



2024 ANNUAL REPORT

VIOLENCE TARGETING LOCAL OFFICIALS

MAY 2025





Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED) is a global monitor that collects, analyses, and maps data on conflict and protest. ACLED provides detailed information to help identify, understand, and track patterns and trends in conflict and crisis situations around the world.

This publication may not be reproduced in whole or in part, in any form beyond the reproduction permitted by Sections 107 and 108 of the U.S. Copyright Law Act (17 U.S.C. Sections 107 and 108) and excerpts by reviewers for the public press, without express written permission from Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED).

Copyright © 2025 ACLED
All rights reserved.

ACLED is a registered non-profit organization with 501(c)(3) status in the United States. Please contact admin@acleddata.com with comments or queries regarding the ACLED dataset.

Front cover photo: Jair Cabrera Torres/picture alliance via Getty Images
Back cover photo: Daniel Cardenas/Anadolu via Getty Images

ACLED
361 Falls Rd #501
Grafton, WI 53024
admin@acleddata.com
www.acleddata.com

REPORT CONTRIBUTORS



Editor	Dr. Andrea Carboni Head of Analysis		
Editorial officers	Niki Papadogiannaki Publications Coordinator	Alex Horowitz Senior Editorial Officer	Sanet Oberholzer Senior Editorial Officer
Production & design	Ciro Murillo Associate Analysis Coordinator	Christina De Paris Associate Multimedia Coordinator	
Authors	Christian Jaffe Research Analyst <i>Africa; The “super year” of elections and violence targeting local officials</i>	Ladd Serwat Senior Analyst, Africa <i>Nigeria</i>	Jalale Getachew Birru Senior Analysis Coordinator, East Africa <i>Ethiopia</i>
	Su Mon Thant Senior Analyst, Asia-Pacific <i>Myanmar</i>	Timothy Lay Analysis Manager <i>Indonesia</i>	Ana Marco Research Analyst <i>Europe & Central Asia; Middle East</i>
	Giulia Bernardi Western Europe Research Manager <i>Italy</i>	Nicola Manfredi Audibert Western Europe Assistant Research Manager <i>Germany</i>	Ciro Murillo Associate Analysis Coordinator <i>Latin America & the Caribbean; The “super year” of elections and violence targeting local officials</i>
	Tiziano Breda Senior Analyst, Latin America & the Caribbean <i>Ecuador</i>	Sandra Pellegrini Senior Analyst, Latin America & the Caribbean <i>Mexico</i>	Muaz al-Abdullah Middle East Research Manager <i>Syria</i>
	Nancy Ezzeddine Research Analyst, Middle East <i>Iraq</i>	Kieran Doyle North America Research Manager <i>United States & Canada</i>	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ACLED's Annual Report on violence against local officials reveals more than 2,600 reported incidents of violence against governors, mayors, village heads, local councilors, local government or election workers, and other officials in 96 countries around the world in 2024. Asia-Pacific, Latin America & the Caribbean, and Africa were the main hotspots, accounting for 88% of incidents worldwide, with Mexico, Myanmar, India, Nigeria, and the Philippines being the five most violent countries for local officials. In at least 42 countries, this violence increased notably from 2023, with Lebanon recording the most outstanding rise.

While direct attacks, like shootings or stabbings, were the most common form of targeting, assaults in the context of riots and destruction of property associated with officials also made up a significant proportion of the violence directed at them.

The activity of non-state armed groups was a major threat that local officials faced in 2024, as these groups were involved in 70% of all incidents worldwide.

In Latin America & the Caribbean, most of this violence comes at the hands of cartels and gangs, as these groups seek to control local administrations to create favorable conditions for their criminal activities or retaliate against local officials who break collusion agreements with them. This was prominent in Mexico, where organized crime attacks led to

increased levels of violence ahead of the June general elections.

In Africa, the activity of rebel, separatist, and ethno-political groups was the main threat that local officials faced, as they were either affected due to collateral damage from larger disputes or directly targeted in light of armed groups' efforts to alter governance systems.

Large-scale conflicts continued to expose local officials to higher danger levels, disrupting local governance structures. Indiscriminate attacks targeting civilian areas across Gaza and southern Lebanon by Israeli forces, and across Ukraine by Russian forces, have not only affected local officials themselves but also government infrastructure critical for the provision of public goods and the proper functioning of local state institutions.

Besides open armed conflict, electoral cycles also drove attacks against local officials, as 57% of this violence was recorded in countries that held elections. Notably, 2024 has been referred to as the "super-year" of elections, as more than half of the world's population was eligible to vote across around 70 countries, and more than 1 billion ballots were cast.

However, while this anomalous election year did not drive an overall increase in the targeting of local officials, ACLED's findings show that political competition continues to heighten the risks they are exposed to. Moreover, this phenomenon is not exclusive to countries experiencing intense levels of violence or semi-consolidated and hybrid

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

democracies.

In Europe, especially during the European parliament elections, increased political tensions led to threats and assaults against local officials, with notable incidents recorded in Germany, France, and Ireland. In India, the periods with the highest levels of violence toward local officials coincided with the Lok Sabha and Punjab local elections.

Attacks by mobs and violent demonstrators accounted for 25% of all events worldwide, reflecting that extreme displays of public dissatisfaction with politics were also a major driver behind violence targeting local officials. This was most notable in Asia-Pacific, especially India, Indonesia, and Bangladesh. In the last two, despite social unrest mostly being motivated by opposition to decisions made at the national level, local officials were among the targets of these outbreaks of violence. Elsewhere, these incidents were common in Mexico, where corruption and underperformance allegations against officials triggered violence by local communities.

In 2025, ACLED has and will continue to monitor this violence, which, so far, has shown no signs of slowing down. During the first quarter of this year, more than 540 incidents have been reported in 59 countries. As armed conflicts, political polarization, and social unrest continue to drive political disorder, local officials will continue to be exposed to intense levels of violence.

AVVISO PUBBLICO FOREWORD

15 years of commitment

By Roberto Montà, President of Avviso Pubblico

Avviso Pubblico's "Administrators Under Fire" report turns 15 this year. When we first began analyzing the phenomenon in 2010, monitoring threats and intimidation against local officials and public servants across Italy, these incidents were largely dismissed as secondary, concentrated in southern Italy, and solely attributable to mafia or criminal networks. That narrative has since been challenged by the evidence. No province in Italy is immune, and today, intimidation and threats against local officials are the norm rather than the exception: Over the past 15 years, we have recorded an average of 381 cases per year — 32 per month, or one each day.

Our monitoring effort has highlighted the vulnerability of "small municipalities" — both because Italy is built on these entities and because their characteristics make them particularly vulnerable to the presence of organized crime. Mafia groups, whether in their original strongholds or in areas where they have since expanded, tend to favor these contexts for various reasons: greater ease in exerting territorial and social control, fewer law enforcement resources, and a relative lack of media attention that allows them to infiltrate the local economy and administrations more swiftly.

Arson, threatening letters, physical assaults, explosives, defamatory and abusive messages on social media — regardless of the method or motive, the goal of intimidation is always the same:

to influence the decisions and actions of a local public official or employee. Such influence can take the form of pressuring how a public contract is awarded, how a case is handled, or whether one decision is made over another. Sometimes, the goal is simply to test a person's response — to see if they're "approachable." In other cases, it is to instill fear and pressure the official into resigning.

The phenomenon of intimidation and violence against local officials is driven not only by the presence of individuals with the power to intimidate, but also by broader socioeconomic conditions. These, in turn, can be triggered by factors external to the local area, as we saw during the pandemic when restrictions imposed to stop the virus led to heightened tensions and the politicization of discontent, with local officials becoming the most immediate and accessible targets.

Yet the citizen is not always cast in the role of aggressor. In many cases, the support of the local community is what enables a mayor or official to hold firm in the face of repeated threats. Across the country, citizens have rallied behind their local representatives following acts of intimidation. They've done so by joining public demonstrations of solidarity, flash mobs, or open council meetings. Because an act of intimidation against a local official does not target just one individual — it targets the entire community. And when citizens recognize this, they also understand that the isolation of a threatened official can have far more

DIÁLOGOS FOREWORD

Data and evidence in times of crisis

By Daniel Núñez, Academic Director of Diálogos

damaging consequences than the threat itself.

It is also thanks to the work of Avviso Pubblico that the Italian government has established a dedicated fund to support local initiatives that promote legality in areas where local officials have been exposed to intimidation and violence. Our ongoing objective — reinforced by our fruitful partnership with ACLED — is to continue documenting and analyzing this phenomenon, which extends beyond Italy and poses a real threat to democratic governance and processes.

Avviso Pubblico (Local Municipalities and Regions Against Mafia and Corruption) is an association founded in Italy in 1996 with the aim to connect and organize local administrators who concretely promote and spread the culture of legality and transparency in politics and public administration and in the territories governed by them. Currently, Avviso Pubblico has more than 500 members, including municipalities, unions of municipalities, metropolitan cities, provinces, and regions. The association also collaborates with some Italian universities to carry out research, dissemination, and training activities.

As in many parts of the world, democracy in Guatemala is under threat. In 2023, after nearly four decades of governments widely criticized for inefficiency, corruption, and violence, the country underwent a political shift with the victory of Movimiento Semilla, a progressive party that emerged from the widespread anti-corruption protests of 2015. Semilla's promise was clear: to continue the fight against corruption and to lay the groundwork for a fairer, more equitable society.

The party's unexpected victory (nobody predicted it, given its low polling numbers and limited funding) quickly sparked allegations of fraud and a refusal by some groups to accept the election results. Led by the Attorney General's Office and supported by certain sectors of former military officials, politicians, business leaders, judges, and bureaucrats keen to preserve the status quo, the attacks on the new government have been sustained and systematic since mid-2023. This backlash has led to a series of accusations, arrest warrants, detentions, forced exiles, protests, and clashes that have left much of the country trapped in a state of anxiety and exhaustion.

As part of the Guatemala Electoral Observation Mission, Diálogos closely monitored electoral violence and conflict throughout 2023, a task that had to be extended into early 2024 due to the fragile political situation created by the Attorney General's Office and its allies. In 2023 alone, Diálogos documented 130

different incidents of electoral violence in Guatemala, resulting in 19 reported deaths and 11 victims of attempted murder. It also recorded nearly 200 cases of electoral conflict, ranging from third-party pressure on voters to the occupation of polling stations by groups dissatisfied with the process or its outcomes. This monitoring work allowed Diálogos to develop a predictive model of electoral conflict based on five key variables, which can be used in future elections to help prevent incidents of this nature.

Apart from its work on electoral violence and conflict, Diálogos has maintained a monthly monitoring system for homicidal violence across the country since 2018. Its findings — shared through reports, analyses, and public databases — reach a wide audience of journalists, policymakers, researchers, academics, students, civil society organizations, and ordinary citizens. The monitoring includes various forms of violence against women, including femicides or murders of women driven by gender-based hatred. It also features a predictive tool called PREVIO that forecasts national levels of homicidal violence based on historical data going back to 2001. These efforts are closely linked to Diálogos' other initiatives in the areas of anti-corruption, democracy, and vulnerability, often in collaboration with organizations like ACLED.

In a context marked by crisis and unrest, Diálogos is guided by a clear mission: to reduce uncertainty and help shape a better future through data-

driven and evidence-based analyses and proposals. It is in this spirit that we welcome the publication of this report and ACLED's work on violence targeting local officials.

Diálogos is a Guatemalan think tank that promotes training, research, and innovation based on data and evidence among public authorities, members of civil society organizations, and journalists in order to address and make decisions on social problems affecting Guatemalans and the countries of Northern Central America.

BRIDGING DIVIDES INITIATIVE FOREWORD

Mixed methods research to understand threats and harassment against local officials in the United States

By Sam Jones, Communications Manager at Bridging Divides Initiative

Hostility against public officials is on the rise in the United States. At the national level, the US Capitol Police have [reported](#) a spike in threats against members of Congress, with 2024 seeing the highest number of incidents since 2021, the year of the Capitol attack. State-level data collected by the Brennan Center for Justice [indicates](#) that the frequency and seriousness of hostility toward state legislators have increased apace. Already this year, judges and court officials are [reporting](#) an “unprecedented” number of threatening messages and calling for heightened security measures to protect themselves and their families.

Despite the clear rise in state and federal threats, there has been a gap in comparable data collection initiatives to systematically track hostility at the local level. To fill this gap, the [Bridging Divides Initiative \(BDI\)](#) at Princeton University brought together a consortium of research partners — including ACLED, the Brennan Center, CivicPulse, and more — to launch the [Understanding Threats and Harassment Against Local Officials](#) project.

Complementing ACLED’s real-time monitoring of physical attacks on officials around the world, BDI’s mixed-methods research program combines event data with nationally representative surveys and in-depth interviews to provide a comprehensive picture of hostile activity — from offline violence

to insults, harassment, and threats — against local government in the US for the first time.

The findings confirm that even as physical political attacks on local officials were reported at lower levels in 2024 compared to the highs of 2020 and 2021, threats and harassment targeting local officials surged. Mirroring national-level trends, [BDI tracked](#) over 600 incidents of threats and harassment against local officials in 2024 — a 14% increase from 2023 and a 74% increase from 2022. In November, when the election was held, [BDI recorded](#) the highest number of incidents for a single month since the start of the project.

The impact of this hostility is clear: Our [survey](#) of local elected officials with CivicPulse finds that many officials are withdrawing from civic engagement, avoiding controversial issues, and reconsidering public service altogether due to safety concerns. Threats and harassment can have a chilling effect on political activity that in some cases matches that of physical violence, enabling conflict actors to achieve their goals with cheaper methods that afford anonymity — like social media — and create additional challenges for legal accountability.

These trends show few signs of slowing in 2025. Following a temporary decline in the aftermath of the election, threats and harassment against local officials have [returned to the high](#)

[baseline](#) we recorded in the lead-up to the vote, with an uptick in incidents related to disputes over the new administration's policies on immigration and education.

Left unchecked, this climate of hostility will continue to pose a serious danger to community safety and the health of US democracy.

However, there are also steps communities and civil servants can take to push back. Drawing on interviews with more than 200 officials to date, our [research](#) has identified a wide array of effective risk mitigation approaches local leaders are using to respond to threats and harassment, from individual security plans to cross-partisan peer networks and community outreach strategies. Effective interventions to support these efforts and meet the safety needs of impacted officials in the short term, coupled with sustained threat monitoring systems to inform holistic policy solutions over the long term, will be essential to break the cycle of hostility and protect civic space.

Bridging Divides Initiative is a non-partisan research initiative at Princeton University that tracks and mitigates political violence in the United States. The Understanding Threats and Harassment Against Local Officials project is a mixed-method research program that analyzes key trends in hostility against public officials and supports efforts to respond. It is made possible by a consortium of research and data-sharing partners, including the Brennan Center for Justice, CivicPulse, the Prosecution Project, and ACLED, among others. BDI regularly works to expand data contributions to address gaps in coverage. If you believe your organization has relevant data to contribute, please reach out to bdi@princeton.edu.

CONTENTS



Report contributors	i
Executive summary <i>by Dr. Andrea Carboni</i>	ii
Foreword <i>by Avviso Pubblico</i>	iv
Foreword <i>by Diálogos</i>	v
Foreword <i>by Bridging Divides Initiative</i>	vii
Essential ACLED glossary	x
Introduction <i>by Andrea Carboni</i>	1
Data summary	3
The “super year” of elections and violence targeting local	i

AFRICA

Summary	9
Map, graph, & figures	12
Case study: Nigeria	13
Case study: Ethiopia	15

ASIA-PACIFIC

Summary	18
Map, graph, & figures	21
Case study: Myanmar	22
Case study: Indonesia	24

EUROPE & CENTRAL ASIA

Summary	27
Map, graph, & figures	30
Case study: Italy	31
Case study: Germany	33

LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN

Summary	36
Map, graph, & figures	39
Case study: Mexico	40
Case study: Ecuador	42

MIDDLE EAST

Summary	45
Map, graph, & figures	48
Case study: Syria	49
Case study: Iraq	51

UNITED STATES & CANADA

Summary	54
Visual appendix	55
Endnotes	66

Abductions/forced disappearances

An ACLED sub-event type used when an organized armed group kidnaps a civilian using force, depriving them of their liberty.

In the ACLED dataset, a single abduction/forced disappearance event can refer to multiple people abducted, depending on the circumstances. For example, if an armed group kidnaps a mayor and their family in the same place and at the same time, the incident is coded as one event.

Airstrikes

Air-to-ground attacks that are recorded within the ACLED dataset using the air/drone strike sub-event type.

In most cases, perpetrators do not intend to directly attack local officials and property associated with them using airstrikes. Instead, local officials get caught in attacks on larger targets.

Battles

An ACLED event type where two organized armed groups violently interact with each other, using force at a close distance. Battle events where there is no report of changes in territorial control are referred to as armed clashes.

These events are considered violence against local officials when it is reported that an official was caught in the crossfire, whether they were killed or injured.

Attack

An ACLED sub-event type that refers to incidents where civilians are targeted with physical, non-remote violence by an organized armed group. Examples of attacks include shootings, assassination attempts, beatings, and torture, among others.

This has been the most common form of violence directed at local officials since ACLED began tracking such violence in 2018.

Deadliness and lethality

Deadliness represents the number of reported fatalities in an event or series of events, or over a period of time. As such, “deadliest” means the most reported fatalities. Lethality refers to the rate of deadliness across a set of events and is calculated by dividing the number of reported fatalities by the number of events.

In the ACLED dataset, the fatalities column registers the aggregated number of all deaths reported in each event. In events of violence against local officials, therefore, the number of fatalities recorded might include bystanders or others killed in addition to the official or officials.

Identity militias

In the ACLED dataset, identity militias are armed organized groups identified in source reporting as tribal, communal, ethnic, local, clan, religious, and caste-based militias.

ESSENTIAL ACLED GLOSSARY

Gang and cartel violence

For selected countries in Latin America & the Caribbean, ACLED records violent events involving organized crime groups, such as gangs and cartels. ACLED conducts systematic coverage of gang violence for countries where such violence has political implications. ACLED's methodology considers gang violence to have political implications in contexts where:

- Gang violence fundamentally challenges a state's public security and safety.
- Gangs hold de facto control over large cities or are dispersed across a country's territory.
- Gangs engage in public acts of violence.

However, when gang violence targets political figures in countries that do not fully satisfy the indicators stated above, these events are also included in the dataset.

Looting/property destruction

An ACLED sub-event type used to refer to cases when perpetrators, organized or not, engage in looting, destruction, or property seizures outside of other forms of violence, such as rioting or armed clashes.

This is considered a form of violence against local officials when it targets public buildings, such as town halls, or is directed at private property associated with officials, like homes or cars.

Mob violence

An ACLED sub-event type used when unorganized crowds of people violently interact with other rioters, civilians, or armed groups, or target property, outside of a demonstration.

Rebel groups

Rebel groups are defined as political organizations with the goal of countering an established national governing regime through violence.

Violent demonstrations

An ACLED sub-event type used when demonstrators engage in violence and/or destructive activity.

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

VIOLENCE TARGETING LOCAL OFFICIALS

MAY 2025



INTRODUCTION

Caught in the crosshairs: Armed groups, organized crime, and political rivals target local officials

By Dr. Andrea Carboni, ACLED Head of Analysis

Alejandro Arcos' mutilated body was found inside a car in early October — less than a week after he took office as mayor of Chilpancingo, a mountain town in the Mexican state of Guerrero. While particularly brutal, Arcos' murder was not an isolated case. In fact, he was the third municipal official killed in the span of just a few days in Chilpancingo alone.

Arcos and the other officials killed in Chilpancingo joined the ever-growing list of local officials who are victims of political violence. For these officials, the past decade has been the deadliest in Mexico's recent history: According to data collected by the organization Data Cívica, hundreds of local administrators were killed in Mexico between 2018 and 2024, with 2024 accounting for the highest number of attacks ever recorded.

Arcos' murder is a stark reminder of the threats local officials face not just in Mexico, but all around the world. Local officials — whether elected representatives, appointees, or local government employees — perform an essential role, underpinning state authority across national territory. These officials play a significant role in the state, as they are responsible for providing or overseeing essential services, and they are the citizens' first point of access to the government.

But all of these aspects that make local officials important for their communities also put them in danger. They find themselves in the crosshairs of armed groups, organized crime, and

political rivals who seek to undermine state authority locally through the use of violence. The fact that they are the closest and most accessible part of the public administration means they are often the prized targets of mobs, vigilantes, and angered popular masses.

The third edition of ACLED's Annual Report on Violence Targeting Local Officials provides a global overview of the risks confronting local officials in 2024.

One set of risks involves their role in armed conflicts: When wars are fought over territory, the deliberate targeting of local authorities seeks not just to inflict symbolic damage to the enemy, showing the inability to protect its own representatives, but also to cripple the infrastructure of the state and its effectiveness in delivering services to the population. The second type of risk is related to the malicious influence of organized criminal organizations, which resort to threats, intimidation, and violence to coerce local officials into collaboration. The third set of risks — and one that played a bigger role in this year's report — involves the role of elections. Elections often turn contests for national and local office into dangerous flashpoints for local officials as a result of criminal infiltration and increasing polarization among electorates and political elites.

Analyzing thousands of events worldwide, and hosting contributions from three leading organizations in this field, this report addresses a key gap — the lack of cross-national data on attacks

INTRODUCTION

against local officials worldwide — and invites policymakers, researchers, and local organizations to examine the local ramifications of a global phenomenon, encouraging the development of cross-national best practices to enhance the protection of local officials from threats, intimidation, and violence.

DATA SUMMARY

How does ACLED track violence targeting local government officials?

ACLED specifically tracks events wherein violence is perpetrated against officials in local administrations. Local government officials are understood as administrators who are part of subnational government institutions, from the first-level administration division down to cities, towns, and villages. Under this category, ACLED includes a broad range of elected and appointed officials, such as governors, mayors, city councilors, local election workers, local government employees, and any other members of subnational administrations.

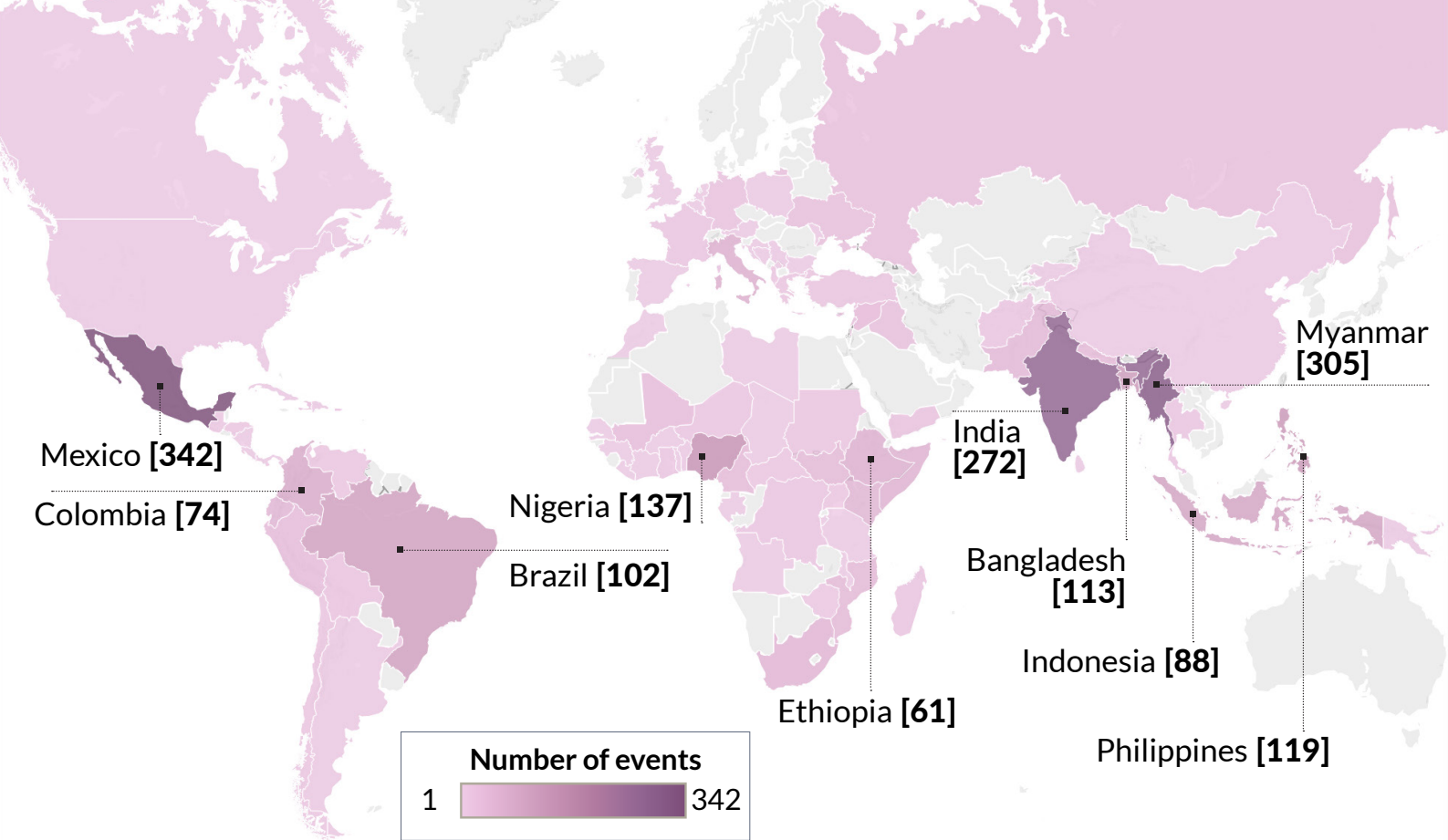
ACLED users can find all relevant events by applying the “local administrators” marker to the ‘Tags’ column in the ACLED dataset. An event is considered relevant when: 1) violence is used against local officials or 2) public

or private property belonging to local officials or governments is targeted.

