

ViEWS monthly forecasts, September 2019*

Summary of forecasts

Monday 2nd September, 2019

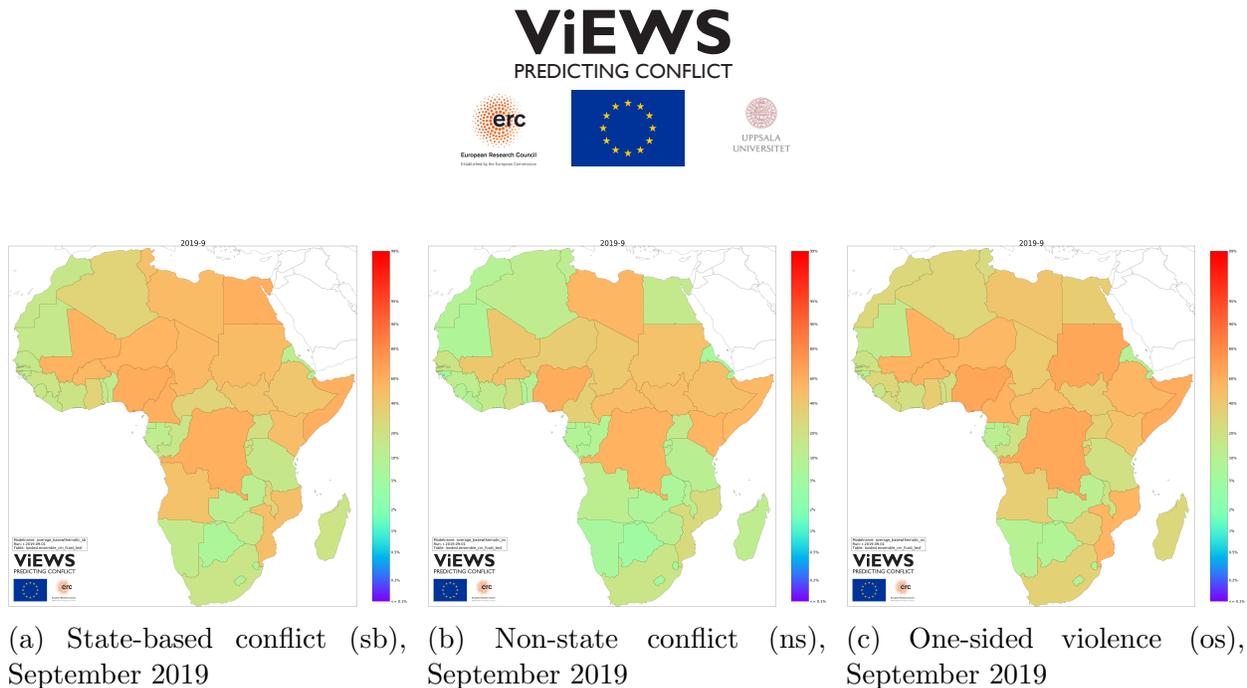


Figure 1: Ensemble forecasts for September 2019

This report presents ViEWS forecasts for September 2019 as of 1 September 2019, which are based on data that are updated up to and including July 2019. The underlying conflict data were produced by the UCDP (<http://ucdp.uu.se>). The ViEWS compilation of these data and data from other sources are available at <https://www.pcr.uu.se/research/views/data/downloads/>.

We highlight developments in the most recent months. For a discussion of what underlies the forecasts in terms of slowly changing risk factors as well as methodological issues, see

*This report was prepared by Håvard Hegre, Mihai Croicu, Frederick Hoyles, and Remco Jansen. The research was funded by the European Research Council, project H2020-ERC-2015-AdG 694640 (ViEWS). The simulations were performed on resources provided by the Swedish National Infrastructure for Computing (SNIC) at Uppsala Multidisciplinary Center for Advanced Computational Science (UPPMAX).

