

ViEWS monthly forecasts, January 2019*

Summary of forecasts

Wednesday 23rd January, 2019

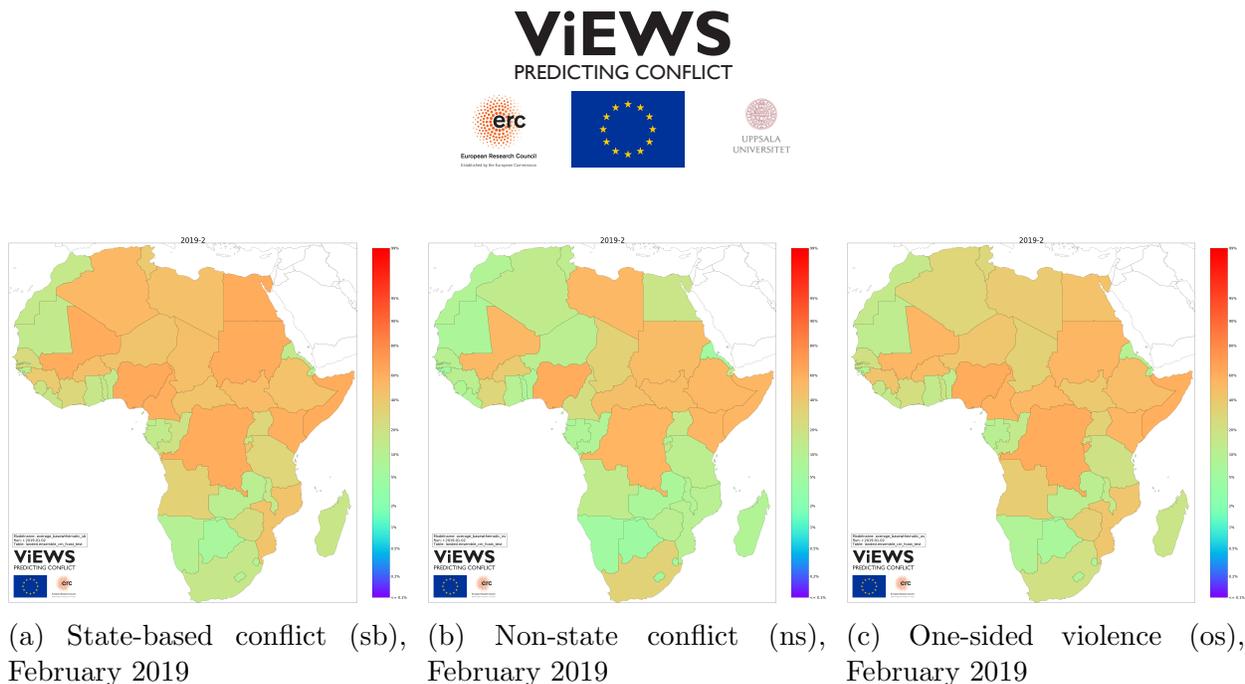


Figure 1: Ensemble forecasts for February 2019

This report presents ViEWS forecasts for February 2019 as of 30 January 2019. The forecasts are based on data that are updated up to and including December 2018. 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/>.

