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## **Subnational Intensities of Violent Political Conflicts in 2017**

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### **The Story Behind the Map**

The Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research publishes this map in its annual publication called *Conflict Barometer*. The map is the result of a one-year coding work of more than 200 researchers. Thus, the authors want to emphasize that this article was written on behalf of all who have contributed to the Conflict Barometer 2017. It depicts the highest intensity of violent conflict measures that have taken place in the context of political conflicts affecting a respective sub-national entity in 2017. Hence, the map provides a unique global overview of 2017's entirety of violent political conflicts on a global level and allows a more differentiated view on violence-torn areas and regions. The disaggregated format the HIIK presents is also highly useful for practitioners deciding over security aspects or the allocation of resources.

Each of our researchers collects data on conflict actors, conflict items, and conflict measures according to our methodology, which has been refined over the last 26 years. The HIIK is a non-profit organization, based on voluntary work. The institute functions as a network that connects regional experts throughout the world. After several steps of internal revision processes, external experts conduct external proofreading. This multi-stage revision process contributes to the high reliability of our data.

The *Conflict Barometer* is a unique format in which all political conflicts that currently shape subnational, national, and international security landscapes are presented. Including brief conflict summaries, qualitative conflict descriptions, quantitative conflict analysis, a dataset, a codebook, and – since 2017 – short analytical pieces on the interaction of different conflicts within a region, the HIIK contributes to a broader understanding of political conflicts and its dynamics. HIIK's unit of analysis is political conflicts. They are defined as “*positional difference between at least two assertive and directly involved*

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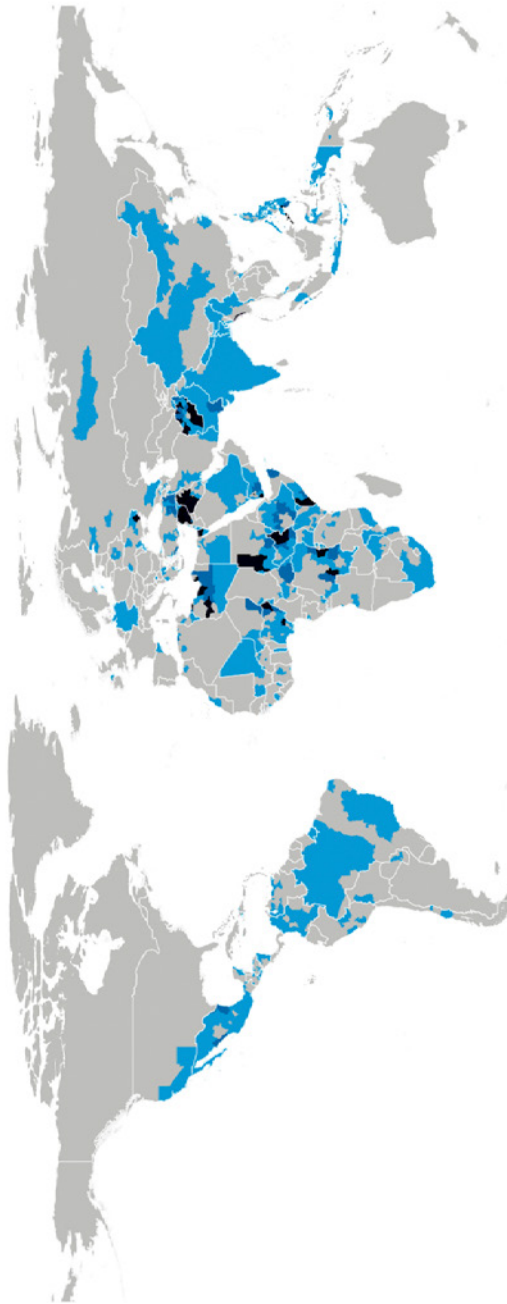
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*actors regarding values relevant to a society (the conflict items) which is carried out using observable and interrelated conflict measures that lie outside established regulatory procedures and threaten core state functions, the international order, or hold the prospect of doing so.”*

Hence, in comparison to other institutes, HIIK does not rely on a casualty-based threshold that defines the existence of a conflict such as the mere counting of fatalities. Instead, we decide about the existence of a political conflict based on qualitative assessments that include the core elements mentioned in the definition. In consequence, HIIK sees the intensity of conflict rather as a characteristic than as a prerequisite. Moreover, our approach is an attempt to combine quantitative and qualitative conflict research.

HIIK distinguishes five intensity levels of political conflicts. While the first two levels – *dispute* and *non-violent crisis* – include low-intensity conflicts in which no intentional personal violence occurs, the three levels *violent crisis*, *limited war*, and *war* describe medium and high-intensity levels of violent contestation. In order to determine the scale of violence, we gather information on five indicators on a spatially and temporally disaggregated level. We use the information on conflict means (personnel, weapons) and on conflict consequences (casualties, refugees, destruction) for each subnational unit and each month in which violence is used. The aggregation of means and consequences results in region-month intensities (RMI), which are illustrated on this map.

SUBNATIONAL INTENSITIES OF VIOLENT  
POLITICAL CONFLICTS IN 2017



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