Besides acts of direct physical violence used against local officials (e.g., attacks, kidnappings) and infrastructure associated with them (e.g., looting and property destruction), ACLED also tracks episodes of unorganized violence (riots) where local officials are the targets. This includes cases of rioting activity where property associated with local officials is damaged or destroyed, or local officials are targeted by mobs or vigilante groups. ACLED data do not include threats or cases of interpersonal violence involving local officials.

Moreover, ACLED also includes incidents of battles where local officials are part of the reported casualties, either when officials get caught in the middle of confrontations, or while protecting local officials, security forces clash with armed groups who seek to attack the former.

For more details on ACLED’s methodology and coverage, see the entry on ACLED’s Knowledge Base about our [coverage of violence targeting local officials](#).



In 2024, ACLED records **nearly 2,625 events of violence targeting local officials globally**, compared to 2,672 in 2023 and 2,953 in 2022.



Direct attacks account for 44% of all violence targeting local officials. It remains the most common type of violence exercised against local officials.

These attacks and other forms of targeted violence were mostly perpetrated by unidentified groups, which were collectively responsible for 44% of this violence.



Asia-Pacific remains the leading region of such violence for the sixth consecutive year, with 1,008 events, followed by Latin America & the Caribbean (680), and Africa (616). The Middle East records the highest increase, as incidents in 2024 grew 23% compared to the previous year.



Violence by mobs and violent demonstrators remains the second most common type of violence against local officials, accounting for 25% of events worldwide.

This violence was particularly high in countries that held elections or where political competition was intense, like India, Bangladesh, Kenya, Indonesia, and Mexico.



Mexico, Myanmar, India, Nigeria, and the Philippines were the most dangerous countries for local officials, accounting for 45% of events worldwide.



Forty-two countries observed notable increases in violence targeting local officials. Lebanon recorded the most outstanding rise, as events rose by more than eight times compared to 2023, driven by Israeli military operations in the south of the country.

By contrast, **France records the largest decrease, where events fell by 94%** compared to the last year amid an overall drop in social unrest during 2024.



The targeting of property associated with these officials remained high, increasing by 11% compared to 2023. Not only are public buildings commonly attacked; the private property of local officials tends to be a common target.



Globally, greater violence against local officials was recorded in countries that held elections in 2024 rather than those that did not. Fifty-seven percent of violence occurred in countries that held elections in 2024 despite them making up 47% of the total number of countries to experience this violence. Moreover, of the ten most violent countries for local officials, six held elections during 2024.

THE “SUPER YEAR” OF ELECTIONS AND VIOLENCE TARGETING LOCAL OFFICIALS

2024 was an election year like no other. More than 3.7 billion people, half of the world’s population, were eligible to vote across around 70 countries, and more than one billion ballots were cast. The “super year” of elections was not only atypical because of the magnitude of the electoral processes but also because of what was at stake.¹ The rising cost of living, climate change, domestic security challenges, and the state of democracy itself were the most common issues debated during election cycles.² As these factors coincide with an increasingly polarized political environment in many parts of the world, [global conflicts reaching their highest levels in years](#), and sustained social unrest, political actors face worrying levels of danger, and local officials are on the frontline of associated violence.

In 2024, 57% of violence targeting local officials around the world took place in countries that held elections. In fact, of the top 10 countries recording the highest number of such events, six held elections: Mexico, India, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Brazil, and Indonesia, accounting for 40% of incidents worldwide alone. While these countries generally experience intense levels of conflict, all but Indonesia rank among the top 20 most violent in the world according to [ACLED’s Conflict Index](#). Violence takes a wide range of forms across these contexts, varying between organized crime, banditry, fierce political competition, ethnic violence, and separatism, among others. Similarly,

they represent diverse democracies with highly varied levels of election integrity. According to Freedom House’s electoral process metrics for 2024, these countries obtained scores ranging between 12, the highest possible, and four.³

In Bangladesh, which recorded a four out of 12 score in Freedom House’s electoral process metric (and the same score for the functioning of government metric), state institutions’ fragility, [concerns about election integrity](#), and the [failure of incumbent officials to properly respond to popular demands](#) have triggered violent social unrest that has affected local officials on multiple occasions. India, on the other hand, despite recording a perfect 12 in the electoral process metric, also saw intense levels of social unrest targeting local officials, especially by the [end of the parliamentary elections in June](#) and during Punjab’s local elections in October, mostly driven by violent inter-party disputes, opposition or resistance to government action, and communal violence.

Meanwhile, Brazil and Mexico scored 10 and 9, respectively, in the electoral process metric. These metrics are indicative of countries that have competitive elections, if not completely fair and free. However, the fact that both countries record high levels of electoral violence, including attacks directed at local officials, and [mostly at the hands of organized crime](#), suggests that elections are just fair enough to serve as a viable power competition that gangs and cartels

can influence.

The variety of contexts in which elevated violence has been recorded suggests that elections provoke heightened levels of danger for local officials across the world, regardless of democracy levels, stability of state institutions, or the type of conflict countries experience.

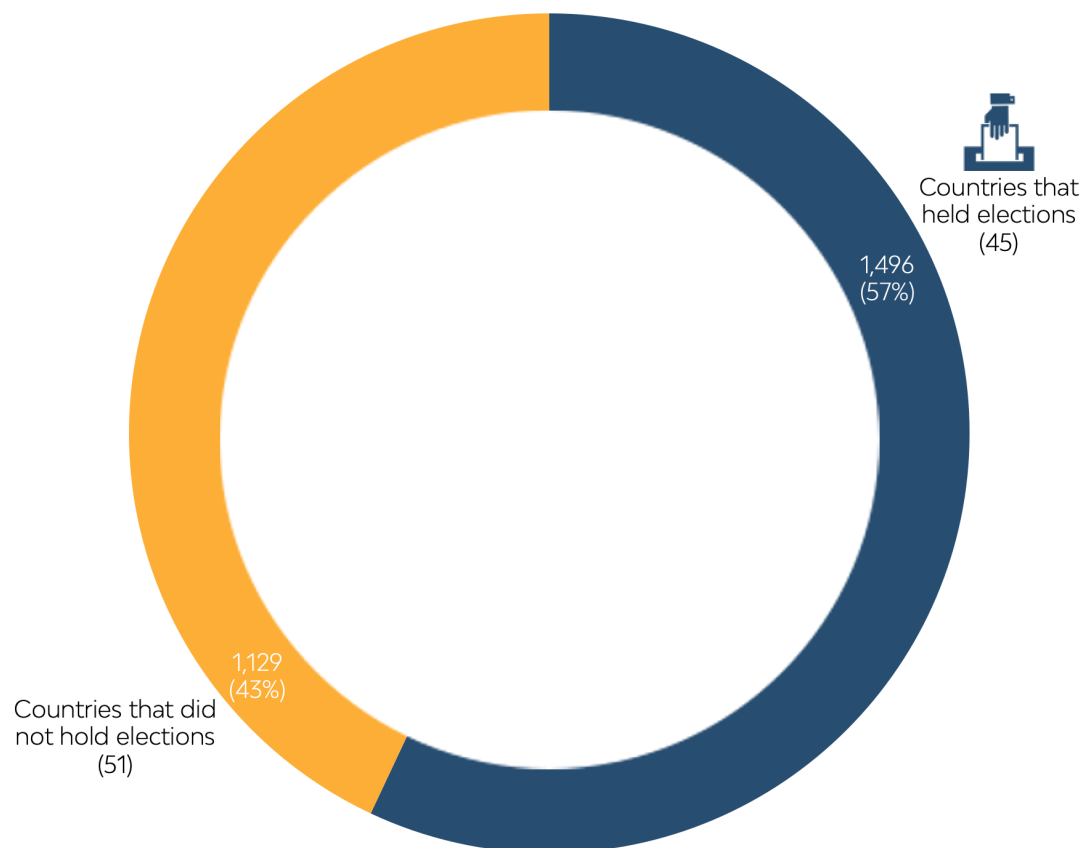
The direct role of local officials in running both national and local-level elections is a key risk factor in their targeting. For example, in the United States, threats against poll workers and election officials spiked ahead of the November presidential elections,⁴ and in Mexico, election officials have been continuously targeted during election cycles by organized crime or political elites.⁵ Ultimately, the targeting of government authorities overseeing elections, regardless of whether it results in threats or physical violence, or if it is perpetrated by mobs, political elites, or organized armed groups, has proven to have a similar goal: influence authorities to benefit a determined candidate or retaliate against them when an alleged advantage has been given to another.⁶

In other cases, officials are attacked when they participate in the electoral process as candidates, either by their direct competitors or by organized groups with larger agendas. Evidence from different contexts shows that the targeting of candidates seeks to force them to withdraw from the race to limit competition and create a favorable path

for others.⁷ But attacks against candidates have larger implications than just their safety. Such public displays of violence can also negatively affect turnout, as voters become afraid of participating in elections due to personal security concerns.⁸ In some cases, these attacks might even affect turnout in subsequent elections.⁹ Research on turnout during the 2018 and 2021 Mexican elections shows that for every attacked official, electoral participation was reduced by three percentage points.¹⁰

While the type of violence that officials face in these contexts is different, the motivation behind it, and the purpose of electoral violence at large, is the same: to influence or alter election outcomes.¹¹ Despite fewer expected elections in 2025, in those elections that do take place, the heightened risk of violence against local officials is undoubtedly real. In the Philippines, during the first quarter of 2025, ACLED records multiple attacks against local officials running for re-election in the May local elections. While in Germany, ahead of the February general elections, four violent incidents targeting local officials were recorded in January and February alone, nearly matching the total number of such events in 2022. Later in the year, as something to monitor, key members of Mexico's judiciary branch, including local judges, will be elected by popular vote for the first time in a process that has raised concern in light of the role that organized crime might play in it.¹²

Violent incidents targeting local officials in 2024



Africa

CASE STUDY: NIGERIA

CASE STUDY: ETHIOPIA



Somalia's security forces deploy to an area in Mogadishu where al-Shabaab carried out an attack on 15 March 2024.
Abukar Mohamed Muhudin/Anadolu via Getty Images

AFRICA

In 2024, ACLED records 616 events of violence targeting local officials in Africa, an 8% decrease compared to 2023. This drop, however, did little to improve conditions in those countries where this phenomenon is most common. Nine of the 10 worst-affected countries from 2023 continued to feature in the top 10 in 2024. These nine countries — Nigeria, Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, South Africa, Cameroon, South Sudan, Mali, and Sudan — together with Mozambique, accounted for 83% of all violence against local officials in Africa in 2024.

With the exception of South Africa and Mozambique, violence against local officials is generally not notably distinct or unconnected from the very worst-affected areas of political violence. The eight other countries feature among the 25 most violent countries worldwide, [according to the ACLED Conflict Index](#). The heightened threat to local officials comes despite the qualitative differences distinguishing violence across these countries, from full-scale civil war in Sudan to prolonged subnational insurgencies in Ethiopia, Somalia, and Cameroon, and complex multipronged security threats in Nigeria.

A significant proportion of this violence across Africa came amid open armed conflict, especially in violence hotspots dominated by rebel or ethno-political groups seeking to establish separate or radically altered systems of governance. Openly declared and armed opposition movements were the main perpetrators of violence against local

administrators in Africa, headlined by Ambazonian separatists in Cameroon, Fano militias in Ethiopia, al-Shabaab in Somalia, Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) in Mali, and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in Sudan. These five groups were collectively involved in about 23% of all violence affecting local officials in Africa.

The broader impact of fighting on local officials is reflected in the fact that Africa accounted for 63% of all armed clashes in which local officials were affected globally, despite the region accounting for only 23% of all global violence against local officials. Most of these clashes involved attacks by rebel or militia groups against state forces in cases where local officials were present and in some cases targeted. Groups like Fano and Ambazonian separatists stand out as much for the number of clashes they were involved in as for the way in which these clashes were carried out. Across all 11 instances of armed clashes involving these two groups, in which local officials were targeted, the presence of these officials was seemingly a key factor: Their offices or convoys were the target of the attacks, leading to clashes with military forces, police, or armed guards stationed on site.¹³

Local officials in Africa were victims of targeted and mass attacks at the hands of several groups. In Ethiopia, Fano militias killed over 30 local authorities on 6 December after losing control of a town in the Amhara region to state forces.¹⁴ In West Africa,

AFRICA

the Sahelian Islamist group [JNIM](#) has been actively increasing its attacks on local officials amid its consolidation of [territorial control in Mali](#). Attacks of this kind by JNIM reached their highest levels in 2024 since the group began its territorial consolidation in 2022.

Abductions and forced disappearances are a particularly common form of violence targeting local officials. The region accounts for 47% of worldwide abduction incidents of local administrators. Ambazonian separatists, JNIM, and the RSF were the main perpetrators of this violence. Such abductions are often carried out for ransom or territorial consolidation, in order to finance or sustain the competing structures of control set up by these groups in their areas of control vis-a-vis the state.¹⁵ Examples in 2024 include the separate abductions of a council worker and a municipal employee in Cameroon's Ndu Commune by Ambazonian separatists and the abduction of several mayors and village chiefs by JNIM for what they alleged was interference with JNIM's revenue and resource extraction.¹⁶ The RSF also carried out at least three abductions aimed at forcibly acquiring financial resources they alleged to be controlled by the victims.

A significant proportion of this violence across Africa came amid open armed conflict, especially in violence hotspots dominated by rebel or ethno-political groups seeking to establish separate or radically altered systems of governance.

Additionally, armed groups in Africa employed a disproportionate use of explosives and remote violence to target local officials, particularly in the Horn of Africa region, where al-Shabaab and Fano militias were responsible for the overwhelming majority of these events. Several of these attacks targeted central figures in local administrations, including ministers, local government leaders, centers of regional administration, and state presidents.¹⁷ For al-Shabaab in particular, both the use of remote violence and the targeting of local officials have increased in response to the government's offensive in August 2022. [Local officials are considered important targets for al-Shabaab](#) as

they compete for local clan support and are key to re-establishing government control in newly liberated areas. Al-Shabaab also uses attacks against important officials to boost morale, a trend that has only been magnified this year with a direct attack on Somalia's president on 18 March.

Beyond regions experiencing large-scale conflicts, local officials were exposed to different but equally dangerous forms of violence. This was most evident in South Africa and Nigeria, where criminal-political violence involved local officials. In Nigeria,

violence by armed groups and bandits continues to be the main threat faced by local authorities. But notably, kidnappings of local officials have reached their lowest levels since 2019, as it has been reported that in 2024, these groups are more frequently committing kidnappings in urban areas.¹⁸ So far, armed bandits have operated mostly in villages and rural areas, where village heads are frequent victims of violence due to their role in local societies, so the switch in tactics seems to have shifted the risk.

In South Africa, more than half of the violence against local officials was recorded between January and May, in the run-up to the general elections. Since 2023, political assassinations have been on the rise, as criminal groups or politicians sought to influence election outcomes.¹⁹ Local officials are targeted frequently as a way to intimidate voters

and eliminate elected officials assuming key roles, but more extensively, to influence the allocation of municipal contracts and funding and retaliate against those investigating or speaking out against corruption and criminal infiltration.²⁰

With little change since 2023, Africa remains a dangerous place for local officials. Most victims are found in the most violent corners of the continent. Entrenched systems of violent political and power competition and complex security environments in which targeting local officials is often a priority of armed groups mean such officials are confronted with daunting challenges to their safety. Given historic levels of violent conflict on the continent, they are unlikely to experience any reprieve in the near future.

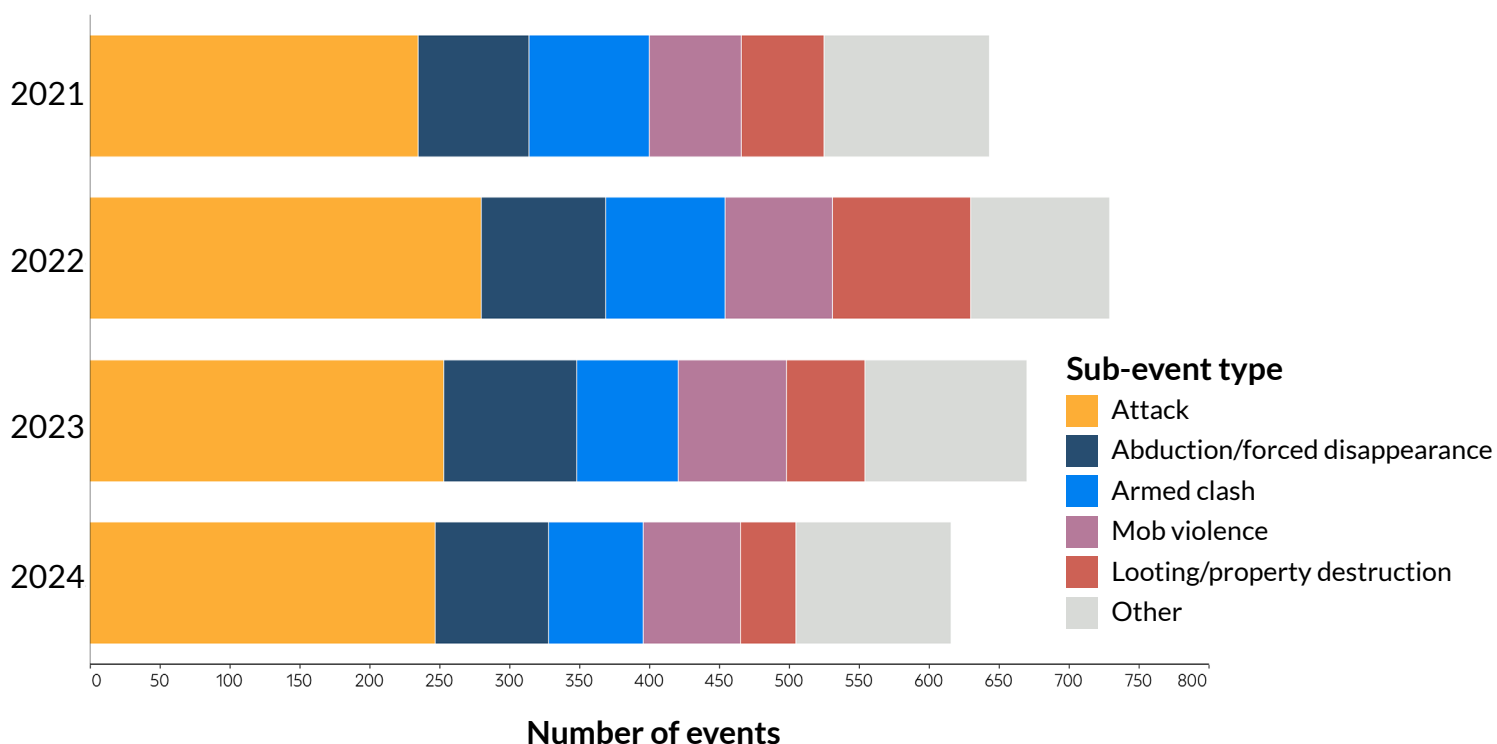
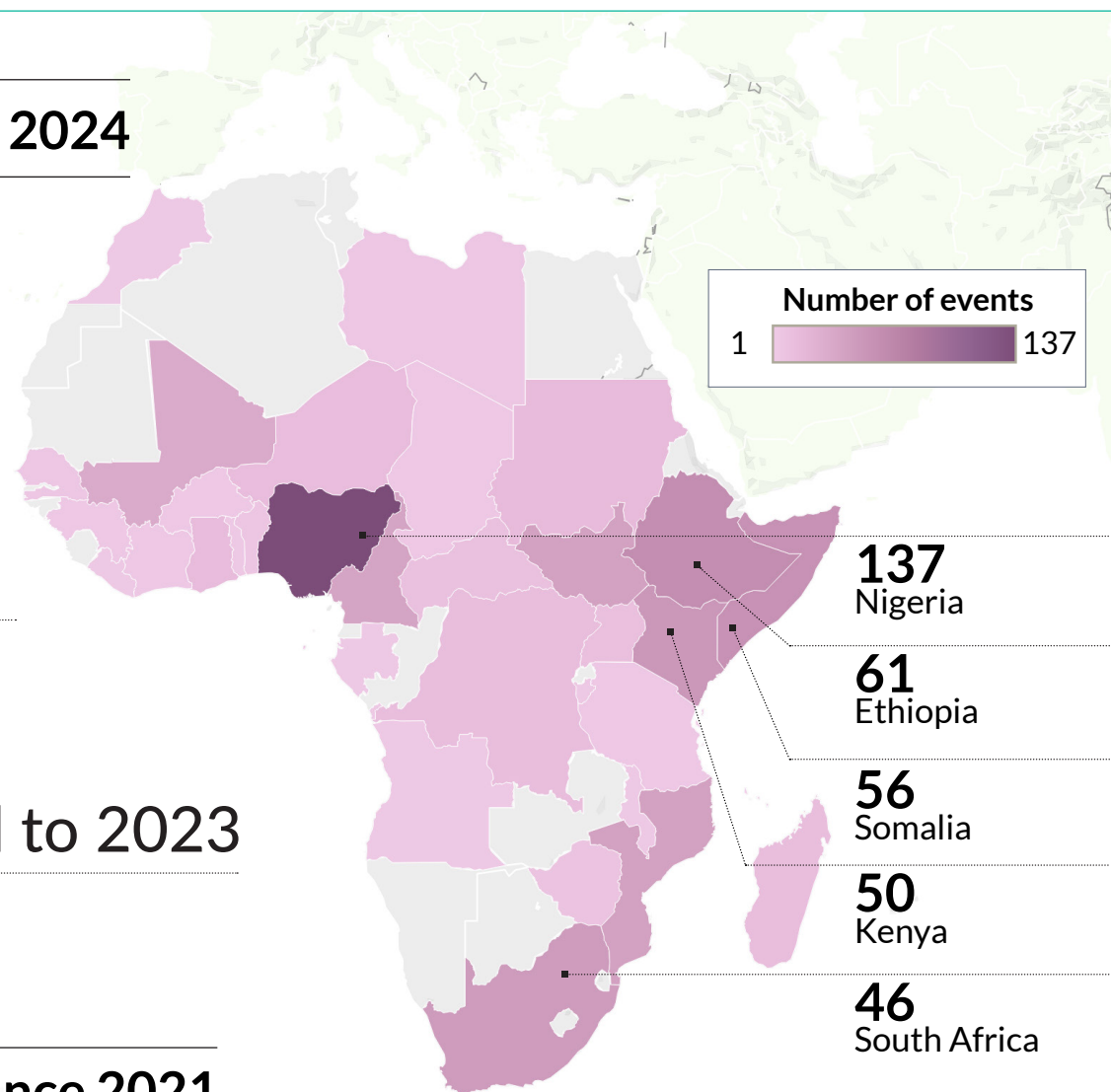
AFRICA

Situation in 2024

616
events
recorded

8%
decrease
compared to 2023

Evolution since 2021



CASE STUDY: NIGERIA

Local officials face increasing danger in Nigeria's fourth republic

The most violent country in Africa for local administrators since 2020, Nigeria faces intense and increasingly deadly political competition over subnational authority. ACLED records over 130 cases of violence against local officials in Nigeria in 2024, more than double the total for Ethiopia — the second-most violent country on the continent for subnational administrators. Nigeria's fourth republic, in place since 1999, divests considerable decision-making to the state governors, making positions in local government a locus of power and a target for violence as competing groups aim to alter authority.²¹ In Nigeria, violence targeting local officials does not fluctuate with election cycles, as it does in many countries, and remains at consistent levels each year. Violence against local officials continued to involve hired armed groups and bandits in 2024, but government administrators also faced increasing and widespread violence from spontaneous mobs across the country.

