Strategies and Tactics in Armed Conflict (STAC)
Dataset Codebook

Note: this codebook accompanies the article:

Sullivan, Patricia L., and Johannes Karreth. 2019a. "Strategies and Tactics in Armed Conflict: How Governments and Foreign Interveners Respond to Insurgent Threats." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 63 (9): 2207–32.

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Internal Armed Conflict Data

An internal armed conflict is defined as conflict between an incumbent government and an armed, organized domestic opponent that resulted in at least 25 deaths directly attributable to one of the actors within one year. Domestic unrest (e.g. demonstrations, protests, rioting) that cannot be linked to an organized group with a political objective does not qualify as an armed conflict for the purposes of this study, even if the unrest results in 25 or more deaths.

Conflict Identifiers

startdate

Date the conflict began**.** Defined as the date on which an organized opposition group first used violence in a year that eventually resulted in at least 25 deaths directly attributable to one of the actors. If an exact date cannot be identified, the first of the month can be used as the start date.

Coding: DDmmmYYYY (example: 01feb1990)

enddate

Date the conflict ended. Defined as the date of a negotiated agreement, peace treaty, or surrender if violence falls below 25 conflict-related deaths in the following year. If the government changes hands (i.e., the rebels win and gain control of government), the present conflict ends and, if fighting continues, a new conflict begins on this date. Otherwise, the conflict end date is the last day of the year prior to a year in which conflict-related deaths fall below 25 for at least two consecutive years.

Coding: DDmmmYYYY

styr

Year the conflict began.

Coding: YYYY (example:1990)

endyr

Year the conflict ended.

Coding: YYYY (example:2000)

conflictcountry

The country in which the conflict took place.

Coding: text

ccode

COW 3-digit country code of **conflictcountry**

conflictid

Unique identifiers for each conflict.

Coding: ccode*10000 + styr

dyadid_ucdp

Identifier for government-rebel group dyads, taken from the UCDP Dyadic Dataset.

conflictid_UCDP

Identifies which conflict in the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset any given dyad is a part of.

sideBID_UCDP

The identifier of the rebel group (rebel1) in the conflict, taken from the UCDP Dyadic Dataset.

rebel1

Name of the primary armed opposition (rebel) group opposing the central government.

Coding: text

rebel2

Name of a secondary armed opposition (rebel) group if applicable.

Coding: text

incgov

Name of incumbent government / civil war regime at conflict startdate.

Coding: text

region

Region of the country in which the fighting was concentrated. Depending on the conflict this could be the name of a province, state, or administrative district in the conflict country, a description (e.g., “primarily the southern half of the country, south of the capital to the border with Pakistan”), or a named region (e.g., the Darfur region of Sudan). If dispersed throughout the county, enter “entire country”.

Coding: text

Conflict Characteristics

Concentration (territorial spread)

Estimate the percentage of the geographic area of the country that experienced significant violence related to the conflict at *any* point during the conflict. Violence should be considered significant if battles/clashes between the rebels and government forces took place in a region, civilians were killed by government or rebel forces in a region, or government or rebel attacks occurred regularly in a region.

1 Less than 25%

2 25-50%

3 50-75%

4 More than 75%

wholecntry

Variable indicating that more than 75% of the country is affected by the conflict.

0 No

1 Yes

halfcntry

Variable indicating that more than 50% of the country is affected by the conflict.

0 No

1 Yes

duration

Total number of days in conflict.

Coding: enddate - startdate

conflictethnic

Dummy variable coded 1 if the conflict is primarily an ethnic conflict. Following a conventional definition, ethnic conflicts involve "groups that identify with a distinct ethnic or cultural heritage" (Regan 1996: 338). Ethnic wars have been defined as "wars among communities (ethnicities) who are in conflict over the power relationship that exists between those communities and the state" (Sambanis 2001: 261). Additionally, the groups in ethnic conflicts "hold irreconcilable visions of the identity, borders, and citizenship of the state. They do not seek to control a state whose identity all sides accept, but rather to redefine or divide the state itself" (Kaufman 1996: 138).

0 No

1 Yes

ethnicgroups

When applicable, name the primary ethnic group or groups contributing rebel fighters to the opposition movement.

Coding: text

conflictideol

Dummy variable coded 1 if the conflict is primarily an ideological conflict, with alignments across ethnic lines. Insurgents may strive for a different regime type and/or political order, but their primary aim does not incorporate the systematic exclusion of specific ethnic or religious groups.

0 No
1 Yes

conflictrelig

Dummy variable coded 1 if insurgent leaders frequently and systematically invoke religion as a motivation and justification for the conflict (cf. Juergensmeyer 2003: 57).

