UCDP Non-State Conflict Codebook

Version 2.3-2010

Uppsala Conflict Data Program
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This version compiled and updated by Ralph Sundberg (2010)

Replacing the earlier version by Joakim Kreutz & Kristine Eck (2005)

Introduction

This document describes the Non-State Conflict Dataset, a project within the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) at the Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University. The UCDP Non-State conflict project is developed with support from the Human Security Report Project, Simon Fraser University, in Vancouver, Canada.

In the development of the definition of non-state conflict, the input from Kristine Eck, Peter Wallensteen, Margareta Sollenberg, Lotta Harbom, Ralph Sundberg, Stina Högbladh, Therése Pettersson and Johan Brosché, have been instrumental. The UCDP non-state conflict project is also grateful for additional advice and feedback from Andrew Mack, Zoe Nielsen, Ole Magnus Thiesen, and others.

Case-specific information about the cases of non-state conflict is available at www.ucdp.uu.se/database. Questions regarding the definitions and the content of the dataset can be directed to therese.pettersson@pcr.uu.se.

Definition of Non-State conflict

A non-state conflict is defined by the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) as *"the use of armed force between two organized armed groups, neither of which is the government of a state, which results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in a year."*

The separate elements of the definition are operationalized as follows:

(1) *Use of armed force*: the use of arms, resulting in deaths.
> *(1.1) Arms*: any material means, e.g. manufactured weapons but also sticks, stones, fire, water, etc.

(2) *25 deaths*: a minimum of 25 battle-related deaths per year
> (2.1) *battle-related deaths:* deaths directly related to combat between the warring groups

(3) *Organized groups*: consists of either
> (3.1) formally organized groups: any non-governmental group of people having announced a name for their group and using armed force against another similarly formally organized group, *or*
>
> (3.2) informally organized groups: any group without an announced name, but who uses armed force against another similarly organized group, where the violent activity meets the following requirements:
>> (3.2.a.) there is a clear pattern of violent incidents that are connected and in which both groups use armed force against the other

(4) *State*: a state is
> (4.1) an internationally recognized sovereign government controlling a specified territory, *or*
> (4.2) an internationally unrecognized government controlling a specified territory whose sovereignty is not disputed by another internationally recognized sovereign government previously controlling the same territory.

(5) *Government*: the party controlling the capital of the state

Modifications from earlier versions of the Non-state Conflict Dataset

(1) Level of organization
The major modification in the 2010 version of the codebook and the dataset is an alteration to the operational definition of *organized groups*. In order to make the non-state conflict and one-sided violence categories mutually exclusive some changes have been made in the definition and how it is operationally applied. Changes have also been made so as to include conflict between very broad groups such as religious collectives.

The major changes are as follows:

(1) The organizational level of warring groups has been more narrowly defined so as to ensure that one-sided violence and non-state conflict events do not overlap. Groups may now fight only groups within their own level of organizational capacity, at the same time as the level of organization has been transformed from the dichotomous variable of 0 and 1 to contain more steps (1 to 3). This change eliminates significant overlap between the non-state conflict and one-sided violence categories.

(2) Organized rebel groups may no longer be coded as participants in non-state conflicts in which their ethnic brethren partake if the levels of organization differ. Violence by rebel groups against civilians of a differing ethnicity/identity/political affiliation is coded as one-sided violence, even if the rebel group's ethnic brethren are at the same time involved in a non-state conflict with the rivaling group[1]. In other words, a formally organized rebel group may not 'assume' an overarching ethnic or other identity and subsequently partake in that identity's non-state conflict. This is done since the level of organization between the two antagonists is uneven and removes further overlap between one-sided violence and non-state conflict.

(3) The dataset now contains records of what is commonly referred to as 'communal violence'; i.e. violence between very broad categories of identification (for instance Hindus versus Muslims in India). This is a result of the slackening of the organization criteria and its classification along a broader hierarchy than formally and informally organized groups. These collectives are identified country by country and there can thus not exist a global conflict between Hindus or Muslims or other such broad identity groups.