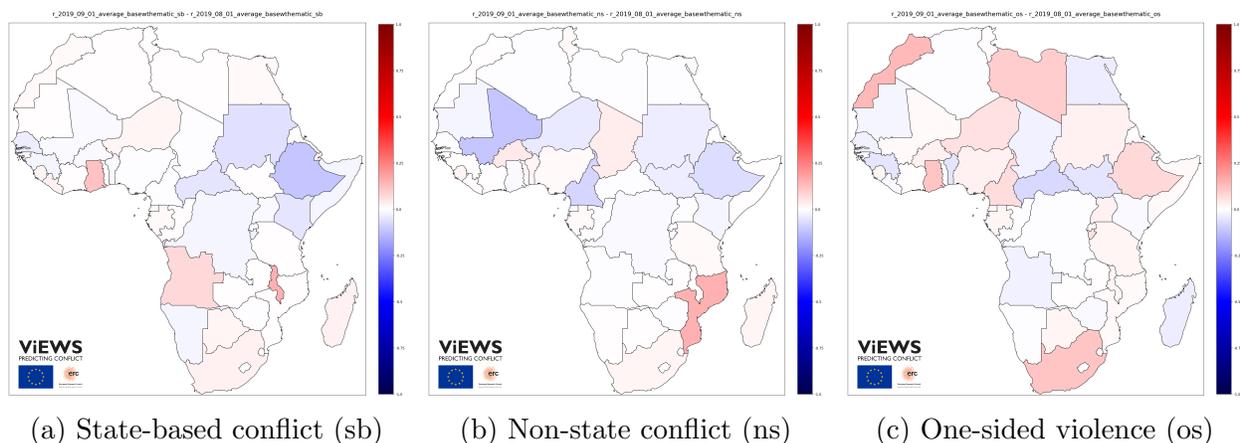


Figure 2: Change maps (cm) for August 2019 to September 2019

the ViEWS introductory article.¹ Figure 1 shows our country-level forecasts for September 2019, Figure 3 the corresponding forecasts at detailed geographic locations (PRIO-GRID level, or **pgm**)², and Figure 5 shows the most recent observed conflict events. Similar reports for previous months are available at <http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/views/>, along with other information on the ViEWS project.

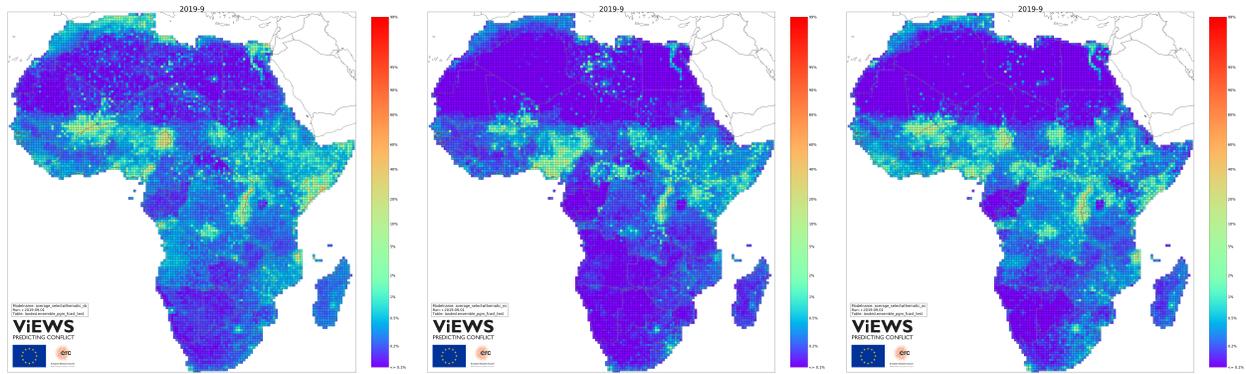
1 Country-month forecasts for September 2019

The plots in Figure 1 show the ViEWS country-level forecasts for the immediate future – what will happen in September 2019 according to our forecasts? We show the probability of at least one event in each country in September 2019, based on data up to and including July 2019. Countries with a red color have been assigned with a forecast probability close to 1, whereas purple countries have been assigned with a probability of less than 0.1. When the forecasts indicate that no event is as likely as at least one event, countries are drawn with a light orange color.

Our forecasts for September 2019 are mostly similar to last month’s forecasts. The September 2019 run is using the same set of models as last month, so only changes to input variables will matter for the forecasts.