0 No
1 Yes

conflictsecess

Dummy variable coded 1 if the rebels' primary aim is to create a separate state outside the current regime's authority.

Coding:

0 No
1 Yes

Note: The variables indicating that a conflict is ethnic or ideological are mutually exclusive. A conflict cannot be both primarily ethnic and primarily ideological. In contrast, *conflictethnic*, c*onflictrelig* and *conflictsecess* are not mutually exclusive—a conflict can be primarily ethnic with or without a secessionist aim, both a secessionist conflict and one in which leaders systematically invoke religion as a motivation and justification, or ethnic and religious at the same time. Approximately 5% of the conflicts in the dataset do not fall into any of the categories.

Counter-insurgency Strategy

Note: Consider how much the government emphasized each tactic relative to the other tactics in its overall strategic approach to counter the threat posed by the rebel group, rather than relative to the prevalence of that tactic in other armed conflicts. Also keep in mind, however, that projects to improve the material wellbeing of civilians and civilian protection are less likely to be reported by the news media or nongovernmental organizations, and less likely to be noted in most secondary sources, than strategic bombing, civilian targeting, or forced resettlement.

Be careful to code these variables in reference to the **government**, not the actions of a foreign country that intervened to assist the government. For example, if the government built schools in conflict zones with funding and assistance provided by a foreign government, that activity can be attributed to the government. If, however, intervening state troops built and secured the schools, those projects should not be attributed to the conflict country's government.

Finally, these variables should be coded in reference to the entire conflict, from **startdate** to **enddate**. For example, if the government began COIN operations with a light force model but used a heavy force model for the majority of the conflict, this variable would be coded as 2. You can note these types of changes in strategy or tactics in your case notes.

Forcemodel (Force model)

Primary type of force used by government troops.

1 Light force: Primarily relied on ground combat units that do not include large military equipment (may include close air support)

2 Heavy force: Primarily large-unit, concentrated firepower combat with mechanized units (may include strategic bombing)

Close air support is defined as "air action by fixed-wing (FW) and rotary-wing (RW) aircraft against hostile targets that are in close proximity to friendly forces. […] It is planned and executed to support ground tactical units. CAS execution is tightly integrated at the tactical level with the fire and maneuver of supported ground forces" (Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 3-09.3). Close air support can be provided by any unit of the armed forces.

Strategic bombing is defined as centrally coordinated aerial bombardment of military and civilian targets designed to destroy the opposition's will and ability to fight.

Strategicair (Strategic bombing)

What role did strategic bombing play in the government's military strategy? Strategic bombing is defined as centrally coordinated aerial bombardment of military and/or civilian targets designed to destroy the opposition's will and ability to fight.

1 None – no evidence of strategic bombing by government forces

2 Minor – played very limited role and/or almost exclusively conducted by an intervening foreign force

3 Moderate

4 Extensive – government engaged in strategic bombing often, throughout the conflict or relied on bombing as primary tactic for at least one third of the duration of the conflict

Civaction (Civilian projects)

What role did projects intended to improve the material wellbeing of civilians play in the government's counterinsurgency strategy? *Was the government trying to increase civilian support for the government by providing goods and services?* Examples: building schools, roads, bridges, hospitals; providing medical care, clean water or electricity; and creating jobs for local residents.

1 None – no evidence of any projects in areas of the country affected by the conflict

2 Minor/rare – very weak evidence that any projects undertaken or that they were part of the government's strategy to counter the rebel threat

3 Moderate

4 Extensive – Clear, reliable evidence that government often and/or heavily engaged in projects intended to improve material wellbeing of civilians as a deliberate strategy

Civsecure (Civilian protection)

What role did attempts to protect noncombatants from harm caused by the insurgents play in the government's counterinsurgency strategy?

1 None – no evidence government tried to protect civilians

2 Minor/rare – very weak evidence that government tried to protect civilians from insurgents

3 Moderate

4 Extensive – Clear, reliable evidence that the government consistently tried to protect civilians from harm and/or deliberately prioritized civilian protection

Resettle (Forced resettlement)

What role did resettlement play in the government's military strategy? Resettlement is defined as the forced relocation of civilian populations to deny an armed group access to resources, recruits, sanctuary, and other types of support; and/or to separate combatants from noncombatants.

