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FAQs: Terms of Use, Attribution Policy, and Data Access

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I work for a local conflict observatory; can we use ACLED data to supplement our dataset?

Can I reach out to you to confirm that my use and attribution adheres to the TOUs?

How do I cite ACLED in different types of outputs?

I am an official ACLED partner and want to cite the data in my work. Are there any special provisions or guidelines?

I want to use ACLED data in a dashboard I am building. Either single or multiple datasets will be mapped/visualized and there will be an export functionality, allowing users to download the raw data. Is this acceptable?

I would like to use ACLED data in an academic publication and am required to submit data for replication to the journal. In this case, is it OK to share the raw data I used?

I am working on a joint project and downloaded ACLED data for this. Can I share the data within my team? What about with partners?

I am using machine learning to train a model to code conflict data. I want to use ACLED — a human coded dataset — as a corpus to train my model. Can I use ACLED for that?

How can I access ACLED data?

ACLED users are required to register through the [ACLED Access Portal](#) before gaining access to the data. This process takes about five minutes. When registering, each person will be asked to provide their name and a contact email as well as to classify their use into one of the following categories: academic; for profit/private business/commercial; foundation/charity; government; intergovernmental/multinational organization; media; military; and NGO/INGO/think tank. Users will also be asked for a brief summary of their use case (*How will you be using ACLED data?*). Once registered, users can immediately generate a unique access key to use when downloading data (*see this [guide](#) for further instructions on how to register and manage your account*). For any questions, please contact access@acleddata.com.

What is ACLED's access model?

ACLED's access model is designed to ensure the responsible use of ACLED data and the sustainability of its collection. ACLED data are free to the public for *extensive, though not unlimited*, use. The extent of free access for users is determined based on the category of the user (*as documented during the registration process*). Once the category of user is determined, for those who are not Media, an existing Sponsor or Partner, or an ACLED Network member, free access will include the following:

- **Public Sector:**
 1. Six downloads per year in total (from date of registration)
 2. Access to real-time data
 3. Access to three years of historical data (where [available](#), from date of download)
- **Civil Society:**
 1. Unlimited downloads
 2. Access to real-time data and historical data
 3. Access to API available upon request
- **Corporate:**
 1. Three downloads per year in total (from date of registration)
 2. Access to real-time data
 3. Access to one year of historical data (from date of download)

Those who wish to gain further access to the data are invited to contact ACLED to discuss their needs. Please send any questions to access@acleddata.com.

Why does ACLED require registration?

Registration allows ACLED to better understand our users and use cases. In turn, this helps us to foster responsible use of the data, better support our users, and ensure the sustainability of ACLED into the future.

In the past, access to ACLED data was unrestricted and registration was not required. ACLED changed its access and use policies for several reasons:

1. ACLED has a team of over 200 researchers and staff members, and the organization is sustained through public and private funding. To build a sustainable model and to allow for public use, restrictions are in place to ensure the data are used responsibly and in good faith, and to prohibit the resale and misuse of ACLED data. The registration system also allows us to learn more about our user community and the varied ways in which ACLED data are used. This in turn supports both our internal and external monitoring and evaluation processes, which contribute to our ability to maintain funding for the project and ensure the sustainability of the free access model.
2. Unrestricted use was damaging ACLED's ability to sustain this model and to guarantee support and visibility for local partners, and the work of ACLED researchers.
3. As part of ACLED's do-no-harm and conflict sensitivity policies (*see below*), ACLED aims to prevent bad faith use, including cases where ACLED's data and research are used, manipulated, or misrepresented to harm, target, oppress, or defame ACLED, the data subjects, or any other group. With the incorporation of ACLED's [Terms of Use \(TOUs\)](#), and the restriction of use being conditional on the acceptance and acknowledgement of ACLED's data collection choices and methods, ACLED is now better positioned to identify and guard against bad faith use. Therefore, ACLED's TOUs and registration process help to protect the organization's reputation and ensure the data are being used responsibly.

Why is it important to guard against misuse?

There are three primary reasons for this:

1. *Research integrity*: Engagement with the research community helps to prevent incorrect interpretations of ACLED data, and also helps to limit TOU violations. Incorrect and/or bad faith engagement impacts research outputs, which can in turn impact future research building off of such work.
2. *Sustainability*: ACLED produces, on average, nearly 5,000 new events per week, in addition to ongoing supplemental coding, analysis, and other projects. A global team of researchers collects, categorizes, reviews, and publishes these events (*for more on the differences between automated and researcher-led data projects, see [this report](#)*). This model requires a considerable budget. Ensuring the sustainability of this system, while offering data access for free to tens of thousands of users, can be challenging, and data misuse and theft make that challenge even more difficult.
3. *Do No Harm*. ACLED recognizes that data, statistics, and analysis can be misinterpreted, manipulated, maligned, and instrumentalized, in turn fueling conflict, harmful, or incorrect narratives, and even violence. ACLED is committed to ensuring that materials made available through the project do no harm, and that principles and approaches to conflict sensitivity are adhered to.

