Religion and Conflict: Evidence from Ramadan*

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Abstract

How does a global religious observance affect armed violence and civilian protest? I study this question in the context of Ramadan, leveraging the lunar calendar's rotation through Gregorian months and an exact-date matching design for identification. Ramadan increases state-based armed conflict in predominantly Muslim countries, an effect driven by religious-ideological rebel groups. Automated aggressor attribution of event narratives indicates that the escalation originates from rebel offensives. Granular military records from Afghanistan reveal that the attack patterns are consistent with combatants fasting as they shift strenuous direct fire attacks to hours after the fast-breaking evening meal in Ramadan. On the civilian side, a cross-country panel shows that demonstration activity declines during Ramadan in proportion to a country's Muslim population share. Survey evidence from 40,000 Muslims is consistent with this pattern: respondents interviewed during Ramadan report heightened religiosity and reduced political engagement. The same religious period that radical insurgents invoke as a season of conquest coincides with ordinary citizens turning inward toward worship and away from political action.

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JEL classification: Z10; Z12; D74; N30; O57; C55

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1 Introduction

Despite global peace efforts, armed conflicts persist (Palik et al., 2022). While their origins range from economic grievances to territorial disputes, religion often plays a pivotal role. Armed groups frequently invoke religious doctrine to justify and motivate violence, while the rhythms of religious practice structure the daily lives of civilians caught in conflict zones. Yet, despite extensive theorizing about the links between faith and violence, we lack granular evidence on whether religious practice itself, the temporal and physical observance of faith, systematically alters patterns of conflict and political mobilization (Iyer, 2016; Becker et al., 2021).

Understanding the impact of religious observance on conflict is important for at least two reasons. First, religion is known to greatly structure the behavior of armed organizations and ordinary civilians (McCleary and Barro, 2006; Berman, 2011), yet its effects on these groups may run in different directions. If so, aggregate studies risk masking the mechanisms through which religion shapes political behavior. Second, if religious practises systematically alter patterns of violence and protest, the implications for security planning, diplomatic timing, and peacebuilding are substantial.

Estimating the causal effect of religious practice on conflict dynamics faces serious challenges. Religious behavior is endogenous, and comparing outcomes across more and less religious populations confounds observance with deep differences in culture, institutions, and history. Any convincing account requires temporal variation in observance that is plausibly orthogonal to conflict intensity.

Ramadan, observed by nearly two billion Muslims worldwide (Pew Research Center, 2017), offers a setting well suited to these challenges. Because the Islamic lunar calendar is roughly 12 days shorter than the Gregorian calendar, Ramadan rotates through all solar months over a 33-year cycle. This rotation breaks the alignment between the fasting month and the solar calendar, allowing me to construct a balanced country-by-Hijri-month panel with country-by-Hijri-year and Gregorian month fixed effects and identify the Ramadan effect from within-country, within-Hijri-year comparisons net of solar seasonality. As a complementary strategy, I exploit the precise rate of this drift: the final 12 days of Ramadan in one year overlap with the same Gregorian calendar dates that fall just after Ramadan the following year, creating a clean comparison in which the same calendar days are treated in one year and untreated in the next. Crucially, both strategies isolate the causal effect of the Ramadan *period* rather than religious observance *per se*, yielding an intention-to-treat estimate.

The conceptual framework rests on three assumptions. First, for religious-ideological insurgents, the holy month provides a doctrinal framework that frames offensive warfare as uniquely meritorious. Modern organizations explicitly invoke historical battles fought during Ramadan, characterizing combat during the fast as obligatory worship whose spiritual rewards are multiplied (Bin Ali, 2017; Amarasingam and Winter, 2017).[1] This generates an incentive for escalation specific to groups with religious governance objectives and absent among

[1] The foundational precedents are the Battle of Badr (624 AD), the first major Muslim military victory, and the Conquest of Mecca (630 AD), both of which occurred during Ramadan.

ethno-religious or secular nationalist organizations. Second, the physiological constraints of the dawn-to-sunset fast impose significant costs on physically demanding operations, creating a rational incentive for fighters to defer high-exertion combat to post-iftar hours. Third, for ordinary civilians, the intensive ritual demands of Ramadan, from heightened daily prayers and extended evening congregations to communal iftars and the injunction to avoid confrontation while fasting, crowd out the time and attention required for political mobilization.

The empirical analysis draws on four main data sources. For armed conflict, I use the UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset (GED) covering 106 countries from 1989 to 2022, which records state-based conflict events with identified rebel groups and narrative event descriptions. I classify hundreds of rebel groups in the UCDP sample into religious-ideological, ethno-religious, and secular-nationalist categories based on founding charters, stated objectives, and affiliations (Crenshaw and Robinson, 2025). To attribute aggression within conflict events, I apply the GABRIEL framework (Asirvatham et al., 2026) to more than 100,000 event descriptions using a frontier LLM, classifying each event as government-initiated, rebel-initiated, or indeterminate. To examine within-day attack timing in Ramadan, I use the U.S. Defense Department's Significant Activities (SIGACTS) dataset, which records over 200,000 insurgent attacks in Afghanistan from 2002 through early 2015 with timestamps precise to the minute (Condra et al., 2018; Shaver and Wright, 2017).

For civilian demonstrations, I use ACLED data covering 48 African countries from 1997 to 2023. To probe individual-level mechanisms, I use World Values Survey data on approximately 40,000 Muslim respondents across Muslim-majority countries between 1999 and 2022, exploiting the quasi-random timing of interviews relative to Ramadan. All Gregorian dates are converted to the Hijri calendar using an expert-reviewed Python package and cross-checked against independent sources.

The baseline specification restricts the sample to countries with Muslim population shares above 75 percent, where observance is near-universal. As a complementary test, I interact the Ramadan indicator with Muslim population shares and estimate the model on the full sample, using countries with negligible Muslim populations as a built-in placebo group. To address the operational mechanism, I construct province-day-shift panels, splitting each day into a daytime fasting window and a post-iftar nighttime window. The coefficient on the Ramadan-by-night interaction isolates the differential reallocation of violence to nighttime hours during the holy month. I further decompose attacks by type, contrasting direct fire (high physical exertion) against IEDs (lower exertion at detonation), which provides a within-attack-type falsification test. For the survey analysis, I exploit within-country-wave-season variation in whether a respondent's interview happened to fall during Ramadan, controlling for individual demographics to address potential compositional shifts in the respondent pool.

The results reveal a sharp divergence in how Ramadan affects armed actors and ordinary citizens. State-based armed conflict increases by around 5% per Muslim-majority country during Ramadan, an effect that is entirely concentrated among religious-ideological rebel groups and absent among ethno-religious and secular-nationalist organizations operating in the same countries. LLM-based aggressor attribution confirms that the escalation originates mainly

from rebel offensives rather than government-initiated operations. Granular military records from Afghanistan uncover that insurgents concentrate labor-intensive direct fire attacks into post-iftar hours, while IED attacks show no such circadian reallocation. Across 31 countries with Muslim population shares exceeding 75%, a conservative calculation suggests Ramadan leads to 150–300 additional conflict-related deaths annually.

On the civilian side, Ramadan systematically suppresses protest activity in countries with large Muslim populations relative to those without, and individual survey evidence from Muslim-majority countries across the globe shows that Muslim respondents whose interviews coincide with Ramadan report heightened religiosity and reduced political interest relative to those interviewed in adjacent months within the same country and survey wave.

Multiple robustness checks support these findings. The armed conflict escalation survives the exact-date matching design, which perfectly differences out any seasonal confound tied to a specific calendar date. Placebo tests on non-Muslim countries and secular rebel groups yield precisely estimated null effects. Restricting to high-casualty or multi-source events addresses reporting concerns. The armed conflict results replicate in declassified military records that bypass media entirely. An event study across all Hijri months shows that Ramadan uniquely drives both the conflict increase and the protest decline, with no comparable effects in any other month. Finally, fasting duration has no independent association with either outcome, indicating that it is the occurrence of Ramadan, not the physical intensity of the fast, that generates the observed effects.

These findings speak to several literatures. They advance research on how religious events and norms shape conflict and political behavior (Clingingsmith et al., 2009; Mitra and Ray, 2014; Becker and Pascali, 2019; Bazzi et al., 2020; Lowes et al., 2025), particularly how quasi-exogenous timing of religious events alters socio-economic behavior (Campante and Yanagizawa-Drott, 2015; Montero and Yang, 2022). More broadly, they speak to ongoing research on the determinants of armed conflict (Miguel et al., 2004; Blattman and Miguel, 2010; Besley and Persson, 2011; Dube and Vargas, 2013; Bazzi and Blattman, 2014; McGuirk and Nunn, 2025), where religion remains underexplored despite its prominence in conflicts (Iyer, 2016).[2]

I build on existing studies that examine terrorist incidents and generally cast Islamic observance as a restraining force on violence. Reese et al. (2017) focus on specific Islamic holidays and find that insurgents commit fewer terrorist attacks to avoid public backlash, noting no surge in political violence during Ramadan. Their mechanism is reputational: armed groups that depend on civilian support avoid attacks that alienate the public during sacred periods. Hodler et al. (2024) argue that longer daylight fasts erode public tolerance for extremism through cumulative attitudinal change, reducing terrorism in the following year. The backlash mechanism applies most directly to indiscriminate civilian targeting, and the annual attitudinal channel operates at a different temporal frequency than the effects documented here.

[2]A growing literature documents the reverse channel: conflict and adversity can themselves intensify religious behavior. Henrich et al. (2019) show that war exposure in Uganda, Sierra Leone, and Tajikistan increased religious participation years later. Zussman (2014) and Blattman (2009) document similar patterns among Israeli civilians and Ugandan ex-combatants, respectively. Dube et al. (2022) use high-frequency telecommunications data to show that religious commitment, measured by mobile phone usage dips during Islamic prayer times, deepens in response to local conflict shocks.

A complementary line of work identifies financing as the operative channel: Limodio (2022) exploits Pakistan's government-run Zakat levy to show that mandatory charitable transfers during Ramadan fund capital-intensive attacks by organizations linked to recipient charities. While this establishes that institutional financial frictions shape the timing of violence, the mechanism is specific to Pakistan's unique levy structure. The two accounts are not mutually exclusive, though the absence of any Ramadan effect among ethno-religious groups in my sample suggests that financing alone cannot explain the escalation: the doctrinal channel appears necessary.

I depart from these studies in scope and conclusions. First, I focus on state-based armed conflict, the most prevalent form of organized violence, rather than terrorist incidents, and decompose effects by group ideology.[3] Second, I introduce a novel exact-date matching design that compares the same Gregorian calendar days across adjacent years, providing the cleanest possible control for seasonal confounds. Third, hourly military records from Afghanistan allow me to study the within-day tactical effects of Ramadan observance at a resolution unavailable in prior work. Furthermore, using cross-country protest data and individual survey evidence, I extend the analysis to civilian political behavior, a dimension absent from the existing literature. [4]

While previous studies leverage the quasi-exogenous timing of the month to identify effects on health, educational performance, and other socioeconomic outcomes (Almond and Mazumder, 2011; Majid, 2015; Campante and Yanagizawa-Drott, 2015; Oosterbeek and van der Klaauw, 2013; Hornung et al., 2023; Gulek, 2024), my analysis extends this work to political violence and collective action, examining how different actors respond to the fasting period. Given the well-documented costs of armed conflict for economic growth (Blattman and Miguel, 2010), these findings carry implications for economic prosperity as well.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 provides relevant details on religious observance and fighting in Ramadan. Section 3 develops the conceptual framework. Section 4 describes the data and empirical strategy. Section 5 presents the results. Section 6 concludes.

2 Background

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Hijri calendar.[5] Ramadan holds profound significance for Muslims as the month in which the Qur'an was first revealed. Observing Ramadan through fasting from early dawn to sunset is a key practice, known as one of the five pillars of Islam. Fasting during the month of Ramadan was made obligatory during the second year of Hi-

[3]To my knowledge, this project is also the first to systematically attribute the aggressor in a large-scale conflict dataset with an LLM-based text analysis.

[4]The paper also contributes to the literature on the determinants of protest and collective action (Madestam et al., 2013; Girod et al., 2018; Cantoni et al., 2019; Enikolopov et al., 2020). The finding that Ramadan crowds out political engagement at the individual level, confirmed by survey data showing heightened religiosity and reduced political interest, provides a new mechanism through which religious institutions can shape the political economy of authoritarian governance.

[5]It is a purely lunar calendar that consists of twelve months that are either 29 or 30 days long. This causes Ramadan to occur 10 to 12 days earlier each year in relation to the Gregorian calendar.

jrah (624 AD) after the Muslims migrated from Mecca to Medina in the month immediately preceding Ramadan. Fasting is obligatory for all Muslims who have reached puberty, with exceptions for those who are acutely or chronically ill, traveling, elderly, breastfeeding, diabetic, or pregnant. Fasting during Ramadan involves abstaining from food, drink, tobacco products, and sexual relations.

Ramadan significantly transforms the social and individual lives of those who observe it. Adherents wake up before dawn to eat and drink (*suhur*) and carry on with their daily activities, before breaking their fast (*iftar*) at sunset, often in the company of family and friends. Mosques also host iftar meals, attracting large gatherings throughout the month. Among various religions, predominantly Muslim countries have the highest daily and weekly rates of worship (Pew Research Center, 2018). Muslims pray five times a day, either in the mosque or individually, and gather for weekly Friday congregational prayers around noon throughout the year, with heightened emphasis on these practices during Ramadan. Both men and women frequently attend additional congregation prayers (*tarawih*) after iftar, which typically last 1-2 hours. Pope (2024) uses evidence from US cellphone data to report large spikes in Muslim worship attendance during Ramadan.

The theological foundations for this intensified engagement are explicit in the prophetic traditions.[6] One hadith (Sahih Bukhari, Book 2, Hadith 38) on Ramadan states:

> Narrated Abu Huraira: Allah's Apostle said, "Whoever observes fasts during the month of Ramadan out of sincere faith, and hoping to attain Allah's rewards, then all his past sins will be forgiven."[7]

This hadith illustrates the special spiritual status accorded to Ramadan, establishing the month as a period of uniquely heightened religious receptivity for believers. Another hadith (Sahih Muslim, Book 13, Hadith 212) explicitly discourages confrontation during fasting:[8]

> Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger as saying: Allah the Exalted and Majestic said: Every act of the son of Adam is for him, except fasting. It is exclusively meant for Me and I alone will reward it. Fasting is a shield. When any one of you is fasting on a day, he should neither indulge in obscene language, nor raise the voice; or if anyone reviles him or tries to quarrel with him he should say: I am a person fasting.

Together, these traditions create a powerful set of incentives for ordinary Muslims to redirect time and energy from secular activities toward worship, prayer, and self-restraint during the holy month.[9]

[6] All hadith references follow the standard numbering of the Sahih al-Bukhari collection and the Sahih Muslim collection, which serve as major sources of religious law and moral guidance, accessed via `https://sunnah.com`.

[7] Translation available at `https://sunnah.com/bukhari:38`.

[8] Translation available at `https://sunnah.com/muslim:1151d`.

[9] A natural question is why this injunction against confrontation does not similarly restrain insurgent groups. As discussed in the following subsection, religious-ideological organizations selectively invoke a separate strand of the prophetic tradition that frames offensive warfare during Ramadan as uniquely meritorious, drawing on historical precedents such as the Battle of Badr and the Conquest of Mecca. The behavioral norm against quarreling applies to interpersonal conduct among civilians; radical groups reinterpret the martial traditions as superseding it for combatants engaged in what they define as obligatory armed struggle.

While the Hijri calendar governs the timing of religious observances, virtually all Muslim-majority countries use the Gregorian calendar for civil, commercial, and governmental functions. Work schedules, school terms, agricultural cycles, and military operations follow Gregorian months and seasons. Even Saudi Arabia, which historically relied on the Hijri calendar for official purposes, adopted the Gregorian system for administrative functions in 2016. As a result, Ramadan's annual rotation through the Gregorian calendar means that fasting overlaps with different seasonal and institutional conditions each year.

Fighting in Ramadan

In Islam, four months of the year are designated as sacred, during which warfare is strictly prohibited except in self-defense.[10] Ramadan is not among them. Crucially, foundational military victories in early Islam occurred during Ramadan. These include the Battle of Badr, the first major engagement between early Muslims and the Meccan Quraysh, as well as the Conquest of Mecca, widely considered one of the most pivotal events in Islamic history. Throughout Islamic history, several other major battles have occurred during Ramadan, including the Muslim conquest of the Iberian Peninsula in 711, the Siege of Jerusalem in 1187, and the decisive Mamluk victories over the Mongols at Ain Jalut in 1260 and Marj al-Saffar in 1303. These historical precedents have carried into the modern era, heavily influencing the timing of the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, often referred to in the Arab world as the Ramadan War, and Iran's massive 1982 offensive during the Iran-Iraq War. The latter, involving over 180,000 troops in one of the largest land battles since World War II, was named Operation Ramadan to invoke religious legitimacy and the historical memory of early Islamic victories to motivate forces.

Both state forces and insurgent groups continue to leverage this historical narrative to provide religious and strategic legitimacy for military engagements during the holy month. While classical Islamic teachings often emphasize the "Greater Jihad" (the internal, spiritual struggle for self-restraint), modern radical Islamist organizations selectively prioritize the "Lesser Jihad" (offensive warfare). These groups engage in a sophisticated form of ideological appropriation, framing Ramadan as a unique temporal window where the spiritual rewards for martyrdom and military success are exponentially multiplied. For example, the Afghan Taliban have formally rejected calls for seasonal ceasefires as an "ignorance of religion," instead characterizing combat during the fast as an "obligatory worship" (*ibadat*) for which the spiritual merit is multiplied seventyfold (Taylor and Harooni, 2013). Similarly, spokesmen for the Islamic State have frequently characterized Ramadan as the "month of conquest and jihad," explicitly drawing a parallel between modern insurgent activities and the foundational victories of the Prophet (Bin Ali, 2017; Amarasingam and Winter, 2017). In this framework, the physical hardship of the fast is rebranded as a form of ascetic preparation that increases the *thawab* (spiritual merit) of the fighter, turning physiological deprivation into a psychological asset.

[10]These sacred months are Muharram (the first month), Rajab (the seventh month), and the last two months, Dhul Qa'dah and Dhu al-Hijjah (Al-Dawoody, 2011).

The doctrinal raw material for this appropriation is readily available in the canonical hadith collections. Radical groups selectively invoke prophetic traditions on warfare and martyrdom, reinterpreting them to frame Ramadan combat as uniquely meritorious (see Cook, 2015; Hegghammer, 2017). Crucially, insurgent fighters maintain strict observance of the fast even while conducting operations. Hegghammer (2017) documents accounts of insurgent groups fasting during Ramadan, including suicidal fighters observing the fast before attacks. The Taliban's code of conduct (Layeha) similarly requires fighters to uphold core religious obligations (Munir, 2011). This simultaneous adherence to the fast and escalation of combat is precisely the behavioral pattern that the military records reveal at hourly resolution in Section 4.

3 Conceptual Framework

This section develops a conceptual framework linking Ramadan to armed conflict and civilian political behavior. I derive testable predictions from three mechanisms and connect each to the literature on the organizational economics of violent groups and the economics of religious participation.

Mechanism 1: Ideological Appropriation and Insurgent Escalation. The historical and doctrinal record establishes that Ramadan occupies a privileged place in the Islamic military tradition. From the Battle of Badr to the Conquest of Mecca, foundational victories occurred during the fasting month, and modern insurgent organizations actively invoke these precedents to frame offensive warfare as uniquely meritorious (Bin Ali, 2017; Amarasingam and Winter, 2017; Taylor and Harooni, 2013). This framing requires an explicitly religious-ideological agenda; groups with religious identity but primarily nationalist goals lack the doctrinal infrastructure to credibly cast Ramadan as a season of obligatory combat, and secular-nationalist groups have no basis for such mobilization at all.

Beyond doctrinal framing, several reinforcing mechanisms incentivize escalation. The heightened religious environment creates opportunities for ideological outbidding (Bloom, 2005): by launching high-profile attacks during the holy month, militant groups signal superior religious commitment relative to the state or competing factions. Conducting complex operations while adhering to a strict fast demonstrates a level of devotion that less observant rivals cannot match, serving as a costly signal critical for recruitment and consolidation of support (Berman and Laitin, 2008; Berman, 2011).[11] This connects to the "club model" of religious organizations (Iannaccone, 1992; Berman, 2011), in which the shared ordeal of fasting under combat conditions screens out uncommitted members and tightens group cohesion. The communal experience of the fast generates a state of collective effervescence and shared sacrifice that lowers mobilization costs, with the shared rhythms of *suhur* and *iftar* providing predictable windows for logistical coordination and clandestine movement of personnel.

Finally, the heightened visibility and logistical concentration of state security forces during communal religious events may create specific tactical opportunities. Rather than target-

[11] Berman and Laitin (2008) show that religious militants are more lethal per attack than secular counterparts precisely because costly religious requirements filter for high-commitment operatives. Ramadan fasting under combat conditions intensifies this screening mechanism.

ing civilians, which carries high political costs and is often explicitly discouraged in militant codes of conduct (Clark, 2011; Reese et al., 2017; Hodler et al., 2024), insurgents can concentrate attacks on government forces during periods of high symbolic salience, demonstrating military capability without alienating the community. The observed escalation is thus not merely a product of individual piety but a calculated intersection of theological justification, competitive signaling, and the strategic exploitation of the state's expanded footprint during the holy month. If the mechanism operates through rebel groups invoking doctrinal justifications for offensive warfare, the escalation should manifest predominantly as rebel-initiated violence, though a smaller government response is consistent with reactive or preemptive counter-insurgency operations triggered by anticipated rebel activity. I test this by classifying the aggressor in each conflict event using LLM-based attribution of unstructured event descriptions.