1 None – no evidence government ever tried to resettle any civilians (there may be unintentional displacement of civilians due to conflict or actions of insurgents)

2 Minor/rare – weak evidence that government tried to resettle civilians, and/or government put forth minimal effort to resettle a very small number of civilians

3 Moderate

4 Extensive – Clear, reliable evidence that government deliberately and forcibly relocated a large number of civilians (e.g., entire villages or everyone identified with a particular ethnic group in multiple villages) to counter the insurgent threat. Resettlement was a primary tactic used by the government.

Decap (Decapitation)

What role did attempts to capture and kill the top leader(s) of the insurgent movement play in the government's military strategy?

1 None – no evidence government tried to identify and capture or kill the rebel group's top leaders

2 Minor/rare –weak evidence, and/or infrequent, unsuccessful attempts

3 Moderate

4 Extensive – Clear, reliable evidence of focused, systematic efforts to target top leaders

Civtarget (Civilian targeting)

To what extent did the military forces of the government intentionally select civilians as direct objects of attack or consistently fail to discriminate between combatants and noncombatants in their military operations? Noncombatants are defined as individuals that are not engaged in armed resistance against regime forces.

1 None/rare – very little to no evidence government intentionally selected civilians as direct objects of attack or consistently failed to discriminate between combatants and noncombatants in their military operations, and/or evidence that government intentionally avoided civilian deaths to the extent possible

2 Moderate – some evidence government intentionally selected civilians as direct objects of attack in isolated incidents and/or government frequently failed to discriminate between combatants and noncombatants

3 Extensive – Clear, reliable evidence that systematic civilian targeting played a major role in government's overall campaign to combat the insurgency

Masskill (Mass killing)

Did the government engage in mass killing? Mass killing is defined as > 50,000 intentional civilian deaths within a 5-year period (Valentino et al. 2004).

0 No
1 Yes

govtrps

Number of government troops at height of conflict. Measured as maximum number of regular military personnel (air, ground, and sea) under central government authority during the conflict. When exact numbers cannot be located, coders may estimate from information about the military units. If even estimates are unreliable because of a lack of data or contradictory and ambiguous information, **govtrps** is coded as missing and only **govtrpcat** is coded.

govtrpcat

Categorical measure of the number of maximum number of regular military personnel (air, ground, and sea) under central government authority during the conflict.

1 500 to 2,999 troops
2 3,000 to 9,999 troops
3 10,000 to 29,999 troops
4 More than 30,000 troops

govcas

Number of government troops killed during the conflict.

Insurgency and Opposition Characteristics

rebeltrps

Estimated number of total troops on rebel side at height of conflict. If even estimates are unreliable because of a lack of data or contradictory and ambiguous information, **rebeltrps** is coded as missing and only **rebeltrpcat** is coded.

rebeltrpcat

Categorical measure of the total number of rebel troops at height of conflict.

1 0 to 2,999 troops
2 3,000 to 9,999 troops
3 10,000 to 29,999 troops
4 More than 30,000 troops

rebelcas

Number of rebels /opposition group members killed during the conflict.

Asst_troops (troop assistance)

Dummy variable coded 1 if any other state (country) committed any military troops to assist or advise the rebels.

0 No

1 Yes

Asst_combat (combat assistance)

Dummy variable coded 1 if any other state engaged in combat to assist the rebels.

0 No
1 Yes

Asst_arms (material assistance)

Dummy variable coded 1 if any other state provided arms or other material aid to assist the rebels.

0 No
1 Yes

Asst_econ (economic assistance)

Dummy variable coded 1 if any other state provided economic support to the rebels.

0 No
1 Yes

Asst_sanct (sanctuary)

Dummy variable coded 1 if any other state provided, on its territory, sanctuaries for the rebels.

0 No
1 Yes

Asst_any

Dummy variable coded 1 if any other state provided any type of support to assist the rebels.

0 No

1 Yes

Conflict Outcome

Internal armed conflicts can end in multiple ways and different termination types can be difficult to categorize in a simple win, loss, or draw framework. Our solution to this challenge was to create several different variables to capture the complexity of conflict outcomes.[1]

outcome

Categorical variable that best describes how the government terminated the military conflict.

0 Conflict ongoing

1 Government militarily defeated the rebels. Military defeat may involve formal surrender, but also include situations in which the armed group is weakened to the point that it ceases to conduct military operations or reduces its lethal activity to a point that the conflict falls below the 25 conflict-related fatalities/year threshold for at least two years.

2 Government and insurgents negotiated a settlement that resulted in a compromise over significant policy, governance, or territorial issues (e.g., a power-sharing agreement, minority rights, autonomy, or institutional changes).

3 The rebels militarily defeated the government.

govcomp

Who was in control of the central government at the end of the conflict (i.e. at **enddate**)?