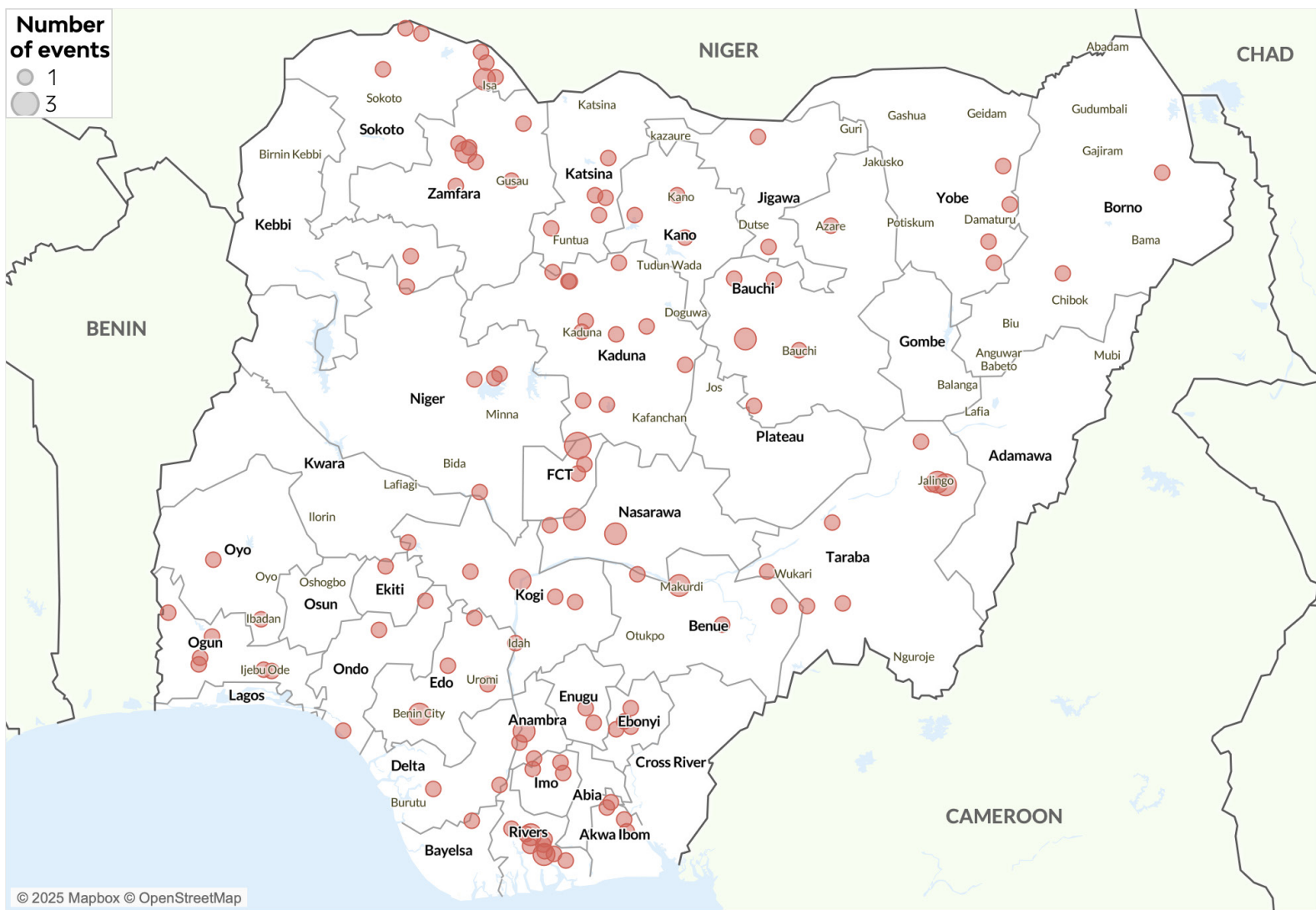
Violence targeting local officials doubled in 2024 compared to the previous year in oil-rich Rivers state due to ongoing tensions between incumbent Governor Siminalayi Fubara and lawmakers in Rivers, primarily those supporting Fubara's predecessor. Those opposing Fubara accuse him of budgetary irregularities and illegal changes to the legislative chamber, as

well as failing to address the frequent attacks on oil pipelines. Ethnic politics and divisive discourse from elites encouraged societal divisions, with groups increasingly frustrated by deteriorating administrative capacity as political feuds limited implementation.²² The diminished public goods and services motivated violence toward local government area (LGA) administrations in the form of targeted attacks by mobs and armed groups, often with links to political parties or specific political elites.

Across Nigeria, armed banditry represents a serious threat to the population as well as local institutions. Bandits maintain bases in rural areas and limit government regulation of illicit economic activity by targeting or replacing local officials.²³ Nowhere is this more evident than in North West Nigeria, which accounts for approximately 28% of the total violence targeting local officials in 2024. Kaduna, Zamfara, and Sokoto were among the most affected. Bandits frequently abduct village heads and other community leaders due to the higher ransoms they can earn in exchange for their release.²⁴ Yet some local authorities opted to collaborate with bandits. In June 2024, Katsina state governor announced the arrest of a village head who received bribes in exchange for providing bandits with access to certain localities or information about local residents.²⁵

CASE STUDY: NIGERIA

Violence targeting local officials in Nigeria: 2024



CASE STUDY: ETHIOPIA

Regional rebellions threaten local officials

In 2024, ACLED records 61 events of violence targeting local officials in Ethiopia – 36 of which were in Amhara and 12 in Oromia. This marks an 85% increase compared to 2023. In Amhara and Oromia, various armed groups have targeted local officials due to their alleged ties to the central government. Since April 2023, Fano militias have been in [conflict with the government](#) due to two main grievances: political deadlock on the status of the disputed territories in Southern and Western Tigray zones and the overall state of security for the Amhara people. In fact, the proximate reason for the Ethiopian military to deploy in the region was the killing of the regional head of the ruling Prosperity Party by suspected members of Fano militias on 27 April 2023. Meanwhile in the Oromia region, the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) – also known as the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF)-Shane – has been fighting with the government since 2019, with plans to secede from Ethiopia.²⁶

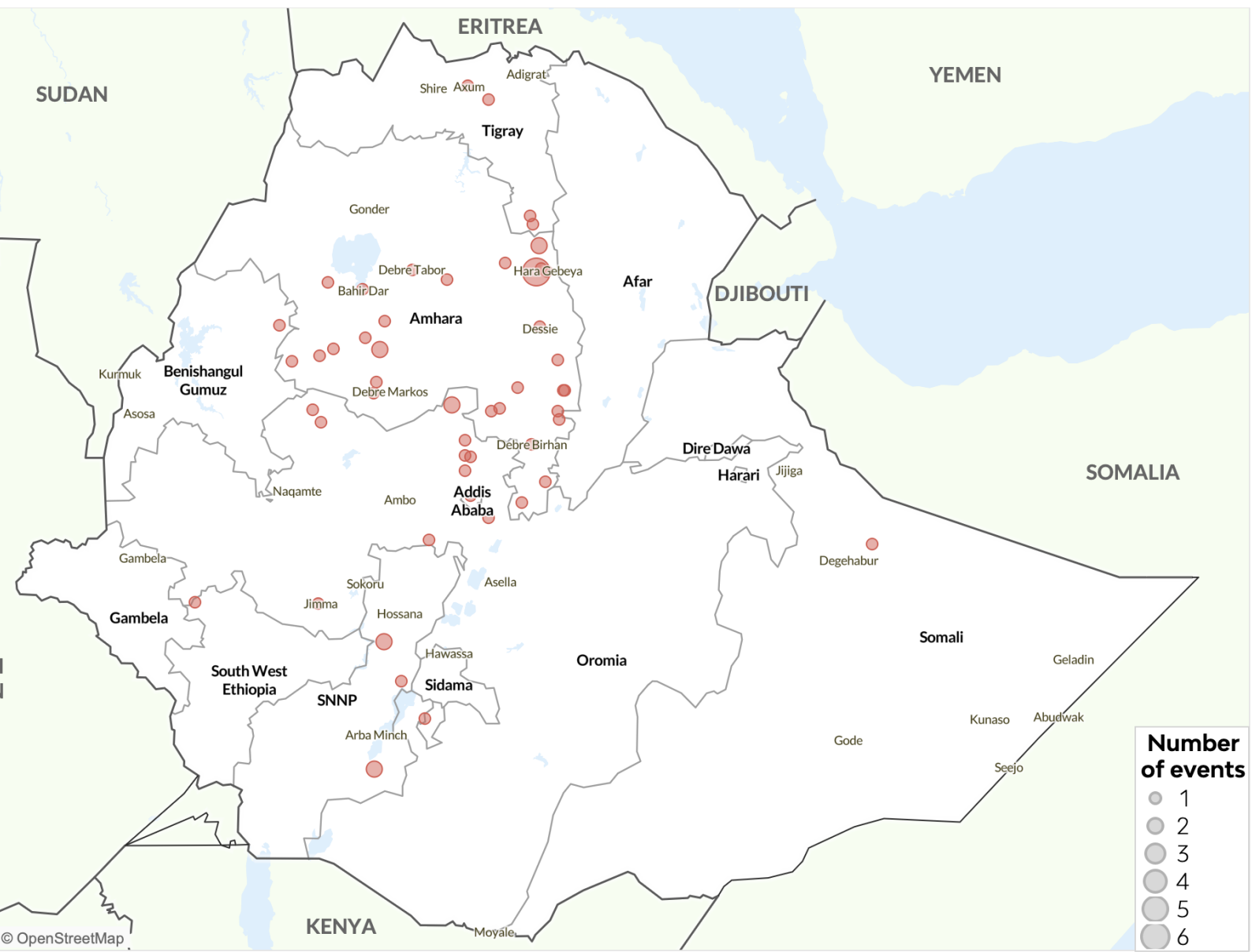
Between the beginning of the Fano insurgency in April 2023 and the end of 2024, ACLED records 48 attacks against local officials in Amhara. Most

of these attacks were perpetrated by Fano militias. These assaults involved kidnapping, shootings, and grenade attacks. On 6 December 2024, in the deadliest such attack, Fano militias reportedly killed [over 30 government officials](#), including the head of the Dega Damot woreda, in Feres Bet town in West Gojam zone after holding them and over 70 additional people hostage for two months, demanding ransom from their families. The militants killed the hostages after a clash with government forces in the area.

In Oromia, the OLA/OLF-Shane and other unidentified armed groups have been accused of perpetrating armed actions against local government officials. The OLA/OLF-Shane is reported to run urban gangs, locally known as Aba Torbe,²⁷ to intimidate local officials into severing their ties with the government, resorting to violence if their demands are not met. Their tactics include attacks at or near the officials' homes. Such assassinations are not claimed and are instead attributed to unknown gangs, typically consisting of a maximum of two operatives.

CASE STUDY: ETHIOPIA

Violence targeting local officials in Ethiopia: 2024



Asia-Pacific

CASE STUDY: MYANMAR

CASE STUDY: INDONESIA



Students and job seekers in Dhaka, Bangladesh, demonstrate on 11 July 2024 against the reinstatement of the quota system in government positions.

Kazi Salahuddin Razu/Anwar Photo via Getty Images

Asia-Pacific remained the region with the highest number of violent incidents targeting local officials in 2024 — a position that it has occupied since ACLED's inaugural report covering 2022. ACLED records more than 1,000 events targeting local officials across 13 countries, with five — Myanmar, India, the Philippines, Bangladesh, and Indonesia — all featuring in the top 10 countries for most events globally. As different groups attempt to exert and shape political influence across the region, a few cross-country drivers for the targeting of local officials emerge from the data: large-scale conflict and separatist aspirations, ethnic or tribal violence, and electoral influence and dissatisfaction with political decisions.

Major conflict and separatist goals continued to be significant drivers behind the targeting of local officials in the Asia-Pacific region. Organized armed groups, including ones that are unidentified, were the leading perpetrators of such violence throughout 2024, accounting for 63% of all events. Myanmar, home to the region's deadliest ongoing conflict, led with the highest number of such incidents — 305 events. Both the military and resistance groups continued to target local officials due to their roles in facilitating administrative functions and law enforcement activities, which, in turn, can be perceived as legitimizing either military or resistance governance structures.²⁸ The military carried out targeted airstrikes, whereas resistance forces continued their campaign against

those supporting the military regime, particularly those carrying out or supporting the conscription law, which took effect in February.

In 2024, both Pakistan and Thailand recorded an overall uptick in the number of violent incidents targeting local officials, largely due to the increased activity of separatists. ACLED records 17 events carried out by separatists in Pakistan and 10 in Thailand, compared to six and two, respectively, in 2023. In 2024, at least 40% of all events targeting local administrators in Pakistan were carried out by separatists, compared to 91% in Thailand. Local officials, who are visible symbols of state authority, are by their nature more accessible than high-ranking government officials. The targeting of local officials contributes to separatist goals, which involve disrupting local governance and delegitimizing state authority in the area to force the national government to make concessions.²⁹

Baloch separatists in Pakistan target anyone associated with the state in their aim to expel the Pakistani army and Chinese investment from the region and ultimately carve out a separate Baloch state.³⁰ Likewise, in Thailand, Malay Muslim separatists have attacked local officials and other ethnic Malays working with the state at the local level, accusing them of acting against Islam.³¹ Both Baloch and Malay Muslim separatists often engaged in ambush tactics, utilizing hit-and-run shootings, grenade attacks, or planting car bombs. Similar dynamics are present

ASIA-PACIFIC

in Indonesia, where the West Papua National Liberation Army continued its campaign against government officials, albeit at a lower level than in 2023.

Similarly, ethnic and tribal disputes persist as a threat to local officials, though with fewer incidents at the regional level. Officials have particularly come under threat from local communal militias when perceived as being aligned with specific parties in these disputes. ACLED records such events in the Philippines, where, for example, a former councilor was tortured and killed in December, likely due to his previous work in mediating disputes over ancestral land.³² India, too, has witnessed tribal-related attacks, centered in the conflict hotspot of [Manipur](#). In September, members of the Kuki ethnic group fired rockets at a former chief minister's residence in Manipur amid ongoing hostilities between themselves and the Meitei group.³³ Conflict originally broke out in May 2023 when the two communities clashed over the Meiteis' demand for tribal status and its associated state benefits. This outbreak of violence coincided with a rise in attacks on local officials, which more than doubled in 2023 but remained at the same level in 2024.

Beyond these evergreen threats, election periods also pose a significant increase in risk for local officials. A large

number of elections across the region in 2024 elevated the level of violence. Out of the 13 countries that recorded attacks on local officials, six held elections. This violence was notable in India and Indonesia, where violence increased ahead of the elections and remained at high levels shortly after. It was accompanied by disputes over electoral fairness, as well as efforts to disrupt campaigning, interfere with ballot counting, and contest election results.

Meanwhile, the Philippines began to witness incidents targeting election officers and those aspiring for office ahead of the May 2025 elections. This was especially present in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) ahead of polls in May

and the upcoming Bangsamoro parliamentary election in October 2025, which will be the first since the region was formed in 2019. This follows decades of violence between state forces and various armed groups, such as the Moro Islamic National Liberation Front (MILF), which sought independence from the central government. In 2024, ACLED records four events involving attacks on individuals, including one on a sitting Bangsamoro member of parliament who is also the regional health minister and another on a barangay councilor.³⁴ The

Asia-Pacific remained the region with the highest number of violent incidents targeting local officials in 2024 – a position that it has occupied since ACLED's inaugural report.

councilor, who was killed, was an aspiring candidate in the May elections, but the MP who survived the attack is expected to run again in October. Additionally, in July 2024, unidentified assailants shot dead a former sub-barangay leader while she was distributing membership forms for the United Bangsamoro Justice Party, a MILF political party set to join the elections in October.³⁵ This violence raises concerns about the election security environment that may overshadow the inaugural parliamentary elections in the BARMM scheduled for 13 October 2025.

Outside of the election cycle, local officials in the Asia-Pacific region have also been readily targeted in acts of mob violence or violent demonstrations, as well as the looting or destruction of property associated with a local official. This is done as a means to demand action when the authorities are not delivering it. Around 400 incidents of such events targeting local officials were reported across 11 countries. While this violence was often associated with local-level disputes, political developments at the national level also triggered significant outbreaks of violence against local officials, including in Bangladesh and New Caledonia.

In mid-2024, the ruling Awami League in Bangladesh came under increasing pressure from demonstrators following the reinstatement of the quota

system for civil service recruitment. This system reserved a significant number of jobs for certain groups, in particular descendants of the 1971 independence war, and critics argued it would lead to discrimination.³⁶ The increasingly violent demonstrations culminated in the resignation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on 5 August and a large outbreak of violence against individuals and symbols associated with the Awami League. On that day alone, ACLED records 28 events targeting local officials across Bangladesh as mobs attacked individuals and set buildings ablaze, sometimes leading to fatalities. In one particularly shocking incident, a mob killed an Awami League chairman and proceeded to hang his body in the public square.³⁷

In New Caledonia, rioters targeted the property of officials during the unrest following an unpopular constitutional amendment proposal in June.³⁸ The amendment, which would have extended voting rights to non-Indigenous residents, was ultimately suspended by French President Emmanuel Macron not long after.³⁹ This, however, failed to stem all of the violence, as later in August, unidentified perpetrators threw rocks and Molotov cocktails at a convoy transporting New Caledonia Congress representatives in an attack believed to be associated with the amendment.⁴⁰

ASIA-PACIFIC

Situation in 2024

1,008
events
recorded

3%
increase
compared to 2023

305
Myanmar

272
India

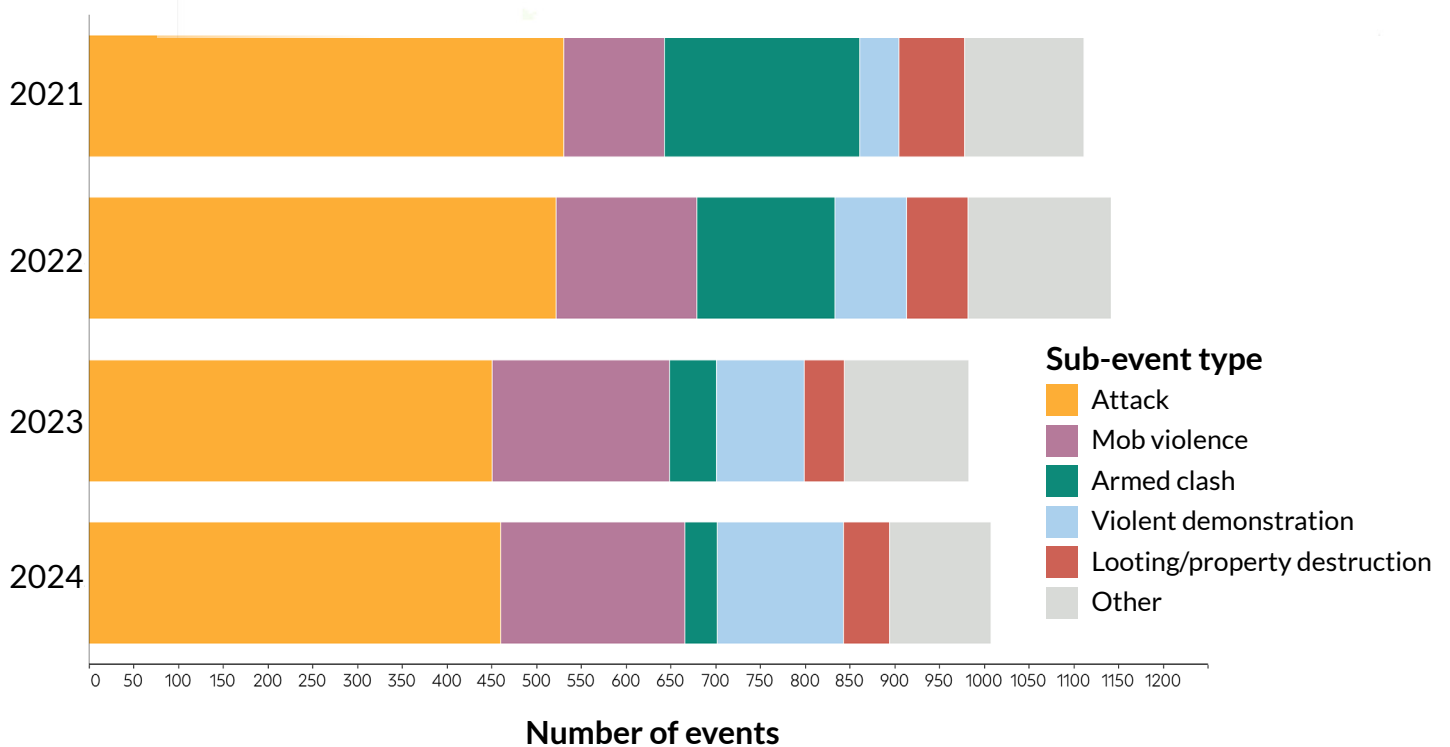
119
Philippines

113
Bangladesh

88
Indonesia

Number of events
1 305

Evolution since 2021



CASE STUDY: MYANMAR

Agents of state and agents of revolution under attack

Since the 2021 coup, local officials in Myanmar have been targeted for their roles as intermediaries between competing armed authorities and local populations. In 2024, ACLED records 305 incidents when they were targeted, placing Myanmar second globally for the most events. In Myanmar, local administrators can usefully be ascribed as either “agents of state” or “agents of revolution,” with each facing different kinds of danger.

Agents of state — administrators who work within the military junta, or State Administration Council (SAC), bureaucracy — are victims of assassination attempts carried out by revolutionary forces. In 2024, SAC administrators have come under attack in more than 80 instances for enforcing the military’s new conscription law and for carrying out limited census enumeration, and ward- and village-level officials tasked with recruiting young people for conscription have become targets.

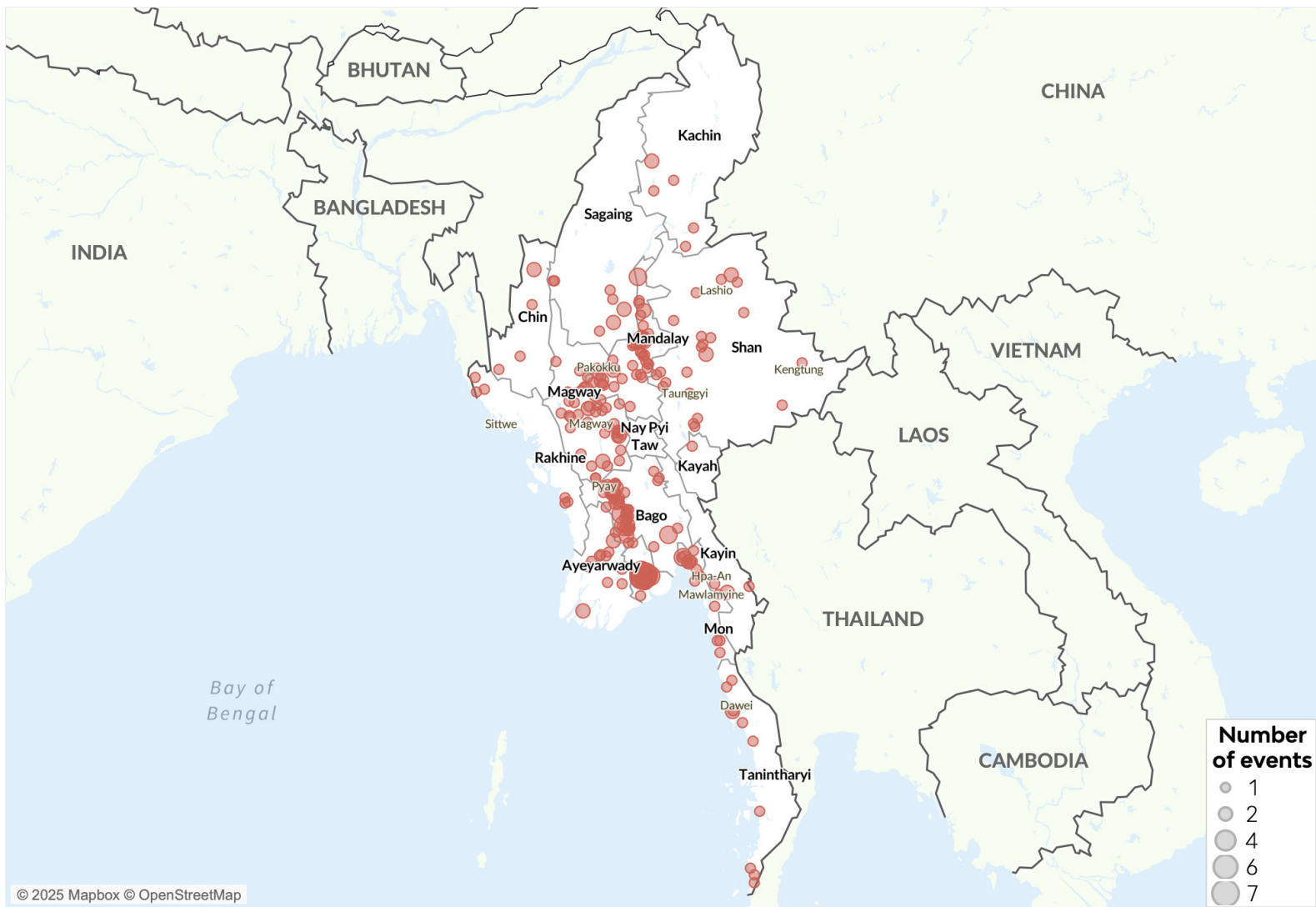
The military continues to assert it will hold some kind of national election in December 2025, which most resistance groups oppose, and there have already been threats against those who support the polls. If the election goes ahead, the

SAC will need to rely on local officials to organize them, putting them at increased risk and representing a significant flashpoint for targeted violence against SAC administrators going forward.

Agents of revolution, on the other hand, are administrators who work under parallel sovereign authorities, such as the National Unity Government (NUG), the United League of Arakan, and the Kachin Independence Organization. In contrast to military-aligned administrators, they are more likely to be killed or injured by the targeted airstrikes of the Myanmar military. For example, in Magway region, where the NUG has established local administration in some areas, the military conducted two airstrikes on a school in Ga Wun Lay Taing village in Pakokku township during a meeting of People’s Administration Team members under the NUG on 13 March. The attack killed a teacher and injured four local officials. Similarly, in northern Shan state, the military launched airstrikes on the Nawnghkio township court on 13 November. The court, which is under the control of the Ta’ang Army (PSLF/TNLA), was destroyed in the attack, and an inmate was injured.

CASE STUDY: MYANMAR

Violence targeting local officials in Myanmar: 2024



CASE STUDY: INDONESIA

Regional tensions drive increased violence

Local officials are a regular target of discontent in Indonesia, where authority has been highly decentralized since the democratic reforms that ushered in the post-Suharto era in the late 1990s. Even so, 2024 represented a notable outlier in the country, with a 60% increase in the targeting of local officials to 88 events from 55 in 2023. This rise in the targeting of officials came on the back of general elections in November, particularly pre-election demonstrations in August against parliament's revision of the Regional Election Law. The amendment, which was not ratified following the demonstrations, would have seen a relaxation of minimum age limits for regional heads, widely seen as supporting the political careers of then-President Joko Widodo's children.⁴¹ During these demonstrations, rioters targeted local council buildings around the country, destroying perimeter fences and causing damage to the buildings.

While the growth in events was felt across the archipelago, and most notably in West Java, the provinces of Papua collectively accounted for nearly a third of all events (27) in 2024. The majority of these events involved spontaneous acts of

mob violence or violent demonstrations targeting local organs of the state in response to electoral disputes, and violence perpetrated on civilians by the military and police.