(2) Levels of organization
Organizational level 1 (formally organized groups): Rebel groups and other organized groups that have a high enough level of organization so as to be possible to include in the

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[1] For instance, even if Naga tribals are attacking Kuki tribals in Northeast India and killing unarmed civilians from the other group, the violence against civilians carried out by the Naga rebel group NSCN – K will be coded as one-sided violence.

state-based armed conflict category. These include rebel groups with an announced name, as well as military factions (Forces of…). This level of organization captures fighting between highly organized rebel groups.

Organizational level 2 (informally organized groups): Groups composed of supporters and affiliates to political parties and candidates. These are commonly not groups that are permanently organized for combat, but who at times use their organizational structures for such purposes. This level of organization captures fighting between political parties/candidates and lethal electoral violence.

Organizational level 3 (informally organized groups): Groups that share a common identification along ethnic, clan, religious, national or tribal lines. These are not groups that are permanently organized for combat, but who at times organize themselves along said lines to engage in fighting. This level of organization captures aspects of what is commonly referred to as 'communal conflicts', in that conflict stands along lines of communal identity. Battle-related deaths are recorded according to section 3.2.a of the definition of non-state conflict.

(3) Battle-related deaths[2]
Some minor modifications have also been made to the way the coding records battle-related deaths. The coding now records somewhat differing phenomena according to the level of organization of the fighting groups.

For formally organized groups (organizational level 1) the recording of battle-related deaths follows the exact same criteria as in the state-based armed conflict category. I.e. the warring groups must target representatives of the other formally organized group. Targeting of civilians, even if those civilians are of, for example, the same ethnicity as a group's rivals, is coded as one-sided violence.

For informally organized groups (organizational level 2-3) the battle-related deaths criteria is somewhat slackened. Instead of coding deaths according to the state-based criteria the dataset records patterns of violent (lethal) interaction between informally organized groups, regardless of whether the targets are civilians or armed. For a non-state conflict to be recorded within these levels of organization both parties must attack each other.

These modifications have been made as it was obvious in the earlier versions of the dataset that significant amounts of overlap between the non-state conflict and one-sided violence categories occurred. It was also obvious that the dynamics involved in fighting between rebel groups and between more loosely organized groups were quite different. The coding has thus been modified so as to correspond more closely to these dynamics.

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[2] For a more in-depth discussion on the definition of battle-related deaths, see http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/definitions/

Variables in the Non-State conflict Dataset

Conflict ID. This variable makes it possible to follow the conflict activity between two parties over several years, regardless of possible changes in name of the actors. Thus, each dyadic relationship in the dataset is given a unique ID.

Org. This variable indicates the organizational level of the warring sides. The level of organization is determined according to the following categories:

Organizational level 1 (formally organized groups): Rebel groups and other organized groups that have a high enough level of organization so as to be possible to include in the state-based armed conflict category. These include rebel groups with an announced name, as well as military factions (Forces of…). This level of organization captures fighting between highly organized rebel groups and fatalities are recorded according to the criteria set for battle-related deaths in the state-based conflict category.

Organizational level 2 (informally organized groups): Groups composed of supporters and affiliates to political parties and candidates. These are commonly not groups that are permanently organized for combat, but who at times use their organizational structures for such purposes. This level of organization captures fighting between political parties/candidates and lethal electoral violence and battle-related deaths are recorded according to section 3.2.a of the definition of non-state conflict.

Organizational level 3 (informally organized groups): Groups that share a common identification along ethnic, clan, religious, national or tribal lines. These are not groups that are permanently organized for combat, but who at times organize themselves along said lines to engage in fighting. This level of organization captures aspects of what is commonly referred to as 'communal conflicts', in that conflict stands along lines of communal identity. Battle-related deaths are recorded according to section 3.2.a of the definition of non-state conflict.

Side A. The party that constitute Side A in the conflict. For each conflict the parties are listed in alphabetical order, using the latest known names of the parties involved.

Side A ID. The ID of the groups that make up Side A. These IDs are taken from the UCDP Actor Dataset (Harbom & Sundberg, 2009).

Side B. The party that constitute Side B in the conflict. For each conflict the parties are listed in alphabetical order, using the latest known names of the parties involved.

Side B ID. The ID of the groups that make up Side B. These IDs are taken from the UCDP Actor Dataset (Harbom & Sundberg, 2009).