Mechanism 2: Physiological Constraints and Tactical Reallocation. The dawn-to-sunset fast imposes acute costs: reduced grip strength, slower reaction times, and diminished aerobic capacity, particularly during afternoon hours when dehydration peaks (Cherif et al., 2016; Chaouachi et al., 2009). These constraints are immediately relaxed after iftar, when fighters eat, rehydrate, and recover the physical capacity necessary for sustained close combat. For insurgent organizations that must rationally allocate scarce combatant resources (Shapiro, 2013), this creates a straightforward optimization problem: operations requiring sustained physical exertion, such as direct fire engagements involving small arms, rocket-propelled grenades, and coordinated squad movements, become prohibitively costly during daylight hours. By contrast, remotely detonated or victim-activated IEDs, which are pre-positioned and require negligible physical effort at the moment of execution, face no comparable physiological constraint.

The implication is that direct fire should shift to post-iftar hours while IEDs should not. This prediction sharply distinguish the physiological mechanism from alternatives. A public-backlash mechanism (Reese et al., 2017) predicts uniform suppression of all violence during Ramadan, not a within-day shift. A generic nocturnal-preference story predicts identical reallocation for all attack types. Only the fasting-constraint channel predicts a divergence between high-exertion and low-exertion tactics concentrated precisely at the iftar boundary. I test these predictions using declassified military records from Afghanistan, which provide timestamps precise to the minute.

Mechanism 3: Ritual Crowding-Out of Civilian Engagement. For ordinary citizens, Ramadan transforms the allocation of time and attention. The daily rhythm of suhur, five obligatory prayers with heightened emphasis, extended tarawih congregations lasting one to two hours each evening, communal iftars, and Qur'anic recitation collectively impose substantial demands on discretionary time (Pope, 2024). This is consistent with the household production framework (Becker, 1965; Azzi and Ehrenberg, 1975; Iannaccone, 1990): during Ramadan, the returns to religious investment rise sharply as canonical traditions promise multiplied merit for worship, creating powerful incentives to substitute away from secular pursuits including

political engagement.[12] This also aligns with recent evidence demonstrating that religious festivals systematically crowd out secular activities while heightening local religious investments (Montero and Yang, 2022).

The doctrinal injunctions reinforce this reallocation: the prophetic tradition instructs the fasting person to avoid confrontation, establishing a behavioral norm against public contention that applies broadly to the civilian population. If the demonstration decline reflects genuine behavioral reallocation rather than reporting artifacts, it should be visible at the individual level.

A complementary channel operates on the supply side: governments and security forces also anticipate Ramadan and may preemptively intensify their presence around mosques, public spaces, and traditional gathering points, raising the expected cost of collective action for would-be demonstrators. To the extent that states treat the holy month as a period of heightened vigilance, the observed protest decline could partly reflect deterrence rather than purely voluntary demobilization. The individual-level survey evidence helps adjudicate between these channels. If preemptive state repression were the sole mechanism, one would expect suppressed protest willingness but no corresponding shift in private religiosity or political interest, since these attitudes are not directly constrained by police presence. The finding that Ramadan simultaneously increases daily prayer frequency and reduces political interest at the individual level is more consistent with genuine behavioral reallocation, though it does not rule out a reinforcing role for state anticipation.

Collectively, the three mechanisms generate interlocking predictions testable at different levels of aggregation: cross-country panels for the overall Ramadan effect and its variation by group ideology and Muslim population share; hourly military records for within-day tactical reallocation; and individual survey data for the time-allocation mechanism underlying civilian demobilization.

4 Data and Empirical Methodology

The empirical analysis draws on the following data sources:

1. Armed conflict. The primary source of armed conflict data is the UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset (GED) covering the period from 1989 to 2022. I focus on state-based armed conflicts, which account for more than 70% of all armed conflict types. An individual "event" in UCDP-GED involves the use of armed force by the government of a state against one or more opposition groups, with at least one direct battle death (Sundberg and Melander, 2013). Each event records the identity of the rebel group involved, which contains more than 100 distinct entities across the sample. The dataset also includes a source article field containing brief narrative descriptions of each event. This panel dataset covers nearly all Muslim-majority

[12] Iannaccone (1990) shows that religious "capital" accumulated through repeated participation raises the marginal return to further religious investment. Ramadan's concentrated period of intensified practice is precisely the kind of shock that activates this mechanism.

countries and spans one complete cycle of Ramadan's progression through the solar year,[13] with a sample of 106 countries. Figure A.1 shows these countries on the world map.

2. Hours of attacks. Data on hourly insurgent violence come from the U.S. Defense Department's Significant Activities (SIGACTS) dataset for Operation Enduring Freedom, covering more than 200,000 insurgent attacks in Afghanistan from 2002 through early 2015 (Condra et al., 2018; Shaver and Wright, 2017). These records were jointly collected by Afghan security forces and NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) following standardized military reporting protocols. Unlike media-sourced datasets, military-recorded data of this kind offer more systematic coverage of conflict events and are less susceptible to the reporting biases documented in media-based incident compilation (Weidmann, 2016). This makes the SIGACTS data a valuable complement to the UCDP records used in the cross-country analysis. Each incident is geo-referenced using military grid coordinates and includes a time stamp, typically precise to the minute.[14] The data capture two main attack types relevant to this analysis: direct fire, which involves small arms and rocket-propelled grenades carried out by insurgents often operating in groups, and improvised explosive devices (IEDs), which are typically placed on or near roadways to target moving patrols.

3. Demonstrations. For data on civilian protests, I use the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED) project in Africa over the period 1997-2023, involving 48 countries (Raleigh et al., 2023). The project started by focusing on Africa, allowing for coverage dating back to 1997, thus making it the only continent with the most extensive data. The rationale behind additionally focusing on Africa in this part is its significant Muslim population, with over half a billion Muslims and at least 17 Muslim-majority countries, comprising nearly a third of the global Muslim population (Kettani, 2010). In a global survey examining the significance of religion within various religious traditions, Pew Research Center (2018) documents that Africa exhibits the highest average percentages of individuals who consider religion to be very important in their lives as well as the highest percentages of individuals who pray daily (around 80%). The countries are shown in Figure A.2.

4. Share of Muslims. I separately merge the UCDP and ACLED datasets with datasets on the Muslim population share in each country from the World Religion Project (WRP) (Maoz and Henderson, 2013) and the Pew Research Center (2017). The WRP provides data on the number of followers and total population in five-year intervals from 1985 to 2010. I interpolate these figures to create an annual cross-country dataset for the years between the WRP's five-year markers. For the period from 2010 to 2023, I interpolate data from the Pew Research Center, which offers similar data at ten-year intervals. For the armed conflict analysis, the monthly panel includes 31 countries with an average Muslim population share of at least 75%. For the demonstration analysis, 14 African countries meet the 75% Muslim population threshold over the sample period.

[13] Since a lunar month is about 29.5 days long, the Hijri calendar shifts by around 1.5 weeks each year compared to the Gregorian calendar, with 34 Hijri years approximately corresponding to 33 Gregorian years.

[14] The use of high-frequency records to capture granular, circadian behavioral shifts closely parallels recent methodological advances in the economics of religion, which leverage high-frequency telecommunications metadata to track localized, prayer-time network dips (Dube et al., 2022).

5. Individual survey outcomes. To investigate the individual-level mechanisms driving the decline in civilian demonstrations, I use World Values Survey (WVS) data spanning four waves between 1999 and 2022 (Haerpfer et al., 2022). Restricting the sample to approximately 40,000 Muslim respondents across more than 20 Muslim-majority countries with exact interview dates, I construct three binary indicators to capture shifts in religious and political engagement. First, to measure daily religious intensity, I construct a prayer frequency indicator coded as 1 for respondents who report praying at least once or several times a day, and 0 otherwise.[15] Second, to capture political interest, I create an indicator coded as 1 if the respondent is "very" or "somewhat" interested in politics, and 0 otherwise. Finally, to measure protest willingness, I construct an indicator coded as 1 if the respondent "has done" or "might do" peaceful demonstrations, and 0 if they assert they "would never" participate.

6. Fasting hours. To explore whether the intensity of fasting mediates the relationship between Ramadan and conflict, I construct a measure of daily fasting duration for each country-year, calculated as the difference between civil twilight and sunset times at each capital city using data web-scraped from the U.S. Naval Observatory's Astronomical Applications Department.[16] Fasting hours vary across countries and years due to two factors: Ramadan's rotation through the Gregorian calendar, which shifts it between longer summer days and shorter winter days, and latitude, which amplifies seasonal daylight variation. Equatorial countries experience nearly constant fasting durations, while countries farther from the equator face swings of up to seven hours across Ramadan cycles. Because this variation is determined entirely by geography and astronomy, it is orthogonal to conflict conditions. I include this variable in selected specifications to test whether longer fasting hours independently affect armed conflict or protest activity; as noted below, I find no significant relationship with either outcome.

In all balanced panels, hours, days or months with no reported incidents are coded as zero. All Gregorian dates are converted to the Hijri calendar using an expert-reviewed Python package and cross-checked against independent sources.[17] Summary statistics for all the key variables presented in this section are available in Table A.1 and Table A.2.

4.1 Empirical Models

To examine the effect of Ramadan on conflict frequency, I use a balanced panel at the country-month level, organized by the Hijri calendar. The baseline model, estimated on countries with a Muslim population share above 75%, is:

$$\log(y_{cmt} + 1) = \beta_1 \text{Ramadan}_{mt} + \gamma_g + \theta_{ct} + \epsilon_{cmt} \tag{1}$$

[15] This high threshold isolates intense daily observance, though baseline religiosity is high; nearly 72% of the sample reports praying at least once a month.

[16] Civil twilight occurs when the sun is 6° below the horizon, closely approximating the 15° angle traditionally used by Muslims to determine the start of fasting.

[17] I use the HijriDate Python package (available at `https://pypi.org/project/hijridate`) and cross-check dates using Islamic Philosophy Online (`https://www.muslimphilosophy.com/ip/hijri.htm`) from the Institute of Oriental Studies, Zürich University.

where y_{cmt} is the number of state-based armed conflicts or demonstrations in country c, Hijri month m, and Hijri year t. Ramadan$_{mt}$ is an indicator equal to 1 if month m in year t corresponds to Ramadan, and 0 otherwise. Since Ramadan falls in the same Hijri month across all countries, this variable does not vary by country. γ_g denotes Gregorian month fixed effects, which absorb seasonal patterns tied to the solar calendar such as weather, agricultural cycles, and fighting seasons. θ_{ct} denotes country-by-Hijri-year fixed effects, which absorb all time-varying shocks specific to a given country and year, including economic conditions, political transitions, and national holidays.

The log transformation reduces skewness in the count data and allows interpretation of coefficients as approximate percentage changes. An alternative is Poisson pseudo-maximum likelihood (PPML), which directly models count data and accommodates zeros without a log transformation (Silva and Tenreyro, 2006; Chen and Roth, 2024). However, the identification strategy in this paper requires both Gregorian month fixed effects, which break the collinearity between Ramadan and solar-calendar seasonality that would otherwise confound identification, and country-by-Hijri-year fixed effects, which ensure the estimate is not driven by country-specific annual shocks. This high-dimensional structure creates severe estimation problems for PPML on sparse conflict data: when an entire fixed-effect group contains only zeros, the likelihood has no finite maximum and the algorithm drops that group entirely, a well-documented consequence of perfect statistical separation in nonlinear models (Correia et al., 2020; Fernández-Val and Weidner, 2016). Separation is particularly costly in this setting, as it systematically excludes peaceful country-years that form the counterfactual against which the Ramadan effect is estimated. I therefore retain the log-linear OLS specification as the baseline throughout.

Identification comes from the rotation of Ramadan through the Gregorian calendar. Because the Hijri calendar shifts approximately 10–12 days earlier each year, Ramadan falls in different Gregorian months across years, cycling through all seasons over a 33-year period. After netting fixed effects out, β_1 is identified from the year-to-year shift in which Gregorian month coincides with the fasting period. Because the rotation of Ramadan through the Gregorian calendar is governed by lunar astronomy, its timing is not determined by or responsive to conflict conditions in any given country or year.

To examine how the effect of Ramadan varies with the relative size of the Muslim population, I estimate the following specification on the full sample of countries:

$$\log(y_{cmt} + 1) = \beta_1 \text{Ramadan}_{mt} + \beta_2 \text{Ramadan}_{mt} \times \%\text{Muslim}_{ct} + \gamma_g + \theta_{ct} + \epsilon_{cmt} \tag{2}$$

where β_2 captures how the effect of Ramadan on conflict changes as the Muslim population share increases. Since the specification includes country-by-year fixed effects, the level of $\%\text{Muslim}_{ct}$ is absorbed and does not enter separately.

The linear interaction in Equation 2 imposes a constant marginal effect of Muslim population share on the Ramadan coefficient. To allow for nonlinearities, I also estimate a more

flexible specification that captures the effect of Ramadan within discrete population-share categories:

$$\log(y_{cmt}+1) = \beta_1 \text{Ramadan}_{mt} + \sum_{k=1}^{4} \theta_k \cdot (D_{k,ct} \times \text{Ramadan}_{mt}) + \gamma_g + \theta_{ct} + d_{kt} + \epsilon_{cmt} \quad (3)$$

where $D_{k,ct}$ represents indicator variables for different Muslim population share categories.[18] The coefficient θ_1, for instance, captures the differential effect of Ramadan on conflict in countries with more than 75% Muslim population relative to the baseline category. d_{kt} denotes category-by-year fixed effects, which absorb group-specific trends across Muslim population share categories.

Subnational Intraday Specifications

To examine the intraday tactical substitution driven by the physiological constraints of fasting, I utilize high-frequency military data from Afghanistan. I structure the data as a panel at the province, Hijri month, and shift level. I first divide each day into two periods: a daylight fasting window from 05:00 to 17:59 and a nighttime post-iftar and pre-suhoor windows from 18:00 to 04:59.[19] After balancing the daily panel to include periods with zero incidents, I aggregate the data to the monthly level by shift to estimate the following:

$$\log(y_{pmst}+1) = \beta_1 \text{Ramadan}_m + \beta_2 \text{Night}_s + \beta_3 (\text{Ramadan}_m \times \text{Night}_s) + \gamma_g + \theta_{pt} + \epsilon_{pmst} \quad (4)$$

where y_{pmst} represents the number of attacks in province p, during Hijri month m, shift s, and Hijri year t. The variable Ramadan_m is an indicator equal to one if the month is the holy month. The variable Night_s is an indicator equal to one for the post-sunset shift. The coefficient of interest is β_3, which captures the differential shift in violence during the nighttime window in Ramadan compared to the same nocturnal window during other months. γ_g denotes Gregorian month fixed effects to absorb seasonal weather patterns and the traditional fighting season. θ_{pt} denotes province-by-Hijri-year fixed effects to account for local annual conflict trajectories, changes in troop deployments, and regional strategic shifts. Standard errors are clustered at the province level to account for spatial and temporal correlation within locations.

To map this circadian reallocation precisely, I expand the temporal resolution to the hour level and estimate a flexible event study specification:

[18] $D_{1,ct}$, $D_{2,ct}$, $D_{3,ct}$, and $D_{4,ct}$ are indicators for countries where the Muslim population share exceeds 75% (31 countries for UCDP and 14 for ACLED), is between 50–75% (7 and 3), between 25–50% (8 and 6), and between 1–25% (39 and 19), respectively. The baseline category consists of countries with less than 1% Muslim population (22 and 6).

[19] These cutoffs approximate the average fasting window in Afghanistan over the 2002–2015 sample period.

$$\log(y_{pdht}+1) = \beta_1 \text{Ramadan}_{dt} + \sum_{j\neq 2} \alpha_j \text{Hour}_j + \sum_{j\neq 2} \delta_j (\text{Hour}_j \times \text{Ramadan}_{dt}) + \gamma_g + \theta_{pt} + \epsilon_{pdht} \tag{5}$$

where Hour_j are indicator variables for each hour of the day local time. The base category is 02:00 AM, which serves as a neutral nighttime reference point falling comfortably between post-sunset mobilization and the pre-dawn meal. The coefficients δ_j trace out the intraday trajectory of violence during Ramadan relative to this baseline hour. Plotting these coefficients provides a direct visual test of whether labor-intensive attacks surge exclusively after sunset.

Fasting Hours

Following Campante and Yanagizawa-Drott (2015), I also test whether the duration of the daily fast influences the frequency of violence. I estimate the baseline equations by interacting the Ramadan indicator with the logarithm of daily fasting hours. I rely on national variation for this analysis rather than adopting a subnational grid approach (as in Hodler et al., 2024). Global subnational conflict panels are exceedingly sparse, georeferencing in standard datasets is often imprecise (Eck, 2012), and local demographic data on religious affiliation are systematically unavailable across the sample.

5 Results

5.1 Effects on Armed Conflicts

Table 1 presents the baseline results on the impact of Ramadan on state-based armed conflict. Columns (1) through (5) restrict the sample to 31 countries with a Muslim population share exceeding 75%. The Ramadan coefficient is stable at 0.037 across all five specifications, significant at the 1% level, and unaffected by the progressive inclusion of Gregorian month fixed effects, country fixed effects, year fixed effects, and the most demanding country-by-year fixed effects. This stability indicates that the result is not driven by seasonality, cross-country differences in conflict levels, or country-specific annual shocks. In levels, the coefficient implies approximately 0.5 additional conflict events per predominantly Muslim country during Ramadan relative to other months, or 15 additional episodes across the sample in a single Ramadan. Given an average of about 7 fatalities per conflict incident per month in these countries, this translates into a conservative estimate of approximately 100 extra conflict-related deaths during each Ramadan.

Columns (6) and (7) expand the sample to all 106 countries. In column (6), the Ramadan indicator and its linear interaction with Muslim population share are both statistically insignificant, suggesting that the relationship does not follow a simple linear pattern. Column (7) addresses this by interacting Ramadan with discrete population-share categories. The coefficient on the interaction with 31 countries exceeding 75% Muslim population indicates that the Ramadan period raises armed conflict frequency in these countries by approximately 3.3%

relative to countries with less than 1% Muslim population ($p < 0.05$). All other population-share interactions are statistically insignificant and close to zero, confirming that the Ramadan effect is concentrated in countries where Islamic observance is most widespread and socially pervasive.

The results withstand several sensitivity checks. Restricting the control group to months immediately adjacent to Ramadan yields similar estimates (Table A.3 reports the specification using three months before and after). A placebo test on 22 countries with less than 1% Muslim population produces precisely estimated null effects, confirming that the results are not driven by non-religious seasonal factors (Table A.4, columns 1–6). Replacing the Muslim population interactions with analogous Christian population variables in the same table (columns 7–8) shows that Ramadan's effect on conflict declines as the Christian share rises, consistent with the reference group of low-Christian countries being predominantly Muslim. As a cross-dataset validation, I replicate the analysis using politically violent events from ACLED, restricted to incidents involving a state actor to approximate the UCDP definition of state-based conflict. These results, presented in Table A.5, are consistent with the main findings, with effect sizes nearly doubling in magnitude and remaining significant at the 1% level. Finally, the estimates are generally robust to excluding any single country from the sample (Figure A.3).

Group Ideology and Aggression Attribution

The baseline results establish that Ramadan is associated with an increase in state-based armed conflict in Muslim-majority countries. A natural follow-up question is *which* groups drive this increase. If the mechanism operates through religious doctrine and historical precedent, as the conceptual framework suggests, then the Ramadan effect should be concentrated among groups that explicitly invoke religious justification for armed struggle. Groups with religious identity but primarily nationalist goals should not respond as much to Ramadan, since their strategic calculus is not anchored in Islamic jurisprudence on warfare. Secular groups, whose objectives are entirely divorced from religious framing, should show no response at all, serving as a falsification benchmark. Furthermore, a precise null among secular groups serves as a powerful falsification of a generic routine-disruption story. If Ramadan simply reshuffled daily rhythms in a way that mechanically altered all conflict, non-religious actors operating within the same cultural geography would exhibit an identical operational response.

To test these predictions, I manually classify all 139 rebel groups in the sample into three ideological categories based on each group's founding charter, stated objectives, and primary recruitment ideology, drawing on the UCDP Actor Dataset (Brosché and Sundberg, 2024) and the Mapping Militants Project (Crenshaw and Robinson, 2025). The complete list and detailed coding logic for all groups are provided in Appendix B.[20] The manual classification proceeds as follows:

[20]The classification covers all 139 organized armed groups identified as engaging in state-based conflict against government forces in 30 Muslim-majority countries in the sample period (1989–2022). State actors appearing as side B in the UCDP data (e.g., Government of Pakistan in interstate episodes) are dropped.

(i) Religious-ideological (n=34) groups are those whose primary stated objective is establishing strict religious governance, an Islamic state or caliphate, or the ideological purification of society. These groups explicitly invoke a religious mandate as the primary justification for armed struggle and operate as ideological vanguards. Examples include the Afghan Taliban, the Islamic State, al-Qaida and its regional affiliates (AQAP, AQIM, JNIM), al-Shabaab, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ). These groups draw directly on Islamic precedent and doctrine, making them the most theoretically likely to alter conflict behavior during Ramadan.

