ViEWS monthly forecasts, August 2018
Summary of forecasts *

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This report presents ViEWS forecasts for August 2018 through August 2021 as of 31 July 2018. The forecasts are based on data that are updated up to and including June 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/`.

In this report, we highlight developments in the most recent month. For a discussion of what underlies the forecasts in terms of slowly changing risk factors as well as methodological issues, see the ViEWS overview article[1]. Figure 1 shows our country-level forecasts for August 2018, Figure 2 the corresponding forecasts at detailed geographic locations, and Figure 3 indicates forecasted trends in organized violence up to August 2021. Figure 4 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.

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[1]`http://files.webb.uu.se/uploader/1576/ViEWS-OverviewArticle-June2018.pdf`.

1 Forecasts for August 2018

(a) State-based conflict (sb), August 2018

(b) Non-state conflict (ns), August 2018
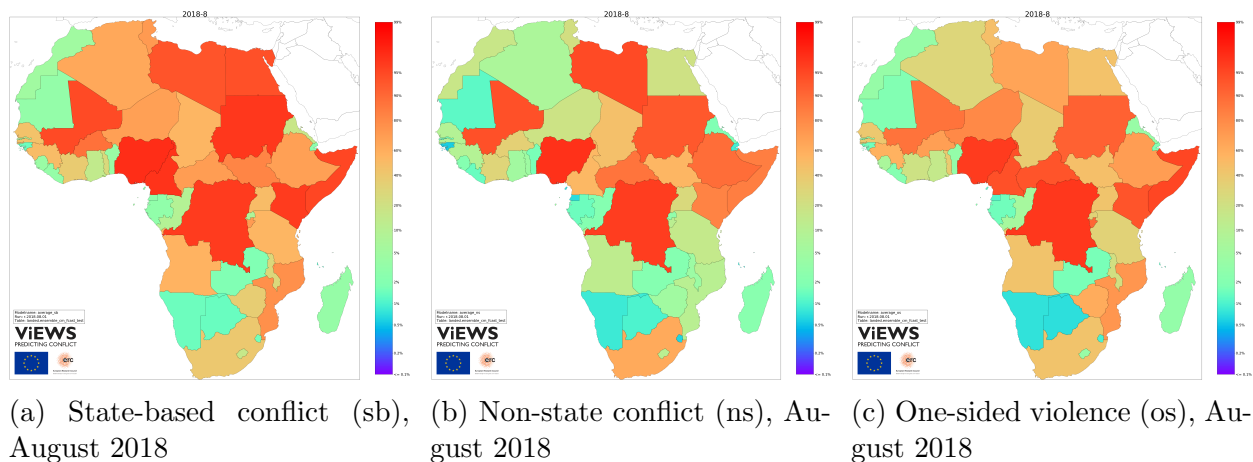
(c) One-sided violence (os), August 2018

Figure 1: Ensemble forecasts for August 2018

The plots in Figure 1 show the ViEWS country-level forecasts for the immediate future – what do we forecast will happen in August 2018? We show the probability of at least one event in each country in August 2018, based on data up to and including June 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 an orange color.

Our forecasts for August 2018 to August 2021 are mostly similar to last month's forecasts. The August 2018 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 June 2018 that change the forecasts for some countries.

We forecast a high probability of conflict in countries that have a recent history of conflict or with recent protest events. In Mali, Nigeria, and DR Congo 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 4a). Tensions and violence betwen anglophones and francophones observed since 2016 have escalated after separatists symbolically declared the independence of 'Ambazonia' in October 2017. The separatist violence, involving several groups, continued throughout the spring in 2018. There have also been clashes between government forces and IS (often referred to as Boko Haram) in the northern part of the country.[2] In Kenya, clashes between the government and Al-Shabaab have been reported in every month up to June 2018, and these are likely to continue.[3]

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[2]See Figure 4a and http://ucdp.uu.se/#/statebased/12422.

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

Our forecasts also indicate that the situation will deteriorate in Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

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 differ across conflict types (see Figure 4). Cameroon and Egypt, for instance, have not had much **ns** conflict, wheras Libya and Sudan have seen a lot. We forecast a high probability also of **ns** in Kenya due to recent confrontations between cattle rustlers and herders. Furthermore, actors with unclear affiliation carried out attacks against civilians.

