ViEWS monthly forecasts, April 2019*

Summary of forecasts

Wednesday 27th March, 2019

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

Figure 1: Ensemble forecasts for April 2019

This report presents ViEWS forecasts for April 2019 as of 26 March 2019. The forecasts are based on data that are updated up to and including February 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

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the ViEWS overview article.\textsuperscript{1} Figure 1 shows our country-level forecasts for April 2019, Figure 2 the corresponding forecasts at detailed geographic locations, and Figure 3 shows the most recent observed conflict events. Similar reports for previous months are available at \url{http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/views/}, along with other information on the ViEWS project.

1 Forecasts for April 2019

The plots in Figure 1 show the ViEWS country-level forecasts for the immediate future – what do we forecast will happen in April 2019? We show the probability of at least one event in each country in April 2019, based on data up to and including February 2019. Countries with red color have forecast probabilities close to 1, whereas blue countries have forecasts at less than 0.01. When the forecasts indicate that no event is as likely as at least one event, countries are drawn with a light orange color.

![Figure 2: Ensemble forecasts for April 2019](image)

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

The UCDP has recorded some conflict events in February 2019 that change the forecasts for some countries compared to recent months (Figure 3 illustrates the most recent history of events). The risk of state-based conflict $sb$ is slightly elevated for Chad given government-requested French airstrikes against Union of Resistance Forces (UFR) in the country’s northeast between 3 and 6 February, in addition to a Boko Haram attack in Lake Chad region on the night of 19 February that killed five. Despite continued government clashes

\textsuperscript{1}\url{http://files.webb.uu.se/uploader/1576/ViEWS-OverviewArticle-June2018.pdf}. 


with IS in North Sinai, our state-based conflict \textbf{sb} forecasts indicate a slightly lower risk for Egypt in April compared to last month. Risk is reduced for the Central African Republic, moreover, despite continued violence after a signed peace agreement on 6 February.

We continue to forecast a high probability of conflict in countries that have a recent history of conflict or protest events. Particularly in Mali, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, South Sudan, DR Congo, and Somalia the risk of at least one conflict event is high. We continue also to forecast a high probability of state-based conflict (\textbf{sb}) in Cameroon, as the recent separatist violence and clashes between government forces and IS (often referred to generally as Boko Haram in this region) continues (see Figure 3a).\textsuperscript{2}

The forecast maps for non-state conflict (\textbf{ns}) and one-sided violence (\textbf{os}) follow partly the same patterns as \textbf{sb}, but the patterns of past events do differ across conflict types (see Figure 3). Cameroon and Egypt, for instance, have not had much \textbf{ns} conflict, whereas Libya and Ethiopia continue to experience it in recent months. Notably, the risk of \textbf{ns} conflict is also at a higher level for Kenya.

The forecasts for \textbf{os} respond to about the same factors, 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 is pronounced in Mali and Burkina Faso, Nigeria and Cameroon (predominantly given Boko Haram), DR Congo, Sudan, Central African Republic, and Somalia and Kenya (predominantly given Al-Shabaab). The risk of one-sided violence is additionally pronounced in Burundi, which has experienced recurrent violence against real and perceived political opponents since 2015.\textsuperscript{3} The risk is comparatively quite a bit lower for the North African countries, than for the Saharan and Sub-Saharan countries. Also striking, finally, is the elevated risk in Zimbabwe, particularly given violent repression of political opposition and protests in January of this year.

Figure 2 presents forecasts at fine-grained sub-national geographical locations for April 2019, for each of the three outcomes. The color mapping is the same as for the \textit{cm} forecasts.

The densest risk clusters for state-based conflict continue to be in northeastern Nigeria, the North and South Kivu provinces in DRC, Somalia (southern states in particular), and Egypt’s Sinai, and the northeastern Cabo Delgado Province of Mozambique where an Islamist insurgency emerged at the end of 2017. The risk of violence in Mali is also increasing, but more spread out geographically. Most of these regions have been facing violence for years as shown in Figure 3, reflecting that countries’ recent conflict history is the strongest predictor of future violence.

The forecasts for non-state conflict and one-sided violence depend on the same factors

\textsuperscript{2}See the monthly report for June for some more details on Cameroon.
\textsuperscript{3}See Figure 3c and \url{http://ucdp.uu.se/#/onesided/1071}. 

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although with somewhat different implications. For ns, we forecast elevated risk in central Mali, central and eastern Nigeria, Central African Republic, North and South Kivu, Darfur, the Kenyan Rift Valley, as well as Northern (Coastal) Libya. Southwestern Libya, too, has seen escalated an escalated risk of non-state violence over the last several months. This is reflecting of the advance into the south west of east-based Libyan National Army (LNA), which the UCDP codes as a non-state actor. The advance has led to deadly clashes with local Tebu armed groups and may lead to retaliation against the LNA by armed actors that are allied to the Tripoli-based government.

For os, Northeastern Nigeria as well as southern Nigeria and neighboring Cameroon, the Kivus, Burundi, Somalia (Mogadishu area) are the primary hotspots in April 2019. Main city areas of Sudan and Zimbabwe additionally have over the last months shown an increased risk of one-sided violence given the violent violent repression of protests and reports of extrajudicial killings in the case of Zimbabwe. Risk has also been elevated for the northeastern Cabo Delgado Province of Mozambique, where attacks on civilians by suspected militants continued throughout February.

2 History of UCDP organized violence

Figure 3 presents the recent history of violence in each PRIO-GRID cell. Red cells had conflict in February 2019, and purple ones have not seen conflict in many years.

Figures 3a, 3b, 3c show state-based, non-state, and one-sided violence respectively from the UCDP. Figure 3d shows data on protests from ACLED (https://www.acleddata.com).
Figure 3: Decay function maps of observed conflict for February 2019

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

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

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

(d) Protests (pr), February 2019