Local officials, however, are also targets within the conflict between the state and the West Papua National Liberation Army (TPNPB), which has led the armed campaign of the Papuan separatist movement that dates back to the initial integration of Papua into Indonesia under the disputed "Act of Free Choice" in 1969. The TPNPB has targeted local institutions as part of a concerted campaign to undermine the Indonesian state's infrastructure and expressions of control in Papua. In 2024, the TPNPB carried out seven attacks on local officials, including the killing of a local public servant in Dekai district, whom they accused of spying for Indonesian state forces. The Indonesian military and police forces have also been implicated in the targeting of local officials as part of this conflict. In July 2024, they shot dead a village head, alongside two others, in Pepera village of Mulia district, claiming they were TPNPB rebels.

CASE STUDY: INDONESIA

Violence targeting local officials in Indonesia: 2024





Europe & Central Asia

CASE STUDY: ITALY

CASE STUDY: GERMANY

Supporters of the leftist New Popular Front gather in Paris on 7 July 2024 after the defeat of the far right in France's legislative elections.

Nathan Posner/Anadolu via Getty Images

Violence targeting local officials remains a serious concern in Europe. In 2024, ACLED records 180 acts of intimidation and violence targeting local officials across the continent – a 46% drop from the 2022 peak of 331 events and a 33% decrease from 2023. In the European Union, Italy was the most affected country in 2024, with 59 documented cases, nearly unchanged from the 61 reported in 2023 and more than three times the number registered in Germany in 2024 (18). France followed with 12 incidents, ahead of Greece (8) and Cyprus (5). Property damage – affecting either public or private assets – was the most common form of intimidation across the EU, accounting for 73% of cases.

The overall decline is driven mainly by France, where the number of recorded cases fell from 127 in 2023 to just 12 in 2024. The previous year's spike had stemmed from widespread unrest following the fatal police shooting of a young man in the suburbs of Paris, which triggered dozens of attacks on local representatives and facilities across the country.

Outside of the EU, however, ACLED records a 47% increase in 2024 – 69 cases, up from 47 the previous year. In 2022, 197 such incidents were reported, 177 of them in Ukraine. This phenomenon remains most prevalent in Ukraine and Russia, where local administrative buildings such as town halls are frequently targeted by aerial and missile strikes. These two countries

accounted for 25 and 23 incidents, respectively, followed by Albania (10), Serbia (4), Bosnia-Herzegovina (3), and Kosovo (2).

Much of the violence across the region stems from deepening political polarization, which remains a key factor behind both overt and covert forms of aggression against local authorities. In recent years, the combination of overlapping crises (from financial and migration challenges, the remaining effects of the pandemic, and Russia's war in Ukraine), growing mistrust in institutions, and rising support for anti-establishment parties across Europe has precipitated a wave of political polarization.

In his address to the International Day of Non-Violence in October 2024, Bernd Vöhringer, a German mayor and president of the Chamber of Local Authorities at the Council of Europe, linked the increase in threats and attacks against local officials with the polarization of European societies, which leaves local politicians and civil servants increasingly exposed to disinformation, hate speech, and online threats.⁴²

In 2024, elections contributed to heightening these tensions across Europe.⁴³ Political violence rocked the campaign for the 2024 European elections in Germany, with [several reported assaults on local politicians and representatives](#).⁴⁴ According to the Federal Criminal Police Office, there were over 4,900 attacks on political figures in 2024 – a 20% increase from

EUROPE & CENTRAL ASIA

2023.⁴⁵ In France, ahead of the July snap elections, more than 50 physical assaults against campaigners and candidates were reported, including an attack on a 77-year-old councilor in La Tronche.⁴⁶ Likewise, in Ireland, campaigners were victims of assaults ahead of the European elections in June.⁴⁷

Yet the effects of political polarization on local politics reflected beyond election cycles, with other politically motivated aggressions reported in Italy, Spain, Greece, and the Western Balkans. Ongoing ethnic tensions in northern Kosovo are behind a string of incidents targeting the town of Leposavić/Leposaviq. In January 2024, the local assembly president's car was set on fire, likely in connection with unrest over the installation of ethnic Albanian mayors in Serb-majority areas and the dismantling of parallel structures and services funded by Serbia.⁴⁸ The Mitrovica region, which borders Serbia, was home to several violent clashes in 2023, following a Serb-majority boycott of local elections that resulted in ethnic Albanian mayors taking office.

The Western Balkans were also rocked by protest movements demanding greater accountability and an end to endemic corruption. Mass mobilization in Albania and Serbia targeted local

authorities, who were held responsible for the mismanagement of public resources. In Albania, Tirana's city hall was the site of mass demonstrations demanding the resignation of the mayor, Erion Veliaj, over corruption and nepotism allegations. On several occasions, the municipality was targeted with Molotov cocktails. Despite the unrest that spanned months, Veliaj remained in office. In early 2025, he was arrested and placed in pretrial detention on corruption and money laundering charges.⁴⁹

Much of the violence across the region stems from deepening political polarization, which remains a key factor behind both overt and covert forms of aggression against local authorities.

Similarly, in Serbia, a deadly railway incident in Novi Sad, which was widely attributed to corruption and negligence, sparked a wave of protests throughout the country from November 2024 through the first quarter of 2025. While demonstrations occurred nationwide, a demonstration in Novi Sad on 5 November was particularly intense, drawing over 22,000 people and ending with violent clashes⁵⁰ outside Novi Sad City Hall. Demonstrators demanding the resignation of several high-level officials threw Molotov cocktails and red paint and set parts of the building on fire.

The interference of organized crime adds another grave risk to the safety of local officials in Europe. Local authorities often find themselves on the front line in the fight against organized

crime, and as such are regularly subjected to threats, intimidation, and violence. Intimidation often occurs through more discreet yet equally worrying actions, including arson and destruction of public and private property. These events, typically left unclaimed, account for nearly half of all recorded events in 2024.

Acts of intimidation were widespread across Europe, although approximately two-thirds were reported in Italy. Most events occurred in the south of the country, were unclaimed, and focused on soft targets, such as cars and private property. In 2024, over 40 cars belonging to Italian mayors, municipal councilors, and other local officials and employees were set on fire or vandalized, along with several residences and municipality buildings. Criminal interests were reported to have played a role in several acts of intimidation that targeted local officials in France, Cyprus, and Greece, among others.⁵¹ In Bosnia and Herzegovina, two separate grenade attacks⁵² targeted the homes of two local

officials who had publicly opposed the former mayor, who was later arrested and charged with running a criminal enterprise.⁵³

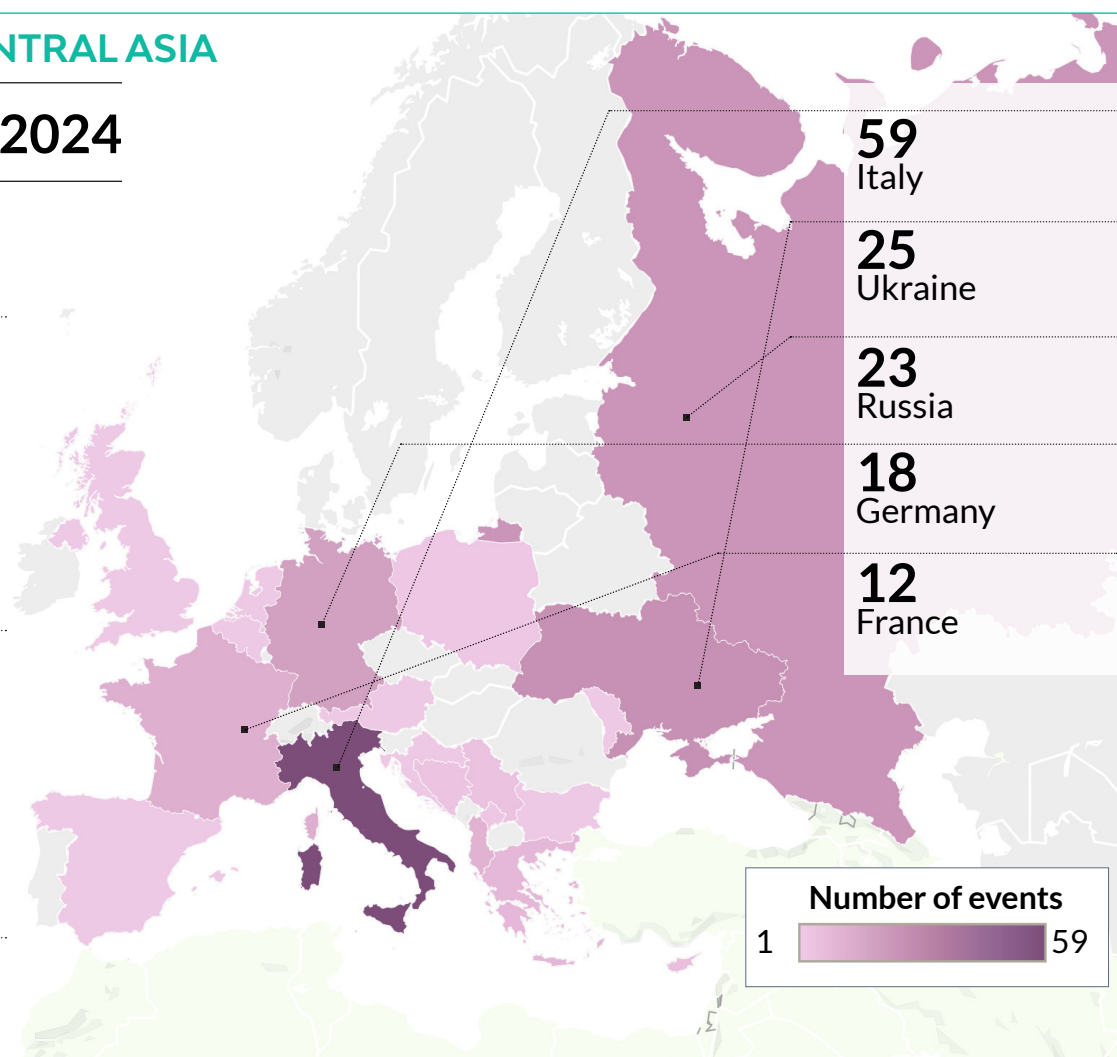
Local administration representatives and facilities are routinely the target of aerial and bombing strikes in Ukraine and Russia. At least 13 local officials and municipal employees were killed in 2024, often at the hands of Ukrainian forces. Among them were the Russian-installed Minister of Emergency Services and two regional deputies; victims of a missile attack on the Russian-occupied city of Lysychansk in Luhansk; a mayor and a deputy mayor from two municipalities in Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions; and at least eight senior staff and employees of local administrations or public companies — one of whom died on Russian territory. For their part, indiscriminate Russian attacks on Ukrainian territory wounded several mayors, village heads, and other local officials, damaging numerous administrative buildings.

EUROPE & CENTRAL ASIA

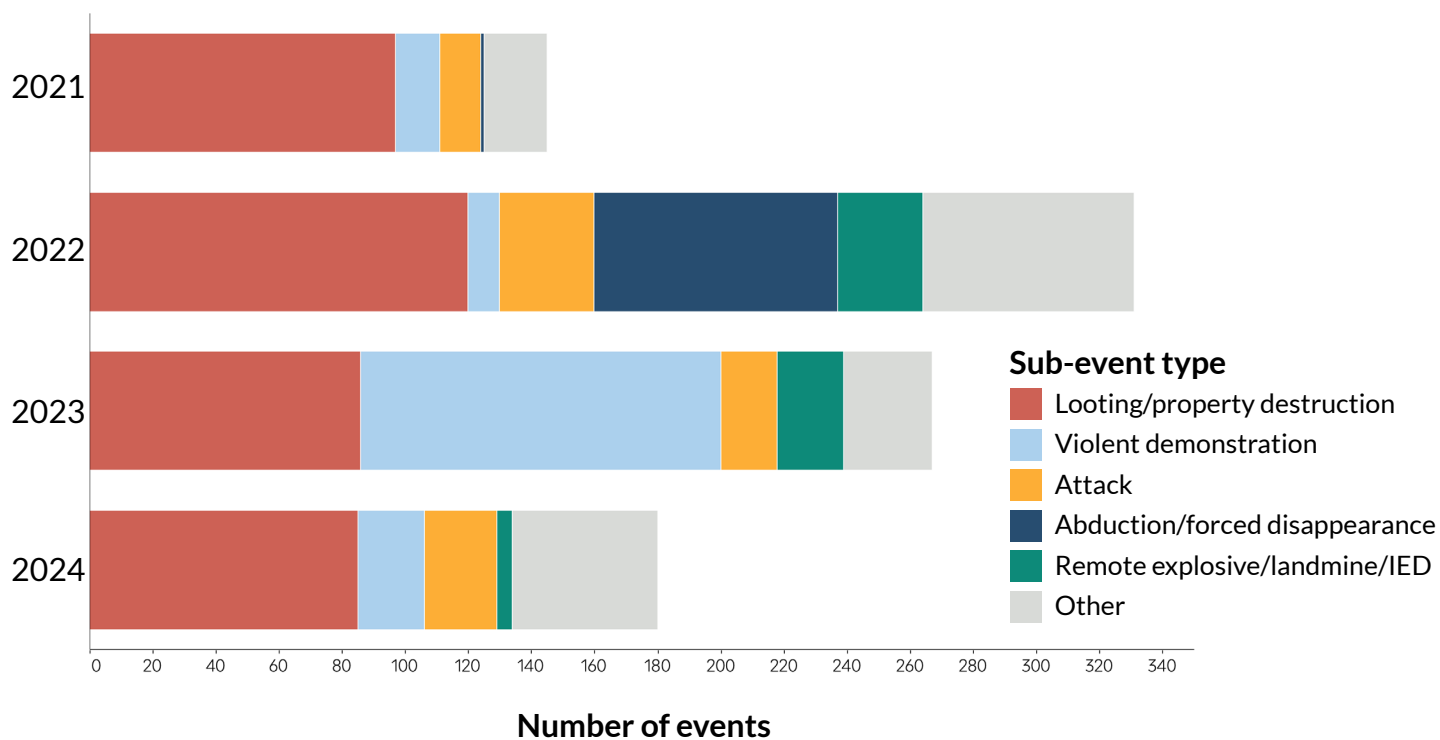
Situation in 2024

180
events
recorded

33%
decrease
compared
to 2023



Evolution since 2021



CASE STUDY: ITALY

Small southern municipalities are left vulnerable to violence

Italy once again ranked first in the European Union for violence targeting local officials. It accounted for over half of such occurrences in the region, with 59 attacks in 2024, following 61 attacks in 2023. The phenomenon of targeted violence against local officials is deeply embedded in the Italian context; more than 130 murders of local officials have been recorded since the 1970s, half of which are suspected to have been carried out by organized crime.⁵⁴

ACLED records events targeting local officials in 12 out of 20 regions in 2024. The southern part of Italy remained the hotbed of this type of violence, accounting for over 80% of attacks. Following last year's trends, Calabria emerged as the most affected region, with 16 cases, followed by Sicily (10), Sardinia and Puglia (eight), and Campania (seven). Smaller municipalities and their representatives appear to be the most affected by violent physical acts. These areas are especially vulnerable as they receive little media attention and local administrators are often left alone to deal

with complex territorial, economic, and social challenges.⁵⁵ Moreover, smaller municipalities are also more susceptible to the influence of and infiltration by criminal groups, which in turn can affect local officeholders.⁵⁶

While the intimidatory nature of these actions is hardly questionable, exploring the actual motives behind them and identifying the perpetrators remains challenging, as most of the violence goes unclaimed, occurs at night, and is almost exclusively directed at properties. ACLED data show that in 2024, there were over 40 cases of cars belonging to local authorities set on fire or damaged. Municipal offices were the second-most targeted, followed by damage to land and agricultural properties. Although the intensity of this violence has fluctuated over the years, with 2024 being the year with the lowest level of this type of violence since ACLED's coverage started in 2020, the targeting of local officials in Italy remains a persistent issue that is difficult to eradicate.

CASE STUDY: ITALY

Violence targeting local officials in Italy: 2024



CASE STUDY: GERMANY

Political polarization threatens local officials

In 2024, for the first time since ACLED began tracking the entire European Union in 2020, Germany moved up to second position in the region for violent incidents targeting local officials, just behind Italy. With at least 18 recorded attacks in 2024, the country saw more than triple the annual average of the past four years, marking a significant uptick in violence aimed at local elected politicians and their property.

The increase coincided with a fractious year for Germany that was marked by the collapse of an embattled coalition, economic stagnation, polarized European and snap federal election campaigns,⁵⁷ and rising support for the far right. Combined with incidents involving foreigners that reignited migration debates,⁵⁸ these tensions exposed deep societal rifts and [fueled record protest levels and a rise in violence against politicians](#), especially around elections.

Because local officials are often on the frontline of public frustration with national politics,⁵⁹ they became focal points for political violence, particularly those affiliated with the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD),

who account for nearly two-thirds of the identified party-affiliated victims in 2024 (10 incidents). The trend suggests a likely emboldenment of radical actors amid sustained [national backlash](#) to the AfD's "remigration" agenda and broader right-wing extremism, despite the party's growing grassroots support.⁶⁰ In one instance, masked individuals attacked AfD city councilors with baseball bats in Karlsruhe on 8 June; in another, on 25 July, a group linked to the radical left assaulted AfD affiliates in Berlin by using tear gas and kicking the victims. Other local officials targeted included members of the ruling coalition — the Social Democrats and Greens were each targeted twice — along with one independent. Three municipal buildings were also vandalized. In some cases, they were targeted explicitly over national policy decisions.

Early 2025 data show little letup. Four new attacks have already been recorded in the first quarter of the year in Germany — a sign that local officials remain in the line of fire as political polarization grinds on nationally.⁶¹

CASE STUDY: GERMANY

Violence targeting local officials in Germany: 2024



Latin America & the Caribbean

CASE STUDY: MEXICO

CASE STUDY: ECUADOR



Family and friends carry the coffin of the elected mayor of Copala, Mexico, on 18 June 2024, a day after he was killed.

Francisco Robles/AFP via Getty Images

LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN

In 2024, there were 680 incidents of violence targeting local officials in Latin America and the Caribbean, making it the second-most dangerous region in the world for such officials, behind Asia-Pacific. Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru were the main hotspots of this violence, concentrating 87% of incidents regionwide. While direct attacks continue to be the most common form of violence, the targeting of property associated with local officials, such as public buildings or even private homes, nearly doubled compared to last year and reached its highest levels since 2018. Findings suggest that local officials not only faced threats from widespread criminal activity across the region but also from sustained political turmoil.

Targeting by non-state armed groups, mainly gangs and cartels, continued to be the main threat for local officials in 2024, representing around 79% of all recorded violence. While these groups often do not aspire to overtake power at the national level, they seek to control the political, economic, and social life of subnational areas that are key to their interests. Ultimately, their end goal is to be able to carry out their activities without interference or resistance from the community, the state, or other armed groups.⁶² In this scenario, targeting local officials is important to gain political control: By coercing these officials through violence, organized crime groups can influence policy decisions and get access to information critical for their operations.⁶³

In many cases, a lack of sufficient protection from higher levels of government means that local officials have no choice other than to comply with armed groups. Amid increased threats and attacks against municipal ombudsmen in Colombia, it was revealed that the National Protection Unit, the government agency that provides protection to political figures and other high-profile individuals, failed to respond immediately to emergencies or life-threatening situations and even took 48 hours to assist targeted officials.⁶⁴ In Mexico, the Morelos state government announced to the mayors elected in the June elections that police agents would not be assigned to protect them and that if they wanted a security detail, mayors must use their private funds to secure it.⁶⁵ This came even though Morelos was the ninth most violent state for local officials in the country in 2024.

Organized crime groups' targeting of local officials was most evident during election cycles, as they [looked to influence the outcomes of elections](#) by targeting candidates or officials who do not align with their interests. Such violence and threats of violence push some to withdraw from the race or worsen the overall security situation, and cause lower turnouts that eventually might benefit candidates with whom they have agreements. In both Mexico and Brazil, where elections were held in 2024, violence targeting local officials by armed groups [increased during the campaign period](#) and [reached its highest](#)

LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN

[levels in the election month](#). Still, violence did not end on election day, with many officials also targeted around swearing-in ceremonies. But incidents dropped in the following months as armed groups looked to secure control of local governments ahead of their renewal, indicating that most of their resources were invested during the campaign period.⁶⁶

Armed groups by no means limited their endeavors to electoral periods, however. Attacks on local officials often feature as part of turf wars and efforts to maintain control over state institutions. For instance, officials were targeted as retaliation for breaking agreements or favoring other groups' interests. This was evident in Ecuador's local government transportation agencies, especially in Manta, Manabí⁶⁷ province. Since 2022, multiple traffic agents and other officials have been killed, and in May 2024, the agency office was set on fire as part of a dispute between Los Choneros and Los Lobos, two of the most important criminal groups in Ecuador that have a strong presence in Manabí. After that attack, a note was found signed by Los Pepes, a gang affiliated with Los Lobos, stating that the agency "no longer belongs to Los Choneros" and asking for the resignation of officials who favor Los Choneros' interests.⁶⁸ Collusion with municipal transportation officials is key to organized crime for revenue generation

Findings suggest that local officials not only faced threats from widespread criminal activity across the region but also from sustained political turmoil.

and to get information relevant to their operations, like what roads they should take to avoid police or military checkpoints.⁶⁹

Outside of organized crime, fierce political competition remains another significant driver of violence targeting local officials in the region. In the majority of cases, such violence came at the hands of supporters of rival politicians. This was most prominent in Bolivia, where [the feud between President Luis Arce and former President Evo Morales](#) has incited violence by their supporters against local officials. In this case, local officials were targeted because of their political affiliation or because they tried to prevent further escalation of the dispute.⁷⁰

Some politicians also solicited targeted attacks on their competitors. In Brazil, for example, the murder of an elected councilman in Santana do Itararé (Paraná state) nearly two weeks after the October local elections was later revealed to have been planned by his substitute, a former councilman who lost the election and would have taken office as his replacement.⁷¹ The tactics used in such incidents, like planned break-ins and drive-by shootings, might make them look like violence by armed groups. This has the effect of hiding the real motivation behind the attack and making its orchestrators harder to identify.

LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN

Another common driver of violence against local officials continues to be corruption and underperformance allegations against officials, or attempts to prevent them from enforcing city ordinance measures. For example, in Chile, inhabitants of an informal settlement in La Florida commune of Santiago threw stones at the mayor and other officials after he issued an eviction order to the community.⁷² In Mexico, members of the community of Ocuituco, Morelos state, detained the mayor and tied him to a wall of the city hall because of their frustration with unfinished public works.⁷³ These cases reflect not only how the state lacks legitimacy to exercise its authority⁷⁴ but, ultimately, an overall dissatisfaction with politics, low levels of trust in the government, and, more evidently, a loss of trust in the justice system as impunity levels for both corruption and serious crimes remain high, and communities feel the need to administrate justice themselves.⁷⁵

LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN

Situation in 2024

680
events
recorded

6%
increase
compared
to 2023

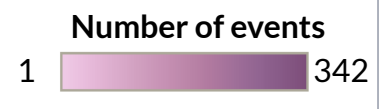
342
Mexico

102
Brazil

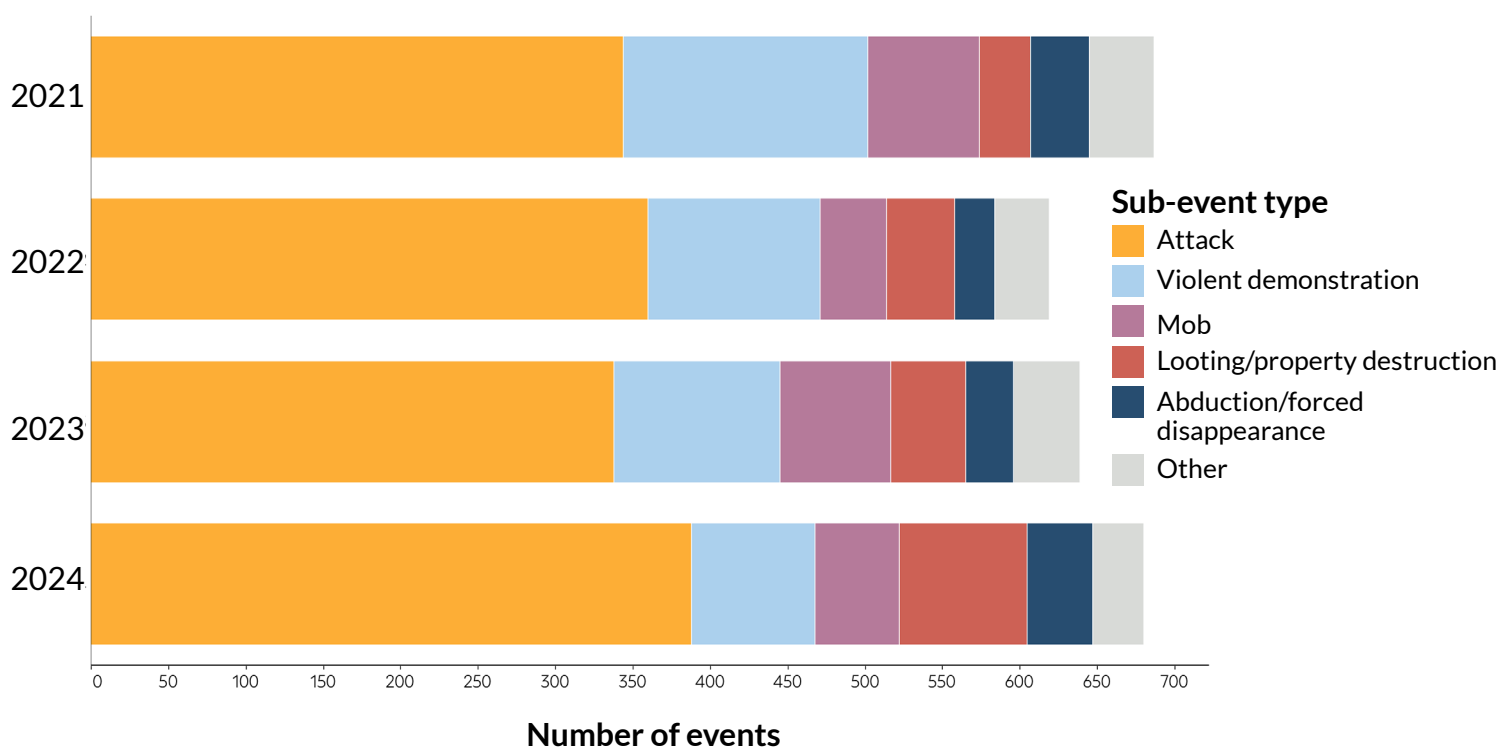
74
Colombia

45
Ecuador

31
Peru



Evolution since 2021



CASE STUDY: MEXICO

Elections put local officials in unprecedented danger

On 6 October 2024, an armed group killed and beheaded the mayor of Chipalcingo in Guerrero, Alejandro Arcos, just six days after he took office. While shocking for the gruesome circumstances,⁷⁶ his murder reflects a systematic trend of violence targeting local officials in Mexico, which in 2024 reached some of its highest levels since 2018 following the June general elections. ACLED records over 340 events in 2024 — the highest figure globally.

