Twenty years of civil conflicts in Nigeria: spatial distribution, trends and actors

George Abuchi Agwu, Monday Nweke Igwe

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George Abuchi Agwu [*1] and *Monday Nweke Igwe*[2]

[1]CATT - UPPA, France

[1,2]Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu Alike, Nigeria

[2]TBS Business School Toulouse, France

September 25, 2020

Abstract

Conflicts are important factors in most economic decisions at global, national and sub-national levels. However, conflict activities data are most often aggregated at the national level, which does not match with the foundation theories of conflict, and thereby complicating empirical tests(3). Recently, large data collection projects came on board to collect disaggregated events-level conflict data in certain countries, and one of these is the Armed Conflict Events and Location Database (ACLED)(6). This data article describes micro-level conflict activities relating to Nigeria, which was extracted from the ACLED. Nigeria is known to have witnessed its fair share of civil conflicts among sub-Saharan African countries, which includes the first modern warfare in the subcontinent âĂŞ the Nigeria (versus Biafra) civil war (4). The large culturally and ethnically heterogeneous Nigerian population continues to generate latent frictions and manifest conflicts. In recent times, a number of deadly militias has sprang up within the country, notable among them are the Boko Haram and pastoral herders whose activities are recognised globally (5). The data described in this article may be relevant in understanding the nexus between the recent Nigeria's conflicts environment and national development along economic, social and political dimensions. In addition, the analyzed data may provide resources needed by individuals and organisations for safety planning.

*george.agwu@univ-pau.fr

Specifications table

subject area	Economics, Development
More specific subject area	Civil Conflicts
Type of data	Images and Graphs
How data was acquired	Surveys, GPS Coding, filtering by strings, and aggregation
Data format	Raw and Analysed
Parameters for data collection	From ACLED database, the Nigerian data is extracted using inbuilt export tool of the ACLED database
Description of data collection	The extracted data are aggregated at administrative levels of Nigeria and analysed using GIS software (QGIS)
Data Sources and location	Online at https://acleddata.com ACLED collects data weekly from newspaper reports For full description of the methodology, see (6)
Data accessibility	Repository name: Mendeley Digital Object Identifier: 10.17632/6pjjcpnkzj.1 Data URL: https://data.mendeley.com/datasets/6pjjcpnkzj/1

Value of data

- The dataset is valuable to the various categories of development researchers and agencies interested in the microlevel dynamics of civil conflicts.
- Researchers in economics and social sciences in general will find this dataset useful for testing of relevant theories (see 1; 2).
- Governments and other formal organisations would find this dataset valuable for intervention planning and execution, especially with respect to crisis prevention and relief distribution.
- Years since the ACLED dataset has been available, only a handful of empirical studies of the Nigerian case has employed it in analysis. Hence, there is need to publicise it and illustrate the key features.
- This dataset may also be used to investigate questions such as:
  - Does the presence of natural resources increase the risk of conflicts?
  - Do multi-ethnic societies have higher risks of onset of conflicts and duration of civil wars?
  - What are geographical risk factors for civil conflicts?
- Publicizing the dataset would also enhance the resources for local travel plans for individuals and organisations.

1 Data description

The extracted data is for the period 2000 - 2020. Fatalities is defined as the number of people killed during conflict events. The ACLED codes the following nine types of events, both violent and non-violent, that may occur during a conflict. These include:

1. Battle-No change of territory (a battle between two violent armed groups where control of the contested location does not change)
2. Battle-Non-state actor overtakes territory (a battle where non-state actors win control of location)
3. Battle-Government regains territory (a battle in which the government regains control of a location)
4. Headquarters or base established (a non-state group establishes a base or headquarters without using violence)
5. Strategic development (accounts for often non-violent activity by conflict and other agents within the context of the war/dispute. Recruitment, looting and arrests are included)
6. Riots/Protests (violent and non-violent demonstrations, often by spontaneous groups of civilians and against a government institution)
7. Violence against civilians (attacks by violent groups on civilians. No fatalities are necessary for inclusion)
8. Non-violent transfer of territory (situations where rebels or governments acquire control of a location without engaging in a violent act)
9. Remote violence (events involving bombings or similar attacks from a remote location, not requiring the physical presence of the perpetrator)

2 Materials and Methods

The data is acquired by strings filtering and aggregation over time and space. The data for Nigeria filtered and extracted from the global ACLED database was aggregated by time and geographical location. The aggregation explores the spatial and temporal dimension of the data. For the spatial distribution, we first aggregate the number of all events, and number of people killed (fatalities) by states administrative units, i.e the 36 states

and the federal capital, Abuja. Secondly, the events and fatalities are aggregated by administrative zones (6 zones in total) and actor types involved (5 main types of actors). For the temporal dimension, we aggregate the events and fatalities by year and yearly quarters (four monthly). The programme file for all the aggregations is hosted together with the data at https://data.mendeley.com/datasets/6pjjcpnkzj/1. The DOI is 10.17632/6pjjcpnkzj.1file-3c871967-4fb0-4c41-8a7b-4deeb285c95f. Our analysis generated figures 1 - 12, which completely described the data as follows:

Figure 1: Number of conflict events by state (2000 - 2020)

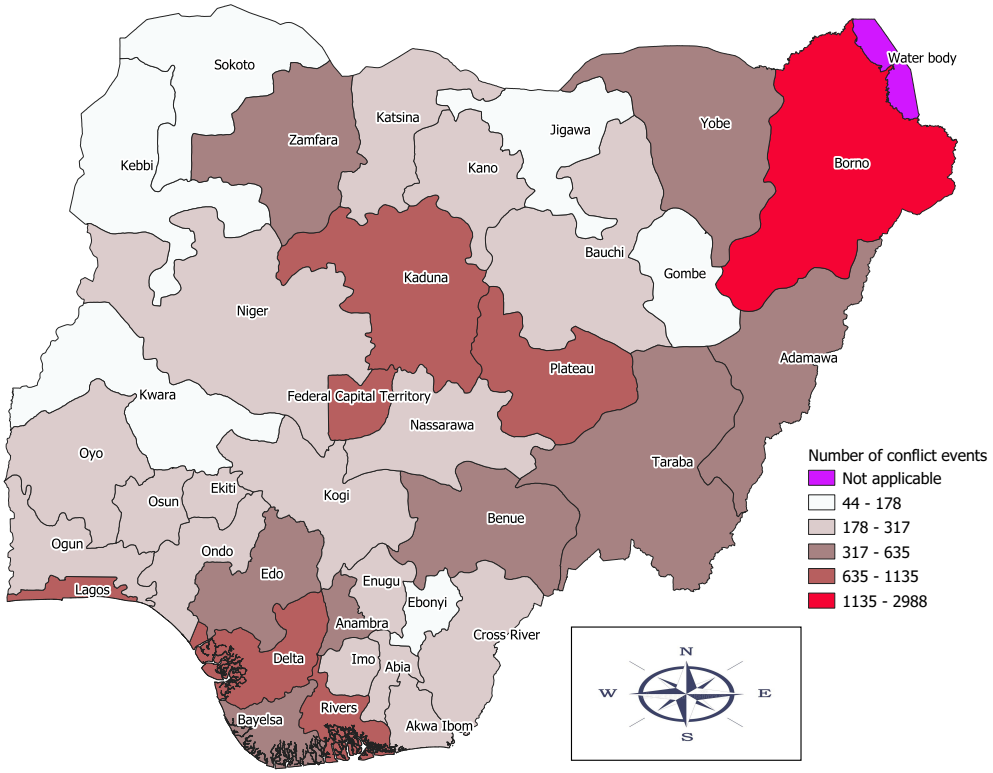


Figure 2: States and their year of maximum number of conflict events (2000 - 2020)