Is ACLED still a non-profit?

Yes. Nothing about ACLED's legal structure has changed. ACLED remains a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

Is access to ACLED data still free and public?

Yes. All users who abide by ACLED's TOUs may access ACLED data for free once they have registered. ACLED's TOUs are presented during the registration process and must be accepted by all users before downloading data via the website or API. For questions, please contact access@acleddata.com.

Is ACLED an academic project?

While ACLED started as an academic project, and the dataset is based on a rigorous and robust methodology, ACLED is no longer an academic project; it is a US-based non-governmental organization (a 501c3 registered non-profit).

Why do academics need to register with ACLED before being able to access the data?

All users must register before accessing the data. The registration and access system helps to prohibit the misuse and illegal re-selling of ACLED data, and it helps to ensure that ACLED data are not being used for harm. The system additionally helps us better understand our users, which in turn allows us to better support their work with the data.

What type of data access do academics receive?

Academics, like other public (non-commercial) users, immediately gain access to six downloads per year, access to the real-time data (which is published weekly), and access to all historical data. When registering with ACLED, please be sure to use your academic institutional email address, as this will help in ensuring your status as an academic is approved.

I need more downloads of ACLED data; how can I arrange that?

If you have exhausted your immediate free downloads of ACLED data and find that you need continued access, please reach out to access@acleddata.com to discuss how to gain further access. The user category you belong to, and what you are hoping to use the data for, will determine continued access terms.

In the vast majority of cases where **researchers** contact us for more downloads to support their work, continued access terms are easily met and further access to ACLED data is granted without delay. All further access is provisional on adhering to ACLED's [TOUs](#).

For **civil society users**, unlimited access to ACLED data can generally be secured with the establishment of a partnership. The terms of a mutually sustaining relationship is different with each organization, in line with capacities, resources, and mandates.

Civil society users engaging with the data in innovative ways may also qualify for membership in the ACLED Network, if they wish to contribute to the improvement of ACLED's data and methodology through providing feedback and insights about their data use. This option ensures those organizations which do not have the capacity or interest to become ACLED partners can gain extended access.

Public sector, multilateral, and other large or multinational organizations are invited to contact ACLED to discuss their data use and options for extending access.

For **private companies**, continued data access can be secured through a paid licensing agreement.

Where can I find ACLED's Terms of Use (TOUs)?

ACLED's TOUs can be found [here](#).

What if I don't agree to ACLED's TOUs?

If you do not agree to ACLED's TOUs, you will not be able to access the data. In order to access ACLED data, you must first register for an account (see above). When registering for an account, you will be prompted to read, understand, and accept ACLED's TOUs.

Only after you agree to these terms will you be given an access key, which can subsequently be used to access ACLED data. As such, this means that ACLED data are only accessible because you have indicated that you have indeed read, understood, and accepted the terms. *Any violation of the TOUs will result in your data access and data use privileges being revoked.*

I am working on a research project in which I want to use ACLED data as a dependent or independent variable measuring violence within a larger model. Can I use ACLED for that? If so, how should I cite?

Yes, such use of ACLED data is permitted, though please make sure to read ACLED's [methodology documents](#) on relevant topics in order to ensure you are interpreting the data correctly. ACLED's [User Guide](#) can also help to direct you towards the right resources. If you have any questions about

interpretation, please reach out to access@acleddata.com with your queries. Users are required to follow ACLED's attribution policy as outlined in the [TOUs](#).

My research project looks at a topic larger than what ACLED covers; I want to use ACLED data, but will also add other data. Can I use ACLED for that? If so, how should I cite? *(For example, a researcher wants to build a model of all deaths in Latin America by using ACLED data on fatalities from political violence, and adding fatalities stemming from other sources including criminal homicides, disease, car accidents, etc.)*

Yes, such use is permitted, however, please be sure to:

