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**Battle Deaths Dataset 1946–2008**

**Codebook for Version 3.0**

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## A Note to Users

This document serves as the codebook for PRIO Battle Deaths Dataset, Version 3.0. To obtain the journal article presenting this dataset, the data files, and materials documenting the sources used and coding decisions made, please visit [www.prio.no/CSCW/Datasets](http://www.prio.no/CSCW/Datasets).

Users of the data should use the following citation:

Bethany Lacina & and Nils Petter Gleditsch, 2005. 'Monitoring Trends in Global Combat: A New Dataset of Battle Deaths', *European Journal of Population* 21(2–3): 145–116.

Feel free to send email to [battledeaths@prio.no](mailto:battledeaths@prio.no) with comments or corrections. This work has been funded mainly by the Research Council of Norway, with additional contributions from the Centre for Human Security.

### Definition of battle deaths

Our definition of battle deaths closely follows from the definition of conflict used to create the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset (Gleditsch et al. 2002). According to codebook for the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset (UCDP/PRIO, 2009), a conflict is:

“a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths.” The separate elements of the definition are operationalized as follows:

(1) Use of armed force: use of arms in order to promote the parties' general position in the conflict, resulting in deaths.

(1.1) Arms: any material means, e.g. manufactured weapons but also sticks, stones, fire, water etc.

(2) 25 deaths: A minimum of 25 battle-related deaths per year and per dyad (see Item 3.3 in this definition) in an incompatibility.

(3) Party: A government of a state or any opposition organization or alliance of organizations. UCDP distinguishes between primary and secondary parties. Primary parties are those that form an incompatibility by stating incompatible positions (see Item 5 in this definition). At least one of the primary parties is the government of a state. Secondary parties are states that enter a conflict with troops to actively support one of the primary parties. The secondary party must share the position of the primary party it is supporting in the incompatibility.

(3.1) Government: The party controlling the capital of a state.

(3.2) Opposition organization: Any non-governmental group of people having announced a name for their group and using armed force to influence the outcome of

the stated incompatibility (see Item 5 in this definition). The UCDP only deals with formally organized opposition. The focus is on armed conflict involving consciously conducted and planned political campaigns rather than spontaneous violence.

(3.3) Dyad: A dyad consists of two conflicting primary parties. At least one of the primary parties must be the government of a state. In interstate conflicts, both primary parties are state governments. In intrastate and extrasystemic conflicts, the non-governmental primary party includes one or more opposition organization(s). A conflict can include more than one dyad. If e.g. a government is opposed by three rebel groups over the same incompatibility, the conflict is made up of three dyads. Note that secondary parties (i.e. intervening states supplying troops to one of the primary parties) do not lead to the formation of additional dyads.

(4) State: A state is an internationally recognised sovereign government controlling a specific territory or an internationally unrecognised government controlling a specified territory whose sovereignty is not disputed by another internationally recognized sovereign government previously controlling the same territory.

(5) Incompatibility concerning government or territory: The incompatibility, as stated by the parties, must concern government and/or territory.

(5.1) Incompatibility: The stated general incompatible positions.

(5.2) Incompatibility concerning government: Incompatibility concerning type of political system, the replacement of the central government, or the change of its composition.

(5.3) Incompatibility concerning territory: Incompatibility concerning the status of a territory, e.g. the change of the state in control of a certain territory (interstate conflict), secession or autonomy (internal conflict).”

For further details on the UCDP/PRIO definition of conflict see:

<http://www.prio.no/CSCW/Datasets/Armed-Conflict/UCDP-PRIO/> and  
[http://www.pcr.uu.se/database/definitions\\_all.htm](http://www.pcr.uu.se/database/definitions_all.htm)

The PRIO Battle Deaths Dataset dataset defines *battle deaths* as deaths resulting directly from violence inflicted through the use of armed force by a party to an armed conflict during *contested combat*. *Contested combat* is use of armed force by a party to an armed conflict against any person or target during which the perpetrator faces the immediate threat of lethal force being used by another party to the conflict against him/her and/or allied fighters. Contested combat excludes the sustained destruction of soldiers or civilians outside of the context of any reciprocal threat of lethal force (e.g. execution of prisoners of war).

*Timeframe:* We have collected annual battle deaths data which includes both deaths during combat and deaths from wounds received in combat. Some of those considered dead of wounds may have died in a year following that in which combat actually took place, especially in the case of battles taking place late in the calendar year. These deaths were included, however, if they were the direct and immediate result of injuries

sustained during combat violence. Long term reduction in life expectancy because of wounds or disability was not included.

## Variables in the PRIO Battle Deaths Dataset

All variables not defined below were imported from the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset.

Variables Added:

1. bdeadlow: Low estimate of annual battle fatalities.
2. bdeadhigh: High estimate of annual battle fatalities.
3. bdeadbest: Best estimate of annual battle fatalities. If a best estimate could not be determined this field is coded as missing, indicated as -999.
4. annualdata: Coded as a 0, 1 or 2, according to the categories below:
  - 0: Estimated based on battle-deaths data that was not specific to the conflict year. This could occur for two reasons:
    - Annual figures on battle deaths were obtained by dividing an estimate over *all* the total number of years in an uninterrupted series of years of a single conflict.
    - The estimate was based on UCDP/PRIO coding rules because no other information was available.
  - 1: Annual figure estimated based on extrapolation from limited data on trends in the conflict or from annual data for only some of the actors or theaters in the conflict. See documentation for details.
  - 2: Estimated based on data regarding total battle deaths specific to this conflict-year.
5. source: Coded as a 0 or 1:
  - 0: The only available information was the UCDP/PRIO coding rules. Coded as follows:
    - If UCDP/PRIO estimated 25-999 battle deaths, the low estimate was 25, the high estimate was 999, and the best estimate was coded as missing (-999).
    - If UCDP/PRIO estimated >999 battle deaths, the low estimate was 1,000, the high estimate was 9,999, and the best estimate was coded as missing (-999).
  - 1: Information available other than UCDP/PRIO coding rules. See documentation for details.
6. bdversion: Coded as 3.0.

## References

Gleditsch, Nils Petter, Peter Wallensteen, Mikael Eriksson, Margareta Sollenberg & Håvard Strand, 2002. 'Armed Conflict 1946–2001: A New Dataset', *Journal of Peace Research* 39(5): 615–637.

UCDP/PRIO, 2009. *UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset Codebook Version 4-2009*. Uppsala and Oslo: Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) and International Peace Research Institute (PRIO).