(ii) Ethno-religious (n=21) groups possess a strong religious identity but pursue primarily territorially bounded nationalist, ethnic, or political objectives (such as statehood or localized regime change). Religion serves as a powerful mechanism for group cohesion and mobilization rather than the primary doctrinal justification for transnational violence. Examples include Syrian Insurgents, Kashmir Insurgents, and Hamas. Groups, which are predominantly Islamist but encompass groups with diverse political and territorial objectives, is also classified in this category. These groups allow testing whether religious identity alone is sufficient to produce a Ramadan effect, or whether an explicitly religious-ideological framework is required.

(iii) Secular-nationalist (n=84) groups are those whose stated objectives are strictly secular, ethnic, nationalist, Marxist-Leninist, or factional, operating entirely outside of any religious-ideological framework (related to observance of Ramadan). Examples include the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and its affiliates, the Baloch separatist groups (BLA, BRA, BRAS), and Fatah.These groups serve as the falsification benchmark: if the theory holds, Ramadan should have no systematic effect on their conflict behavior.

Columns (1)–(3) of Table 2 examine conflict intensity and columns (4)–(6) examine fatalities, with each pair of columns corresponding to one rebel group category. The results reveal a sharp gradient. Religious-ideological groups exhibit a nearly 3.3% increase in conflict events during Ramadan (column 1) and a 4.6% increase in fatalities (column 4), the former and the latter are statistically different below the 5% and 1% thresholds, respectively. The coefficients for both ethno-religious and secular-nationalist groups show a precisely estimated null effect on both outcomes.

Two features of these results stand out. First, the null effect for ethno-religious groups provides a sharp test of the mechanism. Despite operating in the same countries and sharing the same religious calendar as religious-ideological factions, groups like the Syrian insurgent coalition exhibit no comparable escalation. This suggests the mechanism is strictly ideological: mobilizing for violence requires a doctrinal framework justifying warfare, not simply a religious label. Second, the null effect for secular groups weighs heavily against a generic time-reallocation channel that drives all conflict seasonality. If mechanical disruptions to daily routines were the primary driver, they would similarly alter the operational tempo of all armed actors in these environments, regardless of ideology.

The finding that this escalation is strictly isolated to religious-ideological groups also aligns cleanly with the "club model" of religious terrorism (Berman and Laitin, 2008; Berman, 2011). While fighters across various groups may observe the fast, religious-ideological organizations

uniquely couple this physical ordeal with a strict doctrinal mandate for offensive warfare. In this framework, the extreme sacrifice required to execute combat operations while fasting acts as a severe screening mechanism. It weeds out free-riders and tightens group cohesion, enhancing operational lethality specifically for organizations that demand both ritual purity and martial sacrifice.

The preceding analysis establishes *which* groups escalate during Ramadan, but not *who initiates* the violence. The UCDP GED records both parties to each conflict event but does not systematically code which side was the aggressor. If the Ramadan increase among religious-ideological groups is driven by rebel escalation, consistent with the invocation of Islamic precedents for offensive warfare, then the coefficient should be concentrated among rebel-initiated events. If instead governments intensify preemptive strikes during Ramadan, the coefficient would appear on government-initiated events.

To distinguish aggressor from target, I classify each conflict event using an LLM applied to source descriptions in the UCDP data. Using the GABRIEL framework (Asirvatham et al., 2026), I pass each event's source text along with the identities of Side A (government) and Side B (rebel group) through OpenAI's frontier GPT-5-mini model, which evaluates whether Side A, Side B, or neither can be identified as the aggressor based on the event description.[21] GABRIEL's `classify` function constrains the output to exactly three labels—1 if "Side A", 2 if "Side B", and 0 if "Neutral"—using log-probability extraction, ensuring deterministic and reproducible classification with all code and prompts available in the replication package.[22] Events classified as Neutral (57% of the sample) are excluded from the aggression analysis, leaving 43% of events with a clear aggressor attribution: 26% government-initiated and 17% rebel-initiated (see Table A.6).[23]

Table 3 presents the results, disaggregating the data by both ideological category and aggressor type to unpack the mechanisms driving the Ramadan escalation. The findings sharpen the baseline results considerably. Among religious-ideological vanguards, rebel-initiated conflict events surge by 3.9% during Ramadan, a result that is statistically significant at the 1% level (column 1). Concurrently, government-initiated events against these same groups also rise by 1.2%, significant at the 5% level (column 2). Because both sides exhibit a statistically significant escalation, the data points to a broader, interactive intensification of the conflict environment rather than a strictly one-sided offensive. However, the magnitude of the rebel-driven escalation is more than three times larger. This dynamic is highly consistent with the hypothesis that religious-ideological groups actively operationalize Islamic historical precedents

[21] An alternative approach is to cross-reference UCDP events with the Global Terrorism Database, classifying events present in both datasets as rebel-initiated (see Gassebner et al., 2023). While transparent, this method is limited to events meeting the GTD's terrorism definition and may miss rebel-initiated episodes such as conventional military engagements. The LLM-based approach used here classifies each event individually based on the language of its source description, accommodating the full range of conflict types in the UCDP data.

[22] GABRIEL evaluates each label independently and returns probability scores for all three classes per event. Events where the source text is missing or consists only of the UCDP aggregation tag (approximately 1,390 of 156,685 observations) are automatically classified as Neutral. The classification uses temperature $= 0$ for deterministic output.

[23] The high Neutral share reflects the conservative classification guidelines, which default to Neutral when the source text is ambiguous. This is by design: the analysis sacrifices sample size for attribution accuracy.

to justify offensive campaigns during the holy month, which in turn draws a corresponding (though smaller) military response or preemptive engagement from state forces.

The subsequent columns provide a rigorous falsification test. For ethno-religious groups, both rebel-initiated (column 3) and government-initiated (column 4) events return precisely estimated null effects. This confirms a crucial theoretical boundary: a shared Islamic identity, absent a strict religious-ideological mandate for governance, is insufficient to trigger a Ramadan escalation from either side of the conflict.

For secular-nationalist groups, rebel-initiated events yield a precise zero (column 5), offering the cleanest possible rejection of the mechanical across-the-board time-reallocation alternative. Notably, there is a very small increase in government-initiated events against secular targets that is only marginally significant (column 6). Interpreted cautiously, this may suggest a strategic substitution by the state. Governments might opportunistically redirect certain military operations toward secular insurgents during Ramadan, capitalizing on the lower domestic political costs of striking unobservant communities during a sacred period.[24]

While the baseline classification relies strictly on the stated objectives and founding charters of armed groups, insurgent ideological boundaries are frequently contested in qualitative conflict literature. To ensure the core findings are not artifacts of subjective coding decisions, I re-estimate the primary specifications using a "strict" classification sample that excludes prominent borderline cases. From the religious-ideological category, I remove the Afghan Taliban, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and the Macina Liberation Front due to their respective overlaps with Pashtun tribal codes, territorial nationalism, and localized Fulani grievances. From the ethno-religious category, I exclude broad umbrella coalitions—namely Syrian and Kashmir insurgents—as well as Hamas and Hezbollah, whose foundational religious charters complicate their current nationalist operational realities. Finally, because the secular-nationalist category is defined by the explicit absence of a religious governance mandate, its empirical boundaries are inherently less ambiguous and require fewer exclusions. Nevertheless, the result is robust to dropping any one group. The baseline findings remain unchanged when these contested groups are excluded, confirming that the divergent behavioral responses to Ramadan are deeply structural rather than driven by idiosyncratic conflicts.[25]

The results point to a nuanced causal chain. Ramadan systematically intensifies armed conflict in predominantly Muslim countries, but this intensification is exclusively concentrated in conflicts involving insurgencies whose foundational ideologies demand strict religious governance. Within these specific conflicts, while both sides significantly escalate their operations, the surge is disproportionately driven by rebel-initiated violence. In contrast, neither broad religious identity nor secular objectives produce a comparable insurgent behavioral shift.

[24] As an additional robustness check, I also classified the unstructured event descriptions using a standard zero-shot prompting approach via the OpenAI API (`gpt-4o-mini`) rather than GABRIEL's log-probability extraction. The regression estimates remain highly robust to this alternative text classification strategy and are available upon request.

[25] These results are available upon request.

Timing Attacks: Evidence from Afghanistan

The cross-country analysis and rebel-type decomposition establish that the religious month of Ramadan increases armed conflict and that this increase is driven by rebel-initiated violence among religious-ideological groups. A remaining question is how insurgents operationally manage this escalation given the physical constraints of fasting. If fighters strictly adhere to the dawn-to-sunset fast, they face severe physical frictions. Because insurgent organizations must rationally optimize their limited resources to survive (Shapiro, 2013), one would expect high-exertion operations to shift toward post-iftar hours, while attacks requiring minimal physical effort at the time of execution should show no such circadian reallocation. To test this prediction, I turn to the SIGACTS dataset, which records over 200,000 insurgent attacks in Afghanistan from 2002 through early 2015 with precise timestamps and geo-referenced coordinates (Shaver and Wright, 2017). I construct a province-month panel and a province-month-shift panel that splits each province-month into pre-iftar (dawn to sunset) and post-iftar (sunset to dawn) halves, examining three outcomes: total rebel attacks (direct fire plus IEDs), direct fire attacks alone, and IED attacks alone.

Table 4 confirms the cross-country results at the province level. Using province-by-Hijri-year and Gregorian month fixed effects with clustering at the province level, Ramadan is associated with a 7.3% increase in total monthly rebel attacks ($p < 0.01$, column 1), a 6.1% increase in direct fire ($p < 0.05$, column 2), and a 5.6% increase in IEDs ($p < 0.05$, column 3). The fact that both attack types rise at the monthly level is expected: Ramadan elevates the overall volume of violence regardless of tactic.[26]

However, the within-day shift analysis (columns 4–6) reveals exactly *when* insurgents allocate this additional violence. For direct fire (column 5), the interaction term demonstrates a whopping 17% shift toward nighttime operations during Ramadan, significant at the 1% level.[27] In absolute terms, this relative increase translates to approximately 2.4 additional nighttime direct fire attacks per province. Nationwide, this represents an aggregate surge of over 80 extra nighttime engagements during the holy month, or roughly 3 additional firefights every night. During daylight fasting hours, the main effect confirms a statistically insignificant 2.5% decline, ensuring no daytime escalation occurs. IEDs exhibit a distinctly different pattern (column 6): the main effect captures a 5.7% baseline increase significant at the 5% level, while the interaction term reveals an insignificant 4% difference at night. Insurgents therefore escalate IED attacks uniformly throughout the day, aligning seamlessly with the minimal physical exertion required for remote or victim-activated detonations.

This attack-type decomposition provides the most direct evidence for the physiological reallocation mechanism. The monthly Ramadan effect is a composite: for direct fire, it is almost entirely explained by the post-iftar surge, while for IEDs there is no clear surge after iftar hours. This strongly suggests insurgents conserve energy during daylight fasting hours and

[26] Because province-month-shift cells frequently record zero attacks, the subnational panel also permits estimation of the extensive margin. A linear probability model confirms that Ramadan significantly increases the probability of any attack occurring. PPML specifications on attack counts yield consistent results. Both are available upon request.

[27] We can use the exact transformation $(\exp(0.157) - 1) \approx 0.170$, or 17%

concentrate labor-intensive offensive operations into the post-iftar window, when they have eaten, rehydrated, and can sustain the physical demands of close combat. IEDs, which are pre-positioned and executed with negligible effort, show no such circadian shift. This within-day tactical substitution cannot be explained by the public-support mechanism emphasized in prior work (Reese et al., 2017; Hodler et al., 2024), which predicts uniform changes in violence volume rather than circadian reallocation, nor by a generic time-reallocation story, which would affect both attack types equally.[28]

Figure 1 provides stark visual confirmation of the physiological constraints imposed by the fast on an hourly basis. The point estimates for direct fire attacks, derived from Equation 5 and represented by black triangles, reveal a distinct intraday pattern tied closely to energy depletion. Following the pre-dawn meal, direct fire operations show a brief relative increase during the early morning, specifically around hours seven and eight. However, as the day progresses and the physical toll of dehydration and caloric deficit peaks, activity sharply declines. The point estimates drop toward zero as the afternoon approaches, dipping below zero during hours fourteen and fifteen, indicating a near-total cessation of labor-intensive combat while insurgents are at their most depleted. As iftar approaches, the trajectory turns positive, and immediately following the iftar hour and Maghrib prayer, direct fire coefficients experience a sharp structural break, jumping upward and remaining elevated throughout the nighttime hours. This trajectory demonstrates that insurgents strategically schedule high-exertion offensives around their physical limitations, expending morning energy reserves and then deferring further close-quarters combat until they have broken their fast and recovered their stamina

The trajectory of explosive device attacks, represented by gray squares, follows a directional movement similar to that of direct fire, yet differs in temporal significance. Both tactics exhibit a relative increase during the early morning hours, but this effect is particularly robust for IEDs, where coefficients between hours six and eight are large and statistically significant. However, a divergence occurs during the post-iftar window. While direct fire displays a sharp and significant structural break immediately after sunset, the IED coefficients remain smaller and lose statistical significance throughout the night. This suggests that while both tactics respond to the calendar shift, the escalation in IED activity is a morning-heavy phenomenon, whereas the sustained nighttime surge is unique to the direct fire results.

5.2 Effects on Demonstrations

Table 5 examines Ramadan's effect on civilian protest using ACLED demonstration data. Columns (1) through (5) restrict the sample to 14 African countries with a Muslim population share exceeding 75%. While the unconditional baseline specification in column (1) suggests a marginally significant decrease in demonstrations (-0.085, $p < 0.10$), this apparent effect is driven primarily by seasonal confounding rather than the holy month itself. The moment Gregorian month fixed effects are introduced in column (2) to account for seasonal patterns,

[28]The attack-type decomposition here parallels Limodio (2022), who finds that only capital-intensive attacks respond to Ramadan-linked financing shocks in Pakistan. However, his result reflects the capital requirements of different tactics, whereas the direct fire versus IED distinction captures *physical exertion* demands under fasting.

the coefficient's magnitude drops by a third to -0.057 and completely loses statistical precision. This result remains statistically indistinguishable from zero even as country, year, and demanding country-by-year fixed effects are progressively added in columns (3) through (5).

However, the lack of precision in this restricted sample masks a significant relative effect that only emerges when a non-Muslim control group is introduced. The full-sample specifications in columns (6) and (7) substantially increase statistical power by exploiting cross-sectional variation across all 48 African countries. The linear interaction in column (6) is -0.138, significant at the 5% level, indicating that Ramadan's suppressive effect on protests strengthens significantly as the national Muslim population share rises. The positive Ramadan main effect (0.080, significant at the 1% level) captures the baseline trend in non-Muslim countries, confirming that the calendar timing itself carries no inherent depressive effect on protests where the month lacks social salience. Column (7) makes this relative divergence even clearer by replacing the linear interaction with discrete categories. During Ramadan, countries exceeding 75% Muslim population experience an 18.3% relative decline in demonstrations compared to the baseline group of countries with less than 1% Muslim population (significant at the 5% level), with no other demographic category reaching significance.

Restricting the control group to months immediately adjacent to Ramadan also yields comparable estimates (Table A.7). A placebo test on 20 African countries with a Muslim population share below 25% produces precisely estimated null effects across all specifications (Table A.8, columns 1–5), confirming that the protest decline requires a sufficiently large observant population to materialize.[29] Replacing Muslim population interactions with analogous Christian variables in columns (6)–(7) of the same table yields positive and significant coefficients, indicating that demonstrations *increase* in Christian-majority countries relative to Muslim-majority ones during Ramadan, further undermining a generic seasonal explanation.

Individual Survey Evidence

As an additional check and to probe the mechanisms behind the demonstration decline, I examine whether Ramadan shifts individual religiosity and political engagement using World Values Survey data on approximately 40,000 Muslim respondents across 22 Muslim-majority countries (1999–2022). I exploit the quasi-random timing of interviews by matching each respondent's interview date to the Hijri calendar.

A natural concern is that interview timing may not be orthogonal to Ramadan. Several features of the design make it unlikely that selection drives the results. First, the WVS is administered by local survey teams following standardized fieldwork protocols, with schedules determined primarily by logistical and budgetary constraints rather than the religious calendar. Interview dates within a given fieldwork window are set by interviewer availability and respondent accessibility, not by religious timing; indeed, Ramadan ranks as the third-highest month for interview volume in the sample, suggesting no systematic avoidance of the fasting period. Second, country-by-Hijri-year fixed effects absorb any differences in fieldwork in-

[29] The ACLED Africa sample contains only 6 countries below the 1% Muslim threshold used in the armed conflict placebo. I adopt a 25% cutoff to ensure adequate power; results with the 1% cutoff are similar but less precise.

tensity across survey waves, while Gregorian month fixed effects absorb seasonal scheduling patterns. What remains is variation in whether a given interview happened to fall during Ramadan within the same country-wave-season cell. Third, and most importantly, the estimates are stable when individual-level controls for age, gender, marital status, number of children, education, and self-reported importance of religion are included. If compositional shifts in the respondent pool were driving the results, conditioning on these demographics would attenuate the Ramadan coefficients. The fact that the estimates are largely unchanged suggests that observable selection is not the mechanism.

Table 6 presents the results. Columns (1)–(2) show that high-intensity prayer increases by 3.5–4 percentage points during Ramadan ($p < 0.05$ with controls), off a baseline of 72%. Daily prayer is a highly habitual, rigid behavior. An increase of 5% confirms that Ramadan measurably heightens religious engagement even in a population with already high baseline religiosity. Columns (3)–(4) show that political interest declines by 4.5–5.0 percentage points ($p < 0.05$), a roughly 10% reduction from the baseline mean of 0.48. Columns (5)–(6) show that willingness to attend demonstrations declines by nearly 3.5 percentage points ($p < 0.10$ with controls).

The pattern across the three outcomes is internally consistent and difficult to attribute to selection alone. For compositional shifts to explain these results, respondents interviewed during Ramadan would need to simultaneously exhibit higher religiosity, lower political interest, and lower protest willingness relative to those interviewed in adjacent weeks within the same country-wave-season cell, conditional on all observables. This joint selection pattern would need to mimic precisely the behavioral predictions of intensified religious observance. The more parsimonious interpretation is that Ramadan redirects individual attention from political engagement toward religious observance, providing an individual-level channel consistent with the country-level decline in demonstrations documented above.

5.3 Alternative Accounts

Thus far, the results point to two main findings. Ramadan increases insurgent violence, with rebels launching more attacks during the holy month and reallocating labor-intensive operations to post-iftar nighttime hours, consistent with ideological mobilization rooted in historical Islamic battles and the expectation of multiplied spiritual rewards. Simultaneously, Ramadan suppresses civilian protest, as individuals shift toward intensified religious engagement and away from political interest and activism. Both effects are concentrated in Muslim-supermajority countries and absent where Ramadan observance is not socially prevalent. Before concluding, I consider several alternative accounts, including seasonal confounds, differential media coverage during Ramadan, and fasting intensity as a physical constraint.

Seasonal Confounds

A natural concern is that the observed Ramadan effect simply captures Gregorian seasonal patterns, such as weather, agricultural cycles, or fighting seasons. Several features of the empirical design rule this out. First, no solar season can explain the intraday shift of high-exertion

attacks to post-iftar hours in Afghanistan, nor the quasi-random survey evidence linking interview timing to immediate behavioral shifts. Second, the panel data span nearly a full 33-year lunar cycle (34 Hijri years for UCDP, 27 for ACLED). Because Ramadan rotates through every solar month over this period, its timing breaks mechanically from any fixed Gregorian confounder. Finally, the models explicitly absorb seasonality via the consistent inclusion of Gregorian month fixed effects.

As a further robustness check, I implement an exact Gregorian calendar matching design that exploits the precise rate at which Ramadan drifts through the solar calendar. Because the Islamic lunar year is about 12 days shorter than the Gregorian year, the last 12 days of Ramadan in year t fall on nearly the same Gregorian dates as the early post-Ramadan period in year $t+1$, by which point the lunar calendar has shifted forward and Ramadan has already concluded. This creates a natural within-date comparison: for each treated day during Ramadan in year t, the same calendar date in year $t+1$ serves as an untreated control. I restrict the sample to these narrow windows, collapse the UCDP and ACLED event data to the country-day level, and estimate a daily analogue of Equation 1, retaining Gregorian month fixed effects but replacing country-by-Hijri-year fixed effects with country-by-cycle-year fixed effects that group each treated window with its matched control. This specification is deliberately demanding: the sample shrinks to roughly 24 days per country-cycle, standard errors are clustered at the country level, and identification relies entirely on within-pair variation across adjacent years sharing the same calendar dates. To my knowledge, this exact-date matching approach has not previously been applied in the Ramadan literature.

