



PRESS RELEASE: Political Violence Skyrockets in the Sahel According to Latest ACLED Data

28 March 2019: As the UN Security Council returns from a [visit](#) to Mali and Burkina Faso, the [Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project \(ACLED\)](#) has recorded a massive spike in deadly violence across the Sahel.¹ Over the last five months, there has been an increase in both fatalities and conflict events in the region, with approximately 5,000 reported fatalities and more than 1,200 violent events recorded by ACLED. This represents an increase of 46% and 31% respectively relative to the same period the previous year. Over 2,100 of these reported fatalities have resulted from attacks targeting civilians.

Conflict in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso is a major driver of the escalation -- and civilians have faced the brunt of the violence. Compared to the same period last year, *reported fatalities linked to direct attacks targeting civilians from November 2018 to March 2019 have risen by a startling 7,028% in Burkina Faso, followed by 500% in Niger and over 300% in Mali.*

With an unprecedented [massacre](#) leaving more than a hundred Fulani villagers dead in Mali over the weekend, the rising tide of Islamist and intercommunal violence riving the Sahel shows few signs of stopping.

Sahel Conflict Overview (November 2018-March 2019):

- ACLED recorded **4,776 total reported fatalities² in the Sahel** from 1 Nov. 2018 to 23 March 2019
- **Overall reported fatalities and conflict events rose across the region during this period, peaking with 1,068 fatalities and 390 events in February 2019 specifically**
- ACLED recorded **724 direct attacks targeting civilians resulting in 2,151 reported fatalities³**
 - **Both civilian targeting events and reported civilian fatalities increased by nearly 50%** compared to the same period the previous year

Burkina Faso

- Violence has spiked at a particularly alarming rate in Burkina Faso: **conflict events between armed groups and reported fatalities from armed clashes have both risen by over 200%** compared to the same period in 2017/2018
- **Total fatalities reported in connection with direct civilian targeting events rose by a shocking 7,028%**, with 499 fatalities from 124 events recorded between Nov. 2018 and March 2019

Niger

- ACLED recorded **452 reported fatalities stemming from armed clashes in Niger over the past five months -- a 1,574% rise** over the same period last year
 - Fatalities spiked in Dec. 2018 due to a major military operation against Boko Haram

¹ Countries comprising the Sahel: Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, Chad, and Sudan.

² Fatality numbers are frequently the most biased and poorly reported component of conflict data. While ACLED codes the most conservative reports of fatality counts to minimize over-counting, this does not account for biases that exist around fatality counts at-large. Find more information about ACLED's methodology for coding fatalities [here](#).

³ This figure includes only civilians killed as a result of direct civilian targeting. It does not include collateral civilian fatalities. As such, the number is assumed to represent an underestimate of total conflict-related civilian fatalities.



- **Civilian targeting events rose by 600%** compared to the same period in 2017/2018, with 63 attacks resulting in 78 reported fatalities -- a 500% increase over the previous period

Mali

- Mali accounts for **approx. 1/3 of all conflict events and 12% of reported fatalities in the Sahel since Nov. 2018**
- **145 civilian targeting events were recorded in Mali between Nov. 2018 and March 2019 resulting in 547 reported fatalities**
 - Respectively, this is a 150% and 311% increase over the same period in 2017/2018
 - Reported fatalities peaked this month due to a massive attack -- the largest recorded in contemporary Mali -- against Fulani villages by Dogon militiamen on 24 March 2019

A US-based 501c3 established in 2014, [ACLED](#) is the highest quality, most widely used, real-time data and analysis source on political violence and protest around the world.

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For additional figures and analysis for Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali, and other countries in the Sahel region, as well as interview requests and press inquiries, please contact:

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