1. *Be clear and open in all outputs (e.g. papers, website, etc.) about what percentage of your information comes from ACLED.* Following the example above, you might note that 90% of your fatalities data is from ACLED, with the other 10% is from any number of other sources.
2. *Be clear and transparent about what ACLED does and does not cover as part of its mandate.* Be clear about what in your collection falls outside of ACLED's stated mandate and definition of political violence.
3. *Cite ACLED per the [Attribution Policy](#) and make sure to specify:*
 - *The date you accessed the data:* the ACLED dataset is a 'living dataset', with updates made weekly, so your date of access will help to clarify the specific 'snapshot' of ACLED data you have accessed.
 - *Which data you accessed:* what filters did you use to access the relevant events (what countries, time periods, event types, actors, etc.)?
 - *In what ways you have manipulated these data:* are there any changes to the unit of analysis, categorization, groupings, etc. which would result in your data structure looking different from the raw ACLED data?
 - *In what ways have you added to or amended the data:* did you generate a new violence variable based on the raw data? Did you add your own or another assessment of violence to the raw data? This is designed to demonstrate whether and how the ACLED data used in your analysis has been slightly or considerably amended, and in which ways.

If you plan on continuing this work, and if ACLED's continued and sustained collection and publication of data is integral to your project, please reach out to access@acleddata.com to discuss how to help ensure such continued coverage.

I work for a private entity (e.g. a business or company, such as a risk firm). Can I use ACLED data?

Yes, your business will be required to register and then will have three free annual downloads. If you find that you require more data downloads, please reach out to access@acleddata.com to

discuss further data access and licensing options. Use of ACLED data for profit *always* requires a license.

Please remember that you are not permitted to sell ACLED data to your clients, per ACLED's [TOUs](#):

"All users are prohibited from ... 3. providing, permitting, or allowing direct access to any of ACLED's original/raw data or analysis to any other user."

For further details about data use stipulations and opportunities please reach out to access@acleddata.com.

I have collected data on violence in Country X, or about protests in Country Y, and I want to compare these data I collected to ACLED to display the differences in, and merits of, my data in a public forum and through public work. Can I use ACLED for that?

Yes, good faith use of the data for comparison and benchmarking is permitted, but ACLED cannot be used to promote another data project, as this is in violation of ACLED's [TOUs](#):

"All users are prohibited from ... 4. using ACLED's data or analysis to create, develop, or support any dataset, product, or platform similar to, or in competition with, or that would create a functional substitute for, any of ACLED's content, products, or platform."

If, through your work, you have reason to believe that ACLED's coverage of a particular country or trend is missing events or otherwise insufficient, please reach out to us at access@acleddata.com. We are eager to discuss ways to potentially improve the dataset further. We often incorporate the work of researchers to improve ACLED's coverage, citing as agreed.

I have collected data on violence in Country X, or about protests in Country Y, and I want to compare these data I collected to ACLED to better understand the limits of my data. Can I use ACLED for that?

Yes, good faith use of the data for comparison and benchmarking is permitted, as long as ACLED data is not being used to promote another data project, as this is in violation of ACLED's [TOUs](#):

"All users are prohibited from ... 4. using ACLED's data or analysis to create, develop, or support any dataset, product, or platform similar to, or in competition with, or that would create a functional substitute for, any of ACLED's content, products, or platform."

If, through your work, you have reason to believe that ACLED's coverage of a particular country or trend is missing events or otherwise insufficient, please reach out to us at access@acleddata.com. We are eager to discuss ways to potentially improve the dataset further. We often incorporate the work of researchers to improve ACLED's coverage, citing as agreed.

Can I use ACLED data to create a new dataset, or the basis of a new dataset?

No, this is in violation of ACLED's [TOUs](#):

"All users are prohibited from ... 4. using ACLED's data or analysis to create, develop, or support any dataset, product, or platform similar to, or in competition with, or that would create a functional substitute for, any of ACLED's content, products, or platform."

You can reach out to ACLED at access@acleddata.com if you would like to discuss your unique project and/or collaboration on a project.

I am interested in highlighting a number of events in my research; I have cited the original sources of information for each of these events (per ACLED's source column). Is this sufficient?

Original source information should be cited when referencing specific events; this is why ACLED includes this information alongside each and every event. Please also cite ACLED as well, as ACLED originally coded this information in the data, without which you might not have come across the incident, as ACLED's methodology and coding processes help to contextualize and categorize such information within an easily searchable dataset.

I work for a local conflict observatory; can we use ACLED data to supplement our dataset?

If your dataset is meant to be publicly accessible, then no, as this is in violation of ACLED's [TOUs](#):

"All users are prohibited from ... 4. using ACLED's data or analysis to create, develop, or support any dataset, product, or platform similar to, or in competition with, or that would create a functional substitute for, any of ACLED's content, products, or platform."