Table 7 reports the results. For armed conflict, the Ramadan coefficient is positive and statistically significant across all three specifications. Columns 1-2 imply a 1.4% daily increase in state-based conflict during the last 12 days of Ramadan relative to the same calendar dates one year later, and the PPML estimate yields an even larger effect ($p = 0.003$).[30] Beyond methodological rigor, isolating the final 12 days of the month provides a demanding theoretical test. First, the physical toll of the dawn-to-sunset fast is cumulative over weeks; if physiological exhaustion inherently suppressed conflict, the escalation should attenuate by the final weeks. Instead, the effect survives peak physical hardship. Second, the final ten days of Ramadan carry profound doctrinal weight due to *Laylat al-Qadr* (the Night of Power), a period when spiritual rewards are believed to be greater. For religious-ideological insurgents, this creates a peak incentive structure for offensive operations and costly signaling. For demonstrations, the coefficient is consistently negative, in line with the suppression findings from the monthly panel, but does not reach conventional significance in any specification. This is expected: demonstration events are rare at the daily level, and with only 14 country clusters surviving the sample restriction, the design lacks statistical power to detect the effect. Taken together, these results confirm that the conflict escalation finding survives even under an identification strategy that perfectly differences out the seasonal component of any specific calendar date.

[30]To illustrate the severity of the separation problem discussed in Section 4.1, applying PPML with the same fixed-effects structure to the main country-month panel reduces the Muslim-majority sample from 23,777 to 7,908 observations, a loss of two-thirds, and drops 8 of 31 countries entirely. Despite this, the Ramadan coefficient remains positive and statistically significant under the 5% level

Finally, I estimate an event study that jointly includes indicators for Hijri months with stringent year-by-quarter fixed effects. Figure 2 presents the results with the last month as a reference period. In panel (a), Ramadan represents the only Hijri month to drive a positive and marginally significant increase in armed conflict ($p = 0.087$). While the pre-fasting months (Rajab and Sha'ban) display mildly positive point estimates, potentially reflecting anticipatory rebel mobilization, they remain statistically insignificant. Panel (b) shows that Ramadan yields the most negative point estimate for demonstration activity across the Islamic calendar. In the subsequent month of Shawwal (M10), the coefficient for demonstrations remains negative and statistically significant, which may reflect the continued social rhythm of Eid al-Fitr celebrations that immediately follow Ramadan. Crucially, neither outcome exhibits a sustained multi-month trajectory. This isolated spike in violence and corresponding drop in mobilization confirms the behavioral shifts are uniquely tied to the holy month's religious environment rather than slow-moving, unobserved seasonal trends.

News Coverage

News coverage and media attention may fluctuate during holidays or major events (e.g., Durante and Zhuravskaya (2018); Eisensee and Strömberg (2007)), raising the concern that differential reporting during Ramadan could mechanically inflate or deflate recorded incidents. Several features of the results argue against this. The armed conflict increase replicates in declassified military data (SIGACTS) that bypass media reporting entirely, and the demonstration decline is corroborated by individual survey responses on political engagement, which are immune to news cycles. Moreover, the opposite-signed effects for armed conflict and demonstrations within the same media-sourced datasets are difficult to attribute to a single reporting shift: a Ramadan-induced decline in coverage would suppress both outcomes, not raise one while lowering the other.

Nevertheless, Table A.9 directly tests reporting robustness. Columns (1)–(3) address armed conflict. Column (1) restricts UCDP events to those with at least five fatalities, which command media attention regardless of timing. Column (2) restricts to events corroborated by at least two independent sources. Column (3) applies the fatality threshold to ACLED political violence data. Across all three rigorous specifications, the Ramadan escalation remains positive and statistically significant.

Columns (4)–(6) address civilian demonstrations. Because imposing source restrictions on the smaller 14-country Muslim-majority subsample severely reduces statistical power in the ACLED data, these models utilize the full 48-country African sample with population-share interactions. Column (4) restricts to multi-source events; the interaction between Ramadan and high Muslim share dummy remains significant at 5%. Columns (5) and (6) decompose events by whether they were covered by international or exclusively local media: both yield significant coefficients of comparable magnitude, ruling out the possibility that the decline reflects reduced international attention during the holy month. Finally, although fatality thresholds are not applied to demonstrations because fatal protests are rare in the ACLED data, the positive and significant armed conflict results under the fatality restriction in column (3) further

mitigate reporting concerns, since high-casualty political violence events captured in ACLED originate from the same media environment that records demonstrations.

Fasting Hours

Finally, one might ask whether variation in fasting intensity, rather than Ramadan observance per se, drives the results. Hodler et al. (2024) argue that longer daylight fasts mechanically suppress violence in the following year through erosion of public support for religious extremism. Theoretically, however, the link between fasting duration and behavioral change is tenuous: metabolic adaptation stabilizes the body after roughly ten hours (Anton et al., 2018; de Cabo and Mattson, 2019; Lessan and Ali, 2019), countries with longer fasts are known to compensate with shortened work schedules and other accommodations, and Islamic jurisprudence permits breaking fast during extremely strenuous conditions (Al-Dawoody, 2011).

Table A.10 tests this fasting intensity channel directly by restricting the sample exclusively to Ramadan months and regressing outcomes on log fasting hours, following the panel structure in Campante and Yanagizawa-Drott (2015) and Hodler et al. (2024). Fasting hours have no association with armed conflict in Muslim-majority countries (column 1) and are, if anything, positively associated with demonstrations (column 4, $p = 0.018$).[31] Non-Muslim placebo samples yield precisely estimated nulls (columns 2 and 5), and pooling all countries with Muslim share interactions produces no significant coefficients for either outcome (columns 3 and 6). It is the occurrence of Ramadan, not the duration of the daily fast, that generates the observed effects on both armed conflict and civilian protest.

6 Conclusion

In this paper, I exploit the rotation of the Islamic lunar calendar through the Gregorian year to study how a globally observed religious practice shapes social stability. By converting event-level datasets into the Hijri calendar and leveraging Ramadan's annual shift, I isolate the holy month's influence on two core dimensions of political order, armed violence and civilian protests, in predominantly Muslim countries.

The empirical analysis reveals a sharp divergence. Ramadan increases state-based armed conflict, an effect driven entirely by religious-ideological rebel groups that explicitly invoke Islamic precedents of warfare and pursue religious rewards. Within these groups, it is religious ideological rebel-initiated violence that drives the escalation. Non-Muslim countries pass the placebo check, and secular and nationalist rebel groups operating within the exact same Muslim-majority environments do not exhibit identical operational shifts. Granular military records from Afghanistan uncover that insurgents observe the daytime fast but concentrate labor-intensive direct fire attacks into post-iftar hours. On the civilian side, Ramadan

[31] This result should be interpreted cautiously given the small ACLED sample concentrated in North Africa above the equator, making the variation in fasting hours between predominantly Muslim countries extremely limited. The positive coefficient likely reflects summer Ramadans coinciding with warmer weather and longer daylight, which naturally facilitate outdoor civic activity. Regardless, the positive sign contradicts the prediction that longer fasts suppress mobilization through exhaustion.

suppresses demonstration activity, and individual survey data confirm that respondents interviewed during the holy month report heightened religiosity and reduced political engagement.

By exploiting the lunar rotation to include Gregorian month fixed effects, the identification strategy isolates within-country, within-year variation that is orthogonal to both seasonal trends and country-specific conflict conditions. Crucially, it provides an intention-to-treat estimate of the Ramadan period itself, ensuring that endogenous individual observance does not confound the results. Furthermore, a novel exact-date matching strategy confirms the causal nature of this escalation by demonstrating that the effect holds even when comparing the exact same calendar days across adjacent years, perfectly differencing out unobserved seasonal confounds.

At the same time, the approach has limitations. Most fundamentally, the ecological nature of the data precludes observing the actual fasting status, religious adherence, or physiological condition of the individual insurgents and civilians driving these aggregate trends. The mechanisms of physical exhaustion and doctrinal fervor must be inferred from the timing of violence and survey responses, rather than from the combatants or civilians themselves. Furthermore, the ACLED demonstration sample covers only African countries, and the 14-country Muslim-majority subsample is small enough that some specifications lack statistical power. To the best of my knowledge, the aggressor attribution is a novel contribution, but relies on LLM classification of unstructured text, which, despite conservative guidelines and robustness to alternative classification methods, inevitably introduces measurement error. I therefore view the converging evidence across multiple datasets, levels of analysis, and empirical strategies—from cross-country panel estimates and LLM text classification to Afghan hourly military records and large-scale individual survey data—as collectively more persuasive than any single specification.

Beyond the immediate findings, the Ramadan-induced conflict escalation documented here carries downstream consequences for economic development. Armed violence disrupts labor markets, destroys infrastructure, and displaces productive activity (Taylor and Harooni, 2013; Blattman and Miguel, 2010; Miguel et al., 2004). The conflict spikes sparked by Ramadan may constitute an unmeasured micro-foundation for the broader macroeconomic dampening effects of Ramadan observed in prior literature (Campante and Yanagizawa-Drott, 2015). While security forces and policymakers often anticipate escalations tied to the religious calendar on the ground, these findings empirically validate and quantify that expectation. By isolating the specific ideological and physiological constraints driving the divergence between insurgent escalation and civilian demobilization, the results offer a rigorous empirical framework for understanding the temporal structure of these conflicts.

The framework developed here naturally extends beyond the Islamic calendar. The physiological constraints and doctrinal mandates that bifurcate mobilization during Ramadan, especially the within-day tactical reallocations driven by fasting, offer a template for examining the sacred time of other major faiths, such as Lent, Yom Kippur, or Diwali. More intriguingly, the relative contraction in civilian protest in predominantly Muslim countries raises a largely unexplored question about state strategy. If the holy month reliably demobilizes the street, do

governments treat this period as a political window of opportunity? It is entirely plausible that autocratic regimes or embattled incumbents actively time unpopular economic reforms or suppressive legislation to coincide with this predictable lull in civic capacity. In this light, sacred calendars do more than merely disrupt secular routines. They actively structure the political economy of the state, dictating when insurgencies escalate and when civil society disengages.

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Figures & Tables

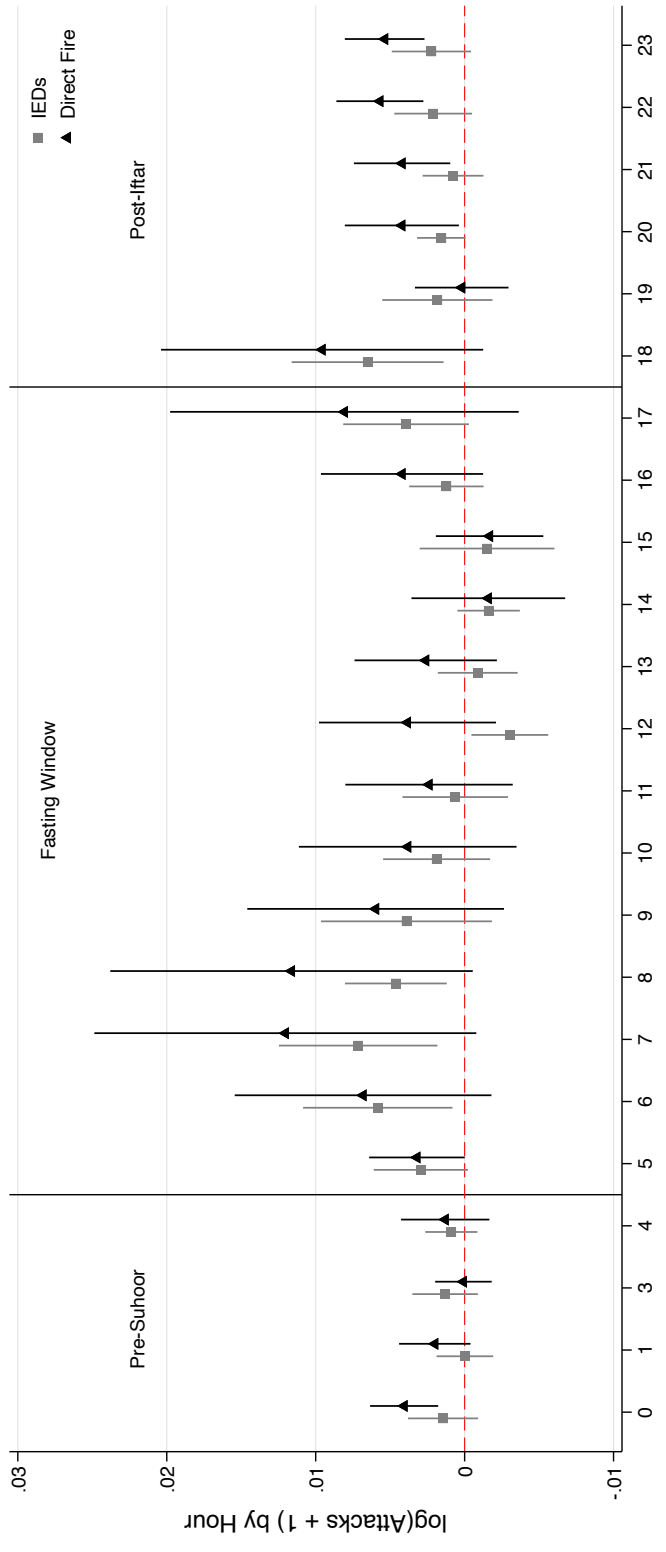


Figure 1: Within-Day Tactical Substitution During Ramadan: Direct Fire vs. IEDs

Notes: This figure plots the point estimates and 95% confidence intervals for the interaction between a Ramadan indicator and hour-of-day indicators. The dependent variable for both models is the log-transformed number of attacks plus one ($\ln(y+1)$)*. The omitted base category is 2:00 AM (local time), representing a neutral nighttime resting state. Black triangles represent direct fire attacks (labor-intensive close combat), while gray squares represent IED explosions and discoveries (low-exertion/pre-positioned attacks). The middle region denotes the approximate daylight fasting window, bordered by the yearly average times for pre-dawn meal (Suhoor) and sunset (Iftar). Both models include province-by-Hijri-year fixed effects to account for local annual conflict trajectories and Gregorian month fixed effects to account for solar seasonality. Robust standard errors are clustered at the province level (34 provinces). Data are sourced from the declassified SIGACTS database. Exact midnight (00:00) observations are dropped to prevent reporting bias from unknown time defaults.*

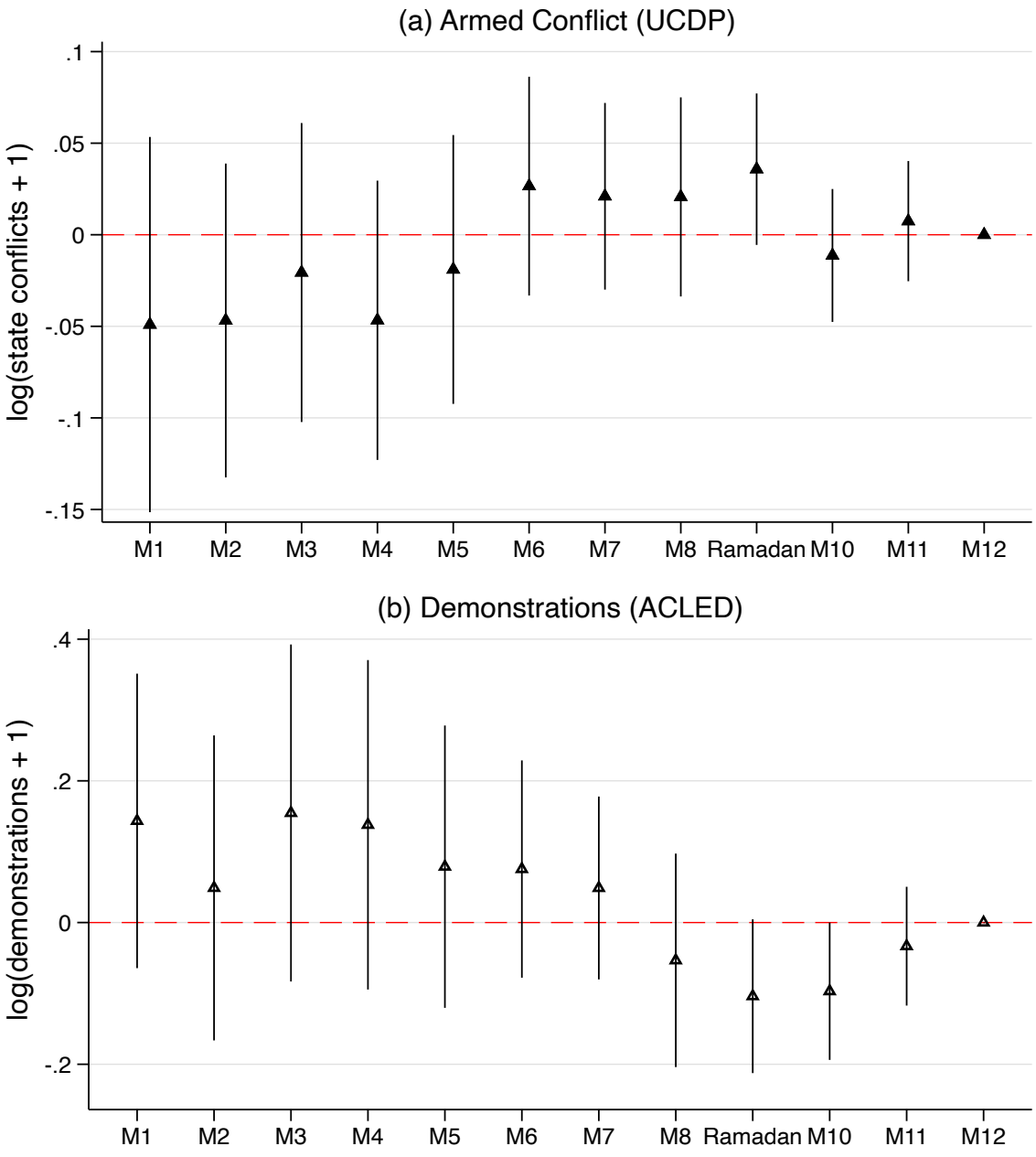


Figure 2: The Ramadan Effect Across All Hijri Months

Notes: This figure plots coefficients on all twelve Hijri month indicators from a single regression for each outcome, with Dhu al-Hijjah (M12) as the omitted base category. Panel (a) estimates the effect on log(state-based armed conflicts + 1) using UCDP data for 31 Muslim-majority countries (1989–2022). Panel (b) estimates the effect on log(demonstrations + 1) using ACLED data for 14 African Muslim-majority countries (1997–2023). Both specifications include country-by-Hijri-year and year-by-quarter fixed effects; the latter absorb year-specific seasonal shocks rather than just average seasonality, providing a more demanding test than the Gregorian month fixed effects used in the baseline regressions. Bars represent 95% confidence intervals based on robust standard errors clustered at the country level (31 clusters in panel a, 14 in panel b). Wider confidence intervals in panel (b) reflect the smaller sample.

