ACLED History

The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) is a disaggregated data collection, analysis, and crisis mapping project. ACLED codes the dates, actors, locations, fatalities, and types of all reported political violence and demonstration events in more than 150 countries and territories in real-time. As of 2020, ACLED has recorded almost a million individual events across Africa, the Middle East, Latin America & the Caribbean, East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Central Asia & the Caucasus, and Southeastern & Eastern Europe & the Balkans.

Since 2014, ACLED has operated as a US 501(c)(3) non-profit organization incorporated in Wisconsin. Data are collected and analyzed by teams of researchers based around the world. ACLED is led by founder and Executive Director Prof. Clionadh Raleigh, a Professor of Political Violence and Geography at the University of Sussex, and operated by Research Director Dr. Roudabeh Kishi and Program Director Olivia Russell.

In 2005, ACLED began as a component of Prof. Raleigh's PhD work, with a focus on African states. She developed the idea while on a fellowship at the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO). Initial data collection covered six Central African states and three West African states. In 2008, while Prof. Raleigh was employed at Trinity College, Dublin, ACLED expanded to cover the 50 least developed countries, with a concentration on African states. This led to the first version of the data in 2009 (pilot), which was tested with ground-truthing methods in 2010. Subsequently, Version 2 was released in 2011, Version 3 in 2012, and Version 4 in 2013. Each version extended and revised collections of political violence and protest data in African states. New additions – including remote violence, and revised terminology – were added in Versions 5, 6, and 7. Version 8 expanded to include 14 states in South and Southeast Asia as well as 15 in the Middle East, and was released in early 2018. (Versions 1-8 of the dataset are available upon request). This release brought the total number of countries covered to 79.

Following the release of Version 8, and encouraged by a partnership with The University of Texas at Austin, ACLED transitioned to a dynamic project that collects data in real-time and releases updates on a weekly basis.

ACLED presently collects real-time data on political violence and demonstration activity across Africa, the Middle East, Latin America & the Caribbean, East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Central Asia & the Caucasus, and Southeastern & Eastern Europe & the Balkans. Data on Western Europe will be released in 2020, with weekly releases of real-time data thereafter. ACLED also maintains special thematic and country-specific projects, including the COVID-19 Disorder Tracker and the US Crisis Monitor.

In addition to data collection, the ACLED team conducts analysis to describe, explore, and test conflict scenarios, with analysis made freely available to the public for non-commercial use (please see ACLED's Terms of Use and Attribution Policy). ACLED material is regularly used to inform journalism, academic research, and public discourse on conflict, and to support the work of practitioners and policymakers. ACLED is the highest quality and most widely used real-time data and analysis source on political violence and protest around the world.