Most violence unfolded in the context of the electoral process, one of the largest in Mexico's history,⁷⁷ and involved attacks on electoral officials and candidates — often current or former local officeholders. Violence levels fluctuated along the electoral cycle, with notable spikes after the end of the pre-campaign period and local candidates' registration in February, around the 2 June vote, and again in October as elected officials took office. The attacks are largely attributable to organized criminal groups seeking to influence election outcomes by targeting officials unlikely to cooperate with their interests. Violence has especially concentrated in states contested by criminal groups, such as Guerrero, Veracruz, Michoacán, and Guanajuato.

Criminal interests were not the sole drivers of violence; competition between local political contenders also fueled violence around the elections, as did incidents linked to discontent over the

outcome. In Chiapas, the second-most violent state for local officials, nearly half of all events occurred around the vote, with the largest share involving party supporters damaging electoral material and property to obstruct or contest outcomes. The state is also a hotspot for a criminal turf war over the control of the border, making the electoral process particularly volatile.

At the same time, spikes in violence triggered by Mexico's shifting gang landscape show that the risk to local officials is not confined to election and political transition periods. In Sinaloa, [violence against officials had historically remained low](#) due to the Sinaloa Cartel's dominance and long-standing ties with local authorities.⁷⁸ However, [the outbreak of an internal power struggle](#) between the cartel's Los Chapitos and El Mayo factions in September triggered increased incidents. In 2024, over half of all attacks on local officials in Sinaloa, including carjackings targeting the Mazatlán and San Ignacio mayors, occurred following the outbreak of the conflict. The move to target officials marks armed groups' attempts to pressure authorities into siding with their interests over those of their rivals in their turf war and reinforce territorial control and influence over law enforcement operations. Additionally, as the Sinaloa Cartel's grip weakens, rivals might seek to fill any emerging power vacuum and coerce officials to secure territorial control.

CASE STUDY: MEXICO

Violence targeting local officials in Mexico: 2024



CASE STUDY: ECUADOR

Gang wars drive uptick in attacks against local officials

Violence against local officials has been rising in recent years, mirroring the country's security deterioration since late 2020, when previously allied organized crime groups started warring for the control of illicit businesses such as drug trafficking, illegal mining, and extortion.⁷⁹ In 2024, Ecuador recorded 45 events of violence targeting local officials, 36% more than in 2023 and the highest number of events since ACLED started covering the country in 2018. These attacks left at least 27 people dead, including mayors, councilors, transit agency and prison officials, and prosecutors, as well as bystanders.

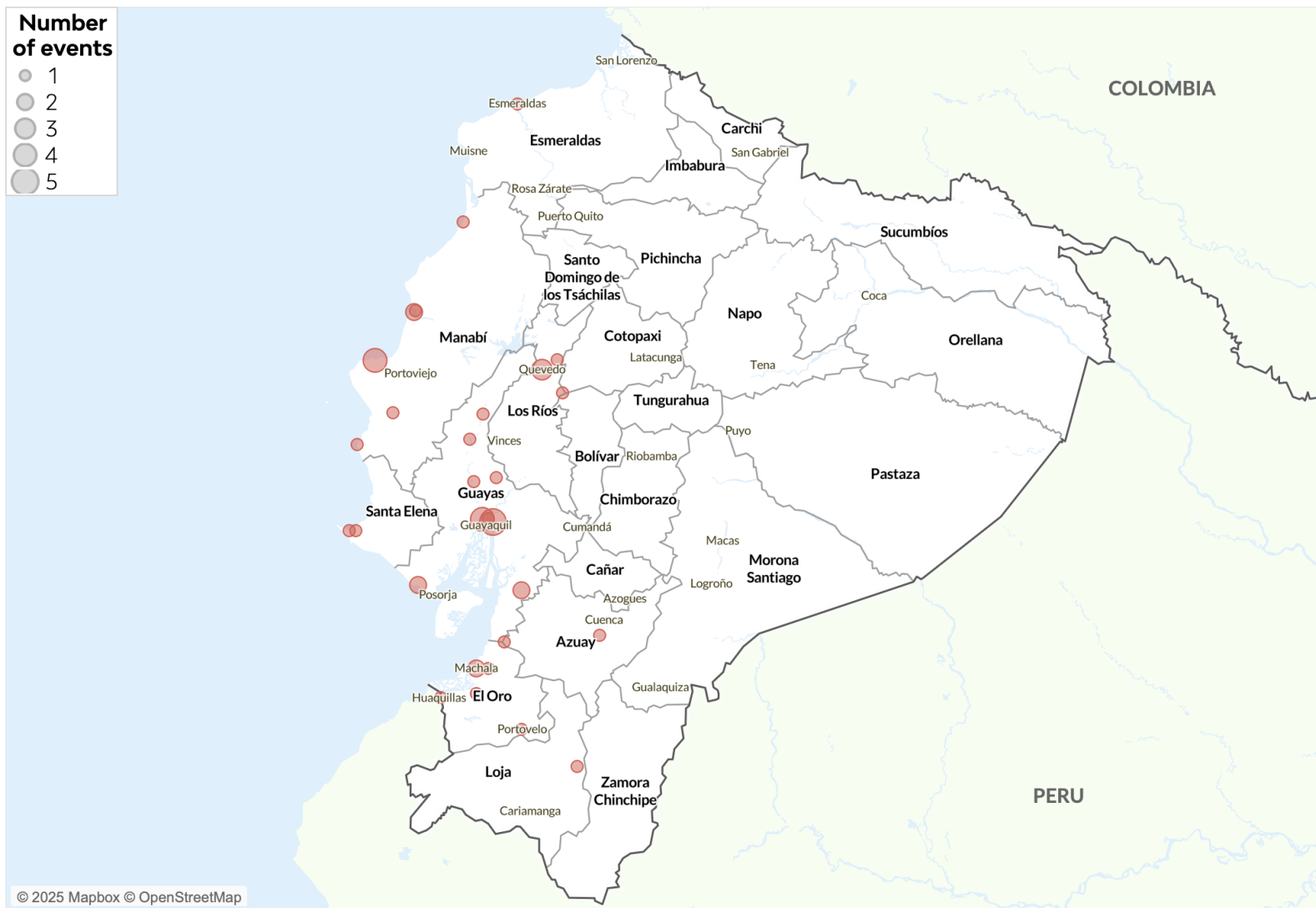
Almost 90% took place in the provinces of Guayas, Manabí, El Oro, and Los Ríos, which also record the highest levels of organized crime violence.⁸⁰ Organized crime groups often attack local officials who refuse to pay extortion, who hinder their activities, or whom they perceive to be affiliated with rival groups. For example, the mayors of Portovelo in El Oro and Camilo Ponce Enríquez in Azuay, two gold mining hotspots, were killed in April 2024 for apparently getting in the way of criminal groups' illegal

mining activities.⁸¹ Gangs also used violence to seek impunity for their crimes by targeting prosecutors and judges working on gang-related cases. On 17 January, Chone Killers gang members killed an attorney who was investigating an armed assault on the TC Television building in Guayaquil a few days before.⁸²

Criminal groups do not always resort to assassinations in their targeting of local administrators: In one-quarter of cases, they either kidnapped or detonated explosives in front of municipal buildings or local administrators' properties in acts of intimidation. Luis Chonillo, the mayor of Durán, a city that is experiencing a fierce war between Chone Killers and Latin Kings gangs that recorded the highest number of events targeting local officials in 2024, has been governing from a hideout since he was attacked at the beginning of his term. On 9 June, a bomb was set off in front of one of Chonillo's family businesses, and pamphlets demanding his resignation were left on the scene. Chonillo claims that his political opponents have taken advantage of, if not actively sponsored, these attacks.⁸³

CASE STUDY: ECUADOR

Violence targeting local officials in Ecuador: 2024



Middle East

CASE STUDY: SYRIA

CASE STUDY: IRAQ



A man in Khan Yunis, Gaza, pushes a bicycle past a destroyed building on 7 April 2024.

AFP via Getty Images

MIDDLE EAST

In the Middle East, ACLED records 135 acts of violence against local officials in 2024, an increase of 23% compared to the previous year. While some of these incidents occurred as collateral damage within broader conflicts, many were the result of deliberate targeting, underscoring the varied nature of the threats local officials face across the region. Events occurred in at least six countries: Syria, Iraq, Palestine, Yemen, Lebanon, and Turkey. From Israeli airstrikes and insurgent campaigns to political and tribal rivalry and internal repression, local officials across the Middle East were targeted by a wide range of actors with a variety of political, ideological, and identity-based motivations.

One of the most prominent patterns in the region has been the entanglement of local officials in the aerial bombardments of Lebanon and Gaza by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), whose operations against Hamas and Hezbollah impacted local administrative institutions in addition to inflicting wider damage to the civilian population. Together, these campaigns accounted for 23% of all events of violence against local officials in the region.

In Gaza, most events involving local officials took place during airstrikes that hit government infrastructure, including town halls, municipality headquarters, a municipal water management facility, and a municipal fuel depot.⁸⁴ Several of the affected buildings were located within densely populated refugee

camps, making it difficult to determine whether local administrations were targeted deliberately. However, in some instances, Israel has explicitly claimed intentional targeting,⁸⁵ particularly when it justified the strikes against such buildings or individuals by claiming the IDF was targeting key Hamas figures. This violence resulted in the deaths of three mayors and at least five municipal workers.

Southern Lebanon saw a similar pattern, with municipal buildings hit throughout the IDF's military operations against Hezbollah, resulting in the deaths of two mayors, a deputy mayor, a municipality chief, and at least 15 other municipal employees. These events suggest that while the IDF's operations in Lebanon primarily aimed at disrupting Hezbollah's military logistics, they also resulted in significant damage to local governance structures, which are often intertwined with Hezbollah and closely Amal's influence in the country.⁸⁶

In the West Bank, by contrast, most incidents involved the direct targeting of local officials, including mayors, village council heads, and other municipality workers of the Palestinian Authority, and were carried out by Israeli settlers, including civilian quasi-military forces trained and equipped with IDF weapons. In fact, this violence increased in 2024 compared to 2023, from three incidents to seven. Palestinian officials engaged in land surveying or road construction projects near settlements were particularly vulnerable, reflecting

MIDDLE EAST

settlers' intentions to assert territorial control by disrupting governance efforts. Moreover, the increasing armament of settlers — a policy strongly advocated by far-right officials such as National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir — may also be contributing to the escalation of violence.⁸⁷

At the same time, the region also saw state actors engaging in attacks on local officials within their own country, motivated by domestic issues. Incidents of this kind were recorded in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen, but the trend was most prominent in the latter, where ruling groups used violence against local officials and the appointment of loyalists to enforce control. The targeting of local officials by the Houthis in their areas of control reflects [broader efforts to consolidate power](#) — a dual strategy that rewards loyalists with government positions while silencing opposition individuals deemed disloyal. This spoils system has resulted in the replacement, intimidation, or detention of local officials who are not seen as enforcing Houthi ideology or have shown acts of noncompliance, reflecting how loyalty and alignment with Houthi values are now prerequisites for holding office. Several individuals, among them a local official and an aqil (a government-appointed neighborhood leader), were

From Israeli airstrikes and insurgent campaigns to political and tribal rivalry and internal repression, local officials across the Middle East were targeted by a wide range of actors with a variety of motivations.

abducted⁸⁸ in Ibb after celebrating the anniversary of the 1962 revolution — an event the Houthis oppose due to its association with the General People's Congress (GPC) and their efforts to promote 21 September as an alternative commemoration. Also in Ibb, the director of the Public Works Fund was beaten up after refusing to pay an extortion demand tied to a Houthi-appointed official,⁸⁹ and the son of an aqil was abducted by Houthi forces to coerce her into resigning from her position.⁹⁰

Similar patterns of repression were observed in the anti-Houthi camp. In areas under the formal control of the internationally recognized governments, local officials also faced abduction or intimidation for criticizing political factions or resisting militias, underscoring how armed groups use violence and coercion to enforce loyalty and suppress dissent against the backdrop of Yemen's fragmented authority.⁹¹

Non-state armed groups also targeted local officials to undermine rival systems of governance in the region, particularly in areas where state authority is weak or contested. ACLED records nearly 70 instances of direct targeting by these groups across the Middle East in 2024. In Syria, which led the region with 30 events, attacks against local officials

MIDDLE EAST

by the Islamic State (IS) accounted for 47% of all events. IS' most frequent targets were members of the autonomous Kurdish-led Democratic Federation of Northern Syria administration⁹² and municipal infrastructure in Dayr al-Zawr in eastern Syria, as part of a continued campaign by IS to dismantle governance linked to the Syrian Democratic Forces, which it views as an extension of enemy control.⁹³ In Turkey, members of the leftist Peoples' United Revolutionary Movement and Kurdistan Freedom Militia carried out politically motivated attacks and arson against government infrastructure and municipal buildings⁹⁴ in an effort to undermine the state. Such attacks accounted for nearly a third of the violence targeting local officials and buildings in Turkey.

Tribal and identity-based tensions also led to the targeting of local officials in 2024 on at least six occasions and were often related to struggles over authority and access to land. Four of these events took place in Yemen, where tribal actors have become increasingly influential in shaping local governance, and local officials involved in land governance were quite vulnerable to violence. In Shabwah, rivalries between tribes led to an attempt to assassinate an acting governor and left three people dead, including the official's nephew and son.⁹⁵ In that same governorate, a clash between two tribes over a disputed border escalated when one group established a new tribal

position on contested land, which the rival tribe later seized.⁹⁶ Further south, in Lahij, the Land Authority director was abducted by tribal militants as a backlash against the resumption of contested land distributions.⁹⁷ Meanwhile, in Thi Qar, Iraq, the Atabi tribe, who opposed the appointment of an external official and wanted the position to remain within their tribe, fired a rocket launcher at a district administration building.⁹⁸

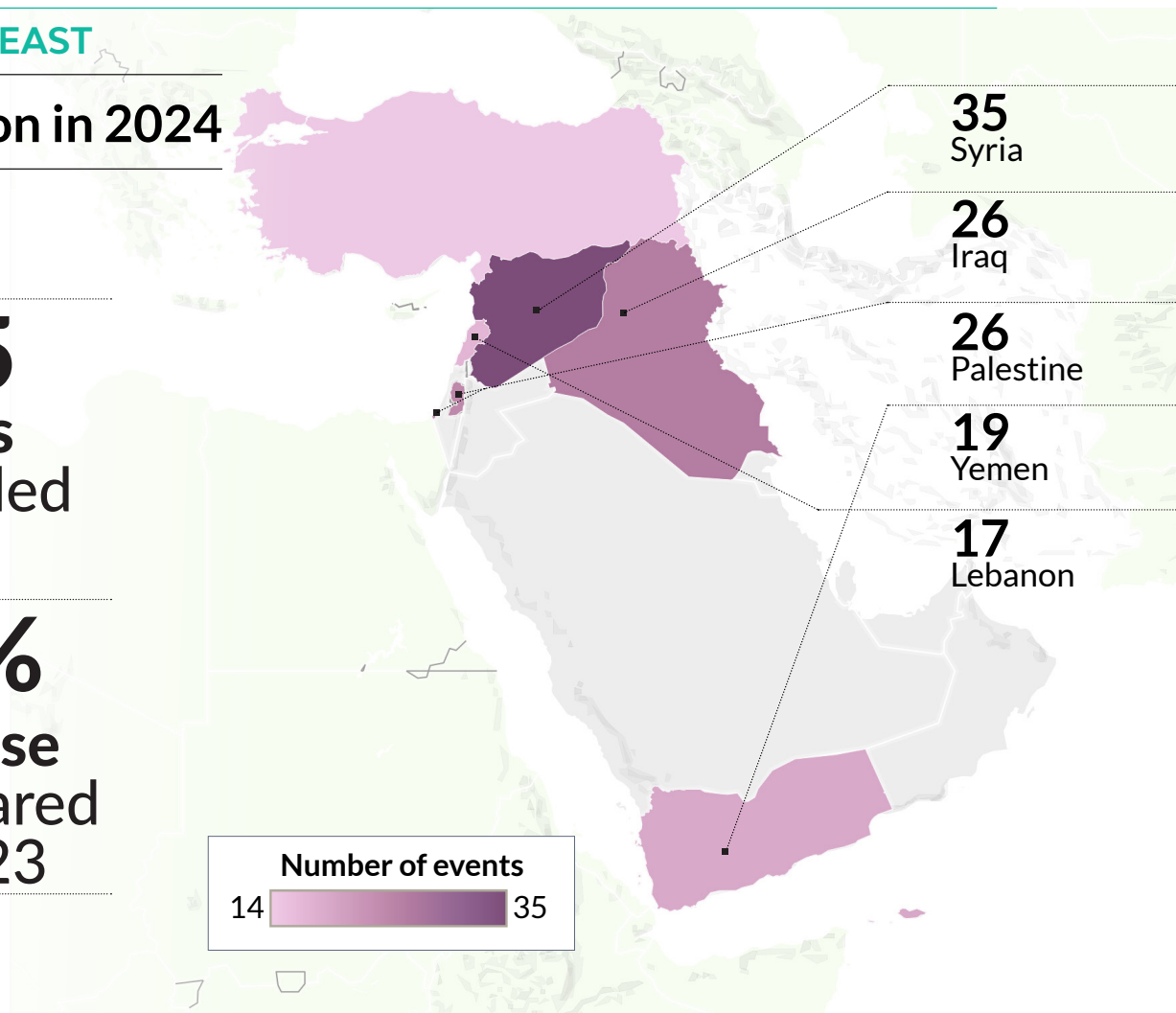
Heightened political competition in Turkey and Iraqi Kurdistan also resulted in several attacks against local officials and party representatives.⁹⁹ In Turkey, local elections turned violent in Sanliurfa when members¹⁰⁰ of the Justice and Development Party set fire to a ballot box and attacked opposition members, while unidentified perpetrators opened fire at the newly elected mayor's house in Giresun.¹⁰¹ There were also reports of election-related violence in the Iraqi Kurdistan region, against the backdrop of a highly polarized political competition. This included an assassination attempt against a Kurdistan Democratic Party official in July¹⁰² and gunfire targeting the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan headquarters in September.¹⁰³ While these events occurred in the months leading up to the elections, there is no clear evidence directly linking them to the electoral process, which unfolded mostly free of violence.¹⁰⁴

MIDDLE EAST

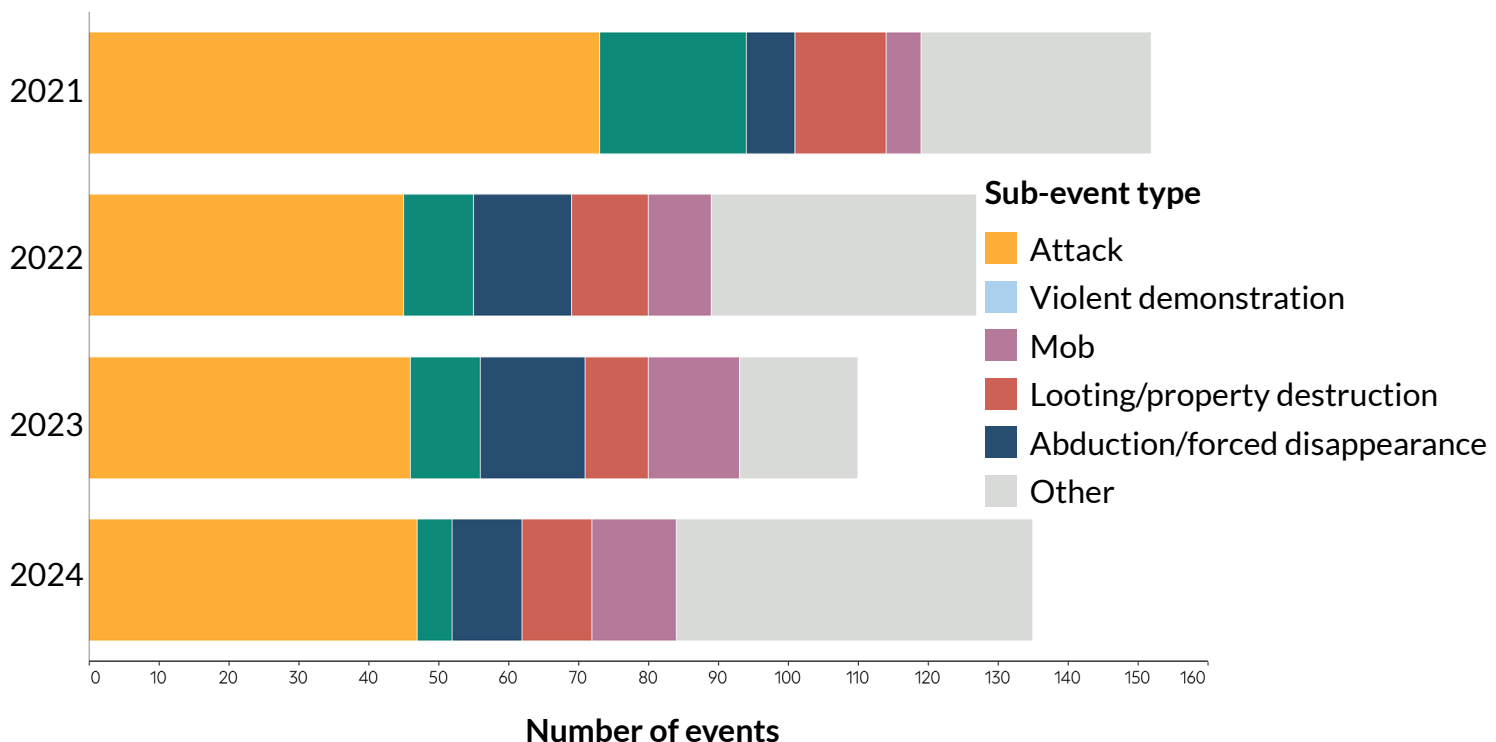
Situation in 2024

135
events
recorded

23%
increase
compared
to 2023



Evolution since 2021



CASE STUDY: SYRIA

The targeting of local officials continues amid a volatile context

Attacks on local officials in Syria reflect the fragmented and unstable security landscape in the country after 14 years of war. ACLED records 35 such attacks in 2024. These events were concentrated in the areas under the control of the Syrian Democratic forces (SDF), where several attacks against members of the Democratic Federation of Northern Syria (DFNS), an autonomous Kurdish-led administration that governs parts of northern Syria, took place. The hotspot of Daraa experienced a significant drop in this kind of violence from heightened levels experienced in 2023.

Deir ez-Zor witnessed the overwhelming majority of attacks against members of local councils in Syria in 2024, with 17 reported events. These attacks were mainly carried out by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and targeted members of the DFNS, with 12 recorded events. This represents a pattern followed by ISIL since the fall of its caliphate in March 2019 at the hands of the SDF, with ISIL considering these local officials to be enforcing SDF rule in northeastern Syria.