Table 1: The Relative Effects of Ramadan on State-Based Armed Conflicts in Muslim Countries, 1989–2022

	Dependent Variable: log(armed conflict+1)						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Ramadan	0.037***	0.037***	0.037***	0.037***	0.037***	0.008	0.002
	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.008)	(0.009)
Ramadan × % Muslim						0.021	
						(0.016)	
Ramadan× >75% Muslim							0.033**
							(0.015)
Ramadan× 50–75% Muslim							-0.017
							(0.025)
Ramadan× 25–50% Muslim							-0.023
							(0.025)
Ramadan× 1–25% Muslim							0.020
							(0.014)
Conflict mean	11.84	11.84	11.84	11.84	11.84	5.046	5.046
Sample	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	All	All
Observations	12648	12648	12648	12648	12648	43656	43656
Adj. R^2	0	0	0.464	0.518	0.897	0.877	0.876
Gregorian month FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country FE			✓	✓			
Year FE				✓			
Country-by-year FE					✓	✓	✓
Share-by-year FE							✓

Notes: In columns (1)–(5), the monthly panel sample consists of the 31 countries with at least 75% Muslims on average for the given period in the World Religion Project (WRP) and PEW database. In columns (6)–(7), the sample consists of 107 countries. In column (7), the reference group consists of 22 countries with an average Muslim population of 1% or less. All specifications except column (1) include Gregorian month fixed effects to absorb seasonal patterns. Conflict mean is the average of the outcome in levels. Robust standard errors are in parentheses, clustered at the country level. Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 2: The Ramadan Effect on Conflict Events and Fatalities by Group Ideology

	log(Conflict Events + 1)			log(Deaths + 1)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Ramadan	0.033**	0.003	0.013	0.046***	-0.006	0.008
	(0.012)	(0.005)	(0.009)	(0.017)	(0.012)	(0.014)
Group Ideology	Relig-Ideo	Ethno-Relig	Secular	Relig-Ideo	Ethno-Relig	Secular
Outcome mean (levels)	5.325	5.554	1.210	36.77	26.97	14.49
Observations	12240	12240	12240	12240	12240	12240
Adj. R^2	0.941	0.912	0.763	0.902	0.817	0.680
Gregorian month FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country-by-year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Notes: This table examines the effect of Ramadan on armed conflict events and fatalities by rebel group ideology in Muslim-majority countries. Rebel groups are classified into three categories: *religious-ideological* (primary stated objective is establishing religious governance), *ethno-religious* (religious identity but primarily nationalist or territorial objectives), and *secular* (nationalist, separatist, or political objectives with no significant religious framing). Columns (1)–(3) use the log-transformed number of initiated conflict events plus one as the dependent variable. Columns (4)–(6) use the log-transformed number of fatalities (best estimate) plus one. All specifications include country-by-Hijri-year and Gregorian month fixed effects. Outcome mean reports the average of the dependent variable in levels. Robust standard errors are in parentheses, clustered at the country level. Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, and *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 3: The Ramadan Effect on Conflict Initiation by Group Ideology and Aggressor

	log(Initiated Conflict Events + 1)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Ramadan	0.038***	0.012**	-0.002	-0.002	-0.000	0.009*
	(0.013)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.007)	(0.005)
Group Ideology	Relig-Ideo	Relig-Ideo	Ethno-Relig	Ethno-Relig	Secular	Secular
Aggressor	Rebel	Government	Rebel	Government	Rebel	Government
Outcome mean (levels)	1.352	1.973	0.526	0.757	0.226	0.302
Observations	12240	12240	12240	12240	12240	12240
Adj. R^2	0.908	0.889	0.863	0.885	0.602	0.666
Gregorian month FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country-by-year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Notes: This table isolates the effect of Ramadan on conflict initiation, disaggregated by rebel group ideology and the initiating actor. The dependent variable across all columns is the log-transformed number of initiated armed conflict events plus one. Aggressor status (Rebel vs. Government) was determined by parsing unstructured UCDP event descriptions using generative AI (LLM log-probability extraction). Rebel groups are classified into *religious-ideological*, *ethno-religious*, and *secular* categories based on their primary stated objectives. All specifications include country-by-Hijri-year and Gregorian month fixed effects. The sample is restricted to Muslim-majority countries. Robust standard errors are in parentheses, clustered at the country level. Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, and *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 4: Ramadan and Insurgent Violence in Afghanistan: Monthly Effects and Within-Day Reallocation

	Panel A: Monthly			Panel B: Within-Day		
	log(rebel)	log(direct)	log(IED)	log(rebel)	log(direct)	log(IED)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Ramadan	0.073***	0.061**	0.056**	0.010	-0.025	0.055**
	(0.024)	(0.026)	(0.023)	(0.020)	(0.023)	(0.020)
Post-Iftar				-0.304***	-0.093	-0.533***
				(0.049)	(0.058)	(0.050)
Ramadan × Post-Iftar				0.129***	0.157***	0.039
				(0.030)	(0.028)	(0.028)
Obs. Level	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly	Half-Day	Half-Day	Half-Day
Outcome mean (levels)	45.93	26.49	19.44	22.97	13.24	9.72
Observations	5,542	5,542	5,542	11,084	11,084	11,084
Adj. R^2	0.920	0.891	0.902	0.860	0.821	0.816
Gregorian month FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Province-by-year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Notes: This table examines the effect of Ramadan on insurgent violence in Afghanistan using the SIGACTS dataset (2002–2015). Panel A estimates the monthly Ramadan effect at the province-month level. Panel B examines within-day reallocation by splitting each province-month into two periods: pre-iftar (dawn to sunset) and post-iftar (sunset to dawn). The dependent variable in columns (1) and (4) is log(total rebel attacks + 1), combining direct fire and IED incidents. Columns (2) and (5) use log(direct fire attacks + 1), which involve small arms and rocket-propelled grenades requiring real-time physical presence. Columns (3) and (6) use log(IED attacks + 1), which are pre-positioned and detonated remotely. In Panel A, the Ramadan coefficient captures the overall monthly effect. In Panel B, the Ramadan main effect captures the differential during pre-iftar (fasting) hours only; the Ramadan × Post-Iftar interaction measures the additional shift in attacks toward post-iftar hours during Ramadan relative to non-Ramadan months. All specifications include province-by-Hijri-year and Gregorian month fixed effects. Outcome mean reports the average of the dependent variable in the estimation sample. Robust standard errors are in parentheses, clustered at the province level (34 provinces). Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 5: The Relative Effects of Ramadan on the Number of Demonstrations in Muslim Countries of Africa, 1997–2023

	Dependent Variable: log(demonstrations+1)						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Ramadan	-0.085*	-0.057	-0.057	-0.062	-0.062	0.080***	0.110*
	(0.043)	(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.043)	(0.043)	(0.022)	(0.063)
Ramadan × % Muslim						-0.138**	
						(0.053)	
Ramadan× >75% Muslim							-0.183**
							(0.076)
Ramadan× 50–75% Muslim							0.028
							(0.091)
Ramadan× 25–50% Muslim							-0.028
							(0.072)
Ramadan× 1–25% Muslim							-0.078
							(0.065)
Demonstrations mean	9.789	9.789	9.789	9.789	9.789	6.047	6.047
Sample	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	All	All
Observations	4536	4536	4536	4536	4536	15552	15552
Adj. R^2	0	0.003	0.176	0.595	0.849	0.806	0.804
Gregorian month FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country FE			✓	✓			
Year FE				✓			
Country-by-year FE					✓	✓	✓
Share-by-year FE							✓

Notes: In columns (1)–(5), the monthly panel sample consists of 14 African countries with at least 75% Muslims on average for the given period in the World Religion Project (WRP) and PEW database. In columns (6)–(7), the whole sample consists of 48 African countries. In column (7), the reference group consists of 6 African countries with an average Muslim population of 1% or less. All specifications except column (1) include Gregorian month fixed effects to absorb seasonal patterns. Demonstration mean provides the average of the outcome in levels. Robust standard errors are in parentheses, clustered at the country level. Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$.

Table 6: The Ramadan Effect on Spirituality and Political Engagement

	Spirituality/Prayer		Interest in Politics		Attending Demonstrations	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Ramadan	0.035*	0.040**	-0.050**	-0.046**	-0.034*	-0.031*
	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.022)	(0.021)	(0.017)	(0.017)
Outcome mean	0.732	0.732	0.483	0.483	0.364	0.364
Observations	35449	35449	43582	43582	39049	39049
Adj. R^2	0.185	0.219	0.0710	0.0967	0.0951	0.135
Gregorian month FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country-by-year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Controls		✓		✓		✓

Notes: This table examines the effect of Ramadan on individual-level measures of spirituality and political engagement using data from the World Values Survey (1999–2022). The analytical sample is restricted to Muslim respondents from 23 Muslim-majority countries. Observation counts vary across specifications because certain survey questions were not administered to respondents in all countries. Columns (1)–(2) use a binary indicator for high-intensity prayer (praying at least once a day) as the dependent variable. Columns (3)–(4) use a binary indicator for political interest (reporting being "very interested" or "somewhat interested" in politics). Columns (5)–(6) use a binary indicator for demonstration participation (reporting having attended or willingness to attend peaceful demonstrations). Odd-numbered columns present estimates without individual-level controls; even-numbered columns include controls for age, age squared, marital status, gender, number of children, education level, and a binary variable for self-reported importance of religion. All specifications include country-by-Hijri-year and Gregorian month fixed effects. Outcome mean reports the baseline average of the dependent variable. Robust standard errors are in parentheses, clustered at the country level. Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, and *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 7: Last 12 Days of Ramadan vs. Same Dates in Year $t + 1$

	Armed Conflict			Demonstrations		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Ramadan	0.014**	0.014**	0.136**	-0.005*	-0.005	-0.113
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.065)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.085)
Outcome mean (levels)	0.429	0.429	0.429	0.279	0.279	0.279
Estimator	OLS	OLS	PPML	OLS	OLS	PPML
Dep. variable	Log(Y+1)	Log(Y+1)	# of Y	Log(Y+1)	Log(Y+1)	# of Y
Observations	23,777	23,777	7,908	8,806	8,806	3,857
Adj. R^2	0.725	0.724		0.437	0.436	
Pse. R^2			0.715			0.401
Country × Cycle-year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gregorian month FE		✓	✓		✓	✓

Notes: This table reports estimates from an exact Gregorian calendar matching design. Because the Islamic lunar year is approximately 11 days shorter than the Gregorian year, the last 12 days of Ramadan in year t fall on nearly the same calendar dates as the early post-Ramadan period in year $t + 1$. I restrict the sample to these narrow windows, creating matched pairs of roughly 24 country-days per cycle: 12 treated days during Ramadan and 12 control days on the same Gregorian dates one year later. Country-by-cycle-year fixed effects group each treated window with its matched control, ensuring that identification comes entirely from within-pair variation. Gregorian month fixed effects absorb residual cross-cycle seasonal differences. Columns (1)–(3) examine state-based armed conflicts using UCDP data; columns (4)–(6) examine demonstrations using ACLED data for Africa. The sample is restricted to countries where the average Muslim population share exceeds 75%. The OLS specifications (columns 1–2, 4–5) use $\log(Y + 1)$ as the dependent variable; the PPML specifications (columns 3 and 6) model the raw event count directly and are robust to the prevalence of zeros in daily data (Silva and Tenreyro, 2006). PPML drops observations separated by fixed effects, reducing the effective sample. The outcome mean reports the unconditional daily average of the level variable across the estimation sample. For armed conflict, the Ramadan coefficient is positive and significant across all specifications, with the PPML estimate implying an approximately 15 percent increase during the treated window ($e^{0.136} - 1 \approx 0.146$). For demonstrations, the coefficient is consistently negative but does not reach conventional significance, reflecting the low statistical power inherent in daily-level data with only 14 country clusters. Robust standard errors are in parentheses, clustered at the country level. Significance levels: *$p < 0.10$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$.

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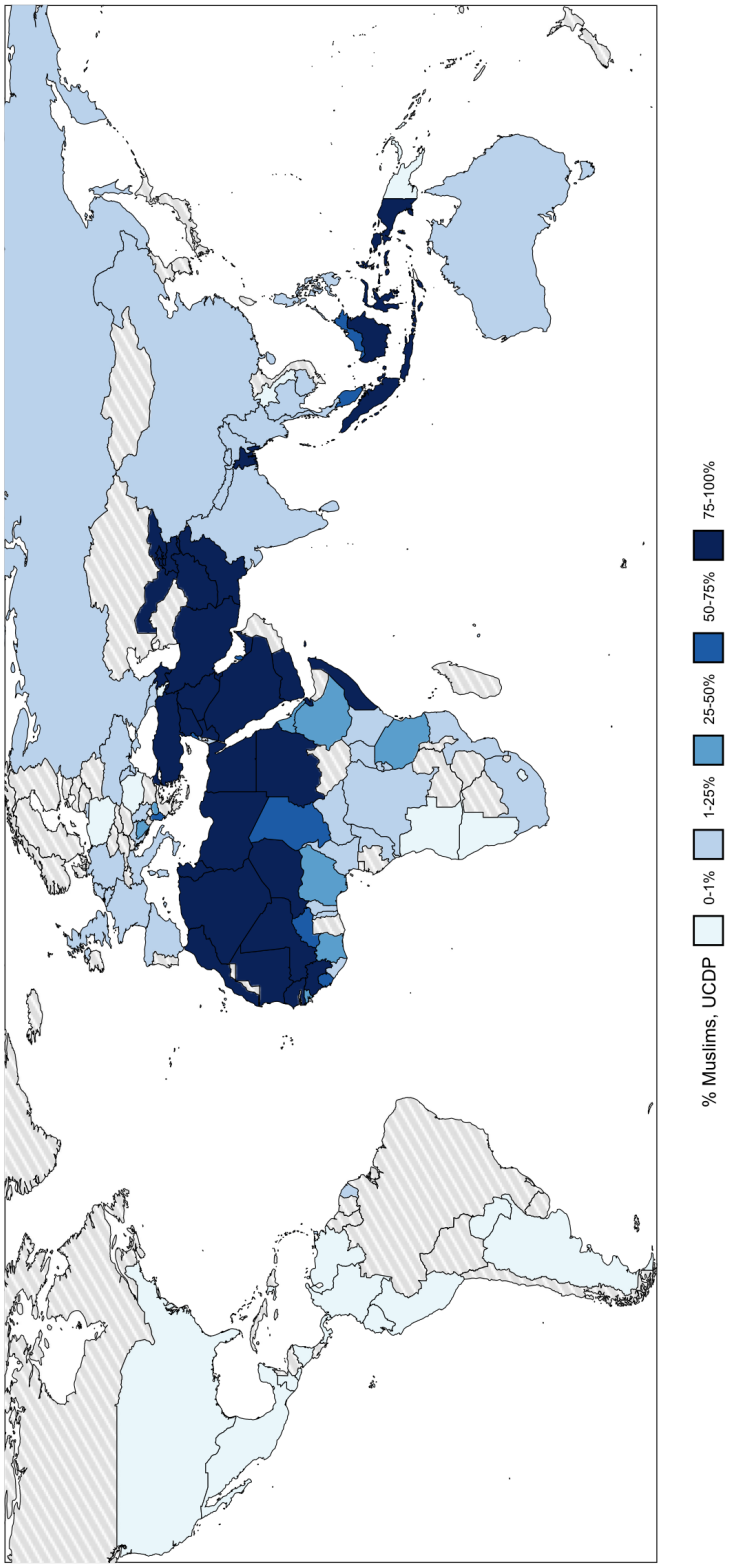


Figure A.1: Countries by Share of Muslim Population

Notes: There are 106 in-sample countries in the UCDP dataset. Hatched countries in gray do not appear in the dataset. Countries are grouped according to their average share of Muslim population from 1989 to 2022.

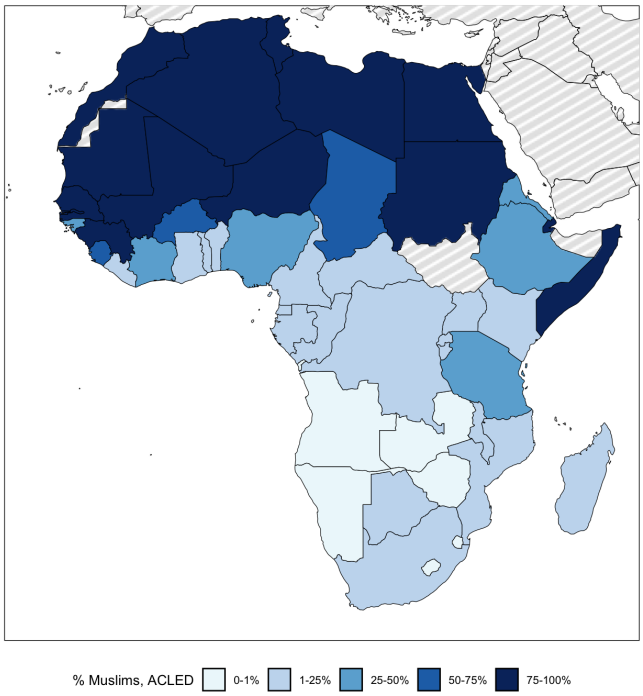


Figure A.2: African Countries by Share of Muslim Population

Notes: There are 48 in-sample countries in the ACLED dataset. Hatched countries in gray do not appear in the dataset. Countries are grouped according to their average share of Muslim population from 1997 to 2023.

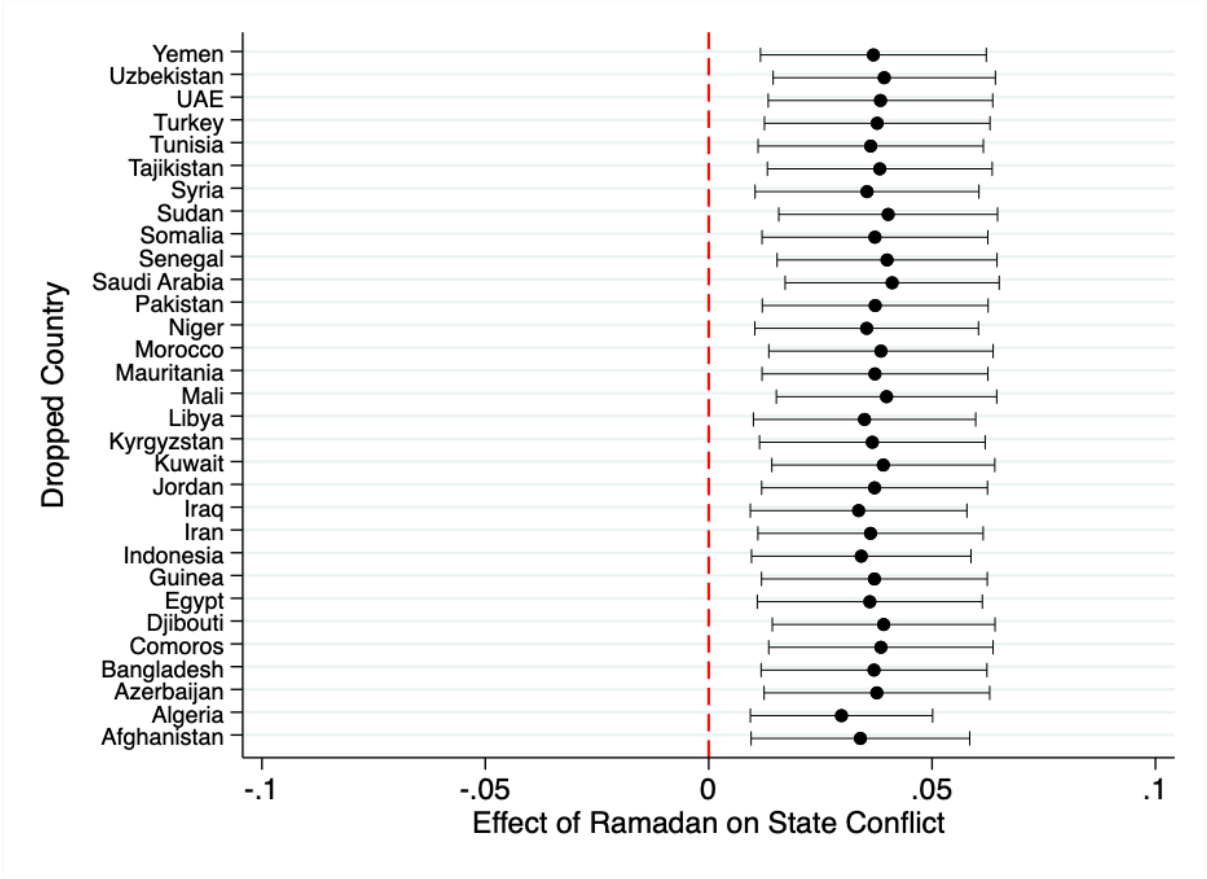


Figure A.3: Relative Effects of Armed Conflict in Ramadan in Muslim Countries Excluding 1 Country

Notes: This figure shows a leave-one-country-out sensitivity analysis of the effect of Ramadan on the incidence of state-based armed conflict, based on UCDP data from 1989–2022. The outcome is the natural logarithm of the number of conflict events plus one, measured monthly. Each point reports the Ramadan coefficient from a separate regression excluding one of the 31 Muslim-majority countries (defined as having a Muslim population share above 75%). All regressions include Gregorian month and country-by-year fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the country level. The red vertical dashed line denotes the zero-effect benchmark. This robustness check assesses the influence of individual countries on the overall result.

Table A.1: Summary Statistics: Armed Conflict

Variable	(1) N	(2) Mean	(3) S.D.	(4) Min	(5) Max
Panel A — UCDP Cross-Country Hijri Month (Muslim Share $>$ 75%, 31 countries)					
Log(State Conflicts+1)$_{cmt}$	12,648	0.729	1.298	0	7.602
Panel B — UCDP by Rebel Ideology (Muslim Share $>$ 75%, 30 countries)					
Log(Religious-Ideological Events+1)$_{cmt}$	12,240	0.436	1.089	0	6.787
Log(Ethno-Religious Events+1)$_{cmt}$	12,240	0.106	0.649	0	7.602
Log(Secular-Nationalist Events+1)$_{cmt}$	12,240	0.262	0.701	0	4.595
Panel C — UCDP by Aggression Attribution (Muslim Share $>$ 75%, 30 countries)					
Rebel-Initiated Events					
Log(Religious-Ideological Events+1)$_{cmt}$	12,240	0.253	0.734	0	4.745
Log(Ethno-Religious Events+1)$_{cmt}$	12,240	0.051	0.374	0	6.174
Log(Secular-Nationalist Events+1)$_{cmt}$	12,240	0.089	0.353	0	3.466
Government-Initiated Events					
Log(Religious-Ideological Events+1)$_{cmt}$	12,240	0.216	0.724	0	6.479
Log(Ethno-Religious Events+1)$_{cmt}$	12,240	0.048	0.400	0	5.481
Log(Secular-Nationalist Events+1)$_{cmt}$	12,240	0.097	0.393	0	3.892
Panel D — SIGACTS Afghanistan					
D.1 Province-Month Panel					
Log(Rebel Attacks+1)$_{pmt}$	5,542	2.252	1.803	0	7.581
Log(Direct Fire+1)$_{pmt}$	5,542	1.833	1.638	0	7.268
Log(IED Attacks+1)$_{pmt}$	5,542	1.608	1.556	0	6.645
D.2 Province-Month-Shift Panel (Pre/Post Iftar)					
Log(Rebel Attacks+1)$_{pmst}$	11,084	1.717	1.583	0	7.401
Log(Direct Fire+1)$_{pmst}$	11,084	1.356	1.416	0	7.090
Log(IED Attacks+1)$_{pmst}$	11,084	1.139	1.313	0	6.506
D.3 Province-Day-Hour Panel					
Log(Rebel Attacks+1)$_{pdht}$	3,804,192	0.038	0.182	0	3.434
Log(Direct Fire+1)$_{pdht}$	3,804,192	0.023	0.138	0	3.367
Log(IED Attacks+1)$_{pdht}$	3,804,192	0.017	0.118	0	2.944

Notes: This table presents summary statistics for all armed conflict variables. Subscripts follow the regression specifications: c denotes country, m Hijri month, t Hijri year, p province, s shift, d Gregorian day, and h hour. Panel A reports descriptives for state-based armed conflict from the UCDP GED (1989–2022) for 31 countries with a Muslim population share above 75%. The full sample covers 106 countries (43,248 observations). Panel B disaggregates log conflict events by rebel group ideology. Panel C further decomposes events by LLM-based aggression attribution using the GABRIEL framework. Panel D reports statistics from the declassified SIGACTS dataset covering insurgent attacks in Afghanistan (2002–2015) at three levels of temporal aggregation. Column (1) reports the number of observations, (2) and (3) the mean and standard deviation, and (4) and (5) the minimum and maximum values.