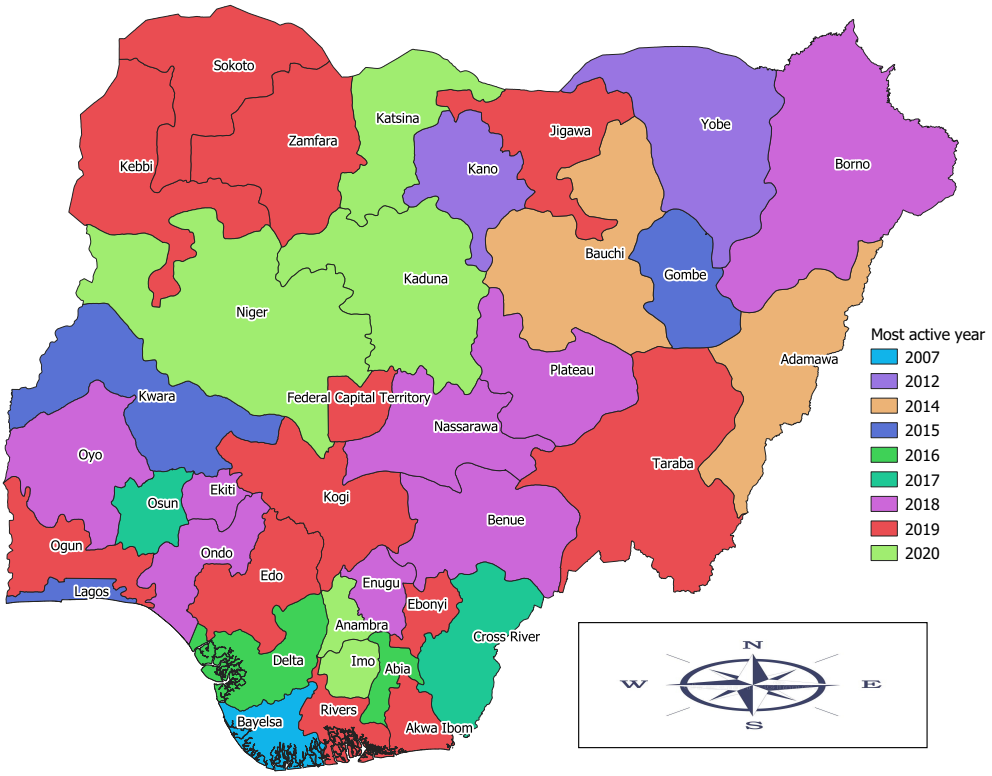


Figure 3: States and their most active conflict actors (2000 - 2020)

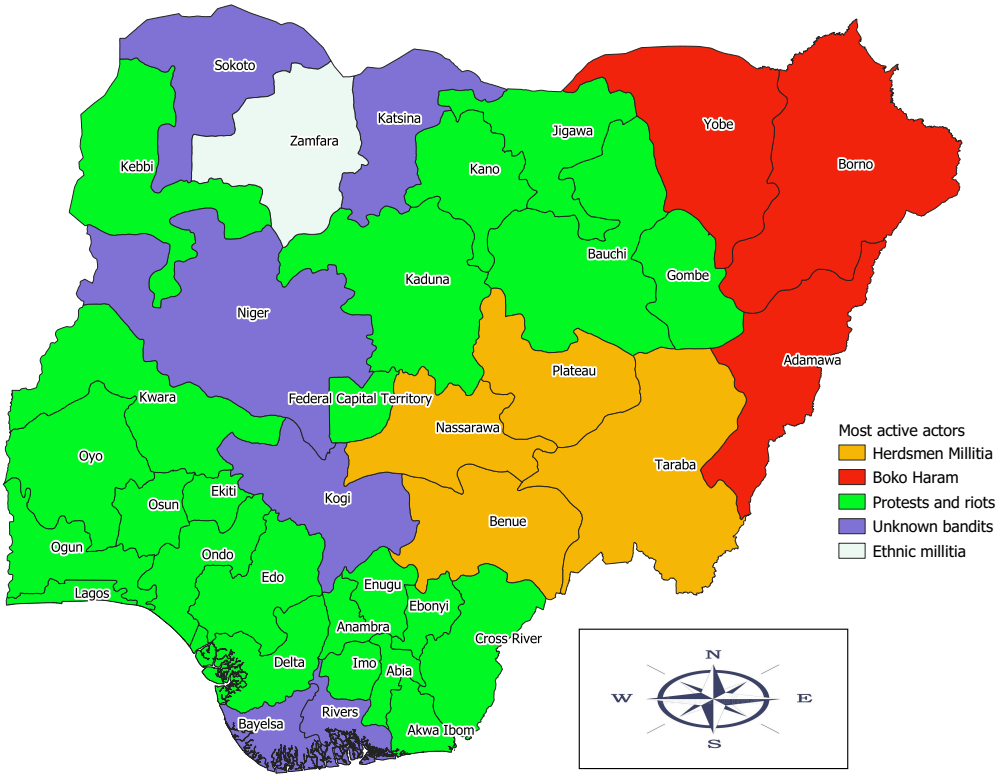


Figure 4: Conflict fatalities by state (2000 - 2020)