This is the case until a partnership agreement is reached with ACLED. Please reach out to ACLED at research@acleddata.com if you would like to discuss a partnership and a mutually beneficial data sharing arrangement. ACLED has many relationships with local conflict observatories and organizations around the world; you can learn more on [ACLED's partner page](#).

Can I reach out to you to confirm that my use and attribution adheres to the TOUs?

Yes, please do! If you are a media user, please reach out to communications@acleddata.com; otherwise, please reach out to access@acleddata.com and we will get back to you shortly.

How to cite ACLED in various types of outputs:

I want to cite a statistic based on ACLED data. How should I cite ACLED?

Please explicitly mention “ACLED” by name, along with a hyperlink to ACLED. For example: *“Political violence increased in Country X, according to [ACLED](#).”* in which the hyperlink leads to the ACLED website.

I want to cite a specific finding from an ACLED report. How should I cite ACLED?

Please explicitly mention “ACLED” by name, along with a hyperlink to the specific ACLED report providing the finding. For example: *“Battles involving Actor X have been on the rise, according to [a recent ACLED report](#).”* in which the hyperlink leads to the specific ACLED report you wish to reference.

I want to use ACLED data to make an infographic/data visualization. How should I cite ACLED?

Please note your use of ACLED data on the infographic/data visualization itself. This can be in small print on the bottom of the image. Please note your date of data access. This should be done for both standalone infographics as well as for tables/figures within a larger report. *Please do not use the ACLED logo on your infographic to denote the use of ACLED data; only products made by or jointly with ACLED can make use of the ACLED logo, per ACLED’s [TOUs](#).*

When using such an image on social media, please (1) be sure that this citation is not cut off, and (2) please tag ACLED ([Twitter](#); [Facebook](#); [LinkedIn](#)).

I am an official ACLED partner and want to cite the data in my work. Are there any special provisions or guidelines?

Yes: ACLED shares a separate logo/’seal’, which denotes *use* of ACLED data in a visual, with its partners. *Please do not use the ACLED logo on your infographic to denote the use of ACLED data; only products made directly by ACLED or jointly with ACLED can make use of the ACLED logo, per ACLED’s [TOUs](#).*

I want to use ACLED data in a dashboard I am building. Either single or multiple datasets will be mapped/visualized and there will be an export functionality, allowing users to download the raw data. Is this acceptable?

No, this is a violation of ACLED’s [TOUs](#):

“All users are prohibited from ... 3. providing, permitting, or allowing direct access to any of ACLED’s original/raw data or analysis to any other user.”

If you restrict data export functionality, then such use would be acceptable, though please be sure to cite ACLED next to each event that draws on information from ACLED; this should be done even when citing the primary source of the information (*see above*). Please reach out to access@acleddata.com to discuss how to secure sustained access to ACLED data for your dashboard.

I would like to use ACLED data in an academic publication and am required to submit data for replication to the journal. In this case, is it OK to share the raw data I used?

If you need to submit replication data alongside an academic manuscript, please share the specific manipulated data you used in your project, which would necessarily *not* include all ACLED variables (i.e. not a raw ACLED file). Submitting the original ACLED downloaded file is a violation of ACLED's [TOUs](#) because only ACLED can share original/raw ACLED data files:

"All users are prohibited from... 3. providing, permitting, or allowing direct access to any of ACLED's original/raw data or analysis to any other user." Making ACLED data available on platforms outside of ACLED not only undermines ACLED's access model, but also creates a context in which potential users of the data are not made aware of ACLED's TOUs. They also may encounter outdated versions of the data that has since been updated, as ACLED is a living dataset.

I am working on a joint project and downloaded ACLED data for this. Can I share the data within my team? What about with partners?

No one is individually permitted to share original/raw ACLED data, per ACLED's [TOUs](#):

"All users are prohibited from... 3. providing, permitting, or allowing direct access to any of ACLED's original/raw data or analysis to any other user." In cases where an organization has secured continued access to the data through a partnership with ACLED (*see above*), members of that organization can share data with one another. If you have a partner on your project outside of your organization (e.g. you work at Organization X, yet you are working with Organization Y on a joint project together), your partner organization will need to register to gain free access the data and establish a separate relationship with ACLED if they need extended access; please do not share ACLED data with them, as this would be a TOU violation.

I am using machine learning to train a model to code conflict data. I want to use ACLED — a human coded dataset — as a corpus to train my model. Can I use ACLED for that?

No, this is a violation of ACLED's [TOUs](#), as it is akin to using ACLED data to create a new dataset:

"All users are prohibited from ... 4. using ACLED's data or analysis to create, develop, or support any dataset, product, or platform similar to, or in competition with, or that would create a functional substitute for, any of ACLED's content, products, or platform."