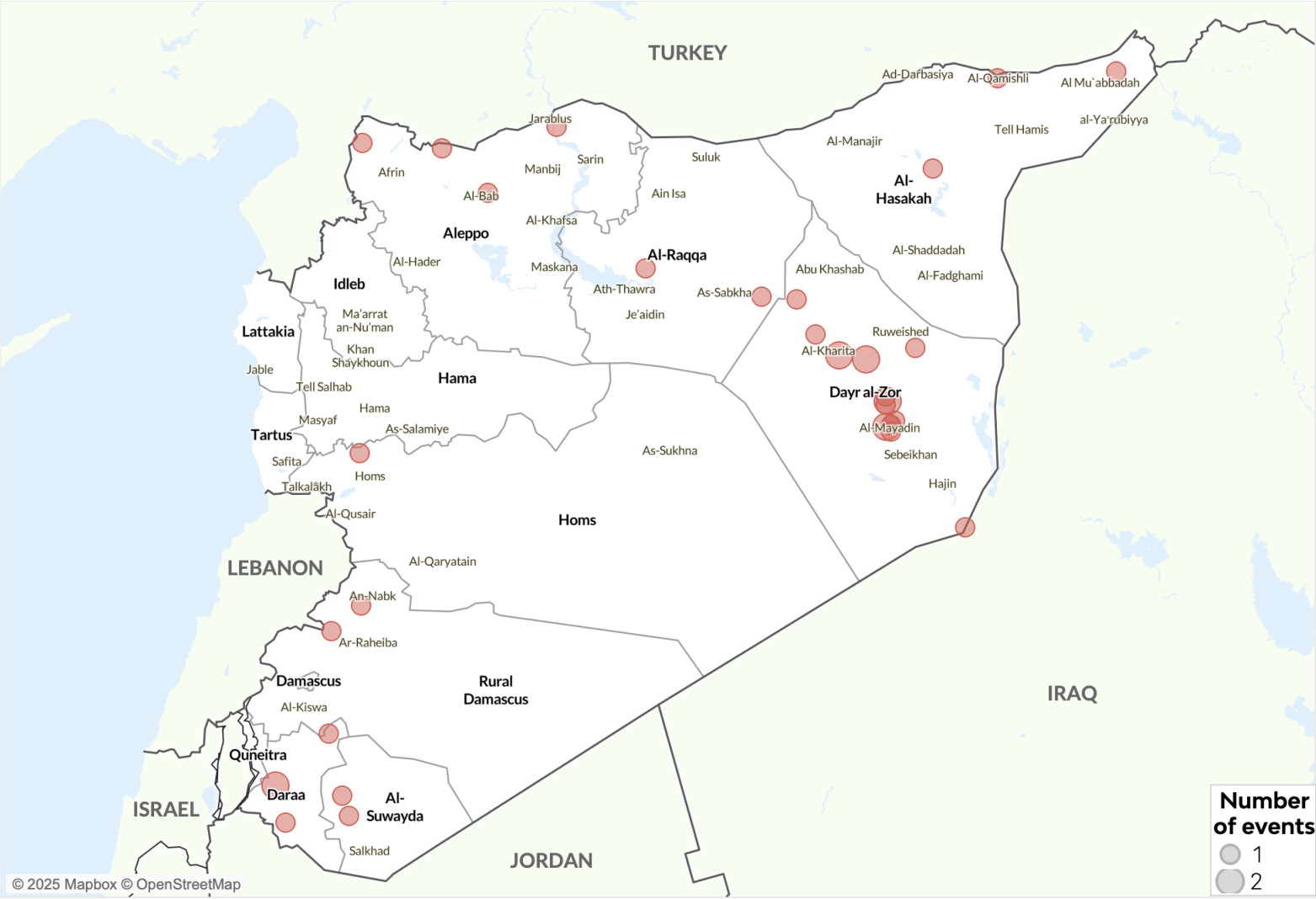
To the south, the governorate of Daraa saw a substantial drop in violence from 2023, from 12 events to four. Nonetheless, it remained one of the most dangerous governorates for local officials. Accusations against civil workers of working with and supporting

the former Syrian regime were the main reason behind most attacks in the region. Local and international dynamics were behind a string of attacks on local officials in Aleppo. Here, the unstable security situation and the actions of the Turkish forces and affiliated militant groups were the main factors behind the attacks on local council events. Turkish forces were involved in at least two events, including the kidnapping of a mukhtar – village chief – and his son in Afrin district and the targeting of a DFNS maintenance team while they were attempting to fix the water station in Ayn al-Arab district. On the other hand, members of the Syrian National Army targeted a judge and former member of the local council in the northern countryside of Aleppo.

With the recent agreement between the new Syrian government and the SDF¹⁰⁵ there has been a decrease in the total number of confrontations between the Turkish-backed militias and SDF, especially after the dissolution of these factions and their integration into the Syrian army. However, the continuation of violence on all levels is linked to the durability of the agreement between the new Syrian government and the SDF and the implementation of its terms. Otherwise, we are highly likely to see a continuation of events in which Turkey-affiliated militants target local officials in northern Aleppo.

CASE STUDY: SYRIA

Violence targeting local officials in Syria: 2024



CASE STUDY: IRAQ

Attacks on local officials surge amid provincial rivalries and governance gaps

In 2024, Iraq saw a renewed rise in violence targeting local officials, with 26 recorded incidents, up from 17 the previous year. Nearly half of all events were concentrated in the southern governorates of Dhi Qar and Maysan. This geographic pattern reflects the fragile local governance environment in the south, where weak state presence, entrenched tribal structures, and militia rivalries converge to heighten risks for local officials.

Dhi Qar was the hardest-hit governorate in 2024. The region is a historical epicenter of protest activity and remains deeply affected by poor service delivery and government neglect.¹⁰⁶ Several incidents involved violent demonstrations and property destruction at municipal buildings, reflecting broader disillusionment with the reform agenda introduced in the aftermath of the 2019 protests, which called for an end to corruption, improved public services, and systemic political change. Local officials, often viewed as the face of an unresponsive state, became key targets for public frustration.

In neighboring Maysan, particularly in Amara city, violence was shaped more by localized political rivalries and tribal tensions.¹⁰⁷ Armed groups carried out explosive attacks and armed assaults on local officials and administrative offices that were likely tied to disputes over appointments, local contracts, or law enforcement

operations. The increasing entanglement of militias in provincial politics has deepened instability in the governorate, exposing officials who resist or challenge their influence.

This evolving violence contrasts with the trends observed in previous years. From 2019 to 2020, violence against local officials was heavily influenced by the IS insurgency in the north and west, which carried out targeted assassinations, bombings, and ambushes in regions like Diyala and Salah al-Din. At the same time, the 2019 protest movement fueled unrest across central and southern Iraq, with demonstrators targeting government buildings. Rather than directly targeting local officials, these attacks reflected demonstrators' frustration with corruption and poor governance, often symbolized through damage to government infrastructure. From 2021 onward, as IS' operational capacity waned and national protests subsided, the nature of violence shifted toward more localized, factional, and personalized threats. By 2024, Iraq's configuration of violence had thus shifted: Local officials now operate in a fragmented system where they face not only public unrest but also coercion from rival groups, pressure from tribal actors, and targeted violence from political adversaries.¹⁰⁸ In this environment, they remain on the frontline of Iraq's unresolved governance crisis — often with little institutional protection or political backing.

Violence targeting local officials in Iraq: 2024



United States & Canada



UNITED STATES & CANADA

The United States and Canada have seen comparatively low levels of violence targeting local officials in recent years. Remarkably, incidents of violence in the US in 2024 remained few and far between despite the highly contentious political environment during the 2024 election cycle. ACLED records a handful of instances in which local officials' offices were vandalized over the course of 2024, as well as a series of incidents related to electoral disputes with the Tribal Council of the Big Pine Paiute Tribe of Owens Valley in California. Though actual incidents of violence were rare, local officials nonetheless often felt they were in the crosshairs. The Survey on Threats and Harassment collected by the Bridging Divides Initiative (BDI), which wrote the forward to this report, captures the "chilling effect" of threats and harassment targeting hundreds of local administrators across the country in a highly charged political climate.¹¹⁹

Similarly, in Canada, harassment and threats targeting local administrators have had a visible impact despite incidents of violence remaining rare. In January 2024, a man fired a gun and threw a Molotov cocktail inside Edmonton City

Hall. In an Instagram video posted online before the attack, the attacker spoke of a "mission" in which he condemned "wokeism" and called for an end to "multiculturalism" and support for "pro-life" policies and Palestine.¹²⁰ Though the attacker wielded weapons capable of high levels of lethality, he ultimately surrendered to police without causing any injuries. Though this incident was singularly violent in 2024, it reflects a concern shared by many local officials: that individuals may follow through on their violent rhetoric and threaten their safety.

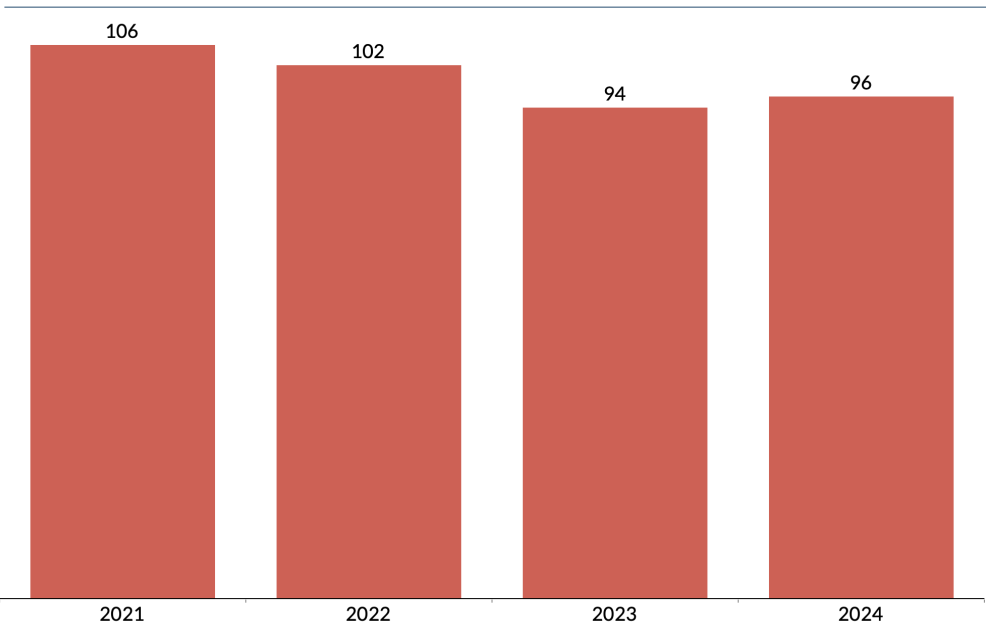
In Quebec, nearly 10% of people elected to local office with terms beginning in 2021 quit before their full terms were served. Many cited abusive behavior as motivation; 74% of Quebec officials have reported being harassed or intimidated.¹²¹ Similar patterns have been seen across the country, leading the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to pass a resolution asking the federal government to step in in the middle of last year.¹²² Multiple municipalities now fund home security for municipal officials in response to the rising tide of threats.¹²³

VISUAL APPENDIX

Countries with the most events targeting local officials in 2024

Country	2023	2024	Change compared to 2023	
Mexico	266	342	▲	29%
Myanmar	325	305	▼	-6%
India	287	272	▼	-5%
Nigeria	135	137	▲	1%
Philippines	132	119	▼	-10%
Bangladesh	56	113	▲	102%
Brazil	97	102	▲	5%
Indonesia	55	88	▲	60%
Colombia	145	74	▼	-49%
Ethiopia	33	61	▲	85%

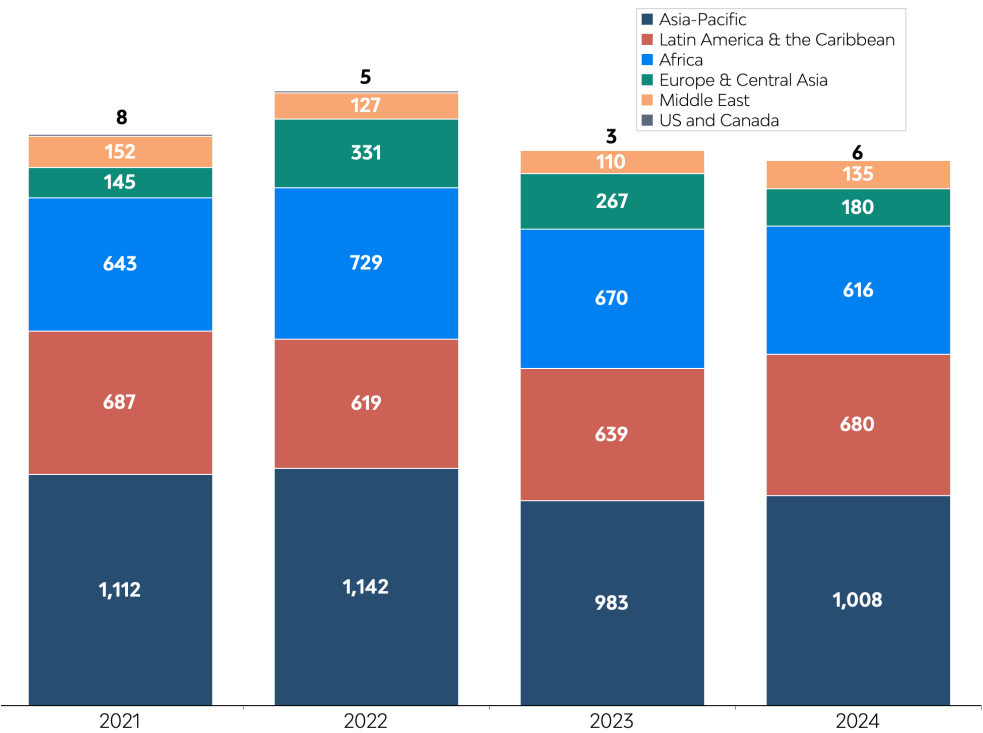
Countries with reported events of violence targeting local officials



VISUAL APPENDIX

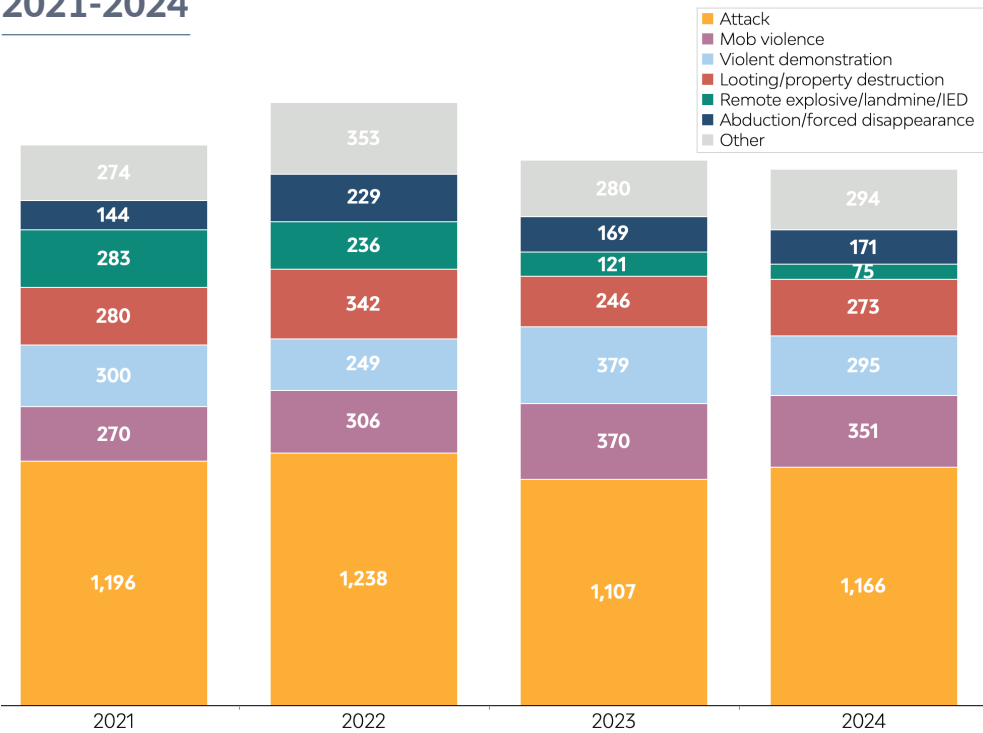
Violence targeting local officials by region

2021-2024



Violence targeting local officials by type of violence

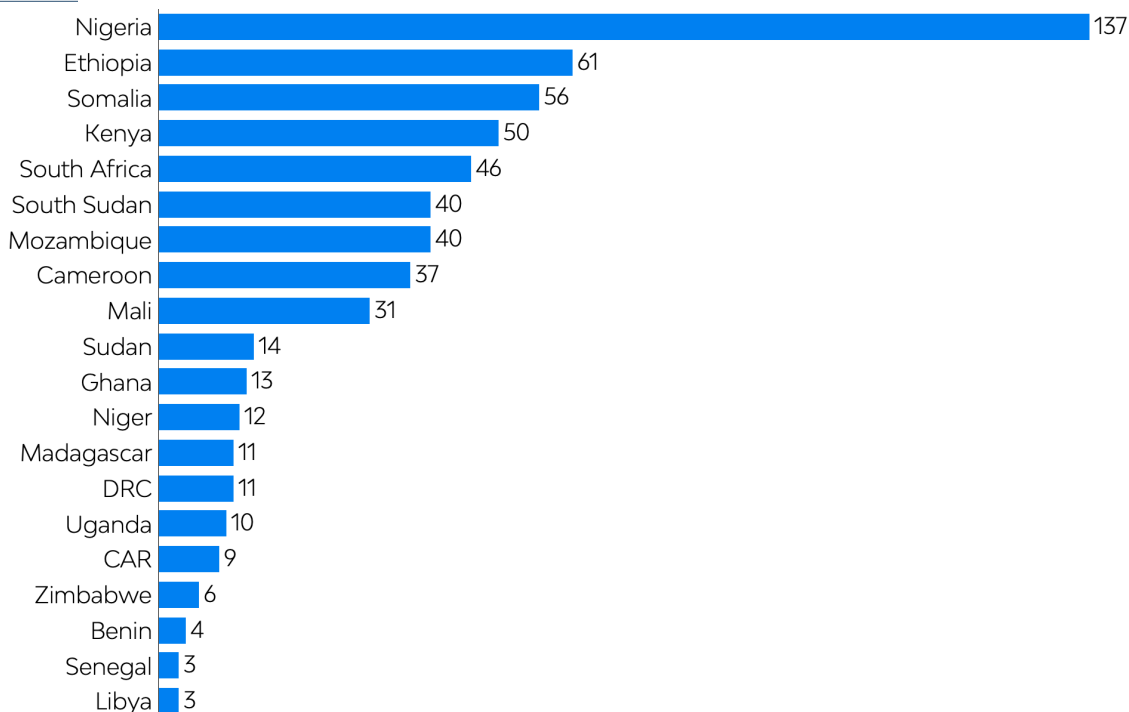
2021-2024



VISUAL APPENDIX

Countries with reported events of violence targeting local officials in Africa*

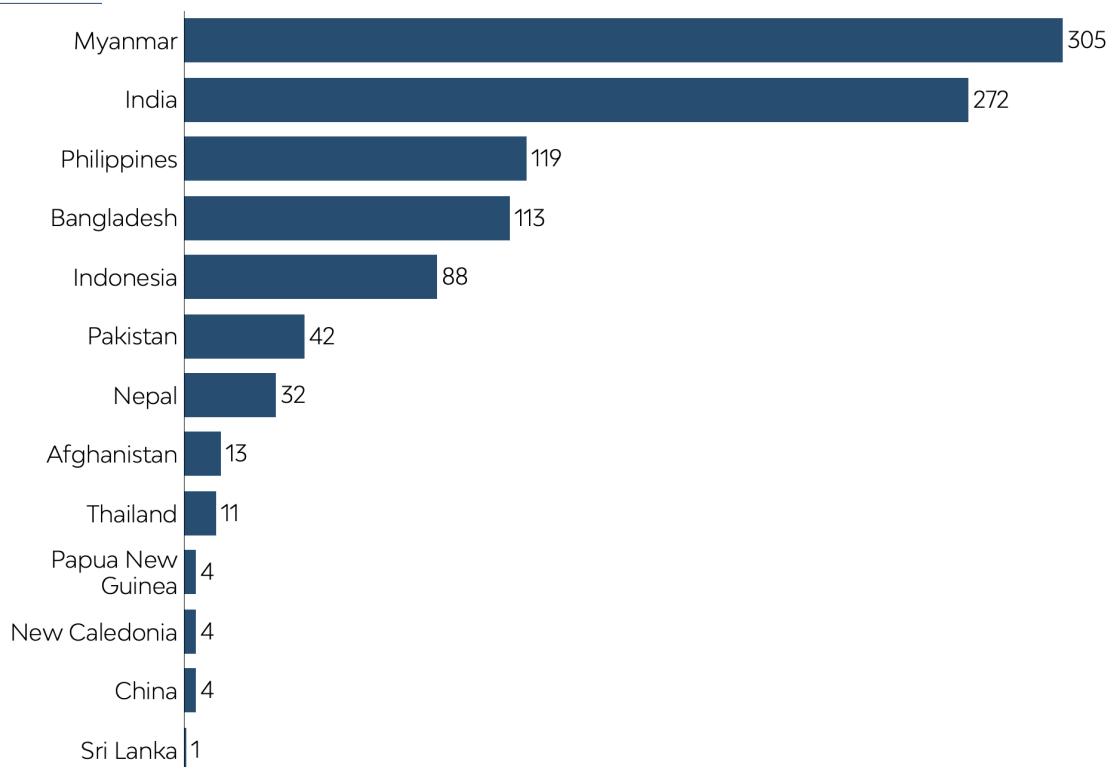
2024



*The following countries record one event: Angola, Burundi, Gabon, Liberia, Malawi, Morocco, Sao Tome and Principe, Togo
The following countries record two events: Burkina Faso, Chad, Comoros, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Mayotte, Tanzania

Countries with reported events of violence targeting local officials in Asia-Pacific

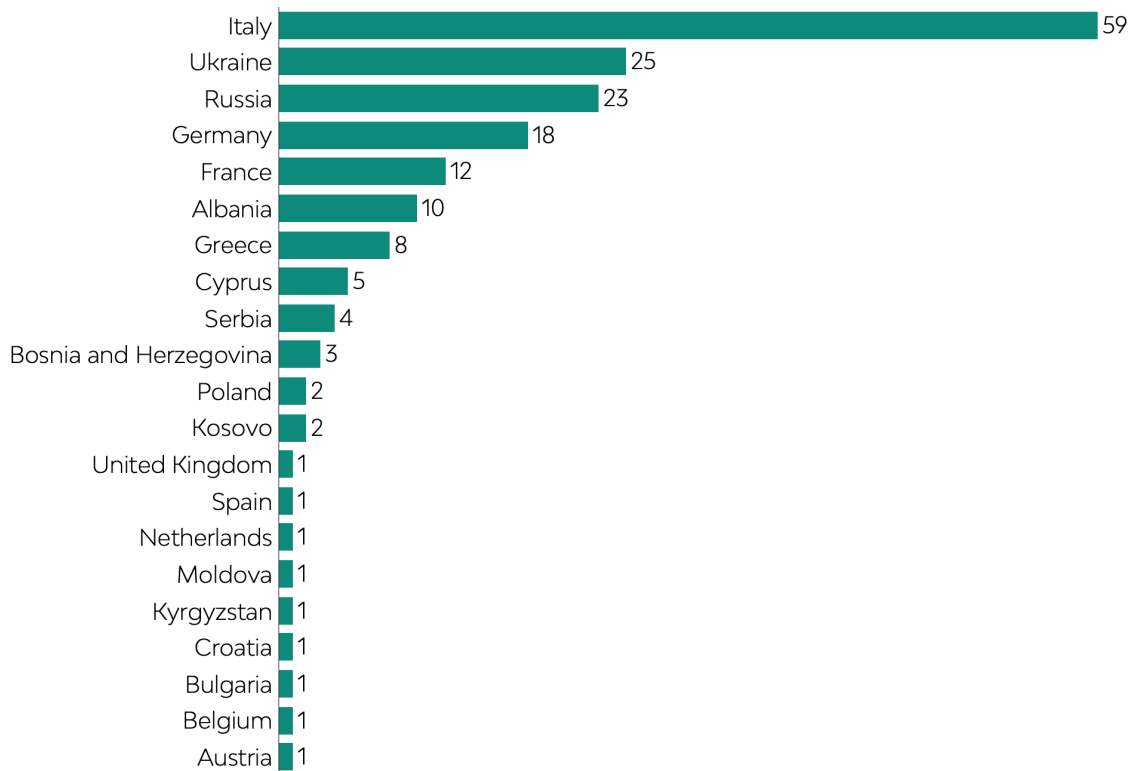
2024



VISUAL APPENDIX

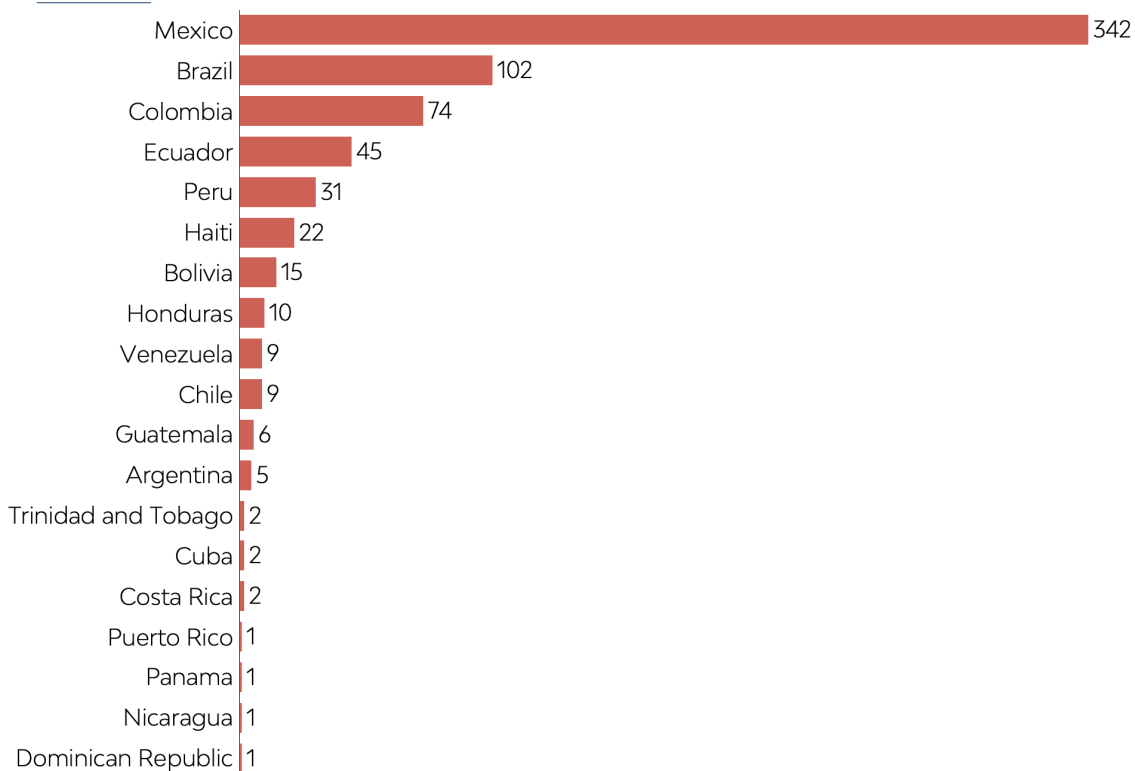
Countries with reported events of violence targeting local officials in Europe & Central Asia