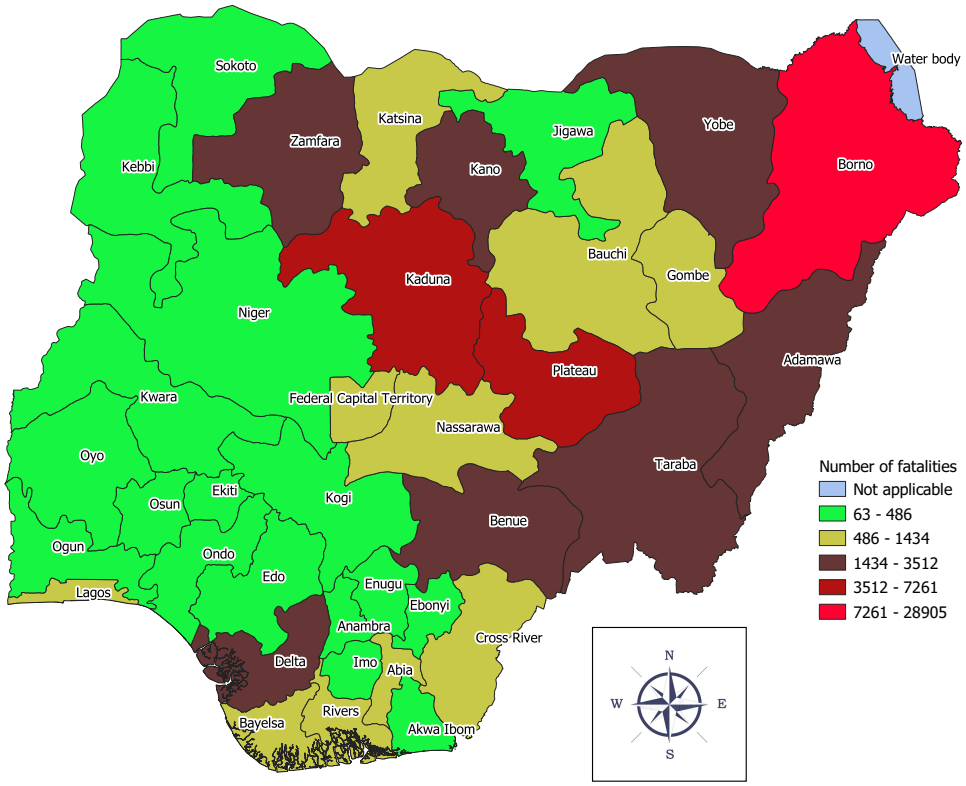


Figure 5: States most deadly conflict actors in fatalities (2000 - 2020)

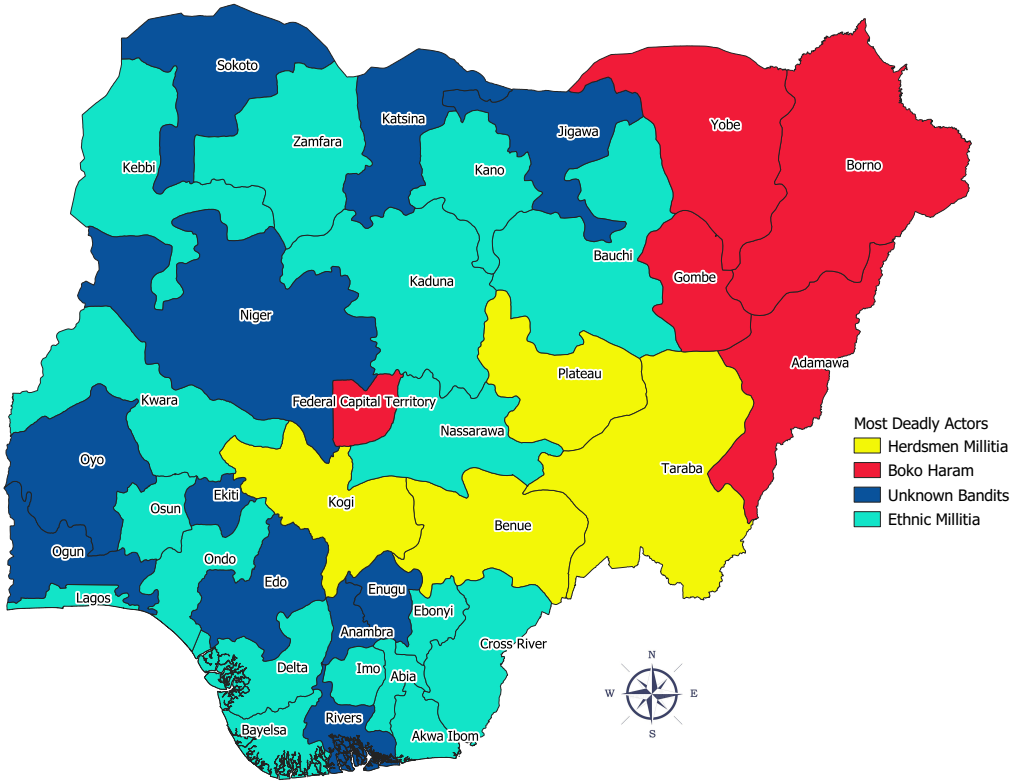


Figure 6: States and their year of maximum conflict fatalities (2000 - 2020)