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. Kenya, again, will see continued one-sided violence, most likely perpetrated by the Al-Shabaab and the government of Kenya.[4]

We forecast an increased risk of one-sided violence as well as state-based conflict in Angola and Tunisia, responding to new records of one-sided violence recorded by the UCDP for June 2017.

(a) State-based conflict (sb), August 2018

(b) Non-state conflict (ns), August 2018

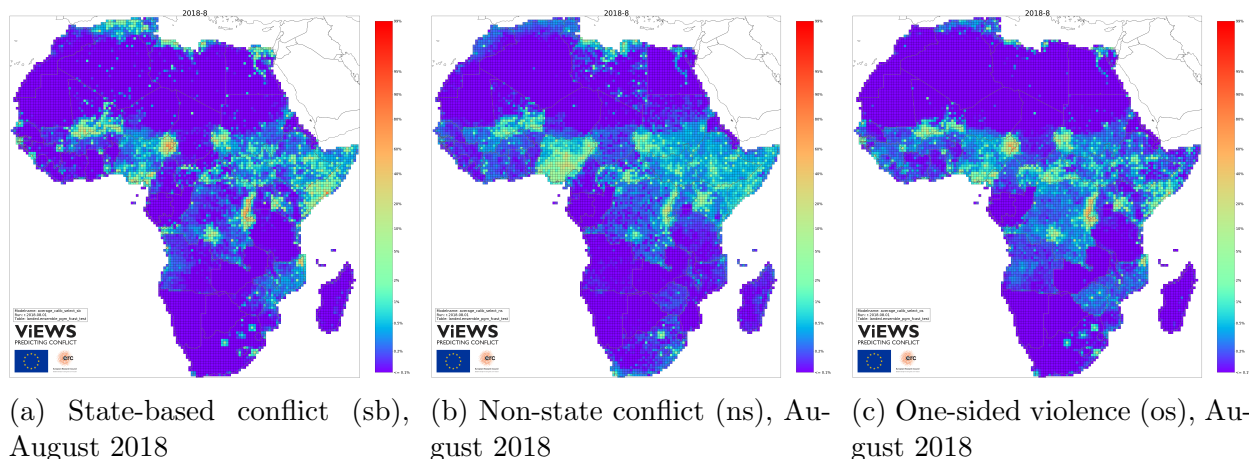(c) One-sided violence (os), August 2018

Figure 2: Ensemble forecasts for August 2018

Figure 2 presents forecasts at fine-grained sub-national geographical locations for August 2018, 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 forecasted violence in Mali is also quite intense, but somewhat more spread out geographically. All of these regions have been ravaged with violence for years as shown in Figure 4. These maps reflect that countries' recent conflict history is the strongest predictor of future violence.

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[4]See Figure 4c and `http://ucdp.uu.se/#/onesided/1071`.

The data from the UCDP also indicate some shifts within countries. Fulani violence against other groups have escalated in both Nigeria and in Mali. The Egyptian Armed Forces initiated a 'Comprehensive Operation – Sinai 2018' in February, with significantly increased state-based conflict activity.

The forecasts for non-state conflict and one-sided violence depend on the same factors although with somewhat different implications. For **ns**, we forecast main clusters in central Nigeria, Central African Republic, North and South Kivu, Darfur and the Kenyan Rift Valley. For **os**, northern Nigeria, Darfur, North Kivu, and Burundi are the primary hotspots.

2   Forecasts August 2018 to August 2021

All forecasts shown so far have been for August 2018, the second month after the most recent data available. Figure 3 indicates how the forecasts change up to August 2021. The color mapping is roughly the same as above, but here correspond to the forecasted proportion of PRIO-GRID cells in **sb** conflict for each country. In Burundi, for instance, we expect about 18% of the cells to have conflict in each month. In Ethiopia, the forecast is 1.2%.

We forecast an increasing probability of state-based violence in Nigeria, Rwanda, and Uganda. Compared to last month, we forecast an even higher risk of escalation in non-state and one-sided violence in Rwanda.