Table A.2: Summary Statistics: Demonstrations, Survey, Fasting Hours, and Raw Counts

Variable	(1) N	(2) Mean	(3) S.D.	(4) Min	(5) Max
Panel A — ACLED Cross-Country Hijri Month (Muslim Share $>$ 75%, 14 countries)					
Log(Demonstrations+1)$_{cmt}$	4,536	1.082	1.361	0	5.730
Log(Political Violence+1)$_{cmt}$	4,536	0.742	1.166	0	5.652
Panel B — World Values Survey (Individual-Level, Muslim Respondents)					
High-Frequency Prayer (Dummy)$_i$	35,449	0.732	0.443	0	1
Interviewed during Ramadan (Prayer Sample)$_i$	35,449	0.121	0.326	0	1
Participation in Demonstrations (Dummy)$_i$	39,049	0.364	0.481	0	1
Interviewed during Ramadan (Demo Sample)$_i$	39,049	0.106	0.308	0	1
Interest in Politics (Dummy)$_i$	43,582	0.483	0.500	0	1
Interviewed during Ramadan (Politics Sample)$_i$	43,582	0.099	0.299	0	1
Panel C — Fasting Hours (Ramadan-Only Sample)					
C.1 ACLED Sample (Muslim Share $>$ 75%, 14 countries)					
Log(Demonstrations+1)$_{ct}$	1,296	0.855	1.159	0	5.537
Log(Fasting Hours)$_{ct}$	1,296	2.526	0.063	2.318	2.719
C.2 UCDP Sample (Muslim Share $>$ 75%, 31 countries)					
Log(State Conflicts+1)$_{ct}$	3,710	0.494	1.058	0	7.298
Log(Fasting Hours)$_{ct}$	3,710	2.527	0.113	2.062	2.917
Panel D — Raw Event Counts (Levels)					
D.1 UCDP Armed Conflict (Muslim Share $>$ 75%)					
State Conflicts$_{cmt}$	12,648	11.904	80.440	0	2,001
Fatalities$_{cmt}$	12,648	79.768	507.713	0	20,214
Religious-Ideological Events$_{cmt}$	12,240	5.427	29.696	0	885
Ethno-Religious Events$_{cmt}$	12,240	5.461	72.670	0	2,001
Secular-Nationalist Events$_{cmt}$	12,240	1.220	5.494	0	98
D.2 SIGACTS Afghanistan					
Rebel Attacks$_{pt}$	5,542	45.931	130.828	0	1,960
Direct Fire$_{pt}$	5,542	26.487	76.880	0	1,433
IED Attacks$_{pt}$	5,542	19.444	59.471	0	768
D.3 ACLED Demonstrations (Muslim Share $>$ 75%)					
Demonstrations$_{cmt}$	4,536	9.789	28.352	0	307

Notes: This table presents summary statistics for civilian demonstrations, individual-level survey outcomes, fasting intensity, and raw count levels for all conflict variables. Subscripts indicate the level of observation: c denotes country, m Hijri month, t Hijri year, p province, and i individual respondent. Panel A reports descriptive statistics from the ACLED dataset. Panel B reports individual-level responses from Muslim participants across four waves of the World Values Survey (1999–2022). Panel C reports cross-sectional fasting hours calculated as the time between civil twilight and sunset at each capital city, restricted strictly to Ramadan months to test for physiological intensity mechanisms. Panel D provides the unlogged raw counts (levels) corresponding to the core armed conflict and demonstration samples. Column (1) reports the number of observations, (2) and (3) the mean and standard deviation, and (4) and (5) the minimum and maximum values.

Table A.3: The Relative Effects of Ramadan on State-Based Armed Conflicts in Muslim Countries, 1989–2022 (Months 6–12)

	Dependent Variable: log(armed conflict+1)						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Ramadan	0.030**	0.034***	0.034***	0.030**	0.030**	0.008	0.003
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.008)	(0.009)
Ramadan × % Muslim						0.017	
						(0.016)	
Ramadan× >75% Muslim							0.025*
							(0.015)
Ramadan× 50–75% Muslim							-0.020
							(0.024)
Ramadan× 25–50% Muslim							-0.011
							(0.025)
Ramadan× 1–25% Muslim							0.015
							(0.014)
Conflict mean	12.19	12.19	12.19	12.19	12.19	5.192	5.192
Sample	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	All	All
Observations	7378	7378	7378	7378	7378	25466	25466
Adj. R^2	0	0.0140	0.475	0.518	0.910	0.892	0.892
Gregorian month FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country FE			✓	✓			
Year FE				✓			
Country-by-year FE					✓	✓	✓
Share-by-year FE							✓

Notes: The control group of months includes the three months preceding and following Ramadan (Hijri months 6–12). In columns (1)–(5), the sample consists of the 31 countries with at least 75% Muslims on average for the given period in the World Religion Project (WRP) and PEW database. Columns (6)–(7) expand the sample to all 107 countries. In column (7), the reference group consists of 22 countries with an average Muslim population of 1% or less. All specifications except column (1) include Gregorian month fixed effects to absorb seasonal patterns. Conflict mean provides the average number of conflicts in levels. Robust standard errors are in parentheses, clustered at the country level. Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.4: The Relative Effects of Ramadan on Conflict in Non-Muslim Countries, 1989–2022

	Dependent Variable: log(armed conflict+1)						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Ramadan	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.029**	0.058***
	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.020)
Ramadan × % Christian						-0.028*	
						(0.016)	
Ramadan× >75% Christian							-0.044**
							(0.022)
Ramadan× 50–75% Christian							-0.069***
							(0.024)
Ramadan× 25–50% Christian							-0.070**
							(0.035)
Ramadan× 1–25% Christian							-0.034
							(0.024)
Conflict mean	0.885	0.885	0.885	0.885	0.885	5.046	5.046
Sample	Non-Muslim	Non-Muslim	Non-Muslim	Non-Muslim	Non-Muslim	All	All
Observations	8976	8976	8976	8976	8976	43656	43656
Adj. R^2	0	0	0.536	0.567	0.840	0.877	0.876
Gregorian month FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country FE			✓	✓			
Year FE				✓			
Country-by-year FE					✓	✓	✓
Share-by-year FE							✓

Notes: This table serves as a placebo test, estimating the effect of Ramadan on state-based armed conflict in countries where Ramadan observance is minimal or nonexistent. In columns (1)–(5), the sample consists of 22 countries with an average Muslim population of 1% or less. Columns (6)–(7) expand the sample to all 107 countries, with interactions based on Christian population shares rather than Muslim shares. In column (7), the reference group consists of countries with an average Christian population of 1% or less, which are predominantly Muslim-majority countries. All specifications except column (1) include Gregorian month fixed effects to absorb seasonal patterns. Conflict mean provides the average number of conflicts in levels. Robust standard errors are in parentheses, clustered at the country level. Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.5: The Relative Effects of Ramadan on Political Violence in Muslim Countries, 1997–2023 (ACLED)

	Dependent Variable: log(Political Violence +1)						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Ramadan	0.065***	0.079***	0.079***	0.076***	0.076***	-0.001	0.006
	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.016)	(0.017)
Ramadan × % Muslim						0.070***	
						(0.025)	
Ramadan× >75% Muslim							0.065**
							(0.024)
Ramadan× 50–75% Muslim							-0.029
							(0.056)
Ramadan× 25–50% Muslim							0.020
							(0.055)
Ramadan× 1–25% Muslim							0.005
							(0.023)
Political Violence mean	5.260	5.260	5.260	5.260	5.260	3.437	3.437
Sample	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	All	All
Observations	4536	4536	4536	4536	4536	15552	15552
Adj. R^2	0	0	0.365	0.508	0.841	0.793	0.791
Gregorian month FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country FE			✓	✓			
Year FE				✓			
Country-by-year FE					✓	✓	✓
Share-by-year FE							✓

Notes: In columns (1)–(5), the sample consists of 14 African countries with at least 75% Muslims on average for the given period in the World Religion Project (WRP) and PEW database. In columns (6)–(7), the sample and the control group consist of 48 and 6 African countries, respectively. Robust standard errors are in parentheses, clustered at the country level. Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.6: Examples of LLM Aggressor Classification from UCDP Source Text

Side A (State)	Side B (Rebel)	UCDP Source Article Text	Class.
Gov. of Somalia	Al-Shabaab	"Xinhua News Agency, 2022-09-23, Somali forces kill 15 al-Shabab militants"	1
Gov. of Pakistan	TTP	"Agence France Presse, 2014-01-22, Bomb blast kills five in northwest Pakistan"	2
Gov. of Syria	Syrian insurgents	"SOHR, 2014-04-19, 203 were killed yesterday"	0
Gov. of Syria	Syrian insurgents	"VDC, 2013-09-20, Unidentified"	0
Gov. of Afghanistan	Hizb-i Islami (Khalis)	"The Globe and Mail, 1989-03-20, Rebel toll 215 in siege at Jalalabad, Kabul says"	1
Gov. of Afghanistan	Taleban	"Reuters, 1995-05-08, Afghan forces claim gains against Taleban militia"	1
Gov. of Syria	Syrian insurgents	"SOHR, 2014-01-05, Nasra Front executes soldiers from regular forces"	2
Gov. of Tunisia	JAK-T	"Agence France Presse, 2016-11-06, IS claims killing of Tunisian soldier"	2
Gov. of Turkey	PKK	"Xinhua News Agency, 2007-06-22, Two PKK members killed in operations in eastern Turkey"	1
Gov. of Uzbekistan	IMU	"AP, 2000-08-07, Militants invade Uzbekistan villages, clash with troops"	2
Gov. of Yemen	AQAP	"Agence France Presse, 2014-08-06, 'Qaeda ambush' kills 5 Yemen soldiers: security"	2

Notes: This table provides illustrative examples of how the GABRIEL LLM framework classified unstructured text from the UCDP GED dataset. Classifications are defined as: 1 = Side A (Government) initiated, 2 = Side B (Rebel) initiated, and 0 = Neutral/Indeterminate. The model conservatively defaults to 0 when the text describes casualties without clear attribution.

Table A.7: The Relative Effects of Ramadan on Demonstrations in Muslim Countries, 1997–2023 (Months 6–12)

	Dependent Variable: log(demonstrations+1)						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Ramadan	-0.061*	-0.012	-0.012	-0.052	-0.052	0.067***	0.101*
	(0.034)	(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.023)	(0.058)
Ramadan × % Muslim						-0.106**	
						(0.045)	
Ramadan× >75% Muslim							-0.158**
							(0.067)
Ramadan× 50–75% Muslim							0.031
							(0.090)
Ramadan× 25–50% Muslim							-0.001
							(0.070)
Ramadan× 1–25% Muslim							-0.081
							(0.060)
Demonstrations mean	9.402	9.402	9.402	9.402	9.402	6.037	6.037
Sample	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	All	All
Observations	2646	2646	2646	2646	2646	9072	9072
Adj. R^2	0	0.150	0.312	0.595	0.869	0.822	0.819
Gregorian month FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country FE			✓	✓			
Year FE				✓			
Country-by-year FE					✓	✓	✓
Share-by-year FE							✓

Notes: The control group of months includes the three months preceding and following Ramadan (Hijri months 6–12). In columns (1)–(5), the sample consists of 14 African countries with at least 75% Muslims on average for the given period in the World Religion Project (WRP) and PEW database. Columns (6)–(7) expand the sample to all 48 African countries. In column (7), the reference group consists of 6 African countries with an average Muslim population of 1% or less. All specifications except column (1) include Gregorian month fixed effects to absorb seasonal patterns. Demonstrations mean provides the average number of demonstrations in levels. Robust standard errors are in parentheses, clustered at the country level. Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.8: The Relative Effects of Ramadan on Demonstrations in Non-Muslim Countries, 1997–2023

	Dependent Variable: log(demonstrations+1)						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Ramadan	-0.030	-0.010	-0.010	-0.013	-0.013	-0.046	-0.118
	(0.040)	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.038)	(0.075)
Ramadan × % Christian						0.145**	
						(0.059)	
Ramadan× >75% Christian							0.185**
							(0.081)
Ramadan× 50–75% Christian							0.162**
							(0.079)
Ramadan× 25–50% Christian							0.171**
							(0.079)
Ramadan× 1–25% Christian							0.117
							(0.088)
Demonstrations mean	2.001	2.001	2.001	2.001	2.001	6.047	6.047
Sample	Non-Muslim	Non-Muslim	Non-Muslim	Non-Muslim	Non-Muslim	All	All
Observations	6480	6480	6480	6480	6480	15552	15552
Adj. R^2	0	0.002	0.193	0.541	0.813	0.806	0.804
Gregorian month FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country FE			✓	✓			
Year FE				✓			
Country-by-year FE					✓	✓	✓
Share-by-year FE							✓

Notes: This table serves as a placebo test, estimating the effect of Ramadan on demonstrations in countries where Ramadan observance is limited. In columns (1)–(5), the sample consists of 20 African countries with an average Muslim population below 25%. Columns (6)–(7) expand the sample to all 48 African countries, with interactions based on Christian population shares rather than Muslim shares. In column (7), the reference group consists of countries with an average Christian population of 1% or less, which are predominantly Muslim-majority countries. The positive and significant Christian interaction coefficients in columns (6)–(7) reflect the fact that demonstrations increase during Ramadan in Christian-majority countries relative to Muslim-majority ones, consistent with the main finding that Ramadan suppresses protest activity specifically in Muslim populations. All specifications except column (1) include Gregorian month fixed effects to absorb seasonal patterns. Demonstrations mean provides the average number of demonstrations in levels. Robust standard errors are in parentheses, clustered at the country level. Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.9: The Ramadan Effect and News Reporting

	Dependent Variable: log(armed conflict + 1)			Dependent Variable: log(demonstrations + 1)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Ramadan	0.020*	0.029**	0.033*	0.115*	0.105*	0.107*
	(0.010)	(0.012)	(0.017)	(0.065)	(0.058)	(0.057)
Ramadan× >75% Muslim				-0.187**	-0.149**	-0.155**
				(0.078)	(0.068)	(0.067)
Ramadan× 50–75% Muslim				-0.004	-0.050	-0.036
				(0.093)	(0.070)	(0.063)
Ramadan× 25–50% Muslim				-0.025	-0.065	-0.064
				(0.073)	(0.061)	(0.062)
Ramadan× 1–25% Muslim				-0.083	-0.096	-0.099
				(0.067)	(0.060)	(0.059)
Dataset	UCDP	UCDP	ACLED	ACLED	ACLED	ACLED
Fatality threshold	≥5	None	≥5	None	None	None
News sources per event	≥1	≥2	≥1	≥2	≥1	≥1
Source type	Any	Any	Any	Any	International	Non-International
Outcome mean (levels)	10.05	8.696	0.797	8.866	8.209	8.441
Observations	12240	11016	4536	15552	15552	15552
Adj. R^2	0.880	0.895	0.716	0.796	0.859	0.858
Gregorian month FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country-by-year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Notes: This table tests whether differential news reporting during Ramadan can account for the baseline results on armed conflict and demonstrations. A concern is that media outlets may reduce coverage during Ramadan, mechanically lowering recorded events, or that international attention shifts in ways correlated with the holy month. Columns (1)–(3) estimate the effect on state-based armed conflict, restricting the sample to countries with a Muslim population share exceeding 75% (31 countries for UCDP, 14 for ACLED). Column (1) uses UCDP data restricted to events with at least five fatalities, under the assumption that high-casualty incidents receive consistent media coverage regardless of timing. Column (2) uses UCDP data restricted to events corroborated by at least two independent sources. Column (3) uses ACLED political violence data (events involving at least one state actor) restricted to events with at least five fatalities. Columns (4)–(6) estimate the effect on civilian demonstrations using the full sample of 48 African countries and report the coefficient on the interaction between the Ramadan indicator and an indicator for countries with a Muslim population share exceeding 75%, with countries below 1% Muslim population as the omitted baseline. This interaction specification exploits low-Muslim countries as a built-in control group for reporting trends. Column (4) restricts to demonstration events corroborated by at least two independent sources. Columns (5) and (6) decompose demonstrations by source type: column (5) retains only events covered by at least one international media outlet, while column (6) retains events reported exclusively by local, national, or subnational sources. Columns (1)–(3) include country-by-Hijri-year and Gregorian month fixed effects. Columns (4)–(6) additionally include Muslim population share category-by-Hijri-year fixed effects to absorb group-specific trends. Outcome mean reports the sample average of the dependent variable in levels for Muslim-majority countries. Robust standard errors are in parentheses, clustered at the country level (31 countries in columns 1–2, 44 in column 3, and 48 in columns 4–6). Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.10: The Effect of Fasting Intensity on Armed Conflicts and Demonstrations

	Dependent Variable: log(armed conflict+1)			Dependent Variable: log(demonstrations+1)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
RFH	0.719	0.283	0.283	5.629**	2.657	2.657
	(2.044)	(0.180)	(0.177)	(2.079)	(3.196)	(2.847)
RFH × >75% Muslim			0.436			2.972
			(2.045)			(3.517)
RFH × 50–75% Muslim			-0.753			-8.758
			(1.318)			(5.720)
RFH × 25–50% Muslim			-2.118*			-2.713
			(1.238)			(5.127)
RFH × 1-25% Muslim			-0.106			-4.510
			(0.554)			(4.027)
Outcome Mean (levels)	12.52	0.891	5.636	8.566	2.469	5.730
Sample	Muslim	Non-Muslim	All	Muslim	Non-Muslim	All
Observations	1,085	770	3,710	378	162	1,296
Adj. R^2	0.515	0.615	0.480	0.599	0.344	0.589
Country FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Share-by-year FE			✓			✓

Notes: This table tests whether fasting intensity, measured as the logarithm of daily Ramadan fasting hours (RFH), predicts armed conflict or demonstrations. The sample is restricted to the month of Ramadan only, so each country contributes one observation per Hijri year. Fasting hours vary across country-years because Ramadan rotates through Gregorian seasons: the same country experiences longer fasts when Ramadan falls in summer and shorter fasts when it falls in winter. Columns (1) and (4) restrict to Muslim-majority countries (Muslim population share above 75%), columns (2) and (5) to non-Muslim countries (below 1%) as a placebo. Columns (3) and (6) pool all countries and interact RFH with indicators for Muslim population share categories; the omitted baseline is countries with less than 1% Muslim population. Country fixed effects absorb time-invariant latitude differences, and Hijri year fixed effects absorb which Gregorian season Ramadan falls in globally. The RFH coefficient is identified from the interaction of latitude and seasonal timing: within a given year, countries at different latitudes experience different fasting durations, and within a given country, fasting duration varies as Ramadan rotates across seasons. Outcome mean reports the sample average of the dependent variable in levels. Robust standard errors are in parentheses, clustered at the country level (31 countries in column 1, 22 in column 2, 106 in column 3, 14 in column 4, 6 in column 5, and 48 in column 6). Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Appendix B: Rebel Group Classifications

Religious-Ideological

1. **Afghan Taliban (Taleban)** — Deobandi Islamist movement founded in 1994 in Kandahar; established the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in 1996 and again in 2021. Primary stated objective is establishing governance based on sharia under the authority of an Amir al-Mu'minin (Commander of the Faithful). The group's founding charter declares that sovereignty belongs only to God and designates sharia as the sole source of legislation. Ideology rooted in Hanafi jurisprudence and the Deobandi tradition; armed jihad is invoked as an obligatory religious duty. The ideology of the Taliban is considered a shift from traditional Islamist views held by anti-Soviet mujahedeen fighters in the 1980s and early 1990s. It can be characterized as a combination of strict anti-modern Pashtun tribal ideology mixed with certain radicalized Deobandi interpretations of Islam. The UN Security Council grouped the Taliban with Al-Qaeda.

2. **Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)** — Deobandi jihadist umbrella organization formed in December 2007 from approximately 40 militant factions in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Stated objectives include enforcing a strict Deobandi interpretation of sharia throughout Pakistan and ultimately establishing an Islamic caliphate. The group explicitly frames its armed struggle as defensive jihad and seeks to replace Pakistan's secular constitution with religious law. The TTP claims that its jihad against the Pakistani government is an act of self-defense against an apostate and puppet regime of the United States.

3. **TTP – Tariq Afridi faction (TTP - TA)** — Splinter faction of the TTP operating in Pakistan's tribal regions, retaining the parent organization's ideological orientation. Same doctrinal basis as the TTP: enforcement of sharia and armed jihad against the Pakistani state on explicitly religious grounds.

4. **Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)** — Islamist militant organization co-founded in 1998 by Tahir Yuldashev and Juma Namangani in Afghanistan. Declared jihad to overthrow the secular government of Uzbekistan and establish an Islamic state governed by sharia. Later expanded its goal to the creation of a caliphate across all of "Turkestan" (Central Asia from the Caspian Sea to western China). Closely affiliated with al-Qaeda; received substantial financial backing from Osama bin Laden and fought alongside the Taliban.