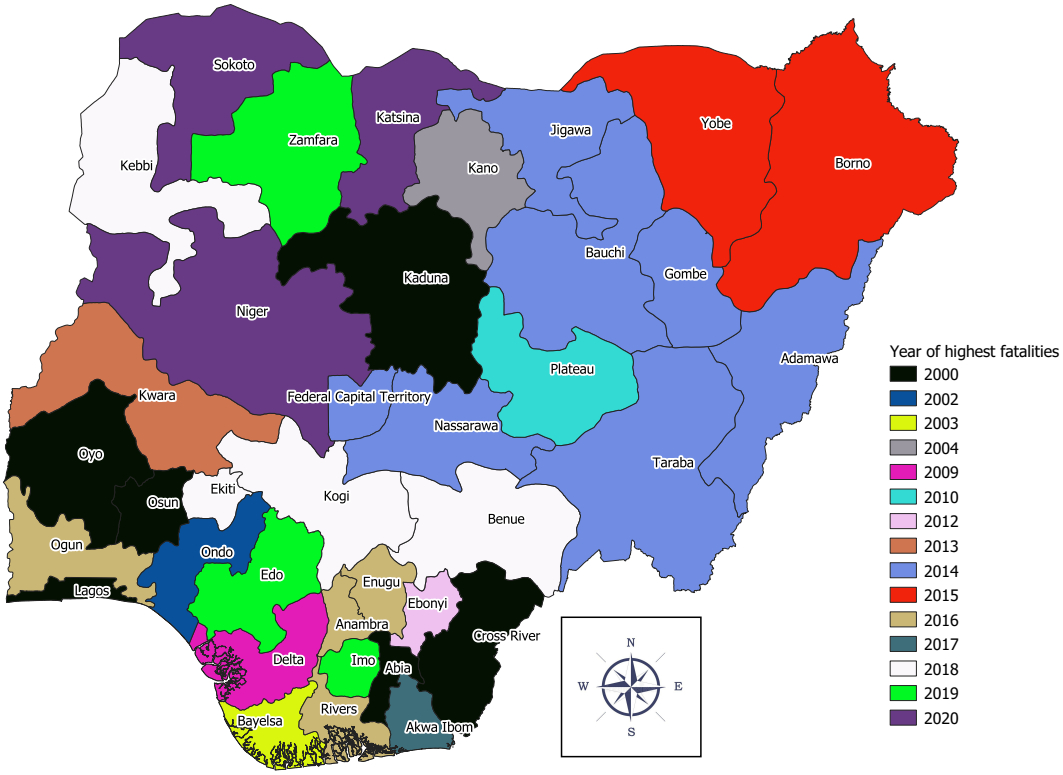


Figure 7: Trend of conflict fatalities by actor (2000 - 2020)

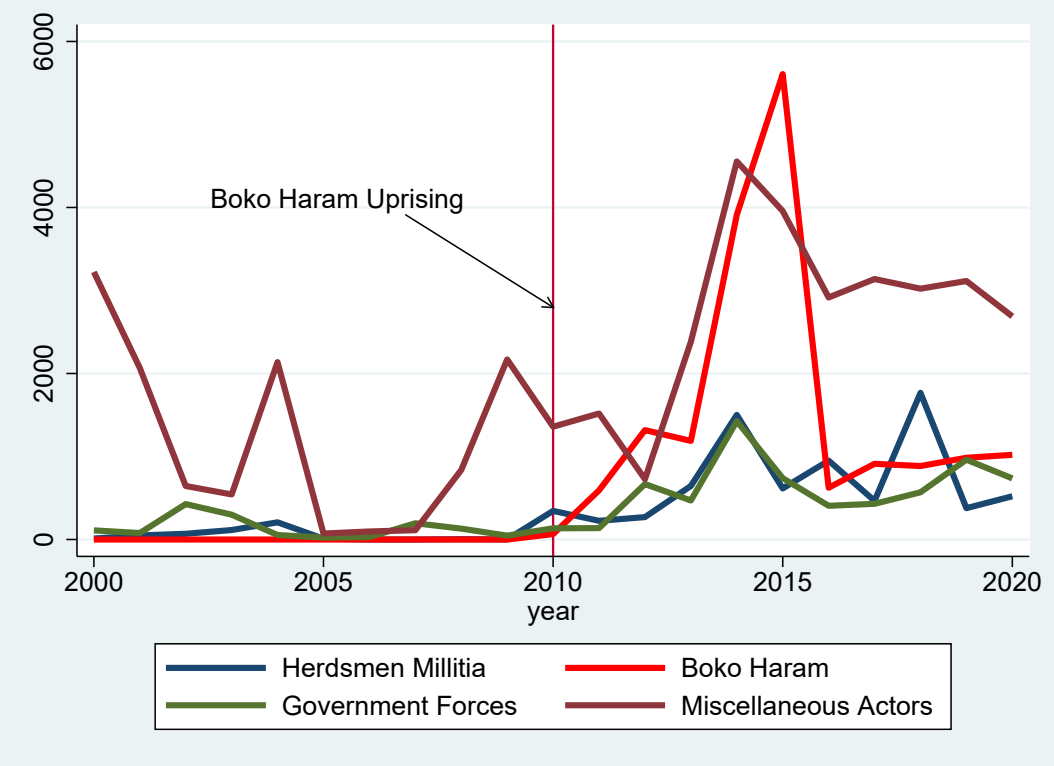


Figure 8: Trend of conflict events by actor (2000 - 2020)