StartDate. The first time the conflict reaches 25 battle-related deaths in one calendar year. This date is the same for all years in which the conflict has been active, regardless of whether the conflict has been active in several episodes or not.

StartPrec. The Startdate is coded as precisely as possible. For certain conflicts we can pinpoint the start of the conflict down to a single event, taking place on a specific day. For other conflicts, this is not possible, due to lack of precise information. The Startprec (start precision) is coded to highlight the level of certainty for the date set in the Startdate variable.

1. Day, month and year are precisely coded; we have good information on the event.
2. Day is assigned; month and year are precisely coded. The assigned date can either be one of several events that can be classified as the first; it can be the last day in a period when several fatalities have been reported jointly or it can be an event that different sources claim occurred on different dates.
3. Day is unknown; month and year are precisely coded. The day is known to be in a given month, but we are missing information on an exact date. Day is then set to the first day of the month.
4. Month is assigned; year is coded precisely. Day is set as the first day of the assigned month.
5. Day and month are unknown, year is coded precisely. Day and month are set as the 1 January of the coded year.

StartDate2. StartDate2 gives the date, as precise as possible, when a given episode of conflict activity reached 25 battle-related deaths.

StartPrec2. Coded according to the criteria stated for Startprec.

EpEnd. EpEnd is a dummy variable that codes whether the conflict is inactive the following year and an episode of the conflict thus ends. If the conflict is inactive the following year(s), this variable is coded as 1. If not, a 0 is coded.

EpEndDate. This variable is only coded in years where EpEnd has the value 1. If a conflict year is followed by at least one year of conflict inactivity, the EpEndDate variable lists, as precise as possible, the last date of recorded combat.

EpEndPrec. Coded according to the criteria stated for Startprec.

Year. The year of observation of the non-state conflict

Yearly Best, Low and High fatality estimates.

The general rule for UCDP's estimation of fatalities is moderation. All incidents are ideally verified by two independent sources, and all estimates reported are grounded in UCDP's expertise of each particular country. Due to the varying certainty of fatality reports, the project provides three estimates concerning battle-related deaths for each year.

(a) ***Best estimate***. The best estimate is constructed by aggregating the best estimates for each individual event. If reports provide conflicting estimates, an examination is made as to what source is most reliable. If no such distinction can be made, UCDP employs the lower figure given.

(b) ***Low estimate***. The low estimate is constructed by aggregating the low estimates for each individual event. If different reports provide different estimates and a higher estimate is considered more reliable, the low estimate is also reported if deemed reasonable.

(c) ***High estimate***. The high estimate is constructed by aggregating the high estimates for each individual event. If different reports provide different estimates and a lower estimate is considered more or equally reliable, the high estimate is also reported if deemed reasonable. If there is uncertainty about exactly which party was involved in a given incident, it may also be included in the high estimate.

Location. The geographical location of the activity in the non-state conflict. Location is a string variable, listing all countries in which the conflict is active in the order of the number of fatalities as defined by the best estimate for the year.

GWNOLoc. This field contains the country code(s) for the state(s) listed in the Location variable. Thus, it lists the country codes for the primary party/parties in the conflict. GWNoloc is a string variable, where the numbers are separated by a comma (','). A full list of country codes is available in the UCDP Dyadic Dataset Codebook (Harbom, 2009).

Region. Region of location.
1 Europe
2 Middle East
3 Asia
4 Africa
5 Americas

Version. The version number is a combination of a number and a year. The number is increased when the structure of the dataset is significantly changed The year refers to when the dataset is updated with new observations. If there are changes in the data between yearly updates, a letter is used behind the year.

This codebook corresponds to version 2.3 of the UCDP Non-State Conflict Dataset. We recommend that whenever this dataset is used, the version number should be cited.

References
Harbom, Lotta, 2009, "UCDP Dyadic Dataset Codebook", Uppsala Conflict Data Program, Dept. of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, http://www.ucdp.uu.se/

Harbom, Lotta and Ralph Sundberg, 2009, "UCDP Actor Dataset Codebook", Uppsala Conflict Data Program, Dept. of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, http://www.ucdp.uu.se/