3   History of UCDP organized violence

Figure 4 presents the the recent history of violence in each PRIO-GRID cell. Red cells had conflict in August 2018, and purple ones have not seen conflict in many years.
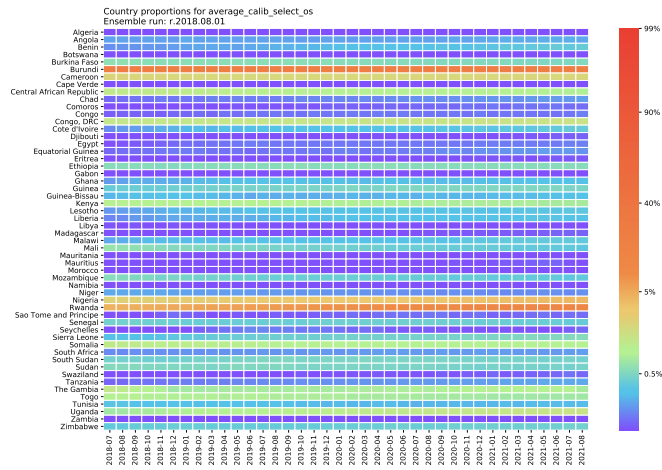
Figures 4a, 4b, 4c show state-based, non-state, and one-sided violence respectively from the UCDP. Figure 4d shows data on protests from ACLED (`https://www.acleddata.com`).
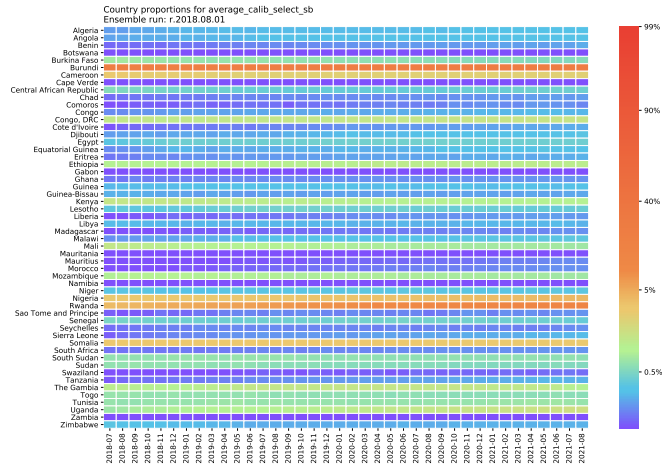
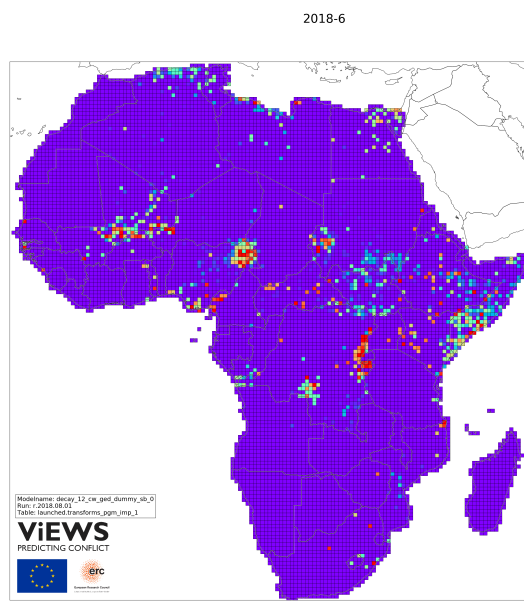(a) State-based conflict (sb), August 2018
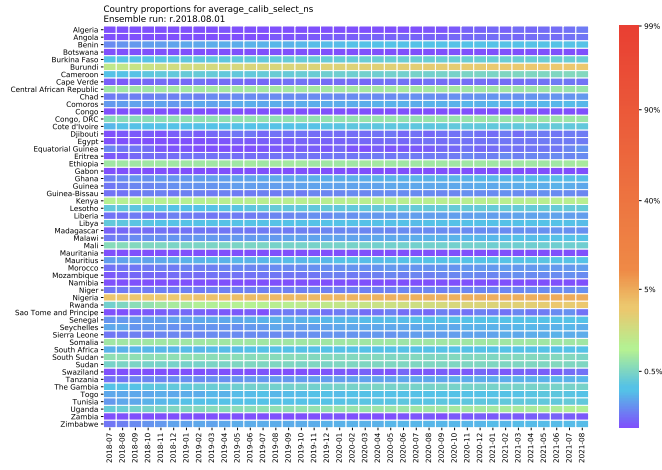
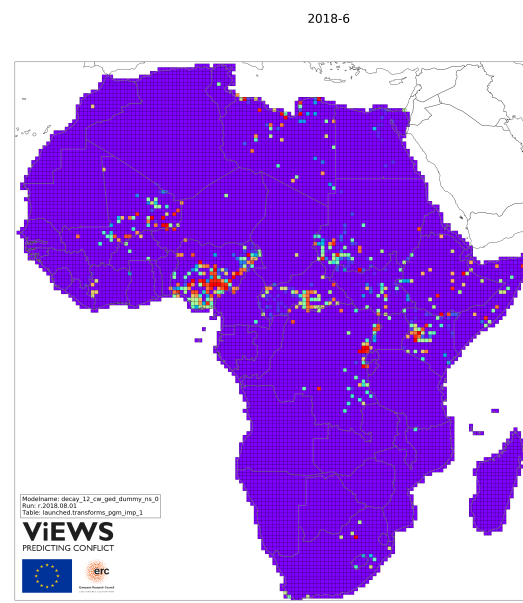(b) Non-state conflict (ns), August 2018

