

Syria-Visualized.com - Disclaimer

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As we advanced in the development of this project, we became increasingly aware that documenting conflict and violence is incredibly challenging.

While we have undertaken reasonable efforts to ensure that our visualizations represent the data transparently, and that visual biases are minimized, we cannot guarantee that our work reflects the events of the Syrian Conflict perfectly. Our website is primarily intended at developing our design and coding skills for our final CS171 Project at the Harvard School of Engineering and Applied Sciences. By no means do we claim to be experts on the Syrian Conflict, nor are we supporting or defending the quality of the data used.

We recognize each of the data sources utilized in this website has relevant caveats, including reporting biases and measurement errors; and we recommend to users that they interpret our visualizations critically, having these limitations in mind.

1. The *Integrated Conflict Early Warning System (ICEWS)* is probably one of the largest databases for social sciences at the moment. Launched in 2008 by the United States Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, it is intended at predicting events of crises drawing data from media events. An key strength of ICEWS data is even when it is originated in an automated coding framework, it is processed and cleaned with multiple techniques. Please, see a great discussion by on event data [here](#). A potential limitation of these data is that as it is drawn from media, it is subject to several biases, including political interests. For an excellent reflection on the biases of conflict data, please refer to [this](#) article.

2. *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)* data is probably the most reliable source available for the accounting of refugees and refugee camps. Even when the UN undertakes great efforts to compile and report statistics on refugees, it is believed that in highly-complex situations the official number of refugees may not match estimates of displaced people who are in a 'stateless' situation.

3. Data by the *Violation Documentation Center in Syria* is likely to be the most exhaustive source of information on casualties of the Syrian Conflict. It has been compiled independently since April 2011 in an effort to monitor and document human rights violations in the country. For more information on the methodology and classification of casualties, please refer to [their website](#). Naturally, a relevant limitation of this source is that most researchers working on the field have poor access to affected communities and to information. Moreover, as the conflict extends, the number of volunteers and their overall energy to pursue such a hard task, is likely to erode, affecting the quality of information.

All interpretations and conclusions expressed in this website are those of the authors and should not be attributed in any manner to Harvard University or any other institution or person cited. All errors remain our own.