,755	-	201,755
Interest	417	-	417
Other income	122,472	-	122,472
Total revenue and support	5,999,273	-	5,999,273
EXPENSES			
Program services			
Conflict data collection and reporting	5,281,115		5,281,115
Management and general	315,265		315,265
Fundraising	52,560		52,560
Total expenses	5,648,940		5,648,940
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	350,333		350,333
Net assets, beginning of year	91,559		91,559
Net assets, end of year	$ **441,892**		$ **441,892**

Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED)