

# ViEWS monthly forecasts, March 2019\*

## Summary of forecasts

Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2019

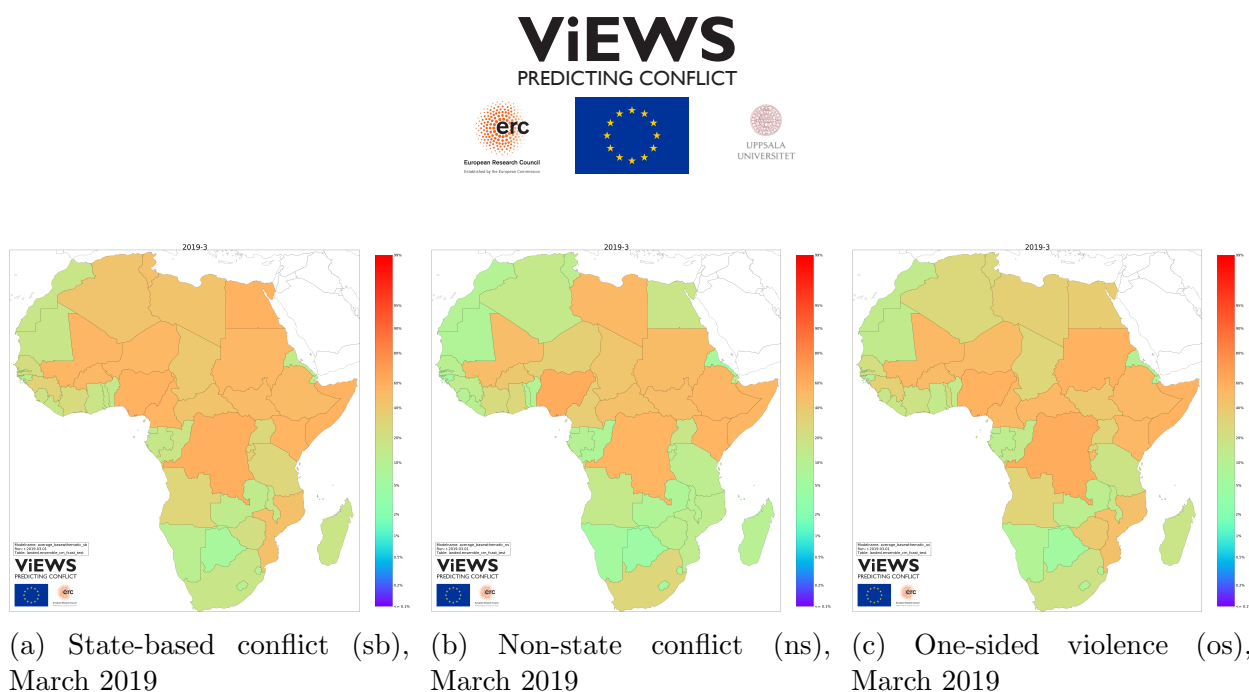


Figure 1: Ensemble forecasts for March 2019

This report presents ViEWS forecasts for March 2019 as of 28 February 2019. The forecasts are based on data that are updated up to and including January 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.<sup>1</sup> Figure 1 shows our country-level forecasts for March 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 March 2019

The plots in Figure 1 show the ViEWS country-level forecasts for the immediate future – what do we forecast will happen in March 2019? We show the probability of at least one event in each country in March 2019, based on data up to and including January 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.

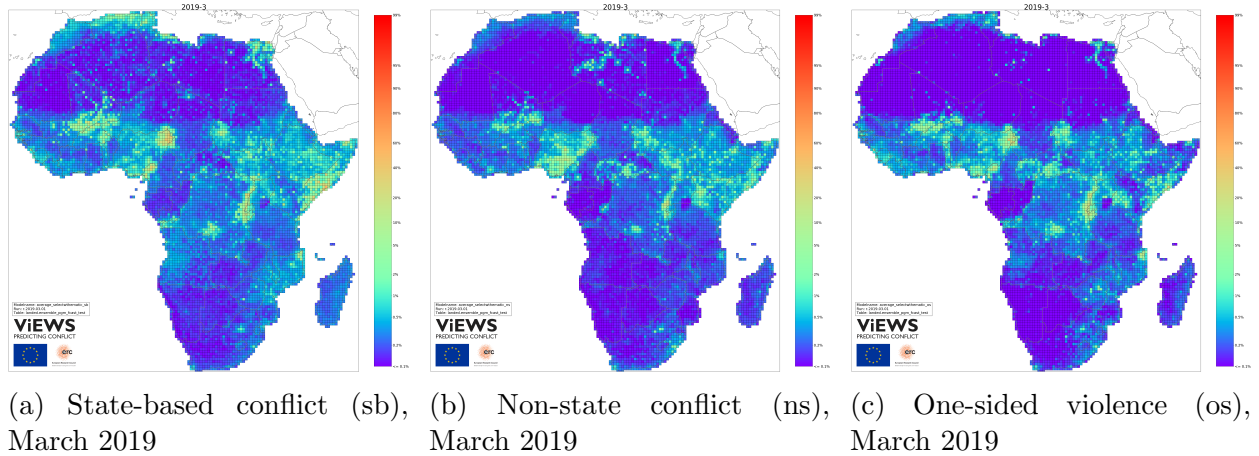


Figure 2: Ensemble forecasts for March 2019

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

Compared to last month, we most notably forecast a higher probability of a state-based conflict event in Niger and Ethiopia. Niger engaged in a large-scale operation against Boko Haram near the southeast border with Nigeria in January, which according to its Defence

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

ministry killed over 280 militants. In Ethiopia, government forces fought with the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) in the Oromia region.

Aside from these developments, 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, 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 (**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).<sup>2</sup> Furthermore we forecast a high probability of a state-based conflict event in Kenya as clashes between the government and Al-Shabaab again occurred in January 2019, most notably the 20-hour siege at the DusitD2 hotel in Nairobi that left 14 people dead.<sup>3</sup>

Our state-based conflict **sb** forecasts finally also indicate that the situation will remain volatile in Egypt and Sudan, particularly given continued escalation of government clashes with IS in North Sinai, and violent crackdown on anti-Bashir protests in Khartoum and elsewhere in Sudan in December and January.

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.

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 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 widespread violence against real and perceived political opponents since 2015.<sup>4</sup>

Figure 2 presents forecasts at fine-grained sub-national geographical locations for March 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, Somalia (southern states in particular), and the north-eastern Cabo Delgado Province of Mozambique where an Islamist insurgency emerged at the end of 2017. 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

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<sup>2</sup>See the monthly report for June for some more details on Cameroon.

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

<sup>4</sup>See Figure 3c and <http://ucdp.uu.se/#/onesided/1071>.

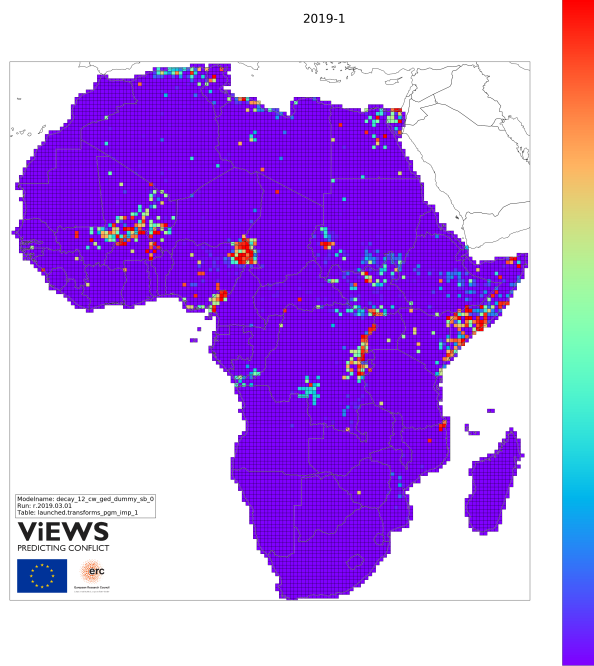
violence.

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**, Northeastern Nigeria as well as southern Nigeria and neighboring Cameroon, the Kivus, Burundi, northeastern Mozambique, and Somalia (Mogadishu area) are the primary hotspots in March 2019.

