



ACLED Introduces New Event Types and Sub-Event Types

ACLED has debuted **new event types** to make analysis for users easier and more informative, and has also added a **NEW sub-event type variable**, which disaggregates event types further to allow for more nuanced analysis.

[An updated codebook reflecting these changes can be accessed here.](#)

These **new event types** include:

- **Battles:** a violent interaction between two politically organized armed groups at a particular time and location
- **Explosions/Remote violence:** one-sided violent events in which the tool for engaging in conflict creates asymmetry by taking away the ability of the target to respond
- **Violence against civilians:** violent events where an organised armed group deliberately inflicts violence upon unarmed non-combatants
- **Riots:** violent events where demonstrators or mobs engage in disruptive acts
- **Protests:** a public demonstration in which the participants do not engage in violence, though violence may be used against them
- **Strategic developments:** contextually important information regarding the activities of violent groups that is not itself recorded as political violence, yet may trigger future events or contribute to political dynamics within and across states. *Because what types of events may be significant varies by context as well as over time, these events are, by definition, not systematically coded. [A methodology note on this specific event type and how it ought to be used in analysis can be accessed here.](#)*

As evident from the names of these event types, the structure of the data remains similar to what users are familiar with in older iterations of the ACLED dataset; there are some small changes to content, however, which are outlined [here](#).

The new sub-event type variable will now appear next to the event type variable. For API users, this will mean a change to the API call in order to continue access to the data. [An updated API manual reflecting these changes can be access here.](#)

The **new sub-event types**, nested within event types, include:

- **Battles**
 - **Government regains territory:** cases where government forces or their affiliates regain control of a location *[this was previously an event type]*
 - **Non-state actor overtakes territory:** when a non-state actor wins control and/or subdues government forces, and/or has won territory in which they can now act with impunity and are regarded as having a monopoly of force within that territory *[this was previously an event type]*
 - **Armed clash:** armed, organized groups engaging in a battle with no reports of a change in territorial control
- **Explosions/Remote violence**



- **Chemical weapon:** use of substances listed in the [Schedule 1 of the Chemical Weapons Convention](#) (including sarin gas, mustard gas, chlorine gas, and anthrax) in warfare in the absence of any other engagement
- **Air/drone strike:** air or drone strike (including any air-to-ground attacks) in the absence of any other engagement
- **Suicide bomb:** a suicide bombing (including SVBIEDs) in the absence of any other engagement
- **Shelling/artillery/missile attack:** use of shelling, artillery (either stand-alone or tank based), mortars, or guided missiles in the absence of any other engagement
- **Remote explosive/landmine/IED:** a remotely- or victim-activated device -- including landmines, improvised explosive devices (IEDs) whether alone or attached to a vehicle, or any other sort of remotely detonated or triggered explosive, including unexploded ordnances (UXO) -- detonated in the absence of any other engagement
- **Grenade:** a grenade or another explosive (not including “crude bombs”, such as Molotov cocktails, firecrackers, cherry bombs, petrol bombs, etc.) thrown in the absence of any other engagement
- **Violence against civilians**
 - **Sexual violence:** individuals (regardless of gender or age) experiencing harm of a sexual nature (including, though not limited to, rape, public stripping, sexual torture, mutilation of genitals, etc.)
 - **Attack:** civilians targeted with any violence (except for that of a sexual nature, which would be covered above) by an organised armed actor
 - **Abduction/forced disappearance:** report of an abduction or forced disappearance of civilians, without reports of further violence
- **Riots**
 - **Violent demonstration:** demonstrators engaging in violence or riotous behavior (such as vandalism, road-blocking, burning tires, etc.)
 - **Mob violence:** violence involving a large crowd of people, especially one that is disorderly and intent on causing trouble or violence, interacting with other such groups/rioters (including vigilante mobs), organized armed groups, or civilians
- **Protests**
 - **Peaceful protest:** peaceful demonstrators, not engaging in violence or other forms of rioting behavior, and not faced with any sort of force or engagement
 - **Excessive force against protesters:** peaceful demonstrators, not engaging in violence or other forms of rioting behavior, experiencing violence (with the possibility of) leading to serious/lethal injuries
 - **Protest with intervention:** peaceful demonstrators, not engaging in violence or other forms of rioting behavior, facing (attempts of) dispersion or suppression without serious/lethal injuries reported or being confronted with lethal weapons
- **Strategic developments**
 - **Agreement:** agreements between actors, including peace agreements/talks, ceasefires, evacuation deals, prisoner exchanges, prisoner releases, surrenders, etc.
 - **Arrests:** state forces (or other actors exercising *de facto* control over a territory) detaining a significant individual or engaging in mass arrests



- **Change to group/activity:** significant changes in the activity or structure of armed groups (including creation of a new rebel group or paramilitary wing, 'voluntary' recruitment drives, security measures, movement of forces, etc.)
- **Disrupted weapons use:** when an event of 'Explosions/Remote violence' is prevented from occurring, or whenever armed actors seize significant caches of weapons
- **Headquarters of base established:** when a violent group establishes a permanent or semi- permanent base or headquarters [*this was previously an event type*]
- **Looting/property destruction:** when organised armed groups engage in looting or seizing goods or property other than weapons or weapon systems
- **Non-violent transfer of territory:** rebels, governments, or affiliates of both acquiring control of a location without engaging in a violent interaction with another group [*this was previously an event type*]
- **Other:** any other significant, strategic developments that do not fit under other categories of this event type

Both event types and sub-event types are hierarchical to accommodate for concurrent tactics within the same event, in order to avoid double-counting. This means that an Explosions/Remote violence event (e.g. an air strike) occurring within the same context as a ground Battle event would be coded as one Battles event. Or a Violence against civilians event (e.g. attack on a civilian) occurring with the same context as an Explosions/Remote violence event (e.g. use of a remote explosive) would be coded as one Explosions/Remote violence event. A similar structure holds for sub-event types. Shelling occurring simultaneously as an air strike being dropped would be coded as Air/drone strike as it is higher on the hierarchy than Shelling/artillery/missile attack. Or a civilian abducted and then killed would be coded as Attack because it is higher on the hierarchy than Abduction/forced disappearance. The event types and sub-event types noted above are presented in hierarchical order. It is important to keep these distinctions in mind when drawing interpretations of the data.

All new data published by ACLED going forward will adhere to the structure of these new event types and sub-event types. All previous data already in the ACLED dataset has been re-coded to fit within this structure. A version of the dataset, updated as of 11 March 2019, adhering to the old data structure is available upon request; data released/updated following this date will no longer be available in the old structure format.

Have a question? Join ACLED on Twitter @ACLEDINFO on 15 March 2019 by using the hashtag #ACLEDchanges or replying to our Tweet announcement for a live Q&A event with the ACLED team. Join in to ask your questions about how the new event and sub-event types will impact your analysis!

Not on Twitter? Send your questions in via email to: admin@acleddata.com