5. **Jamaat-ul-Ahrar (JuA)** — Splinter faction that broke from the TTP in August 2014, merging elements of TTP's Mohmand Agency branch with Ahrar-ul-Hind. Retained the TTP's core objective of imposing sharia in Pakistan. Its founding emir, Omar Khalid Khorasani, explicitly called for overthrowing the Pakistani government, seizing its nuclear weapons, and waging jihad until a global caliphate is established. The group pledged to continue attacks until sharia law was implemented nationwide.

6. **Lashkar-e-Islam (LeI)** — Deobandi militant group founded in 2004 in Pakistan's Khyber Agency (now Khyber District) by Mufti Munir Shakir. Established with the explicit purpose of enforcing strict Deobandi sharia in Khyber Agency. Under the subsequent leadership of Mangal Bagh Afridi, the group set up parallel Islamic courts, mandated mosque attendance, imposed Islamic dress codes, and banned activities it deemed un-Islamic. LeI only accepted sharia as legitimate law and refused to recognize elected Pakistani officials. Before 2008, LeI was primarily a religious reformist organization. After Mangal Bagh assumed leadership, LeI sought to gain extensive control over the Khyber District and the Khyber Pass. During this period, LeI began conducting more suicide and violent

attacks against members of the Pakistani state. Since 2014, this goal has largely been compromised because of LeI's relocation to Afghanistan. However, LeI still launches attacks and raises funds from Afghanistan with the hope of returning to the Khyber District.

7. **Ansar al-Islam (Jama'at Ansar al-Islam)** — Kurdish Salafist-jihadist group formed in December 2001 in Iraqi Kurdistan from the merger of Jund al-Islam and a splinter faction of the Islamic Movement of Kurdistan. Founded with the stated objective of expelling non-Muslim influences from Kurdistan and governing all territory under strict sharia. Established an "Islamic Emirate of Kurdistan" where it implemented Taliban-style governance: barring women from education and employment, banning music and television, and threatening amputation, flogging, and stoning for religious offenses. Funded by al-Qaeda and closely affiliated with its network.

8. **Ittihad-i Islami (High Council of Afghanistan Islamic Emirate)** — Islamic Union for the Liberation of Afghanistan, a Wahhabist mujahideen faction founded in 1981 by Abdul Rasul Sayyaf. The only major Afghan mujahideen party to embrace Wahhabi theology explicitly and in its entirety. Sayyaf, a Saudi-trained theologian with an MA from Al-Azhar University, maintained close ties to the Saudi religious establishment and to Osama bin Laden. The organization was strongly committed to sharia governance and, in the post-Taliban era, secured control over parts of Afghanistan's judiciary to advance that agenda.

9. **Forces of Mullo Abdullo** — Armed faction led by Abdullo Rahimov (known as Mullo Abdullo), a veteran Islamist field commander of the UTO during Tajikistan's 1992–1997 civil war. Mullo Abdullo rejected the 1997 peace agreement and fled to Afghanistan, where he sheltered with the Taliban and maintained links to the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. He returned to Tajikistan in 2009 with a multinational band of insurgents and proclaimed jihad against the Rahmon government. His forces carried out a major ambush in the Rasht Valley in September 2010 that killed at least 28 Tajik military personnel. Tajik authorities identified him as an al-Qaeda-linked commander.

10. **East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM)** — Uyghur jihadist organization founded in 1997 by Hasan Mahsum in Xinjiang, China; also known as the Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP). The group's stated objective is the creation of an independent Islamic state of "East Turkestan" governed by sharia. Since its establishment, ETIM has maintained close organizational ties with al-Qaeda and the Taliban, with its leader Abdul Haq reportedly serving on al-Qaeda's shura council from 2005. The group relocated its headquarters to Taliban-controlled Kabul in 1998, trained fighters in al-Qaeda camps in Afghanistan, and later deployed several thousand fighters to Syria's civil war under the Turkistan Islamic Party banner. Its propaganda calls explicitly for armed jihad against the Chinese state, framing the struggle in religious terms against "atheist" occupation.

11. **Forces of the Caucasus Emirate (Imirat Kavkaz)** — North Caucasus jihadist umbrella organization founded in October 2007 by Chechen militant leader Doku Umarov. Umarov's declaration of the Caucasus Emirate marked a decisive shift from Chechen separatist nationalism toward a transnational jihadist agenda. The group's stated objective was the establishment of an Islamic state governed by sharia across the entire North Caucasus, encompassing Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, and other republics. Umarov explicitly rejected the secular nationalist goals of the earlier Chechen independence movement and declared armed jihad against Russia as a religious obligation. The organization conducted suicide bombings against civilian targets in Moscow and elsewhere, and was designated a terrorist organization by the United States, the United Nations, and Russia.

12. **Islamic State (IS)** — Salafi-jihadist organization that emerged from al-Qaeda in Iraq (founded 2004 by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi) and declared a global caliphate in June 2014 under Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The group's central objective is the establishment and expansion of a caliphate governed by a literalist interpretation of sharia. The declaration of the caliphate explicitly invoked religious authority, claiming sovereignty over all Muslims worldwide and demanding their allegiance. IS implemented comprehensive sharia governance in territories it controlled across Iraq and Syria, including religious courts, enforcement of hudud punishments, and systematic persecution of religious minorities. The group frames its armed struggle as an obligatory religious duty incumbent upon all Muslims.

13. **Al-Qaeda** — Transnational Salafi-jihadist organization founded in 1988 by Osama bin Laden and Abdullah Azzam in Peshawar, Pakistan. Al-Qaeda's stated objectives center on a global armed jihad to expel Western influence from Muslim lands and ultimately establish Islamic governance under sharia across the Muslim world. The group's founding ideology frames armed struggle as an individual religious obligation (fard ayn) for all Muslims. Al-Qaeda's 1998 fatwa explicitly invoked Quranic authority to call for attacks on Americans and their allies worldwide. The organization has served as the ideological and operational nucleus for a network of regional affiliates (AQAP, AQIM, al-Shabaab, JNIM) that share its religious-ideological framework.

14. **Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)** — Regional al-Qaeda affiliate formed in January 2009 from the merger of the Saudi and Yemeni branches of al-Qaeda, based in Yemen. AQAP's stated objective is the establishment of Islamic governance under sharia across the Arabian Peninsula and the expulsion of Western influence from Muslim lands. The group operates within al-Qaeda's global jihadist framework, framing armed struggle as a religious obligation. AQAP has pursued both local insurgency against the Yemeni government and transnational attacks, including the 2009 attempted bombing of a U.S. airliner and the 2015 attack on the offices of Charlie Hebdo in Paris.

15. **Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)** — Regional al-Qaeda affiliate that formally adopted its current name in 2007, evolving from Algeria's Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC, founded 1998). AQIM's objectives include the establishment of an Islamic caliphate across North and West Africa and the expulsion of Western presence from Muslim lands. The group pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda's central leadership and adopted its transnational jihadist agenda. AQIM has conducted kidnappings, bombings, and armed attacks across Algeria, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Burkina Faso, and its Saharan branch later merged into JNIM.

16. **Armed Islamic Group of Algeria (GIA)** — Salafi-jihadist organization founded in 1992 during the Algerian Civil War following the military's cancellation of the 1991 elections that the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was poised to win. The GIA's stated objective was the violent overthrow of the Algerian secular state and the establishment of an Islamic state governed by sharia. The group rejected any political compromise and pursued an uncompromising takfiri ideology, declaring all who did not support its armed struggle to be apostates. The GIA conducted mass civilian massacres, assassinations, and bombings throughout the 1990s.

17. **Takfir wa'l Hijra** — Egyptian jihadist group (formally Jama'at al-Muslimin) founded in the 1960s–1970s by Shukri Mustafa, a former Muslim Brotherhood member radicalized during imprisonment. The group's ideology centers on the concept of takfir (excommunication of other Muslims deemed insufficiently pious) and hijra (withdrawal from corrupt society). It declared Egyptian society to be in a state of pre-Islamic ignorance

(jahiliyya) and sought to establish a purified Islamic community that would eventually overthrow the secular state. The group carried out the 1977 kidnapping and murder of a former Egyptian minister of religious endowments.

18. **Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya (Egyptian Islamic Group)** — Egyptian Islamist militant organization active primarily from the 1970s through the late 1990s. The group's stated objective was the overthrow of the Egyptian secular state and the establishment of an Islamic state governed by sharia, drawing ideological inspiration from Sayyid Qutb's writings. Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya carried out attacks on government officials, Coptic Christians, secular intellectuals, and foreign tourists, most notably the 1997 Luxor massacre that killed 62 people. Its spiritual leader, Omar Abdel-Rahman, was convicted for his role in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing conspiracy.

19. **Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis** — Sinai-based jihadist group that emerged around 2011 in the security vacuum following the Egyptian revolution. Initially focused on attacks against the Israel-Egypt gas pipeline and Israeli targets, the group expanded to attack Egyptian military and police forces in the Sinai Peninsula. In November 2014, Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis pledged allegiance to the Islamic State and rebranded as "Wilayat Sinai" (Sinai Province). The group seeks to establish Islamic governance in the Sinai through armed jihad against the Egyptian state, which it considers apostate.

20. **Signed-in-Blood Battalion (al-Muwaqi'un bi-l-Dima)** — AQIM splinter group formed in 2012 by veteran jihadist Mokhtar Belmokhtar after his expulsion from AQIM's leadership. The group operated within a Salafi-jihadist framework and is most known for the January 2013 attack on the In Amenas gas facility in Algeria, which killed 39 foreign hostages. Belmokhtar framed the attack as retaliation for France's military intervention in Mali. The group subsequently merged with MUJAO to form al-Murabitun in August 2013.

21. **Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO)** — West African jihadist organization that split from AQIM in 2011. MUJAO's stated objective was to spread jihad across West Africa, particularly targeting what it considered apostate governments and Western interests. The group occupied the city of Gao in northern Mali in 2012, where it imposed strict sharia governance including amputations and public floggings. MUJAO merged with Belmokhtar's Signed-in-Blood Battalion to form al-Murabitun in August 2013.

22. **Al-Murabitun** — Jihadist organization formed in August 2013 through the merger of MUJAO and the Signed-in-Blood Battalion, led by Mokhtar Belmokhtar. Al-Murabitun's stated goal was to spread jihad across North and West Africa. The group reaffirmed its allegiance to al-Qaeda in 2015 and conducted joint operations with AQIM in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Ivory Coast, including the November 2015 Radisson Blu hotel attack in Bamako. In March 2017, al-Murabitun merged with AQIM's Saharan branch and other groups to form Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM).

23. **Al-Shabaab** — Somali Salafi-jihadist organization that emerged from the militant wing of the Islamic Courts Union following the 2006 Ethiopian intervention, formally pledging allegiance to al-Qaeda in 2012. Al-Shabaab's stated objective is the establishment of an Islamic state governed by sharia across Somalia and the broader Horn of Africa. The group has implemented strict sharia governance in territories under its control, including religious courts, hudud punishments, and bans on music, cinema, and secular education. Al-Shabaab frames its armed struggle as jihad against the "apostate" Somali government and its foreign backers, particularly the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

24. **Hizbul Islam** — Somali Islamist alliance formed in 2009 from the merger of several factions, led by Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys. Hizbul Islam sought to establish Islamic governance in Somalia and opposed the Transitional Federal Government and the Ethiopian military presence. The group imposed sharia in areas under its control and rejected any political accommodation with the Western-backed government. In December 2010, Hizbul Islam formally merged with al-Shabaab after losing most of its territory to the larger organization.

25. **Ansar Dine** — Malian Salafist Islamist group founded in late 2011 by Iyad ag Ghaly, a veteran Tuareg political and military leader. Ansar Dine's stated objective is the implementation of sharia law across all of Mali, distinguishing it from the secular Tuareg separatist movement (MNLA) with which it briefly cooperated. During the 2012 occupation of northern Mali, the group imposed strict sharia governance in Timbuktu and other cities, destroying Sufi shrines designated as UNESCO World Heritage Sites. In March 2017, Ansar Dine merged into JNIM under ag Ghaly's overall leadership.

26. **Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM)** — Al-Qaeda-affiliated jihadist umbrella organization formed in March 2017 from the merger of Ansar Dine, AQIM's Saharan branch, al-Murabitun, and the Macina Liberation Front, led by Iyad ag Ghaly. JNIM's stated purpose is to unite jihadist efforts across the Sahel under al-Qaeda's global framework. The group pursues the establishment of sharia governance, the expulsion of French and Western military forces, and the overthrow of what it considers apostate governments in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. JNIM has become the dominant jihadist force in the Sahel, conducting attacks across a vast operational area.

27. **Macina Liberation Front (FLM / Katiba Macina)** — Fulani-dominated jihadist organization founded in 2015 by the radical preacher Amadou Koufa, operating primarily in central Mali. The FLM seeks to impose sharia governance in the Macina region (the historic Fulani heartland of the inner Niger Delta) and draws on the legacy of the 19th-century Macina Empire, a Fulani theocratic state. While the group recruits heavily along Fulani ethnic lines and taps into longstanding grievances over land rights and intercommunal marginalization, it operates under JNIM's al-Qaeda-affiliated umbrella and explicitly frames its struggle in religious terms. Koufa's preaching calls for armed jihad and the rejection of secular state authority.

28. **Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (Boko Haram)** — Nigerian Salafi-jihadist organization founded around 2002 by Mohammed Yusuf in Maiduguri, Borno State. The group's name translates roughly to "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad," and it rejects Western secular education and governance as incompatible with Islam. Following Yusuf's extrajudicial killing in 2009, the group launched a full-scale insurgency under Abubakar Shekau, seeking to establish an Islamic state governed by sharia in northeastern Nigeria and the broader Lake Chad Basin.

29. **Al-Itihaad al-Islamiya (AIAI)** — Somali Salafi-jihadist organization active primarily in the 1990s, seeking to establish an Islamic state in Somalia and unite ethnic Somali territories in the Horn of Africa. Founded in the early 1980s and influenced by Wahhabi ideology, AIAI drew support from Saudi and Gulf donors and operated training camps in Somalia. The group imposed sharia governance in areas under its control, notably in the Gedo and Luuq regions. AIAI was linked to al-Qaeda and was accused of involvement in the 1998 U.S. embassy bombings in East Africa. Following Ethiopian military operations and internal fragmentation, many former AIAI members later joined the Islamic Courts Union and subsequently al-Shabaab.

30. **Islamic Front for Armed Jihad (FIAA / FIDA)** — Islamist militant group that split from Algeria's GIA in 1993 during the Algerian Civil War. The group pursued the establishment of an Islamic state in Algeria through armed jihad, sharing the broader Islamist insurgency's goal of replacing the secular government with sharia-based governance. It operated during the most violent phase of Algeria's civil conflict. The Islamic Front for Armed Jihad (FIDA) was notorious during the Algerian Civil War for a very specific tactical choice: they primarily assassinated secular intellectuals, journalists, feminists, and secular politicians. Their violence was not aimed at capturing territory or redressing an ethnic grievance; it was explicitly designed to purge Algerian society of secular and Western ideological influence to pave the way for a strict Sharia state.

31. **Jama'at al-Islamiyya al-Gama'a (JIG)** — Algerian Islamist militant faction active during the Algerian Civil War. Operating as part of the broader constellation of armed jihadist groups that emerged in the 1990s, the group rejected secular state authority and sought to establish strict Islamic governance in Algeria through armed struggle, framing its violent campaign against the state as a religious mandate rather than a conventional political dispute.

32. **Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)** — Palestinian Islamist militant organization founded in 1981 as an explicit break from the secular nationalist factions of the PLO. PIJ was established precisely to place Islamic religious mandate at the center of the Palestinian armed struggle, and its founding ideology invokes jihad as a religious obligation rather than a strategic instrument. Unlike Hamas, PIJ maintains no formal political wing or social services apparatus, reflecting an organizational structure oriented almost entirely around religiously framed armed resistance. While its operational theater is territorially bounded to the Palestinian context, its primary justification for violence is doctrinal rather than nationalist, placing it in the religious-ideological category.

33. **Abu Sayyaf Group (ASL)** — A violent jihadist militant network founded in 1991 in the southern Philippines. While operating within the ethno-religious geography of Mindanao, the group split from the broader Moro separatist movement specifically to pursue a hardline transnational jihadist agenda. The group rejected political autonomy in favor of establishing an independent Islamic state governed by strict sharia, maintained deep historical ties to al-Qaeda, and later officially pledged allegiance to the Islamic State.

34. **Jama'atu Ansaril Muslimina Fi Biladis Sudan (Ansaru)** — A Salafi-jihadist militant organization based in northeastern Nigeria that splintered from Boko Haram in 2012. Translating to the "Vanguard for the Protection of Muslims in Black Africa," the group is formally aligned with Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Its explicitly stated objectives are the restoration of the historical Islamic Sokoto Caliphate across West Africa and the violently enforced defense of Muslims against Western and secular influence.

Ethno-Religious

1. **Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia / Union of Islamic Courts (ARS/UIC)** — Broad Somali Islamist coalition. The Islamic Courts Union rose to power in Mogadishu in 2006 by providing governance and security in the absence of a functioning state, before being ousted by the Ethiopian military intervention in December 2006. The ARS was subsequently formed in Asmara in 2007 as an opposition umbrella. The ICU imposed sharia in areas under its control, but its primary appeal was the restoration of order and Somali self-governance against foreign intervention. The coalition included moderates alongside hardliners, and the ARS later split, with the Djibouti faction under

Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed joining the transitional government and eventually assuming the presidency. Islam provided the organizational framework and legitimacy, but the movement's objectives centered on Somali sovereignty and state-building rather than transnational jihad.

2. **Islamic Salvation Army (AIS)** — Armed wing of Algeria's Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), active during the Algerian Civil War (1992–2002). The AIS was formed after the military annulled the 1991 elections that the FIS was poised to win. Its armed struggle sought to restore the political rights of Algeria's Islamist constituency rather than to impose religious governance through jihad. The AIS targeted primarily military and state installations, maintained a conventional insurgent posture, declared a unilateral ceasefire in 1997, and formally disbanded in 2000 under a government amnesty. Islam defined the movement's identity and constituency, but the armed campaign was driven by political exclusion.

3. **Harakat Sawa'id Misr (HASM)** — Militant group formed in Egypt in 2015 following the military ouster of President Mohamed Morsi. HASM has been linked by Egyptian authorities to the Muslim Brotherhood, though the Brotherhood denies the connection. The group targets Egyptian security officials and government installations, framing its struggle as nationalist resistance against an illegitimate regime. HASM's slogans and communiqués employ nationalist rather than jihadist language, and the group has not articulated goals of establishing sharia governance or a caliphate. Islam serves as an organizational identity rooted in the Brotherhood tradition, but the armed campaign is oriented toward political regime change.

4. **Jondullah (Jundallah)** — Sunni Baloch militant organization founded in 2003 by Abdolmalek Rigi in Iran's Sistan-Baluchestan province. The group's stated objectives center on securing recognition of Baloch cultural, economic, and political rights within Iran. Rigi framed the struggle as a fight for equal citizenship for Sunni Baloch, explicitly denying separatist or radical sectarian aims. However, the group recruited through Sunni religious seminaries and increasingly adopted sectarian rhetoric. Sunni Islam serves as a key component of group identity and a basis for external solidarity, but the underlying grievances are ethnic marginalization and economic underdevelopment of the Baloch population. Not to be confused with the Pakistani organization of the same name, a TTP-linked sectarian group that pledged allegiance to IS in 2014.

5. **Jaish al-Adl** — Successor organization to Jondullah, emerging in 2012 after the execution of Abdolmalek Rigi. Inherited Jondullah's organizational base and membership while adopting a more explicitly Salafi posture. Frames its insurgency as defending Sunni Baloch from Shia state oppression, blending Baloch nationalist objectives with Salafi ideology. Primarily targets Iranian Revolutionary Guards and security personnel through ambushes, assassinations, and kidnappings.

6. **Rohingya Solidarity Organisation (RSO)** — Rohingya insurgent group founded in 1982 following the Tatmadaw's mass displacement operations against the Rohingya in Arakan (Rakhine) State, Myanmar. The RSO's stated objectives center on Rohingya self-determination, restoration of political rights, and return to ancestral lands in Arakan. The group split from the more moderate Rohingya Patriotic Front as its religiously oriented faction and cultivated ties with Islamist networks in Pakistan and Bangladesh, recruiting fighters through religious channels. However, its manifesto frames the armed struggle around ethnic persecution and racial discrimination rather than religious governance, with no stated goal of establishing sharia or an Islamic state. Islam serves as a component of group identity and a basis for external solidarity rather than the primary ideological framework for armed struggle.

7. **United Tajik Opposition (UTO)** — Coalition of Islamist, democratic, nationalist, and regionalist factions formed in 1993 during the Tajikistani Civil War, led by Sayid Abdulloh Nuri. The dominant component was the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT), which gave the coalition its Islamic identity and facilitated support from Afghan mujahideen. However, the UTO's objectives centered on political power-sharing, regional representation for marginalized Gharmi and Pamiri populations, and opposition to the post-Soviet Kulobi-Khujandi ruling elite. The coalition included secular democrats and Pamiri autonomists alongside Islamists. The IRPT never demanded an Islamic state and transitioned to legal party politics after the 1997 peace agreement, underscoring that religion served primarily as a component of group cohesion rather than the central justification for armed struggle.