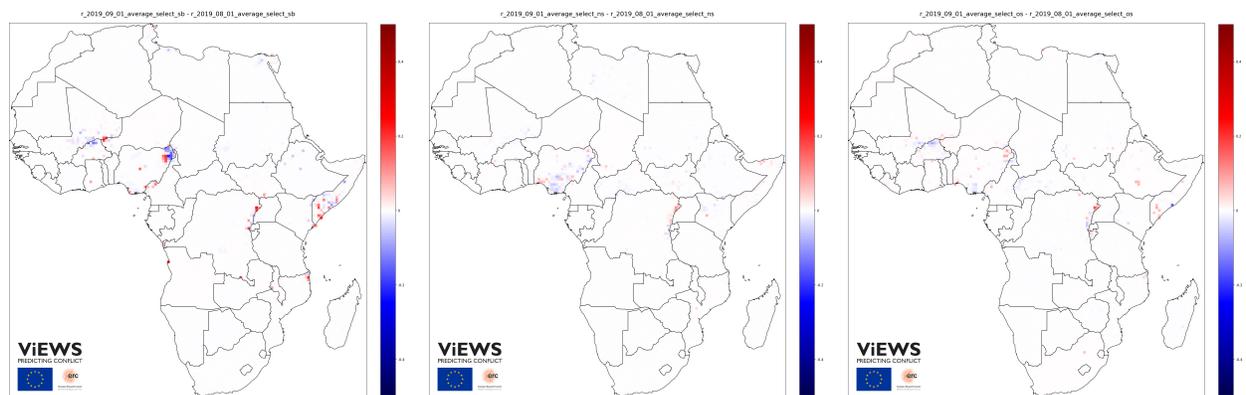
¹<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0022343319823860>.

²PRIO-GRID is a grid structure that divides the terrestrial world into squares of approximately 55 by 55 kilometers. See <http://grid.prio.org/>



(a) State-based conflict (sb), (b) Non-state conflict (ns), (c) One-sided violence (os), September 2019

Figure 3: Ensemble forecasts for September 2019



(a) State-based conflict (sb) (b) Non-state conflict (ns) (c) One-sided violence (os)

Figure 4: Change maps (pgm) for August 2019 to September 2019

1.1 State-based conflict (sb)

We continue to forecast a high probability of state-based conflict in countries that have a recent history of conflict or protest events. Particularly in Mali, Nigeria, DR Congo, Somalia, and Egypt the risk of at least one state-based conflict event is high. We also continue to forecast a high probability of state-based conflict in Cameroon, as the recent separatist violence and clashes between government forces and IS (often referred to generally as Boko Haram in this region) proceeds (see Figure 5a).³

Figure 2a shows that compared to last month’s forecast, we forecast a higher risk of a state-based conflict event in Malawi, where in July 2019 thousands went out to protest against President Mutharika’s allegedly fraudulent re-election. Risk also shows an increase in Ghana, but this appears to be the result of an unclear event erroneously coded as a state-based dyad

³See <https://ucdp.uu.se/#/statebased/640>.

included in the July candidate events dataset. Note that the risk of state-based violence remains relatively low for Ghana. Risk has also slightly risen in Angola, where reportedly up to ten people were killed in clashes between Angolan security forces and Armed Forces of Cabinda (FAC) in Cabinda Province.

1.2 Non-state conflict (ns)

The forecast maps for non-state conflict (**ns**) follow partly the same patterns as **sb**, but the patterns of past events do differ across conflict types (see Figure 5). Mozambique for instance has experienced little non-state conflict, yet has seen significant one-sided violence, whereas for Libya the inverse has recently been true. Nigeria, DR Congo, Kenya, and Libya in particular remain at high risk of non-state violence this month, the latter being reflective of expanding hostilities between the UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) and the Libyan National Army (LNA), which the UCDP codes as non-state actors.⁴

Compared to last month's forecast, the risk of non-state conflict has increased in Mozambique in particular, where one person was killed in an attack assumed to be perpetrated by dissidents from former rebel movement RENAMO.⁵ Conversely, in Mali the risk of non-state conflict is on the decrease. Although communal violence continues, both the government and civil society have recently launched several peace initiatives that are starting a dialogue between warring non-state groups. On 1 July, Dan Na Ambassagou and Fulani militia in Mopti signed a peace agreement.⁶

1.3 One-sided violence (os)

The forecasts for one-sided violence respond to about the same factors as non-state conflict, but are less clearly related to protests and regime change. They also in general occur more frequently in newly independent countries. The probability of one-sided violence events remains pronounced in Mali and Burkina Faso, Nigeria (predominantly given Boko Haram), DR Congo, Sudan, and Somalia (predominantly given Al-Shabaab). Mozambique continues to be at high risk of one-sided violence as well, given persisting civilian killings in Cabo Delgado Province by Islamist militants.

Compared to our August forecast (figure 2c) we find an elevated risk in Morocco, where on 19 July a civilian was killed by security services trying to disperse people celebrating Algeria's victory in the Africa Cup of Nations.⁷ In Ghana, one student was killed by police

⁴See <https://ucdp.uu.se/#/actor/7072>.