2024



Countries with reported events of violence targeting local officials in Latin America & the Caribbean

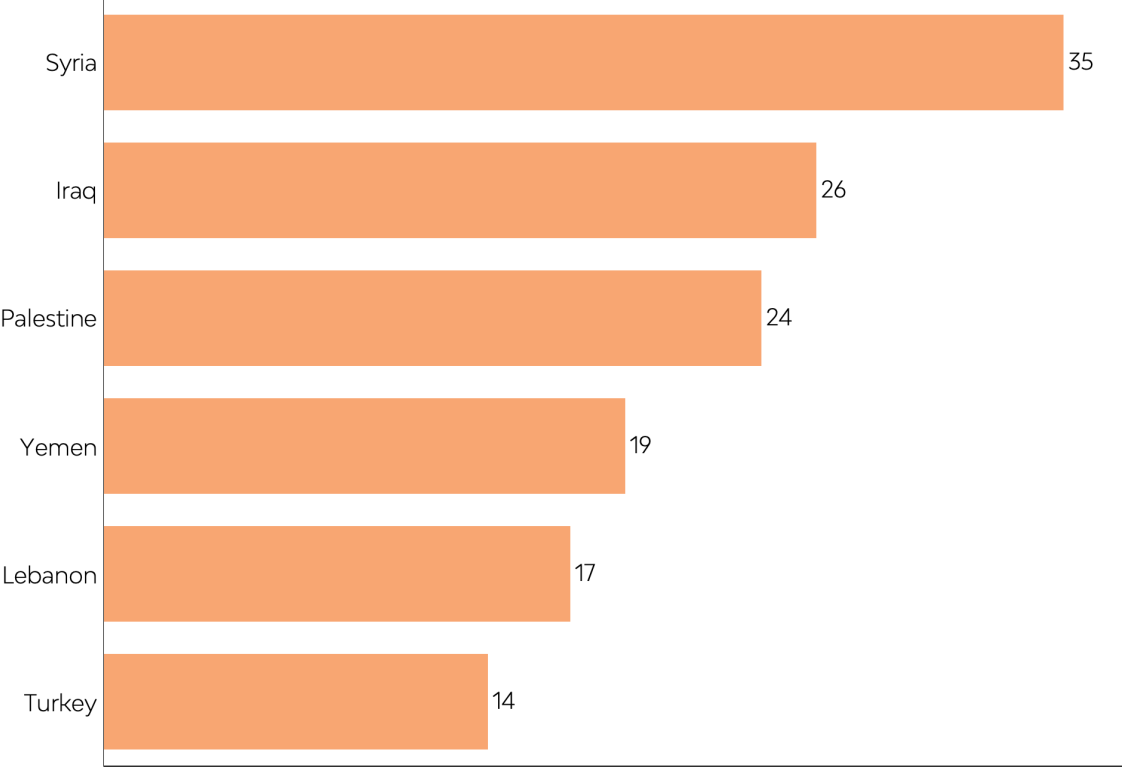
2024



VISUAL APPENDIX

**Countries with reported events of violence
targeting local officials in the Middle East**

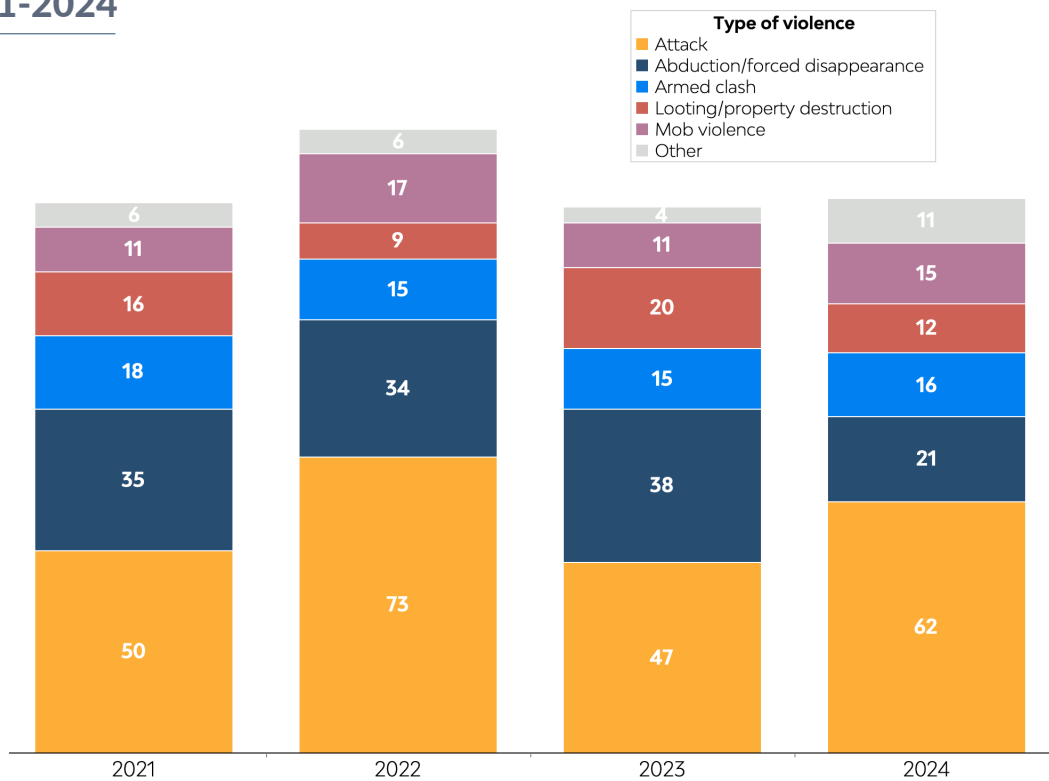
2024



VISUAL APPENDIX: AFRICA

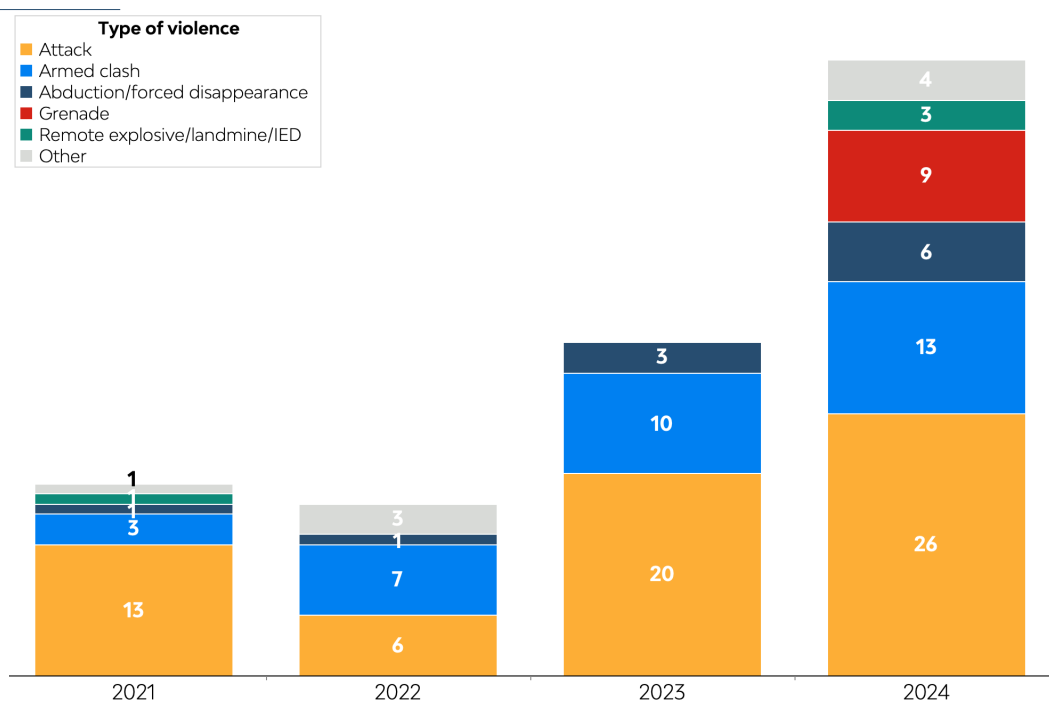
Violence targeting local officials by type of violence in Nigeria

2021-2024



Violence targeting local officials by type of violence in Ethiopia

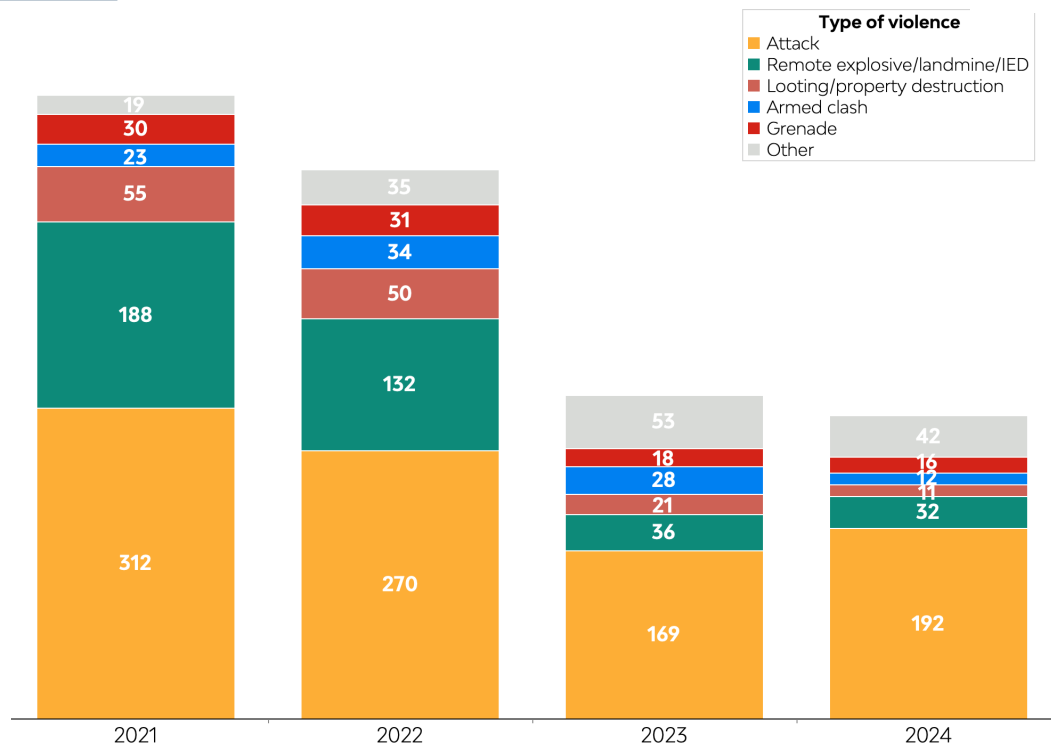
2021-2024



VISUAL APPENDIX: ASIA-PACIFIC

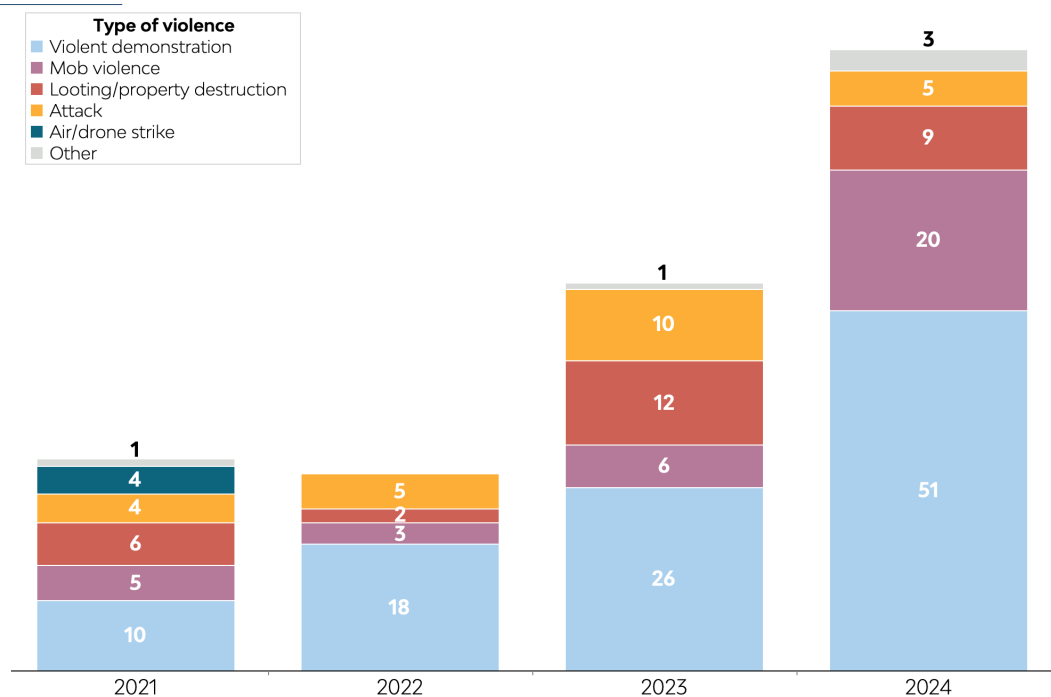
Violence targeting local officials by type of violence in Myanmar

2021-2024



Violence targeting local officials by type of violence in Indonesia

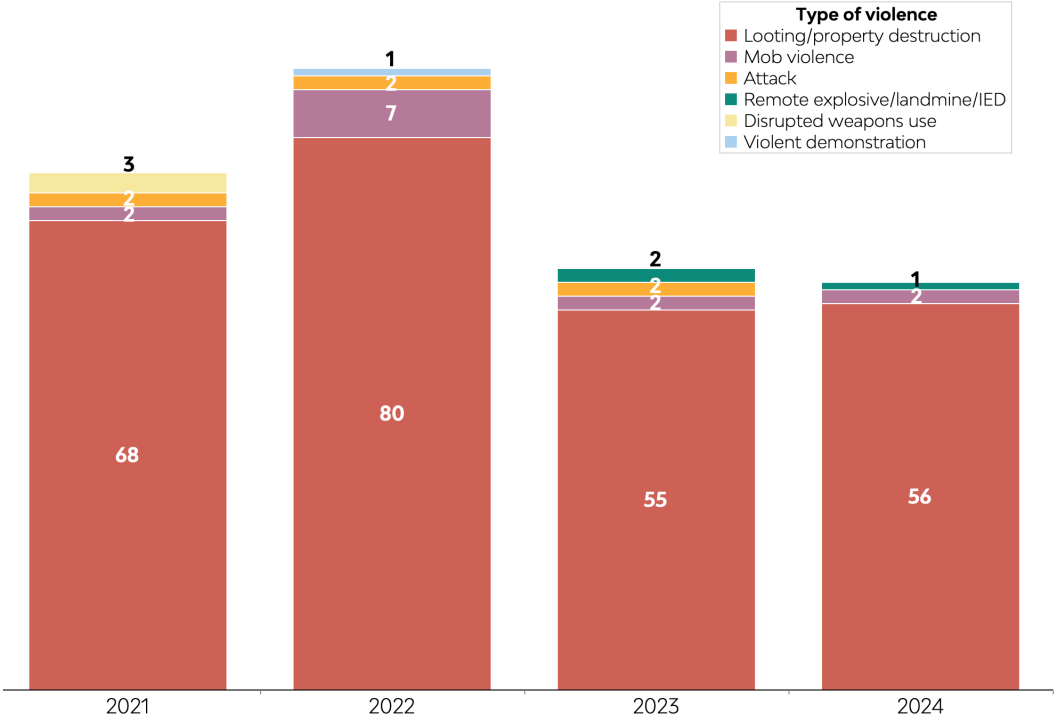
2021-2024



VISUAL APPENDIX: EUROPE & CENTRAL ASIA

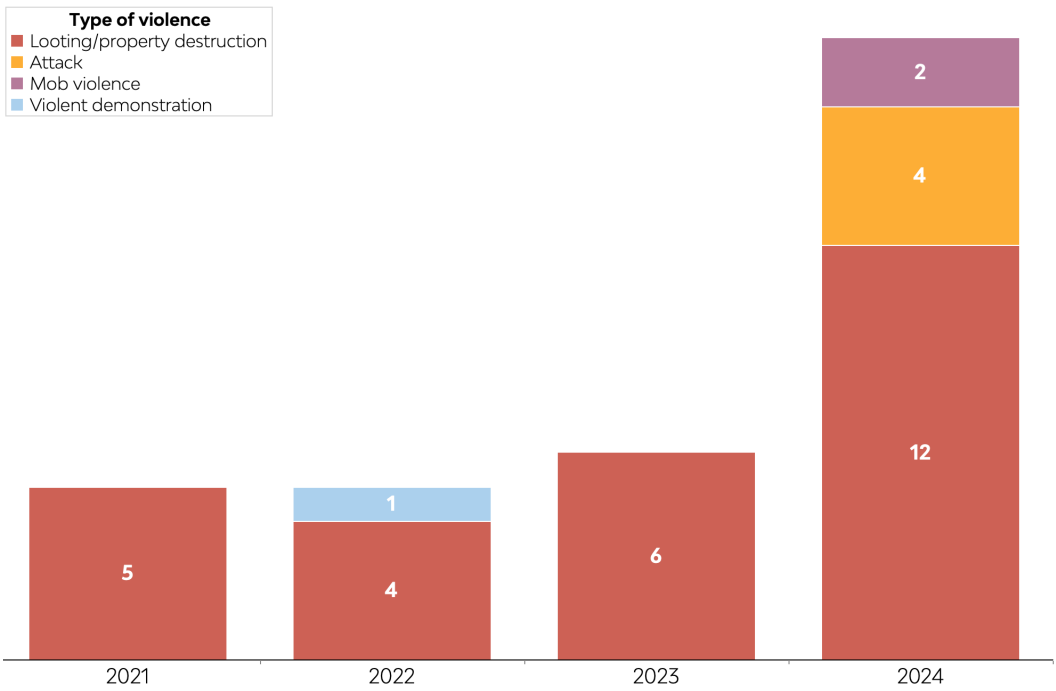
Violence targeting local officials by type of violence in Italy

2021-2024



Violence targeting local officials by type of violence in Germany

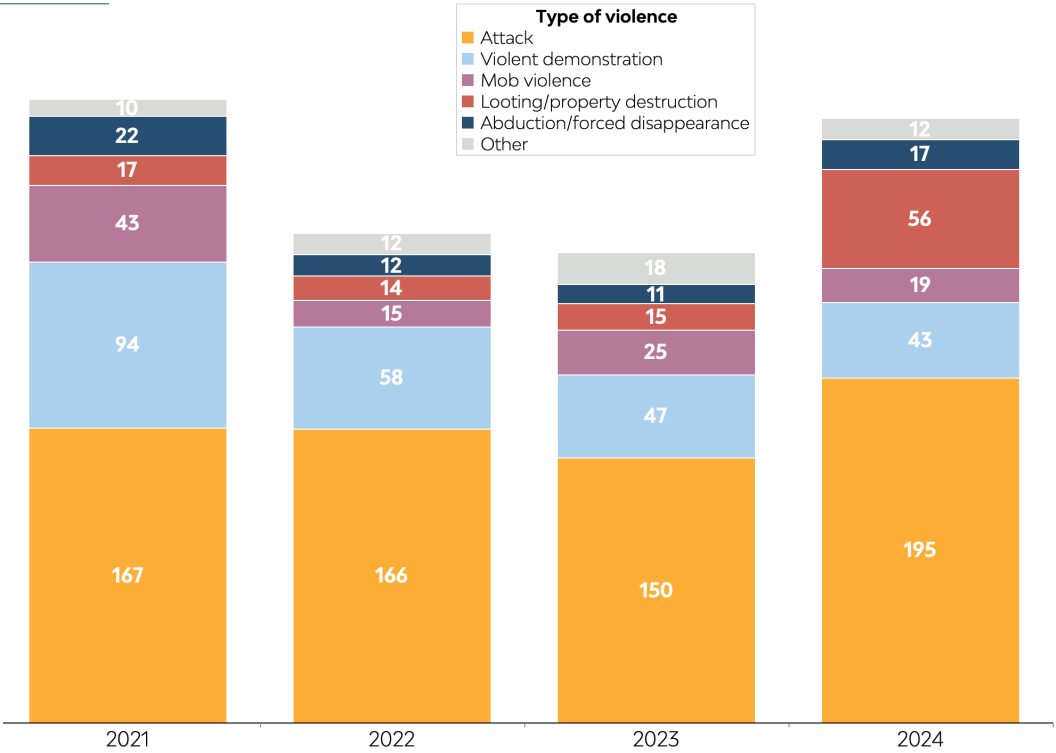
2021-2024



VISUAL APPENDIX: LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN

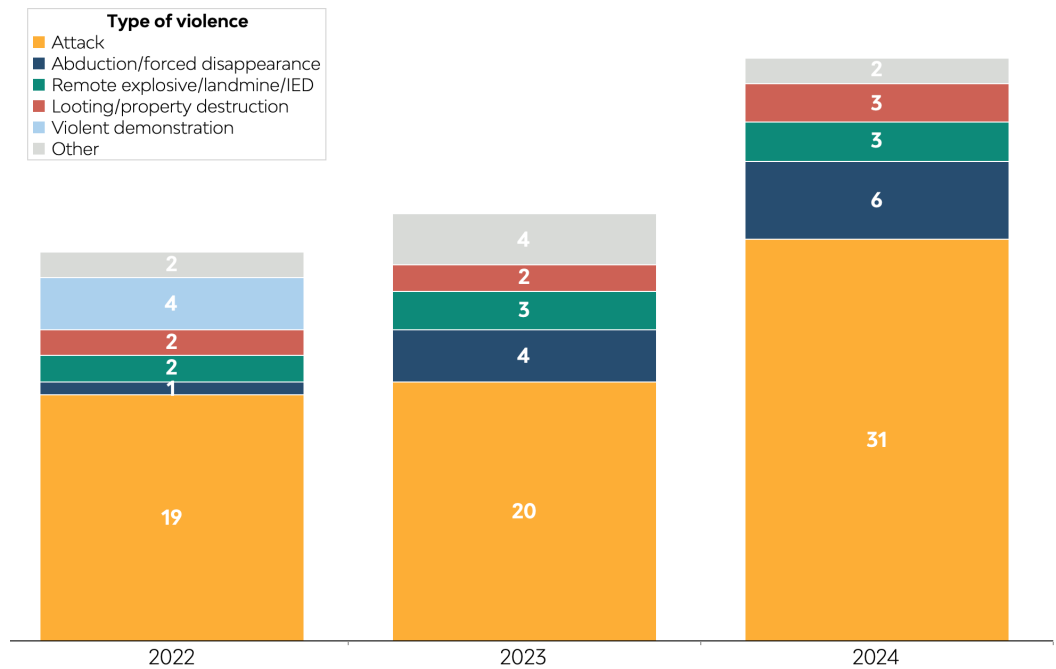
Violence targeting local officials by type of violence in Mexico

