Tags in ACLED Data

The 'Tags' column provides additional structured information about an ACLED event. Tags provide a flexible means of refining or grouping existing variables, or providing new variables to specific contexts not already captured within the other data columns. Tags can be specific to certain (combinations of) actors and event types, themes, countries, time periods, etc. As such, some tags are hyperspecific, such as the "count every vote" tag that was introduced in the dataset for the 2020 election demonstrations in the United States. Other tags, like the "crowd size" tag, apply globally to all 'Protests' and 'Riots' events. Tags can be introduced or retired as situations on the ground and analytical needs develop or subside.

Each tag is separated by a semicolon (;) in the 'Tags' column. Users may filter for specific tags to quickly generate datasets related to specific aspects of political violence or demonstrations within the ACLED dataset. The full list of tags, their coverage periods, and how they are coded can be found in the table below.

As with all ACLED data, all tags coded for an event are reviewed for accuracy and consistency to ensure that they meet the criteria for inclusion.[1] Therefore, users can filter directly on the 'Tags' column to pull up events related to a trend already being tracked with a tag, without needing to curate the data further to remove false positives. The ACLED Research Hub on Political Violence Targeting Women and the interactive dashboard in the United States Country Hub are examples of real-time analysis made possible by tags.

To ensure the reliability of the 'Tags' column, all tags go through a rigorous approval and review process before being introduced to the dataset. Based on observations and knowledge of local contexts or developing trends, potential new tags are discussed among members of the ACLED team and additions are proposed to the Research team. The Research team then evaluates and refines the criteria for coding a tag. Some tags may go through a testing phase in order to determine if the tag can be coded in a useful and reliable way. Once a tag has been approved, corrections are made to the data to ensure the tag is applied consistently for a specific region and/or time period.

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[1] For more, see this primer on ACLED's Coding and Review Process.

List of tags in the data

Coverage	Coverage Period[2]	Tag	Brief description	More information
Global	1 January 2019-present	"crowd size=*X*"	To denote the size of the crowd in 'Protests' and 'Riots' events as reported by the source.	See *Why doesn't ACLED have a 'crowd size' variable and what does the 'crowd size' tag in demonstration events capture?* section in the Quick Guide to ACLED data
Global	All published data	"sexual violence"	To capture incidents of sexual violence that occur in the context of other forms of violence coded higher than Violence against civilians event type in the ACLED event type hierarchy, like Riot events.	See How is sexual violence coded in ACLED data?
Global	All published data	"women targeted: *XYZ*"	To provide additional information about the identity types of women targeted with political violence.	See Gendered Actors: Uses and limitations of ACLED data
Global	1 January 2018-present	"local administrators"	To capture incidents of violence targeting officials who are part of subnational governments and their property.	See How is violence against local government officials and administrators coded in ACLED data?
United States	1 January 2020-present	"armed"	To capture the presence of firearms at demonstrations	See United States: Scope and coverage in ACLED data

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[2] Note that ACLED's coverage of regions over time is not uniform. Please reference ACLED's country coverage list for further information.

Coverage	Coverage Period[2]	Tag	Brief description	More information
United States	1 January 2020-present	"armed presence"	A subset of the "armed" tag used to capture the presence of armed individuals at a demonstration who are neither participants in the demonstration nor engage physically with demonstrators.	See United States: Scope and coverage in ACLED data
United States	1 January 2020-present	"car ramming"	To capture the occurrence of car ramming in a demonstration event.	See United States: Scope and coverage in ACLED data
United States	1 January 2020-present	"count every vote"	To capture all demonstrations whose goal is to call for all votes to be counted, including valid mail-in/absentee ballots counted after Election Day 2020.	See United States: Scope and coverage in ACLED data
United States	1 January 2020-present	"counter-demonstration"	To capture two demonstrations that occur simultaneously, in the same place, and are essentially 'counter' to one another.	See United States: Scope and coverage in ACLED data
United States	1 January 2020-present	"detentions"	To capture events where demonstrators or other civilians are detained by state forces in unmarked vehicles during or outside demonstrations.	See United States: Scope and coverage in ACLED data
United States	1 January 2020-present	"schools"	To capture coronavirus-related demonstrations against the reopening of schools or school activities during the pandemic.	See United States: Scope and coverage in ACLED data

Coverage	Coverage Period[2]	Tag	Brief description	More information
United States	1 January 2020-present	"statue"	To capture events around the targeting of statues (such as the breaking off of pieces or the toppling of statues including, but not limited to, Confederate statues).	See United States: Scope and coverage in ACLED data
United States	1 January 2020-present	"stop the steal"	To capture all demonstrations which call for action against alleged Democratic voter fraud and 'illegal' ballot counting, as claimed by President Donald Trump and other Republican officials.	See United States: Scope and coverage in ACLED data
United States	1 January 2020-present	"suggested agents provocateurs"	To capture demonstration events in which reports suggest infiltrations or instigation of violence from an outside group.	See United States: Scope and coverage in ACLED data