⁵Note that this has not been confirmed. See <https://allafrica.com/stories/201908020774.html>.

⁶see <https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch>

⁷see <https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch>

responding to a campus riot at Sandema Senior High Technical school on 16 July, increasing the predicted probability of one-sided violence in September. South Africa, too, shows a slight increased risk this month due to an unclear event in the July candidate events data in which a person died under custody in a police van.⁸ Libya is at higher risk of one-sided violence, finally, particularly given an airstrike perpetrated by the LNA on 2 July on a migrant detention center in Tajoura, leading to at least 53 people killed.

2 PRIO-GRID-month forecasts for September 2019

Figure 3 presents forecasts at fine-grained sub-national geographical locations for September 2019, for each of the three outcomes. The color mapping is the same as for the country-month forecasts.

2.1 State-based conflict (sb)

The densest risk clusters at **pgm** level for state-based conflict continue to be in northeastern Nigeria, the Anglophone region of Cameroon, the North and South Kivu provinces in DR Congo, Somalia (southern states in particular), Egypt’s Sinai, and the northeastern Cabo Delgado Province of Mozambique where an Islamist insurgency emerged at the end of 2017.⁹ The risk of violence in Mali and Burkina Faso also remains high, but is more spread out geographically. Most of these regions have been facing violence for years as shown in Figure 5, reflecting that countries’ recent conflict history is the strongest predictor of future violence.

Compared to last month (see Figure 4a), we find the strongest increases in the risk of state-based violence in the northeast of Nigeria given ramped up security operations in the region since April. Interestingly, the risk appears to have increased this month in the southern parts of Borno State, while the risk has decreased in its northern parts. Nonetheless, the risk remains significant across the region. While the cluster of violence in central Mali and northern Burkina Faso has shown a decline in the probability of state-based violence compared to last month, the risk does appear to have increased along the southern border with Niger. The Anglophone areas of Cameroon show a slightly increased risk of state-based violence in September, while by contrast in DR Congo, the risk has again increased significantly in Ituri province given a large-scale government operation against militias there.¹⁰ Continued clashes with Islamist militants in Mozambique furthermore produces a significant elevation in the risk of state-based violence in the Cabo Delgado Province. In Somalia, finally, we find

⁸see <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2019-07-08-friends-account-deepens-mystery-around>

⁹See <https://ucdp.uu.se/#/actor/7032>.

¹⁰See <https://www.africanews.com/2019/07/03/drc-president-decries-attempted-genocide-in-ituri-province>.

an unclear pattern of increase and decrease in its southern regions and around the country's capital.

2.2 Non-state conflict (ns) and one-sided violence (os)

The forecasts for non-state conflict and one-sided violence depend on the same factors although with somewhat different implications. For **ns**, we most notably predict a worsened cluster of non-state violence in the northeastern DR Congo province of Ituri, given escalated ethnic violence between ethnic Hema and Lenuda, leaving at least 170 dead in Djugu area in June.¹¹ Compared to last month (see Figure 4b), Nigeria shows an increased risk of non-state violence in the country's southwest in particular. On 12 July a group alleged to be Fulani herders killed the daughter of a pan-Yoruba leader.¹² With regard to the risk of one-sided violence, we again find a strong increase in the DRC's Ituri province given escalated violence against civilians perpetrated by the ADF and other militias.¹³ Nigeria's Borno State furthermore shows a continued rise in the risk of one-sided violence given increased Boko Haram attacks in July. Ethiopia, too, shows a southern cluster of risk as a result of deadly clashes between security forces and ethnic Sidama that protested the delay of a referendum on the creation of a Sidama State.¹⁴ Somalia, finally, faces a heightened risk due to ramped up attacks by Al-Shabaab.

3 History of UCDP organized violence

Figure 5 presents the the recent history of violence in each PRIO-GRID cell. Red cells experienced violence in July 2019, and purple ones have not seen armed conflict in many years.