2021-2024



Violence targeting local officials by type of violence in Ecuador

2021-2024

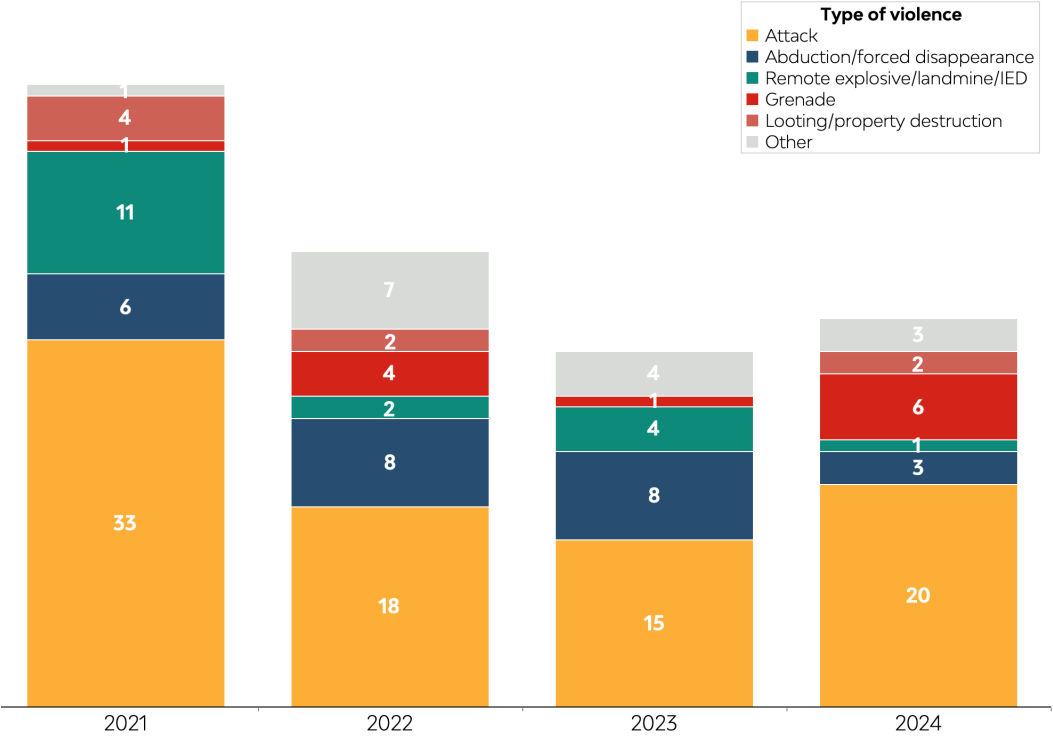


No events recorded in 2021

VISUAL APPENDIX: MIDDLE EAST

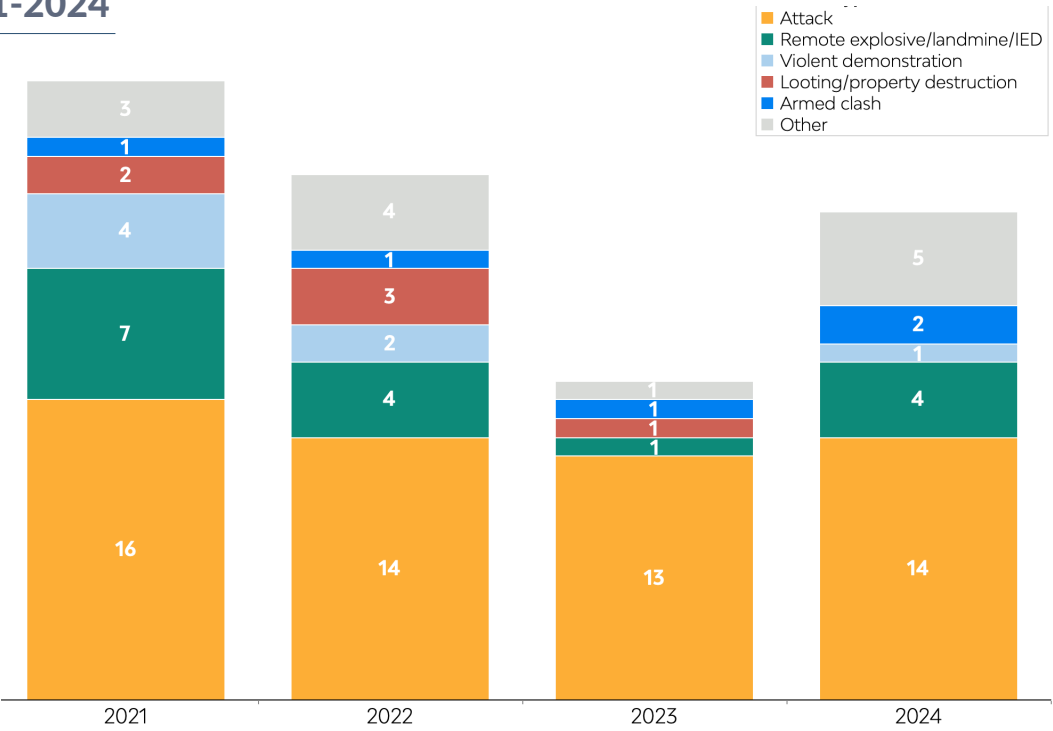
Violence targeting local officials by type of violence in Syria

2021-2024



Violence targeting local officials by type of violence in Iraq

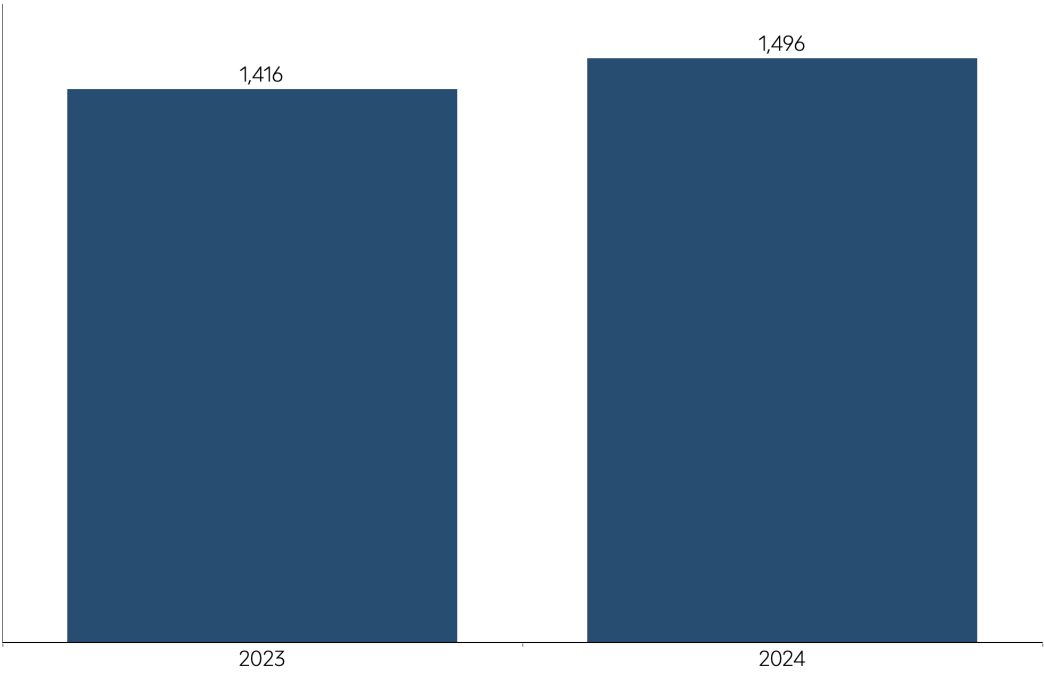
2021-2024



VISUAL APPENDIX: ELECTION-RELATED VIOLENCE

Events targeting local officials in countries that held elections in 2024

2023-2024



ENDNOTES

1. United Nations Development Programme, "A 'super year' for elections," accessed on 1 April 2025; International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, "The 2024 Global Elections Super-Cycle," accessed on 1 April 2025; IDEA, "The Global Elections Super-Cycle," accessed on 1 April 2025
2. Mark John and Sumanta Sen, "How this year of elections is set to reshape global politics," Reuters, 9 July 2024
3. Freedom House, "Freedom Map," accessed on 4 April 2024
4. Bringing Divides Initiative, "Analysis of Threat and Harassment Data for the 2024 Election," accessed on 1 April 2025
5. Luis Félix, "Lethal elections in Mexico," Global Initiative Against Transnational Crime, 31 May 2024 (Spanish)
6. S. P. Harish and Risa Toha, "A New Typology of Electoral Violence: Insights from Indonesia," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 3 May 2017, p. 693
7. Gianmarco Daniele and Gemma Dipoppa, "Mafia, elections and violence against politicians," *Journal of Public Economics*, October 2017, p. 11; Céline González and Sandra Ley, "Violated democracy: organized crime in elections and public administration in Mexico," *Mexico Evalua, Data Cívica, and Animal Político*, 16 April 2024 (Spanish)
8. Sebastian van Baalen, "Polls of fear? Electoral violence, incumbent strength, and voter turnout in Côte d'Ivoire," *Journal of Peace Research*, 16 April 2023, p. 597
9. Ana Arjona, Mario Chacón, and Laura García-Montoya, "The impact of political assassinations on turnout: Evidence from Colombia," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 11 March 2025, p. 10
10. Céline González and Sandra Ley, "Violated democracy: organized crime in elections and public administration in Mexico," *México Evalúa, Data Cívica, and Animal Político*, 16 April 2024 (Spanish)
11. Sarah Birch, Ursula Daxecker, and Kristine Höglund, "Electoral violence: An introduction," *Journal of Peace Research*, 3 January 2020, p. 4
12. Alejandra Rodriguez, "Popular Election of Judges in Mexico: Risk of Corruption and Inefficiency," *Insight Crime*, 6 November 2024
13. YouTube, @ethiopianmediaservices, "Ethiopian Media Services streaming," 17 August 2024 (Amharic); YouTube, @ethiopianmediaservices, "Ethiopian Media Services streaming," 2 September 2024 (Amharic)
14. Alemnew Mekonen and Eshete Bekele, "It has been reported that 37 leaders of Dega Damot district in the Amhara region have been killed," *Deutsche Welle*, 7 December 2024
15. Ladd Serwat and Eleanor Beevor, "Non-State Armed Groups and Illicit Economies in West Africa: Anglophone separatists," *ACLED and GITOC*, 10 September 2024; Flore Berger, "Kidnappings in the Sahel – a favoured weapon of war," *Institute for Security Studies*, 4 October 2023
16. Studio Tamani, "Kidnapping of elected municipal officials in Yorosso," 27 June 2024 (French)
17. Jamaal Maxamed, "Latest news on explosions in Baidoa," *Caasimada Online*, 13 May 2024; Caasimada Online, "Jubaland minister attacked on the outskirts of Kismayo," 22 July 2024 (Somali)
18. Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, "Bandits shift kidnapping focus in Nigeria's north from rural areas to cities," *Risk Bulletin* # 11, October 2024
19. Katharine Houreld, "Political killings rock South Africa as it heads into elections," *The Washington Post*, 28 May 2024
20. Rumbidzai Matamba and Chwayita Thobela, "The politics of murder: criminal governance and targeted killings in South Africa," *Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime*, 20 May 2024
21. Wale Adebani, "Democracy and Nigeria's Fourth Republic: Governance, Political Economy, and Party Politics 1999-2023," *Boydell and Brewer*, 2023, pp. 1-32, 313-326
22. Eniola Akinkuotu, "Nigeria: Shell warns of violence in Rivers after Wike threatens impeachment," *The Africa Report*, 14 March 2025; Kunle Adeniyi, "Tinubu Declares State of Emergency in Rivers, Suspends Governor Fubara, Lawmakers," *Fellow Press*, 18 March 2025
23. Kingsley Madueke et al. "Non-State Armed Groups and Illicit Economies in West Africa: Armed Bandits in Nigeria," *ACLED and GI-TOC*, 5 July 2024
24. Musa Umar Bologi, "Mass Exodus Follows Abductions In A North-central Nigeria Community," *HumAngle*, 21 September 2022
25. Omeiza Ajayi, "How village head collected N700,000 bribe from bandits, allowed invasion, killing of 30 villagers," *Vanguard*, 1 June 2024
26. Oromo Liberation Front- Oromo Liberation Army (OLF-OLA), "A brief political manifesto," *Addis Standard*, January 2023
27. Borkena, "Aba Torbe – Oromo clandestine assassin group – members captured, says govt.," 24 December 2018
28. Military Coup Myanmar, "An 'outburst of anger': Local administrators under fire," 6 May 2024
29. Peter Chalk, "The Insurgency," in *The Malay-Muslim Insurgency in Southern Thailand--Understanding the Conflict's Evolving Dynamic*, RAND Corporation, 2008, p. 5
30. Abubakar Siddique, "What's Behind The Deadly Surge Of Violence In Pakistan's Balochistan?" *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 23 April 2024; Yunas Samad, "The Balochistan Quagmire: A Cycle of Violence, Political Mobilization, and Repression," *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, 14 March 2025
31. Human Rights Watch, "Thailand: Insurgents Bomb District Office in Deep South," 10 March 2025
32. John Felix M. Unson, "Another ethnic group chieftain in BARMM shot dead," *BusinessWorld*, 11 December 2024
33. *Ukhrul Times*, "Kuki Armed groups launch rocket attack on former CM's Residence; one dead, five injured," 6 September 2024
34. Edwin Fernandez, "BARMM lawmaker offers P200K for arrest of office grenade attacker," *Philippine News Agency*, 16 October 2024; Ferdinand Cabera, "Gunmen kill town council bet in Maguindanao del Sur ambush," *Rappler*, 21 October 2024
35. Drema Quitayen Bravo, "Police launch manhunt for killers of UBJP member," *Inquirer*, 2 July 2024
36. Anbarasan Ethirajan and Hannah Ritchie, "What sparked the protests that toppled Bangladesh's PM?" *BBC*, 6 August 2024
37. *The Daily Star*, "76 killed in attacks, clashes outside capital," 6 August 2024
38. François Tromeur, "Violence in New Caledonia: unrest during the night, especially in Païta, and still today," *France Info*, 27 June 2024 (French)
39. *The Guardian*, "Macron suspends controversial voting reforms in New Caledonia after deadly unrest," 13 June 2024
40. Julie Straboni, "Five arrests at the Île des Pins following the attack of two elected officials," *France Info*, 3 September 2024 (French)

ENDNOTES

41. Al Jazeera, "Indonesia scraps plan to change election law after thousands protest," 22 August 2024
42. Council of Europe, "International Day of Non-Violence: Violence against grassroots politicians has a chilling effect on local democracy," 1 October 2024 (Italian)
43. Andrea Carboni, Ana Marco, and Kieran Doyle, "The Year of Elections Was Also a Year of Electoral Violence," *World Politics Review*, 24 January 2025; Silvia Ayuso, Almudena de Cabo, and Juan Navarro, "La oleada de agresiones a políticos desata la alarma en Europa: 'Me atacaron de forma repentina e inesperada,'" *El País*, 12 May 2024 (Spanish)
44. Paul Hocken, "Politics Is Especially Violent in Germany," *Foreign Policy*, 6 June 2024
45. MDR, "Attacks on public officials and elected representatives increased in 2024," 4 February 2025 (German)
46. France 24, "More than 50 candidates and activists assaulted in French election campaign, interior minister says," 5 July 2024; Antoine Belhassen, "'He punched me': an elected official attacked while pasting up posters for Olivier Véran's campaign, a man in police custody," *France 3 Régions*, 4 July 2024 (French)
47. The Journal, "We feared for our lives': Fingal councillor Tania Doyle attacked while putting up posters," 12 May 2024; Jennifer Bray, "Green Party councillor attacked while hanging posters in Dublin," *The Irish Times*, 15 May 2024
48. Talha Ozturk, "Car belonging to Kosovo's Serb-born mayor set ablaze," *Anadolu Agency*, 29 January 2024
49. Vladimir Karaj and Fjori Sinoruka, "Albanian Mayor Takes Aim at Corruption Prosecutor from Detention," *Balkan Insight*, 25 February 2025
50. Aleksandar Vasovic, "Serbian protesters clash with police over train station disaster," *Reuters*, 6 November 2024
51. In-Cyprus, "Unexploded bomb found at village authority office," 3 December 2024; *Le Point*, "250 mayors call on France not to give in to drug trafficking," 19 March 2025 (French); In-Cyprus, "Police concerned over attack against prosecutor in Paphos," 17 January 2024
52. Klix, "Sarajevo: Bomb thrown in Old Town, residential buildings damaged," 27 March 2024 (Bosnian); Klix, "Police on the bomb thrown at Irfan Čengić's house: Two cars and two residential buildings were damaged," 2 April 2024, (Bosnian)
53. Center for Investigative Reporting, "Former Sarajevo Mayor Ibrahim Hadžibajrić Faces Serious Corruption Charges," 18 April 2024
54. Senato della Repubblica, "Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry into the phenomenon of intimidation against local administrators," 3 March 2015 (Italian)
55. Patrizia Maciocchi, "Administrators in the crosshairs: a threat every 28 hours," *Il Sole 24 Ore*, 17 April 2024 (Italian)
56. Claudio Forleo, "Those who target a local administrator target the entire community and aim at the country's democracy," *Avviso Pubblico*, 29 June 2023 (Italian)
57. Thorsten Faas, "Polarization despite stability," *Freie Universität Berlin*, 20 February 2025 (German)
58. Maria Martinez, "Germans worried about economic malaise ahead of election, survey finds," *Reuters*, 10 February 2025
59. Bettina Stehkämper, "More and more German mayors want to quit," *Deutsche Welle*, 14 April 2024
60. Nette Nöstlinger, "The firewall against the German far right is crumbling," *Politico*, 30 August 2024; Rolf Frankenberger, "These maps of support for Germany's far-right AfD lay bare the depth of the urban-rural divide," *The Conversation*, 6 February 2025
61. Hans Pfeifer, "AfD, Trump and Co: Politics of division," *Deutsche Welle*, 13 March 2025 (German)
62. Guillermo Trejo and Sandra Ley, "Votes, Drugs, and Violence: The Political Logic of Criminal Wars in Mexico," Cambridge University Press, 2020, p. 216; Alberto Coronado, "In Colombia, the armed groups are no longer interested in making a revolution, but rather having power over the lives of people and communities," *Luis Fernando Trejos*, *Contexto Media*, 6 March 2025 (Spanish); Kees Koonings and Dirk Kruijt, "Hybrid violence and criminal governance in Latin America," *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 2023
63. Guillermo Trejo and Sandra Ley, "Votes, Drugs, and Violence: The Political Logic of Criminal Wars in Mexico," Cambridge University Press, 2020, p. 230
64. Laura Cortez Palacios, "Something imminent may happen: alarming warning about the security of ombudsmen in Colombia; more than 100 are under threat," *El País*, 13 October 2024 (Spanish)
65. Enrique Domínguez, "No personal security for mayors, state government reiterates," *El Sol de Cuernavaca*, 19 December 2024 (Spanish)
66. Aldo F. Ponce, Rodrigo Velázquez López Velarde, and Jaime Sáinz Santamaría, "Do local elections increase violence? Electoral cycles and organized crime in Mexico," *Trends in Organized Crime*, 2019, pp. 44-45
67. InSight Crime, "Lobos," 3 December 2024; InSight Crime, "Choneros," 3 December 2024
68. Ecuavisa, "The influence of Los Choneros' close circle in Manta's transit agency," 1 June 2024 (Spanish)
69. Primicias, "Five transit officials in Manabí arrested for alleged links to 'Los Choneros,'" 18 July 2024 (Spanish); Ecuavisa, "Criminal gangs reportedly infiltrating transit agencies: Manta at center of the crisis," 13 April 2024 (Spanish)
70. Opinión, "Evistas violently take over the city hall of Ocurí, Potosí and beat up three councilors," 6 March 2024 (Spanish); *Correo del Sur*, "A councilman was kidnapped by Evo's supporters in Potosí, according to reports," 1 February 2024 (Spanish); Verónica Calderón, "Mayor of La Paz is injured during demonstration by Evo Morales supporters," *CNN en Español*, 10 July 2024 (Spanish)
71. Manuella Mariani and André Salamucha, "Alternate arrested on charges of having elected councilor killed in Paraná: Political motivation," *G1*, 19 November 2024 (Portuguese)
72. Joaquín Díaz, "Tension in Campamento Dignidad: stones thrown at Mayor Carter and municipal officials after ordering eviction of the settlement," *La Tercera*, 14 March 2024 (Spanish)
73. Teodoro Rentería, "Community members tie the mayor of Ocuituco to a pole; they accuse him of delivering unfinished works," *El Financiero*, 17 December 2024 (Spanish)
74. Giovanni B. Corvino, "State Authority and Lynching in Latin America," *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, 2021, pp. 5-6; José Miguel Cruz and Gema Kloppe-Santamaría, "Determinants of Support for Extralegal Violence in Latin America and the Caribbean," *Latin American Research Review*, 2019, p. 60
75. Latinobarómetro, "2024 Latinobarómetro report: the resilient democracy," accessed on 25 March 2025 (Spanish); Emilia Rojas Sasse, "Lynchings in Latin America: a powder keg of vulnerability," *Deutsche Welle*, 14 June 2022 (Spanish)

ENDNOTES

76. El Financiero, "Alejandro Arcos: Why was the mayor of Chilpancingo killed and what does Los Ardillos have to do with it?" 14 November 2024 (Spanish)
77. Instituto Nacional Electoral, "2024 Elections," 2023-2024 (Spanish)
78. Rafael Croda, "Sinaloa: Armed deterrence as a tool of political control," Proceso, 31 May 2024 (Spanish)
79. International Crisis Group, "Ecuador's High Tide of Drug Violence," 4 November 2022
80. James Bargent, "Ecuador: A Cocaine Superhighway to the US and Europe," InSight Crime, 30 October 2019
81. Código Vidrio, "Illegal mining mafias may be behind the executions of the mayors of Portovelo and Ponce Enriquez," 19 April 2024 (Spanish)
82. Abel Alvarado and Tara John, "Ecuadorian prosecutor investigating TV station attack has been assassinated, attorney general says," CNN, 18 January 2024
83. Alexander García, "Luis Chonillo, Mayor of Durán: 'No criminal power can prosper without political power,'" Primicias, 17 June 2024 (Spanish)
84. Bashar Taleb, "Gaza town says mayor killed in Israeli strike on water station," Al-Monitor, 7 June 2024; Human Rights Watch, "Extermination and Acts of Genocide Israel Deliberately Depriving Palestinians in Gaza of Water," 19 December 2024
85. Yasser Al-Banna, "The fourth mayor of Gaza assassinated by Israel... Who is Diab Al-Jaru?" Al Jazeera, 16 December 2024 (Arabic)
86. William Christou, "Israeli strike kills Lebanese mayor at meeting to coordinate aid deliveries," The Guardian, 16 October 2024
87. Since October 2023, over 120,000 firearms have been distributed to Israeli settlers, with Ben-Gvir stating on his X account in October 2024, "We intend to continue arming Israel. That's what we did, and that's what we'll continue to do!" Abdelraouf Arnaout, "Over 120,000 firearms distributed among Israeli settlers since Gaza war: Minister," 7 October 2024
88. Saeed Al-Batati, "Yemeni official among 13 abducted by Houthis in Ibb over revolution celebrations," Arab News, 7 October 2024; Yemeni Archive, "Houthis Arrest September Revolution Anniversary Celebrants," 28 January 2025
89. Jumada al-Awwal, "A local official in central Yemen was attacked by gunmen from a prominent Houthi leader," Al-Mashhad News, 24 November 2024 (Arabic)
90. Al Masdra Online, "Houthi militias kidnap a young man to pressure his mother to quit her job as a 'neighborhood leader' in Ibb," 17 January 2024 (Arabic)
91. Yemen-Window, "A government official was brutally assassinated in the Brotherhood-controlled areas," 20 October 2024 (Arabic); Yemen Window, "Taiz axis militants attack the home of an official months after an assassination attempt on him and his son," 10 November 2024 (Arabic); Al-Mashhad News, "A prominent leader in Radfan was arrested after criticizing the suppression of the Ashal million-man march in Aden," 9 August 2024 (Arabic)
92. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, "Following threats, ISIS cells assassinate an employee in the municipality of Al-Busayrah city in the eastern Deir ez-Zor countryside," 29 June 2024 (Arabic); The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, "ISIS cells target the home of the head of the Civil Council in eastern Deir ez-Zor," 7 October 2024 (Arabic); North Press Agency, "Assassination of a local official in Deir ez-Zor," 4 November 2024 (Arabic)
93. Aaron Y. Zelin and Devorah Margolin, "The Islamic State's Shadow Governance in Eastern Syria Since the Fall of Baghuz," Combating Terrorism Center, September 2023
94. ANF News, "Action from MAK to Hinis District Governorate," 20 April 2024 (Turkish); ANF News, "Action in three cities against usurpation of will by HBDH militia," 10 June 2024 (Turkish); ANF News, "HBDH militia targeted fascist factories and business centers," 11 September (Turkish)
95. Al-Masdar, "A local official in Shabwa survived an assassination attempt, while his son and two of his companions were killed in an ambush by tribal gunmen," 19 May 2024 (Arabic)
96. Al-Masdar, "Shabwa: One person killed and six others injured in tribal clashes in Usaylan District," 24 February 2024 (Arabic)
97. Al-Masdar, "A local official was kidnapped by unknown gunmen in Lahj," 9 August 2024 (Arabic)
98. Al-Mirbad, "Dhi Qar: The Nasr District mayor's building was targeted with a missile launcher," 31 July 2024 (Arabic)
99. Andrea Carboni, Ana Marco, and Kieran Doyle, "The Year of Elections Was Also a Year of Electoral Violence," World Politics Review, 24 January 2025
100. Medya News, "Burning of ballots was deliberate act by ruling AKP members to invalidate elections: Opposition MP," 5 April 2024
101. Beyaz Gazette, "Armed Harassment at the House of the Mayor Who Won the Election in Giresun," 1 April 2024
102. Rudaw, "Kurdistan security council blames PKK for attack on KDP official," 16 July 2024 (Arabic)
103. ANF News, "Armed attack in Dohuk targets the headquarters of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan," 28 September 2024 (Arabic)
104. Winthrop Rodger, "Will KDP-PUK tensions threaten Iraqi Kurdistan's unity?" The New Arab, 4 November 2024
105. Eyad Kourdi and Kareem El Damanhoury, "Syria's new government strikes deal to integrate powerful Kurdish rival in landmark agreement," CNN, 11 March 2025
106. Hasan Al-Nasry, "Power struggle in Thi Qar met with reform protests," Iraqi Network for Investigative Journalism, 17 July 2024
107. Emirates Policy Center, "Maysan and the cycle of violence in southern Iraq," 23 March 2022
108. Bilal Wahab, "The paradox of centralization and state fracture in Iraq," European Institute for Studies on the Middle East and North Africa, 7 December 2022
109. Bridging Divides Initiative, "Survey on Threats and Harassment: Fourth Quarter 2024," 2024
110. Jana G. Pruden, "Suspect in Edmonton City Hall attack raised 'no red flags,' employer says," The Globe and Mail, 25 January 2024
111. Sidhartha Banerjee, "Harassment is pushing Quebec's municipal leaders out of politics," National Observer, 30 December 2024
112. Andrew Lupton, "Faced with hate, municipal politicians want help turning down the temperature," CBC, 19 July 2024
113. Jason Viau, "Why some Canadian municipalities fund home security for elected officials while others are secretive about it," CBC News, 2 October 2024



2024 ANNUAL REPORT

VIOLENCE TARGETING LOCAL OFFICIALS