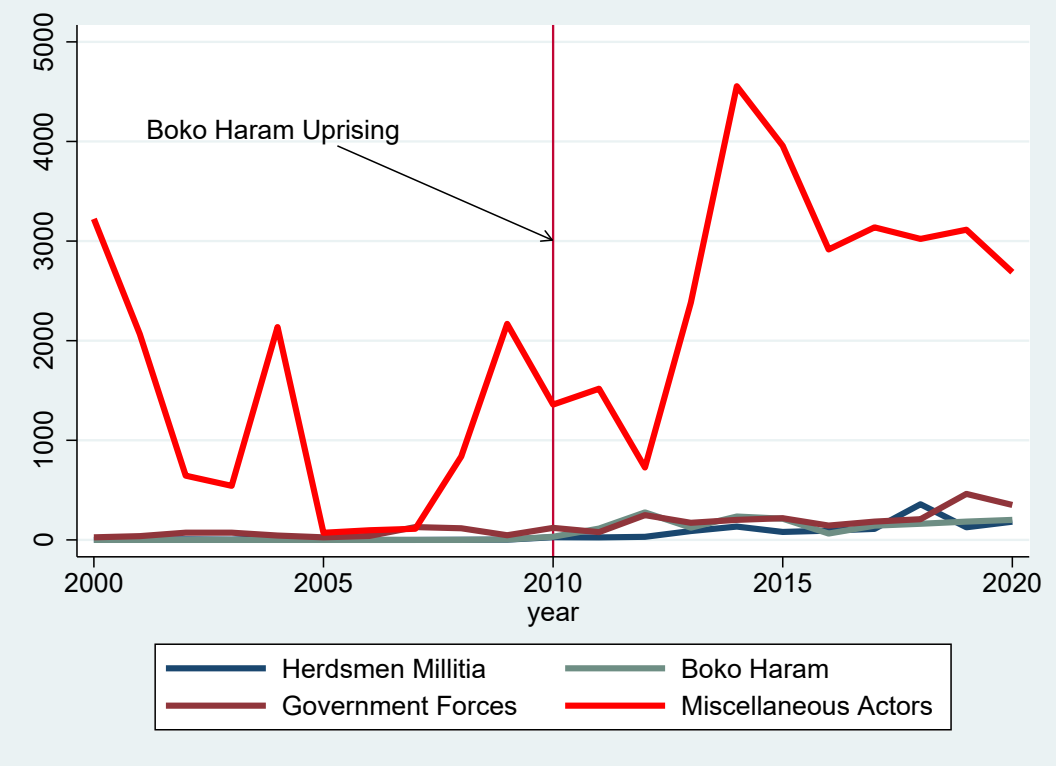


Figure 9: Trend of conflict fatalities by quarter of occurrence (2000 - 2020)