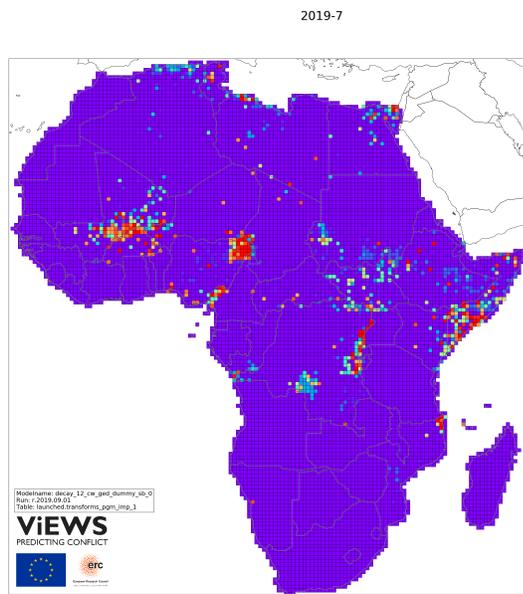
Figures 5a, 5b, 5c show state-based, non-state, and one-sided violence respectively from the UCDP. Figure 5d shows data on protests from ACLED (<https://www.acleddata.com>).

¹¹See our monthly report for August 2019.

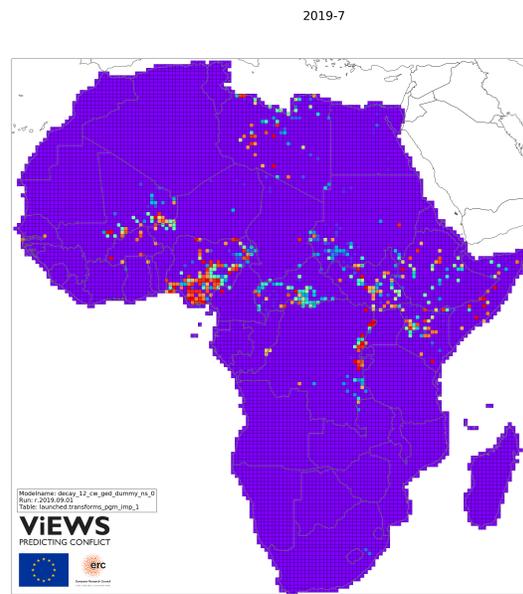
¹²See <https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch/>

¹³See <https://ucdp.uu.se/#onesided/1027>

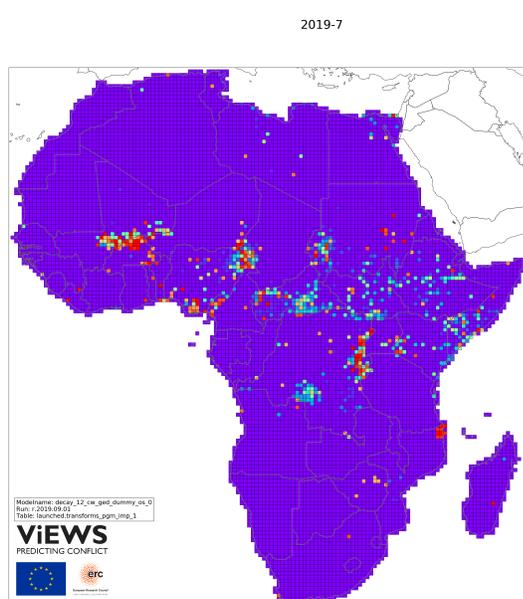
¹⁴See <https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch/>



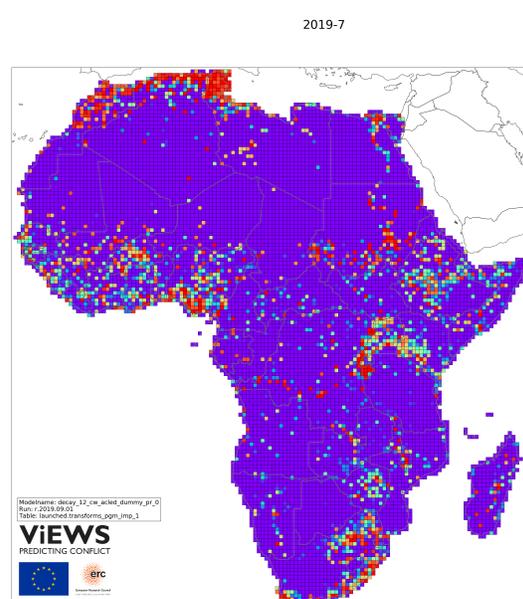
(a) State-based conflict (sb), July 2019



(b) Non-state conflict (ns), July 2019



(c) One-sided violence (os), July 2019



(d) Protests (pr), July 2019

Figure 5: Decay function maps of observed conflict for July 2019