1 Rebels (leaders from the armed opposition; parties associated with the insurgents; political wings of rebels; etc.)

2 Government (the previous incumbent government; politicians associated with the previous regime; etc.)

3 Foreign intervener

4 Power-sharing: both previous rebels and previous incumbents began sharing political power in a joint government at the end of the conflict

5 Unclear: failing or failed state, no clear central authority

[1] See Kreutz (2010) for an alternative, comparable attempt to capture the complexity of armed conflict outcomes for the UCDP-PRIO Armed Conflict data v 4-2015 and UCDP Armed Conflict Dyads v 1-2015.

partition

Dummy variable indicating the conflict country was divided into separate states at conflict termination—whether as a result of rebel military victory or a negotiated settlement.

0	No
1	Yes

maintain

The number of months the civil war (incumbent) government remained in power after the termination of the conflict (**enddate**). This variable ranges from zero, when the regime was removed from power and/or replaced with a power-sharing government, to 60, when the regime remained in power for at least five years post-conflict.

Foreign Regime Maintenance (FRM) Interventions

FRM

Variable indicating that there was Foreign Regime Maintenance Intervention in the conflict.

0	No
1	Yes

Intervention Identifiers

intyrcon

Identifies the external intervener (by its COW country code), the year in which the conflict began, and the conflict country (by its COW country code). This variable was generated through:

IntYrCon = (Int1 * 10^7) + (YearBeg * 10^3) + ConCoCOW

FRMstdate

The date (DDmmmYYYY) on which the intervention began. **FRMstdate** is the date at least 500 regular troops (ground, air, or naval) from the intervening state arrive at the location of the conflict or, in the event that more than 500 military troops were already stationed at the conflict location, the date on which at least 500 additional troops were deployed. Military operations could include air, sea, and/or long-range missile fire; small unit raids; commando operations; and/or large-scale ground combat operations. If a precise start day could not be identified, **FRMstdate** is coded as the first of the month.

FRMenddate

The date (DDmmmYYYY) on which the intervention ended. **FRMenddate** is coded as the date either, (1) a peace treaty or other agreement between the parties that terminates the intervening state's combat role is signed; (2) more than 80% of the intervening state's newly deployed combat troops have been withdrawn. In the event that a peace treaty is signed but the intervening state's combat role does not significantly diminish, the conflict will be considered ongoing until 80% of the intervening state's combat troops have been withdrawn. If the major power terminates an intervention through either a formal agreement or withdrawal of 80% of its combat troops and then re-introduces troops, the two operations are coded as separate interventions.

FRMintervener

Name of the primary state that intervened in the conflict to support the incumbent government.

Intervention Characteristics

FRMforcemdl (FRM Force model)

Primary type of force used by the intervening state.

1 Light force: Primary use of ground combat units that do not include large military equipment (may include close air support).

2 Heavy force: Primarily large-unit, concentrated firepower combat with mechanized units (may include strategic bombing).

FRMforcetype (FRM Force type)

Ordinal variable that indicates the type of force used by the intervening state. The highest applicable category is coded.

1 Display: The intervening state deployed military personnel that were prepared to use force to the vicinity of the conflict but did not use lethal force or engage in combat operations.

2 Limited Air/ Naval Power: The intervening state conducted air strikes, engaged in air or naval combat, and/or fired missiles that resulted in fewer than 500 target casualties. No more than 499 ground combat troops were deployed.

3 Limited Ground Commitment: The intervening state deployed at least 500 but less than 2000 combat-ready ground troops to serve as advisors in combat and/or to conduct small unit raids and commando operations, possibly in combination with the use of limited air/naval power.

4 Extensive Airpower: The intervening state conducted air strikes, engaged in air or naval combat, and/or fired missiles that resulted in at least 500 target casualties. No more than 1999 ground combat troops were deployed.

5 Ground Combat: The intervening state deployed more than 2000 combat-ready troops and conducted ground combat operations.

FRMtrps

Number of intervening state troops at height of intervention. Measured as maximum number of regular military personnel (air, ground, and sea) deployed to the conflict location at any one time during the intervention. When exact numbers cannot be located, coders may estimate from information about the military units, ships, and/or planes deployed. If even estimates are unreliable because of a lack of data or contradictory and ambiguous information, **FRMtrps** is coded as missing and only **trpcat_FRM** is coded.

FRM_trpcat

Categorical measure of the number of intervening state troops at height of intervention.

1 500 to 2999 troops

2 3000 to 9999 troops

3 10,000 to 29,999 troops

4 More than 30,000 troops

FRMgrndcmbt (FRM ground combat)

Dummy variable coded 1 if intervening state ground troops engaged in combat.

