INDICATOR ANALYSIS

ATROCITIES

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How is the indicator calculated?	The Political Instability Task Force (PITF) defines an atrocity as "the deliberate killing of non-combatant civilians in the context of a wider political conflict" (1). Non-combatants are defined using the Valentino (2004) definition as: "any unarmed individual who is not a member of a professional or guerrilla military group and who does not actively participate in hostilities by intending to cause physical harm to enemy personnel or property" (2). The identification of an atrocity by the PITF requires that five criteria be met (1): 1. An article describing the atrocity is identified through a search of the factiva database (3) for english language articles from the following sources: Reuters Newx, CNN, The New York Times, Agence France Press, BBC, Associated Press and All-Africa (after 2013). The search is based on the following key words: " killed or kills or massacre or bomb or bombing or bomber or beheaded or mass grave" with other search words used to eliminate irrelevant articles such as "cyclone" and "accident". 2. At least five non-combatants have been killed in an incident or the incident is a "targeted killing" 3. The date of the incident can be determined to within a week, more or less 4. The location can be determined at least to roughly the level of a province 5. The incident does not involve the United States as either target or perpetrator Outside of the automated article search performed on the factiva database, all coding is done by humans. The PITF describes their method as an attempt to cast as wide a net as possible to ensure that cases are not missed because of assumptions or inferences about perpetrator motivations and identity. They also note that: - In cases where the description of the targets as combatants or other legitimate military targets is contested, the event is included in their dataset with a note regarding competing claims about the victim's status. - In cases where the news source does not label the target as military or paramilitary, the event is included - Killings of combatants that have moved into civilian roles are included - Single killings of any popular leaders are included

GLOBAL TRENDS	
What are the global patterns for this indicator?	According to Human Rights Watch 2019 Report atrocities are on the rise (4).

UTILITY

What does the indicator measure?	The indicator measures the deliberate use of lethal violence against non-combatant civilians by actors engaged in a wider political or military conflict.
What does it NOT measure - what does it miss?	The indicator does not measure atrocities committed in the US or events for which data in time and space is inaccurate. The indicator does not capture events in which any type of harm was done to non-combatants that did not lead to death. The PITF notes that their data on full scale wars, attacks targeting journalists, and state sanctioned police killing campaigns is weaker because of data collection challenges.
If and how does the indicator relate to interface/relationship among health, gender and fragility/stability;	Although men's health outcomes from atrocities are often very poor, atrocities often target entire groups, thus also affecting women and children in the process. Atrocities are also easier to cover up in fragile states as news sources are less reliable.

AVAILABILITY	
Sources for indicator (CRVS, DHS etc - include links);	Data is collected from these News sources: Reuters News, CNN, The New York Times, Agence France Press, BBC, Associated Press and All-Africa (after 2013) Dataset for atrocities: http://eventdata.parusanalytics.com/data.dir/atrocities.html
Dates available;	Data is available from 1995-Present
Availability across geographic areas;	Global
Availability in conflict affected settings;	Yes

GRANULARITY
Disaggregation at national level

Data disaggregated by sex;	No.
Data disaggregated by identity group (race, ethnicity);	Yes (but often missing or non-descriptive - e.g., "people" or "villagers").
Data disaggregated by income;	No.
Data disaggregated by citizenship;	No.
Data disaggregated by migration background;	No.
Disaggregation at sub-national level	
Data disaggregated by geographic region;	Yes (geocodes).
Data disaggregated by identity group (race, ethnicity);	Yes (but often missing or non-descriptive - e.g., "people" or "villagers").
Data disaggregated by income.	No.

SOURCES OF BIAS	
What bias can exist with this data?	Bias towards English sources. Omission Bias - the data do not account for the US as a target or perpetrator. Inclusion bias - Methodological document from 2016 mentions not recording events with fewer than 5 non-combatant deaths since these are "targetted killings" and citing logistical difficulties. However, there are some recorded events with 1-4 deaths (but the coverage is extremely low before 2016).

VALIDITY	
Clear and accepted international standards for indicator;	Yes, the PITF relies on recognized news sources. Data sources are also coded as primary or secondary.

Validity of measurement of indicator generally accepted;	Yes, and the PITF database goes beyond the scope of incidence occurrence (e.g., they include options like perpetrator intent and type of weapon used) in an attempt to further support their primary incident data collection. They also try to use multiple sources to corroborate an incident.

RELIABILITY	
Reliability of indicator generally accepted;	The indicator does not appear to be widely used.

COMPLEXITY	
Enables analysis across time and location.	Yes - with high granularity for both.

OTHER REFLECTIONS	
Are indicator values modelled/imputed?	No.
Other reflections etc.	Regarding excluding the US from analysis, the PITF notes that: "The exclusion of incidents involving the United States as either target or perpetrator is due to legal limitations on the Central Intelligence Agency, which is funding this collection. These limitations date to the 1970s—see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church Committee—and were intended to limit the ability of the CIA to monitor (or analyse) the behaviour of U.S. citizens. While open-source data collections such as this were probably not the intent of the original legislation, the PITF has interpreted those restrictions cautiously and therefore such episodes are not included in this data set" (1).

References

1. Schrodt PA, Ulfelder J. Political Instability Task Force Atrocities Event Data Collection Codebook. 2016;

2. Valentino B, Huth P, Balch-Lindsay D. "Draining the sea": mass killing and guerrilla warfare. International organization. 2004;58(2):375–407.

3. FACTIVA [Internet]. MAIN Professional. [cited 2021 Sep 30]. Available from: https://www.dowjones.com/professional/factiva/

4. Human Rights Watch. Atrocities as the New Normal: Time to Re-Energize the "Never Again" Movement. In 2019 [cited 2021 Sep 30]. Available from: https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/global-2