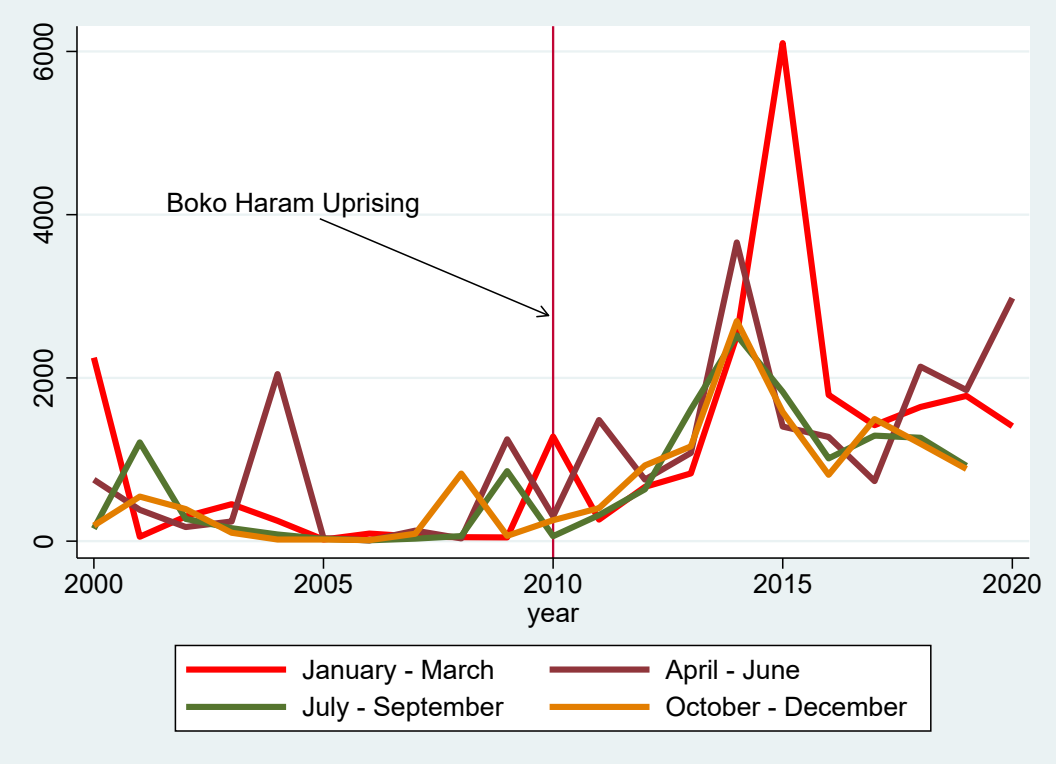


Figure 10: Trend of conflict events by quarter of occurrence (2000 - 2020)

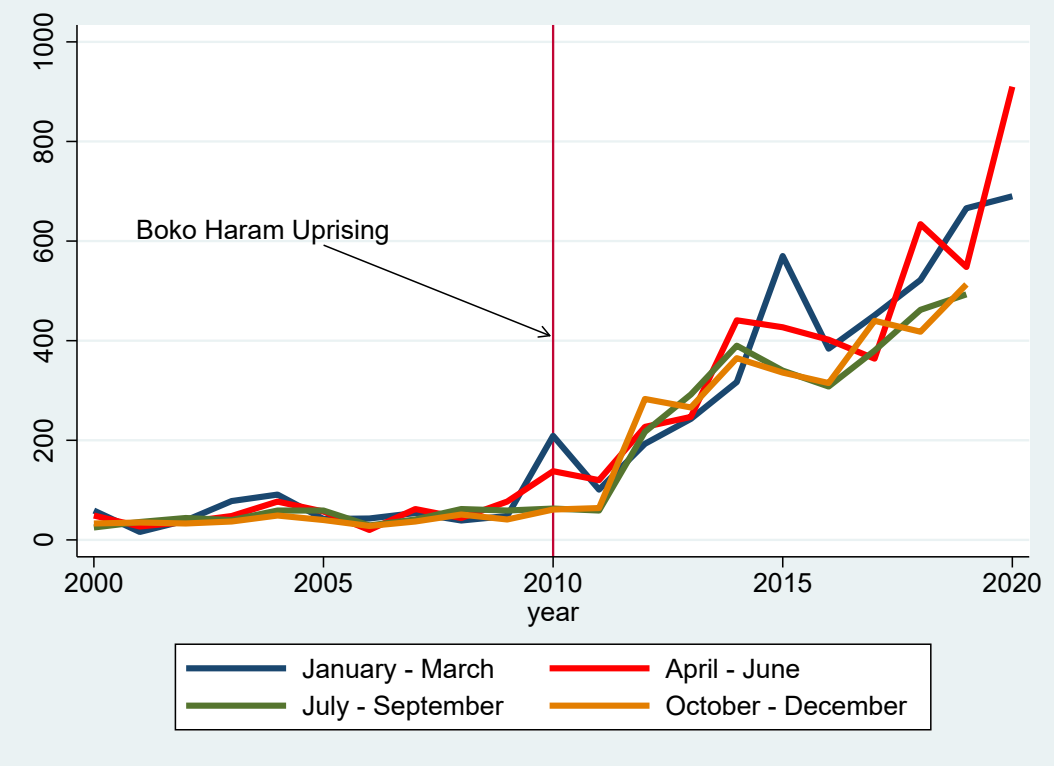


Figure 11: Trend of conflict fatalities by geographical zone of occurrence (2000 - 2020)

