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How Is Violence Against Local Government Officials and Administrators Captured in ACLED Data?

Tracking violence targeting local officials and administrators

Local government officials and administrators — including governors, mayors, councilors, and other civil servants — frequently come under attack by a wide array of armed actors, from cartels waging turf wars in Mexico to Russian occupying forces in Ukraine (see the ACLED report [Administering Violence: An ACLED Special Project on Violence Targeting Local Officials](#)). To systematically monitor this phenomenon and identify emerging trends, ACLED introduced a tag to track violence against local officials into the event dataset.

What is included in this definition?

ACLED captures violence targeting local officials and administrators for all cases where:

- violence or force is used against local officials (i.e. they were targeted, injured, or killed in the event), or
- when property considered as belonging to, or symbolic of, the local government administration is targeted or destroyed, or
- when local officials are part of protests that are subjected to excessive force.

Local officials are considered all administrators and employees who are part of *subnational* government administrations, such as mayors, municipal or town councilors, and employees of the city council. Village heads and other similar community-level positions are also included where such positions are part of the official government structure. Excluded are administrators and employees who are part of national-level administrations or central governments.

How do I identify these events in the ACLED dataset?

Violence targeting local officials and administrators can be tracked by filtering for the 'local administrators' tag coded in the 'Tags' column in the ACLED dataset (see [Tags in ACLED data](#)).

How far back are these events tracked?

Violence targeting local officials and administrators is tracked for all countries covered by ACLED back to 1 January 2018, or their start-date of ACLED coverage, whichever is most recent (see [ACLED's country and time period coverage list](#)).

Local administrators can be perpetrators of violence too and not just targets. Does the tag capture this?

No, the 'local administrators' tag does not capture events where local administrators are the perpetrators of violence unless the violence is used against other local administrators or where property owned by (or symbolic of) the local government administration is targeted or destroyed.