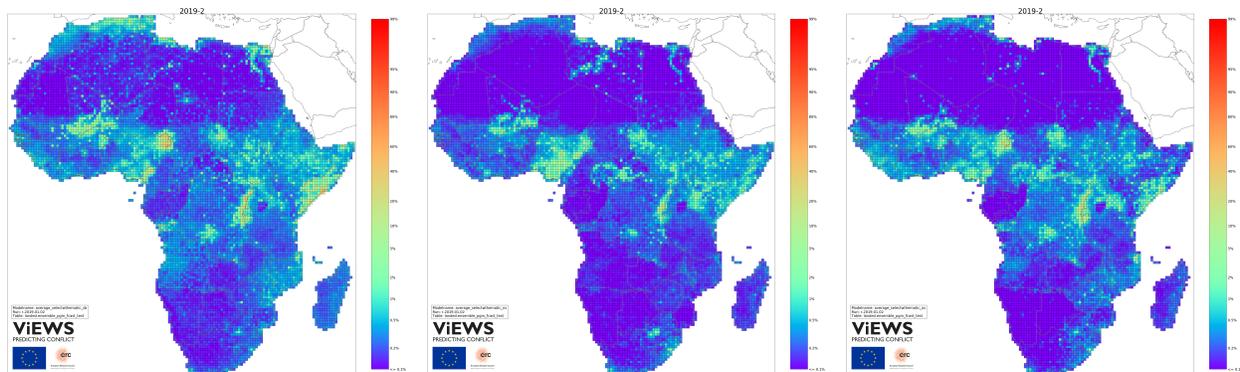
We highlight developments in the most recent months. For a discussion of what underlies the forecasts in terms of slowly changing risk factors as well as methodological issues, see

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the ViEWS overview article.¹ Figure 1 shows our country-level forecasts for January 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 <http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/views/>, along with other information on the ViEWS project.

1 Forecasts for February 2019

The plots in Figure 1 show the ViEWS country-level forecasts for the immediate future – what do we forecast will happen in February 2019? We show the probability of at least one event in each country in February 2019, based on data up to and including December 2018. 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 events is as likely as at least one event, countries are drawn with a light orange color.



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

Figure 2: Ensemble forecasts for February 2019

Our forecasts for February 2019 are mostly similar to last month’s forecasts. The January 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 December 2018 that change the forecasts for some countries (Figure 3 illustrates the most recent history of events).

We continue to forecast a high probability of conflict in countries that have a recent history of conflict or with recent protest events. In Mali, Nigeria, DR Congo, and Somalia at least one conflict event is almost certain. We also forecast a high probability of state-based conflict (sb) in Cameroon, as the recent violence continues (see Figure 3a). Separatist

¹<http://files.webb.uu.se/uploader/1576/ViEWS-OverviewArticle-June2018.pdf>.

violence in southern Cameroon continued throughout the summer of 2018,² as did clashes between government forces and IS (often referred to as Boko Haram) in the North.³ In Kenya, too, we forecast a high probability of a state-based conflict event, as clashes between the government and Al-Shabaab as well as incidents of Al-Shabaab violence against civilians have been recorded in and leading up to December 2018.⁴

Our forecasts also indicate that the situation will remain volatile in Egypt, too, particularly given continued Jihadi activity in the Sinai.

The forecast maps for non-state conflict (**ns**) and one-sided violence (**os**) follow partly the same patterns as **sb**, but the patterns of past events do differ across conflict types (see Figure 3). Cameroon and Egypt, for instance, have not had much **ns** conflict, whereas Libya and Ethiopia have seen a lot in recent months. We forecast a high probability also of **ns** in Kenya due to recent confrontations between cattle rustlers and herders.

The forecasts for **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 Nigeria and Cameroon (predominantly given Boko Haram), DR Congo, Central African Republic, and Somalia and Kenya (predominantly given Al-Shabaab).⁵

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

The densest risk clusters for state-based conflict are in north-eastern Nigeria, the North and South Kivu provinces in DRC, in Somalia, and in Darfur. The risk of violence in Mali is also elevated, but more spread out geographically. All of these regions have been ravaged with violence for years as shown in Figure 3. These maps reflect 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 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 Libya. For **os**, central Mali, northern Nigeria as well as southern Nigeria and neighboring Cameroon, the Kivus, and Somalia (Mogadishu area) are the primary hotspots for February 2019.

²See the monthly report for June for some more details on Cameroon.

³See Figure 3a and <http://ucdp.uu.se/#/statebased/12422>.

⁴See Figure 3a and <http://ucdp.uu.se/#/statebased/10589>.

⁵See Figure 3c and <http://ucdp.uu.se/#/onesided/1071>.

2 History of UCDP organized violence

Figure 3 presents the the recent history of violence in each PRIO-GRID cell. Red cells had conflict in December 2018, and purple ones have not seen conflict in many years.