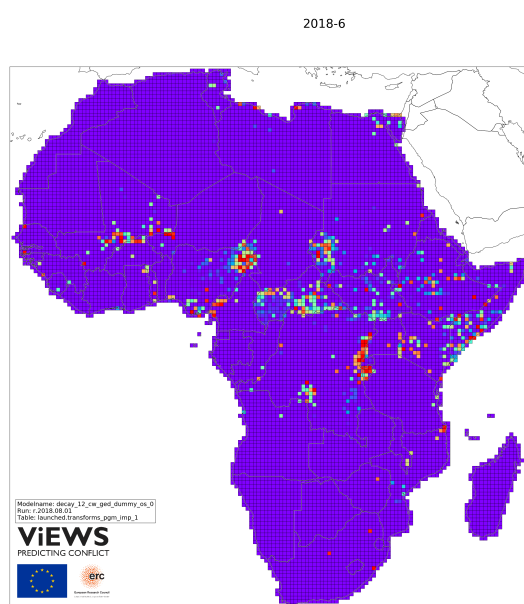(c) One-sided violence (os), August 2018

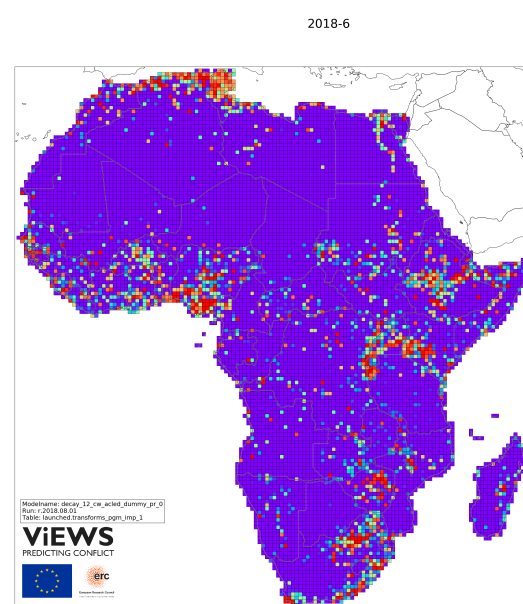Figure 3: Heatmaps for August 2018

(a) State-based conflict (sb), June 2018

(b) Non-state conflict (ns), June 2018

(c) One-sided violence (os), June 2018

(d) Protests (pr), June 2018

Figure 4: Decay function maps of observed conflict for June 2018