0 No

1 Yes

FRMgrndtrps (FRM Ground troops)

Dummy variable coded 1 if intervening state committed any military troops to advise, train, or assist the rebels in any way. The variable should always be equal to 1 when FRM ground combat is equal to 1.

0 No

1 Yes

FRMcas

Number of intervening state troops killed during the intervention.

Note that "0" indicates that intervening state has no casualties, whereas "." Indicates that the information is missing.

FRM_strategicair (FRM strategic bombing)

What role did strategic bombing play in the intervening state's military strategy? (see definition above)

1 None – no evidence of strategic bombing by intervening forces

2 Minor – played very limited role

3 Moderate

4 Extensive – intervening state engaged in strategic bombing often, throughout the intervention or relied on bombing as primary tactic for at least one third of the duration of the intervention

FRM_civaction (Civilian projects)

What role did projects intended to improve the material wellbeing of civilians play in the intervening state's military strategy? Examples: building schools, roads, bridges, hospitals; providing medical care, clean water or electricity; and creating jobs for local residents.

1 None – no evidence of any projects by the intervening state

2 Minor/rare – very weak evidence that any projects undertaken or that they were part of the intervening state's strategy to counter the rebel threat

3 Moderate

4 Extensive – Clear, reliable evidence that intervening state often and/or heavily engaged in projects intended to improve material wellbeing of civilians as a deliberate strategy

FRM_civsecure (Civilian protection)
What role did attempts to protect noncombatants from harm caused by the insurgents play in the intervening state's military strategy?

1 None – no evidence intervening state tried to protect civilians

2 Minor/rare – very weak evidence that intervening state tried to protect civilians from insurgents

3 Moderate

4 Extensive – Clear, reliable evidence that the intervening state consistently tried to protect civilians from harm and/or deliberately prioritized civilian protection

FRM_decap (Decapitation)
What role did attempts to capture and kill the top leader(s) of the insurgent movement play in the intervening state's military strategy? Compare this variable to Jenna Jordan's decapitation data.

1 None – no evidence intervening state tried to identify and capture or kill the rebel group's top leaders

2 Minor/rare –weak evidence, and/or infrequent, unsuccessful attempts

3 Moderate

4 Extensive – Clear, reliable evidence of focused, systematic efforts to target top leaders

FRM_civtarget (Civilian targeting)
To what extent did the military forces of the intervening state intentionally select civilians as direct objects of attack or consistently fail to discriminate between combatants and noncombatants in their military operations? Combatants are defined as individuals that engage in armed resistance against regime forces.

1 None/rare – very little to no evidence intervening state intentionally selected civilians as direct objects of attack or consistently failed to discriminate between combatants and noncombatants in their military operations, and/or evidence that intervening state intentionally avoided civilian deaths to the extent possible

2 Moderate – some evidence intervening state intentionally selected civilians as direct objects of attack in isolated incidents and/or intervening state frequently failed to discriminate between combatants and noncombatants

3 Extensive – Clear, reliable evidence that systematic civilian targeting played a major role in intervening state's overall campaign to combat the insurgency

Intervention Outcome

FRM_outcome (FRM Intervention outcome)

Categorical variable that describes how the intervening state terminated its military intervention.

0 Intervention ongoing.

1 Intervening state withdrew its military forces unilaterally without maintaining the existing regime.

2 Intervening state completed a mission with a pre-determined end date without definitively securing the tenure of the incumbent regime.

3 Intervening state withdrew its forces after successfully averting the threat to the existing regime.

4 Intervening state negotiated a settlement that resulted in a compromise with the insurgents, such as power-sharing agreements.

FRMgovcomp (Intervention end government)

Who was in control of the central government at the end of the intervention (i.e. at **FRMenddate**)?

1 Insurgents (the previous opposition; groups associated with the insurgents; political wings of rebels; etc.)

2 Government (the incumbent government; politicians/party leaders associated with the previous regime)

3 Foreign intervener

4 Power-sharing: both previous rebels and previous incumbents began sharing political power in a joint government at the end of the conflict

5 Unclear: failing or failed state

FRMmaintain

The number of months the government remained in power after the termination of the foreign intervention (**FRMenddate**). This variable ranges from zero, when the regime was never stabilized, to 60, when the regime remained in power for at least five years post-conflict.

FRM_posttrps

Dummy variable indicating that the intervening state maintained a significant troop presence in the conflict country after the intervention end date to enforce the terms of the conflict settlement. Significant = > 500 troops

0 No

1 Yes

Appendix A: List of Sources used in data collection

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