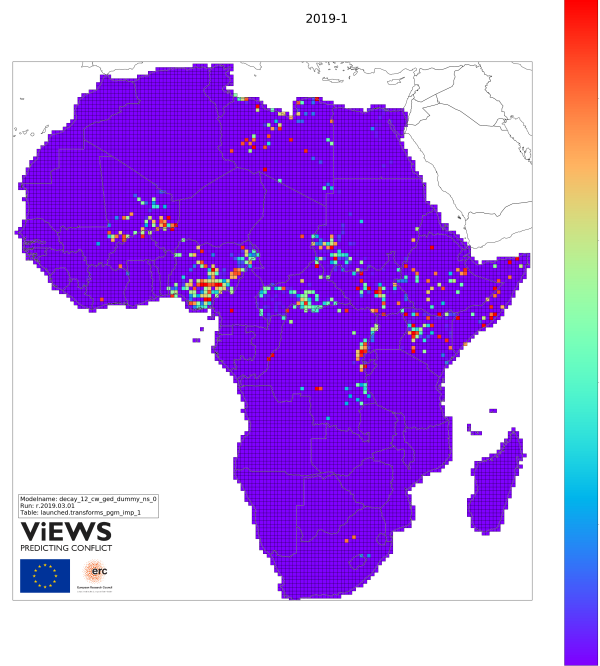
## 2 History of UCDP organized violence

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

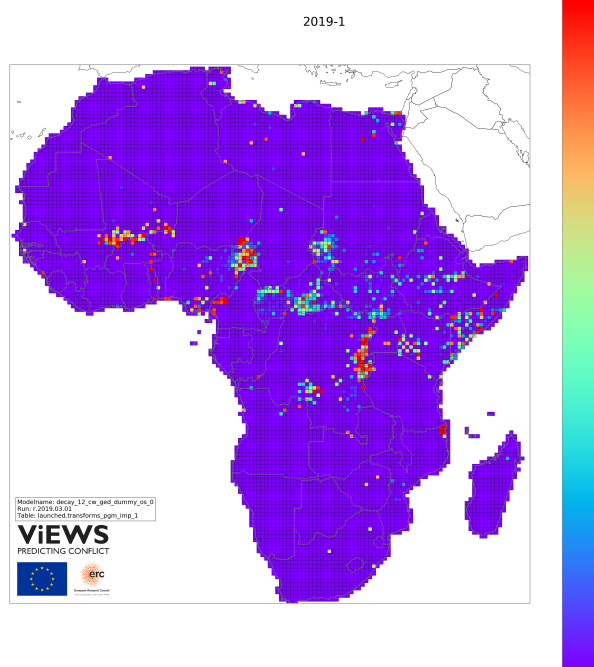
Figures 3a, 3b, 3c show state-based, non-state, and one-sided violence respectively from the UCDP. Figure 3d shows data on protests from ACLED (<https://www.acleddata.com>).



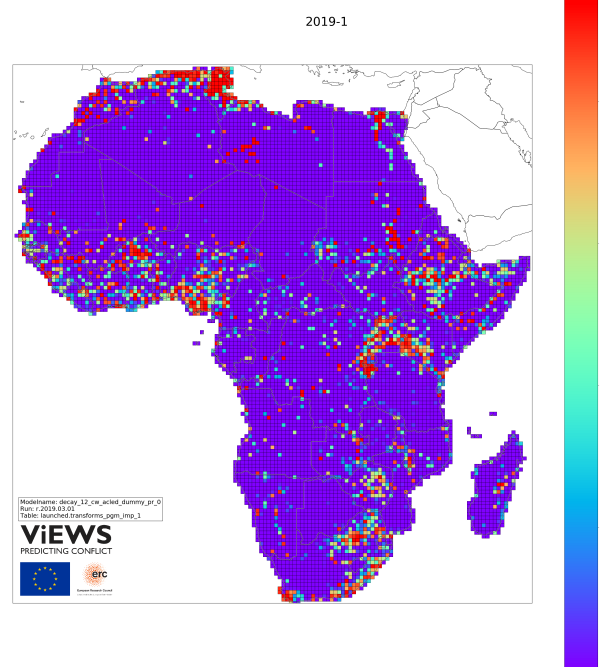
(a) State-based conflict (sb), January 2019



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



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



(d) Protests (pr), January 2019

Figure 3: Decay function maps of observed conflict for January 2019