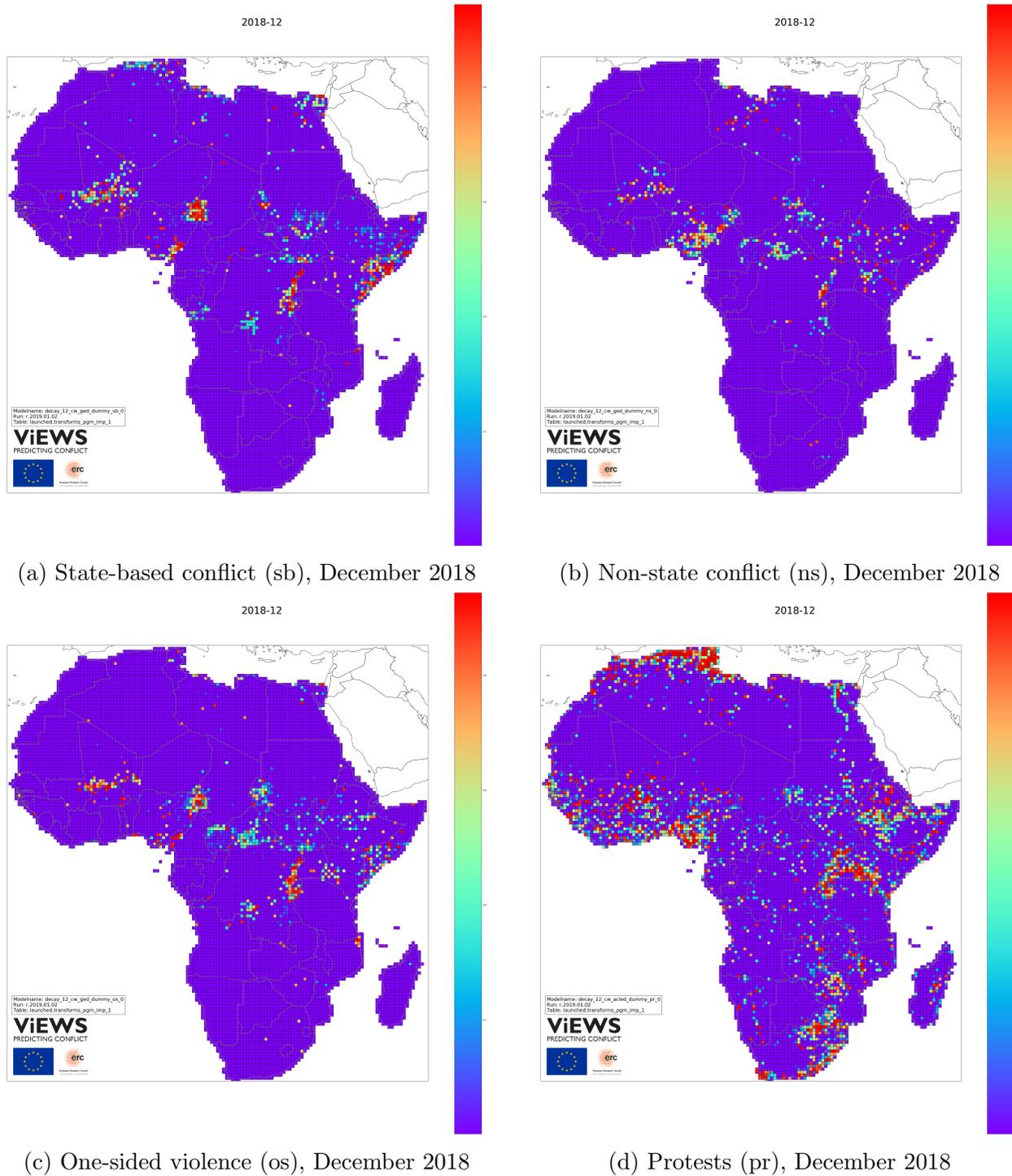


Figure 3: Decay function maps of observed conflict for December 2018

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>).