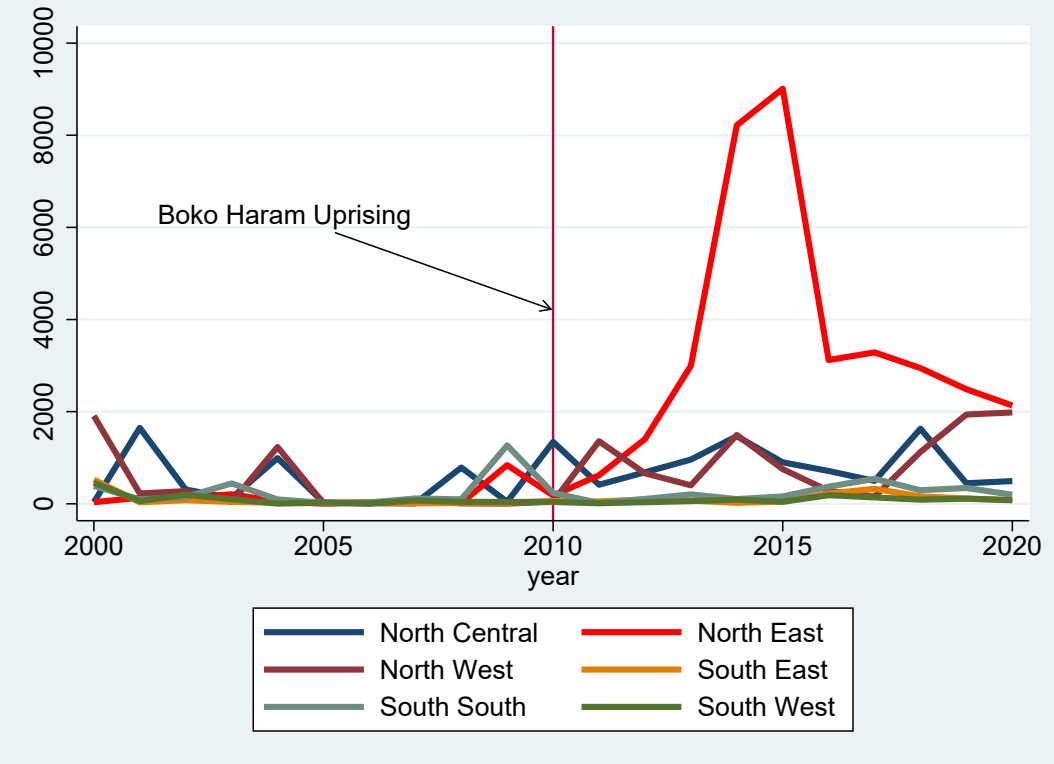
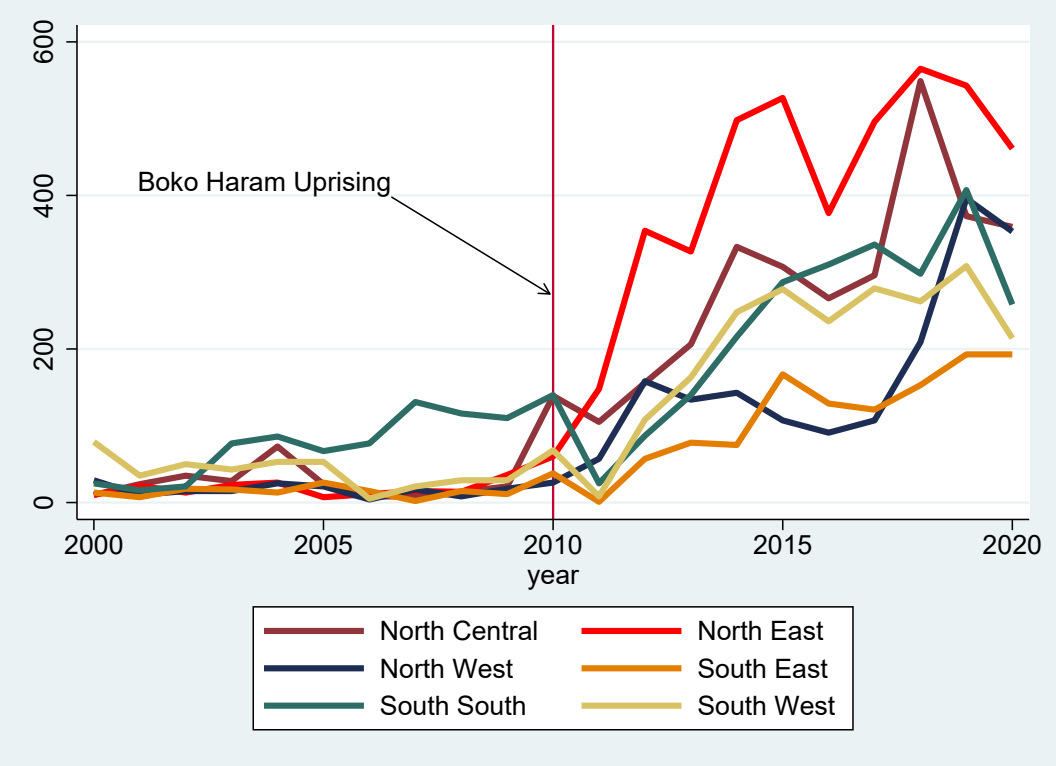


Figure 12: Trend of conflict events by geographical zone of occurrence (2000 - 2020)



Acknowledgments

Research support by the Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu Alike, Nigeria is graciously acknowledged.

Declaration of Competing Interest

We declare no competing interest

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