8. **Hamas** — Sunni Islamist militant organization and Palestinian nationalist movement founded in 1987. While its founding charter is steeped in Islamic rhetoric and frames the liberation of Palestine as a religious duty, its primary operational objective is territorial and nationalist: the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. Religion serves as a powerful mobilizing identity and ideological framework, but the conflict is fundamentally rooted in territorial disputes rather than a transnational jihadist mandate.

9. **Hezbollah** — Lebanese Shia militant organization and political party founded in 1982 with Iranian Revolutionary Guard support in response to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Hezbollah's founding 1985 Open Letter declared allegiance to Ayatollah Khomeini's wilayat al-faqih and called for an Islamic republic in Lebanon, placing its origins squarely in religious-ideological territory. However, the organization underwent substantial ideological evolution, and its 2009 manifesto dropped the Islamic state objective entirely in favor of Lebanese sovereignty, resistance to Israeli occupation, and confessional power-sharing within the existing political system. Hezbollah operates an extensive social services network, holds parliamentary seats, and functions as the primary political representative of Lebanon's Shia community. Its armed struggle is framed around national resistance and defense of the Shia community rather than the imposition of religious governance, and its operational alliances with secular actors such as the Syrian Social Nationalist Party and the Free Patriotic Movement reflect a pragmatic political orientation. Shia religious identity remains central to recruitment, internal cohesion, and external patronage networks, but it operates as a marker of communal solidarity rather than the doctrinal basis for violence.

10. **Hizb-i Islami-yi Afghanistan (Hekmatyar faction)** — Afghan Islamist party founded by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar in 1977 as an offshoot of the Muslim Youth movement at Kabul University. Hizb-i Islami's founding charter explicitly calls for an Islamic state in Afghanistan, and the party received substantial Pakistani ISI and Saudi funding during the anti-Soviet jihad on the basis of its Islamist credentials. However, Hekmatyar's operational behavior consistently prioritized Pashtun factional interests over ideological objectives. During the 1992–1996 civil war, Hizb-i Islami fought other Islamist mujahideen factions with equal or greater intensity than it had fought the Soviets, allied with the secularist Dostum militia against the Islamist Rabbani government, and shelled Kabul in campaigns that followed ethnic-factional fault lines rather than ideological ones. Hekmatyar's eventual reconciliation with the Afghan government in 2016 and entry into electoral politics further suggest that Islamic governance was instrumentally deployed rather than constitutively central. The party's recruitment base drew overwhelmingly from eastern Pashtun (particularly Ghilzai) networks, and its conflicts tracked tribal and regional rivalries as much as ideological commitments.

11. **Hizb-i Islami-yi Afghanistan (Khalis faction)** — Splinter faction established by Yunus Khalis in 1979 following a break with Hekmatyar over leadership and organizational style. Khalis, a religious scholar from Nangarhar, oriented his faction more explicitly around traditional religious authority than Hekmatyar's university-educated cadre, and the faction maintained closer ties to local ulema networks in eastern Afghanistan. Nevertheless, its operational footprint was heavily concentrated among Pashtun communities in Nangarhar and Paktia provinces, and its armed struggle during the anti-Soviet jihad and subsequent civil war followed regional and tribal patterns consistent with localized power competition rather than a unified project of religious state-building. Several prominent Khalis commanders, including Jalaluddin Haqqani, later defected to the Taliban, suggesting that the faction functioned more as a vehicle for eastern Pashtun mobilization than as a cohesive ideological movement.

12. **Jam'iyyat-i Islami-yi Afghanistan** — Afghan Islamist party founded by Burhanuddin Rabbani in 1971, with Ahmad Shah Massoud as its most prominent military commander. Jam'iyyat's founding ideology drew on the Muslim Brotherhood tradition and called for Islamic governance, and Rabbani served as president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan from 1992 to 1996. However, the party's recruitment and operational base was overwhelmingly Tajik, centered in the Panjshir Valley and northeastern Afghanistan. During the civil war, Jam'iyyat's alliances and enmities tracked ethnic geography with striking consistency: cooperation with Hazara and Uzbek factions against Pashtun-dominated groups, regardless of the latter's Islamic credentials. Massoud's resistance to the Taliban was framed as much around Tajik survival and anti-Pashtun domination as around competing visions of Islamic governance. The party's ethnic character was sufficiently pronounced that its post-2001 political successor, the National Coalition of Afghanistan, operated as a de facto vehicle for Tajik political representation.

13. **Hizb-i Wahdat** — Afghan political-military organization founded in 1989 through the unification of several Hazara Shia factions, led by Abdul Ali Mazari. The party's name translates to "Party of Unity," reflecting its primary objective of consolidating Hazara political representation in a context of severe ethnic marginalization. Hazara communities had faced systematic discrimination under successive Pashtun-dominated governments, and Hizb-i Wahdat's armed struggle centered on securing Hazara political rights, territorial autonomy in the Hazarajat, and protection against ethnic violence. Iran provided patronage on the basis of Shia solidarity, and the party's religious identity was inseparable from its ethnic one, as the Hazara are Afghanistan's largest Shia community. However, Hizb-i Wahdat's conflicts were driven by ethnic survival and power-sharing demands rather than any project of imposing Shia governance, and the party fought Sunni Islamist groups (the Taliban, Hizb-i Islami) and allied with secular or Sunni actors (Dostum's Junbish-i Milli) on the basis of ethnic-strategic calculus.

14. **United Islamic Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan (UIFSA / Northern Alliance)** — Military-political coalition formed in 1996 to resist the Taliban, bringing together Jam'iyyat-i Islami, Hizb-i Wahdat, and Junbish-i Milli-yi Islami under the nominal leadership of Rabbani's government. The coalition's name invoked Islamic unity, and its component factions each carried Islamic credentials of varying degrees. However, the UIFSA's formation was driven entirely by the shared existential threat posed by the Taliban's military advance against non-Pashtun regions, and its internal cohesion derived from ethnic complementarity (Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek) rather than ideological agreement. The coalition included Dostum's Junbish-i Milli, a largely secular Uzbek militia, alongside Shia and Sunni Islamist factions whose theological positions were mutually incompatible. The UIFSA's armed struggle was framed around national sovereignty and resistance to Taliban domination rather than any shared vision of Islamic governance.

15. **Mahaz-i Milli-yi Islami-yi Afghanistan (National Islamic Front)** — Afghan mujahideen party founded by Pir Sayyid Ahmad Gailani in 1978. Gailani, a hereditary Sufi pir of the Qadiriyya order, derived his authority from traditional religious lineage rather than Islamist ideology, and his political orientation was notably moderate and pro-Western within the mujahideen spectrum. The party advocated for the restoration of the Zahir Shah monarchy and a constitutional system, positioning it closer to nationalist traditionalism than to the Islamist state-building projects of Hizb-i Islami or the Taliban. Its recruitment base drew on Gailani's Sufi network and southern Pashtun tribal affiliations. Islam functioned as a source of traditional authority and communal identity rather than as a programmatic ideology for governance, and Gailani consistently favored negotiated political settlements over maximalist religious objectives.

16. **National Resistance Front (NRF)** — An Afghan military-political alliance formed in 2021 as the de facto successor to the Northern Alliance. Operating primarily out of the Panjshir Valley and led by Ahmad Massoud, the group is structurally an ethno-nationalist resistance movement dominated by ethnic Tajiks. While entirely composed of devout Muslims, its armed struggle is fundamentally oriented toward territorial defense, anti-Taliban resistance, and the establishment of a decentralized, pluralistic Afghan republic, sharply contrasting with the Taliban's theocratic project.

17. **Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI)** — An Iraqi Shia political party and militia founded in Iran in 1982. Despite its name, following the 2003 US invasion of Iraq, SCIRI integrated heavily into the newly established Iraqi political system. Its primary objectives shifted from a strict ideological revolution to securing and consolidating the political, territorial, and institutional dominance of Iraq's Shia majority against Sunni and Baathist rivals

18. **al-Mahdi Army** — An Iraqi Shia militia formed in 2003 by the populist cleric Muqtada al-Sadr. While intensely religious in its rhetoric and drawing legitimacy from the Sadr clerical lineage, the militia functioned primarily as a militant Iraqi nationalist and communal defense organization. Its armed struggle was driven by opposition to the US occupation and the defense of impoverished Shia neighborhoods in Baghdad and southern Iraq against Sunni militant groups.

19. **Syrian Insurgents** — A broad, fragmented coalition of armed factions fighting against the Assad regime during the Syrian Civil War. Similar to the United Tajik Opposition (UTO), while the most militarily dominant elements of this umbrella (such as Ahrar al-Sham or HTS) maintain strict Islamist ideologies, the overarching category includes a spectrum of actors—from secular Free Syrian Army defectors to localized defense militias. Across the coalition, Sunni Islamic identity serves as a unifying mechanism against the Alawite-dominated government, but the primary shared objective is contesting political and territorial control of the Syrian state.

20. **Kashmir Insurgents** — A broad umbrella classification encompassing the constellation of armed groups fighting the Indian state in Jammu and Kashmir since 1989. While the coalition includes hardline jihadist factions (like Lashkar-e-Taiba) alongside more secular-leaning liberation fronts (like the JKLF), the conflict is fundamentally driven by the territorial dispute over the Kashmir region. Islamic identity serves as a powerful mobilizing force and a boundary marker against the Hindu-majority Indian state, utilized to pursue either an independent Kashmiri state or integration with Pakistan.

21. **Ansarallah (Houthi movement)** — A Zaydi Shia political and militant movement operating in Yemen. Emerging in the 1990s as a theological revivalist movement to protect Zaydi cultural identity against perceived Sunni/Wahhabi encroachment, it evolved into

a powerful insurgent force. While adopting radical religious rhetoric and receiving backing from Iran, its armed struggle is deeply rooted in Yemeni ethno-political dynamics, primarily seeking territorial control, economic resources, and political dominance within the Yemeni state.

Secular Nationalist

1. **Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK)** — An Iranian dissident militant organization founded in 1965. Originally rooted in a unique syncretism of Marxist-Leninist ideology and Islamic traditionalism, the group participated in the 1979 revolution but quickly took up arms against the newly established Islamic Republic. Its armed struggle against Tehran is fundamentally political and regime-change oriented, and the organization officially campaigns for a secular, democratic Iranian state.

2. **Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - General Command (PFLP-GC)** — A Palestinian nationalist militant organization founded in 1968 by Ahmed Jibril following a split from the main PFLP. The group maintains a strict secular, Marxist-Leninist ideological orientation. While operating within the heavily religiously contested geography of the Levant and receiving state backing from Syria and Iran, its foundational ideology and stated objectives are centered entirely on secular Palestinian nationalism and armed resistance against Israel, devoid of any Islamist state-building mandate.

3. **Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)** — A Kurdish militant and political organization founded in 1978 by Abdullah Öcalan. Originating as a strict Marxist-Leninist revolutionary movement, its initial objective was the establishment of an independent, socialist Kurdish state in southeastern Turkey. While its ideology later evolved toward "democratic confederalism," the organization remains staunchly secular. Its armed struggle is driven purely by Kurdish ethno-nationalism and the demand for political autonomy, consistently rejecting religious framing.

4. **Kurdistan Freedom Hawks (TAK)** — A radical Kurdish militant faction that emerged as a splinter group from the PKK. Sharing the secular-nationalist roots of its parent organization, TAK conducts urban terrorism and bombings across Turkey in pursuit of Kurdish ethno-nationalist retaliation against the Turkish state. It operates outside of any religious-ideological framework.

5. **Democratic Union Party (PYD)** — A Kurdish political party and militant organization (via its armed wing, the YPG) operating primarily in northern Syria. As the Syrian affiliate of the PKK's broader transnational network, it adheres to Abdullah Öcalan's secular ideology of democratic confederalism. Its armed conflict against the Syrian government and various jihadist groups (including the Islamic State) is driven by the defense of Kurdish territorial autonomy and the establishment of a secular, decentralized administrative region (Rojava).

6. **Party of Free Life of Kurdistan (PJAK)** — An Iranian Kurdish militant group founded in 2004 as part of the PKK's broader umbrella network. Following the same secular-nationalist and democratic confederalist ideology as the PKK and PYD, the group conducts an armed insurgency against the Iranian government to secure self-determination and cultural rights for the Kurdish minority in northwestern Iran, explicitly rejecting the theocratic framework of the Islamic Republic.

7. **Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (KDPI)** — A Kurdish nationalist party and militant group operating in Iran, founded in 1945. As one of the oldest Kurdish political organizations, it maintains a strictly secular and left-leaning orientation. Its armed struggle

against both the Pahlavi monarchy and the subsequent Islamic Republic has been driven entirely by the goal of securing Kurdish autonomy and federalism within a democratic, secular Iran.

8. **Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP)** — A prominent Iraqi Kurdish political party and paramilitary organization (Peshmerga) founded in 1946 by Mustafa Barzani. Functioning as a secular, traditionalist ethno-nationalist movement, its historical armed struggle against the Iraqi state was waged to achieve Kurdish self-determination, territorial autonomy, and the protection of Kurdish cultural identity, culminating in the establishment of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

9. **Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK)** — An Iraqi Kurdish political party and paramilitary organization founded in 1975 by Jalal Talabani following a split from the KDP. The group adopted a more secular, socialist, and progressive ideological platform compared to the traditionalist KDP. Its armed insurgency against the Ba'athist Iraqi regime was fundamentally rooted in Kurdish ethno-nationalism and the pursuit of political autonomy.

10. **Communist Party of Turkey/Marxist-Leninist (TKP-ML)** — A radical Turkish insurgent organization founded in 1972. Adhering strictly to Maoist and Marxist-Leninist ideology, the group's armed struggle is aimed at the violent overthrow of the Turkish state to establish a communist regime. Its motivations and operational framework are entirely secular and rooted in revolutionary class struggle.

11. **Maoist Communist Party (MKP)** — A Turkish revolutionary insurgent group that emerged as a splinter faction from the TKP-ML. The group pursues a hardline Maoist ideological agenda, conducting armed attacks against Turkish state targets with the objective of sparking a communist revolution. It operates completely outside of any religious or ethno-religious parameters.

12. **Peace at Home Council (Yurtta Sulh Konseyi)** — A clandestine faction within the Turkish Armed Forces that orchestrated the violent, failed coup d'état attempt on July 15, 2016. In their official broadcast declaration, the plotters framed their armed takeover as a necessary intervention to restore the secular, democratic, and constitutional order of the Turkish Republic, making their stated ideological justification explicitly secular-nationalist.

13. **Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front (DHKP-C)** — A radical Marxist-Leninist militant organization operating in Turkey, founded in 1978 (originally as Revolutionary Left). The group pursues the violent overthrow of the Turkish government to establish a socialist state. It conducts assassinations and bombings motivated purely by secular, anti-imperialist, and communist ideology.

14. **Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)** — A Palestinian Marxist-Leninist and revolutionary socialist organization founded in 1967 by George Habash. The group's ideology is fundamentally secular, viewing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through the lens of anti-imperialism and class struggle rather than religious duty. It pursues the establishment of a secular, democratic Palestinian state.

15. **Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA)** — A secular ethno-nationalist militant organization based in the Balochistan region of Pakistan. The group wages an armed insurgency against the Pakistani state to achieve independence for the Baloch people. Its grievances are rooted in the economic exploitation of regional resources and political marginalization, and its ideology explicitly rejects religious framing in favor of secular Baloch nationalism.

16. **Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF)** — A Baloch ethno-nationalist militant group founded in 1964, operating primarily in Pakistan's Balochistan province. With historical roots in Marxist ideology and left-wing nationalism, the organization's armed struggle against the Pakistani state is strictly secular. It seeks an independent Balochistan based on ethnic identity rather than religious affiliation.

17. **Baloch Republican Army (BRA)** — A secular, ethno-nationalist insurgent group in Pakistan's Balochistan province, largely serving as the militant wing of the Baloch Republican Party. Like other Baloch separatist organizations, its armed struggle is driven by demands for ethnic sovereignty, political rights, and control over natural resources, entirely separate from the religious militant networks operating in the same region.

18. **Baloch Raaji Aajoi Sangar (BRAS)** — An operational umbrella organization formed in 2018 to unify the efforts of several secular Baloch ethno-nationalist insurgent groups, including the BLA, BLF, and BRA. The coalition coordinates armed attacks against Pakistani security forces and Chinese infrastructure projects. Its foundational mandate is strictly secular and separatist, consolidating the armed struggle for an independent Baloch state.

19. **Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM)** — A secular political party in Pakistan representing the Muhajir community (Urdu-speaking migrants from India). Its armed factions engaged in extensive urban conflict in Karachi to secure political and economic power for Muhajirs, operating strictly along ethnic and secular lines

20. **Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP)** — A clandestine Marxist-Leninist and Maoist insurgent group operating in Bangladesh. The group's armed struggle is driven by revolutionary communist ideology, seeking to overthrow the state through agrarian revolution and class warfare, firmly placing it in the secular-ideological category.

21. **Purbo Banglar Communist Party - Janajuddha (PBCP-J)** — A hardline splinter faction of the PBCP in Bangladesh. It maintains the same secular, Maoist revolutionary ideology as its parent organization, conducting assassinations and extortion to fund its localized class-based armed struggle.

22. **Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS)** — A secular political organization representing the indigenous Jumma people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh. Its armed wing, the Shanti Bahini, waged a decades-long ethno-nationalist insurgency to secure autonomy, land rights, and cultural preservation against Bengali settlement and state marginalization.

23. **Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A)** — The primary secular insurgent movement that fought the Sudanese government during the Second Sudanese Civil War. Founded by John Garang, the group initially pursued a Marxist-oriented vision for a unified, secular, and democratic "New Sudan," vigorously opposing the Khartoum government's imposition of Islamic law (sharia) on the diverse and largely non-Muslim southern population.

24. **Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM/A-North)** — The northern branch of the SPLM/A that continued fighting the Sudanese state after the secession of South Sudan in 2011. Operating primarily in the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile states, it fights against regional marginalization and advocates for a secular, democratic, and decentralized Sudan.

25. **Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A)** — A secular, ethno-nationalist rebel group founded in 2002 to fight for the rights of the marginalized non-Arab communities in the

Darfur region of Sudan. It explicitly rejects the Islamist and Arab-nationalist policies of the central government, demanding political representation and economic development.

26. **Sudan Liberation Movement/Army - Minni Minnawi (SLM/A - MM)** — A major splinter faction of the SLM/A, drawing its support predominantly from the Zaghawa ethnic group. While it has occasionally signed peace agreements with the government, its ideological foundation remains rooted in secular Darfuri ethno-nationalism and regional autonomy.

27. **Justice and Equality Movement (JEM)** — A powerful Darfuri rebel group. While its early leadership had historical ties to the Islamist politician Hassan al-Turabi, the organization's armed struggle is overwhelmingly centered on regional equality, Darfuri ethno-nationalist rights, and the overthrow of the Bashir regime. It allied with strictly secular rebel groups, placing its operational focus squarely on regional political objectives rather than a religious mandate.

28. **Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF)** — A broad alliance formed in 2011 comprising major Sudanese rebel groups, including the SPLM-N, JEM, and various SLM factions. The coalition's unified mandate is entirely secular and political, aiming to overthrow the Islamist regime in Khartoum and establish a democratic, federal state that respects the rights of Sudan's marginalized peripheries.

29. **Darfur Joint Resistance Forces** — An umbrella coalition of Darfuri rebel factions formed to coordinate military operations against Sudanese government forces and allied militias. Its objectives are firmly rooted in the defense of Darfuri communities and secular regional autonomy.

30. **National Democratic Alliance (NDA)** — An umbrella coalition of Sudanese opposition groups formed in 1989 to oppose Omar al-Bashir's Islamist military regime. It brought together the secular SPLM/A with northern political parties, unified by a secular, democratic, and anti-regime political platform.

31. **South Sudan Democratic Movement/Army (SSDM/A)** — A militant group formed in South Sudan shortly before its independence. Driven by ethnic grievances (particularly among the Murle and Shilluk) and opposition to the dominance of the SPLM government, its insurgency was entirely secular and based on localized political and ethnic power struggles.

32. **South Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SSLM/A)** — A predominantly Nuer rebel militia in South Sudan. Formed in opposition to the Dinka-dominated SPLM/A state apparatus, its armed campaign was driven by secular ethno-nationalist grievances, seeking greater political power and resource distribution for its constituency.

33. **Free Aceh Movement (GAM)** — An ethno-nationalist separatist organization that waged an insurgency against the Indonesian government from 1976 to 2005. Despite Aceh's strong Islamic identity and the eventual implementation of regional sharia law, GAM's foundational ideology under founder Hasan di Tiro was explicitly secular, anti-colonial, and ethno-nationalist. The group's stated objective was independence from perceived Javanese neo-colonialism and the restoration of the historic Acehnese state, consciously rejecting the religious-state objectives of earlier rebellions like Darul Islam.

34. **Free Papua Movement (OPM)** — An umbrella term for the decentralized ethno-nationalist separatist movement in West Papua, Indonesia. Founded in 1965, the movement's armed

factions wage a low-level guerrilla war against the Indonesian state. Their armed struggle is strictly secular and driven by demands for indigenous self-determination, independence, and the cessation of economic exploitation and demographic marginalization by the Indonesian government.

35. **National Transitional Council (NTC)** — The de facto political body and armed coalition formed by anti-Gaddafi forces during the 2011 Libyan Civil War. While functioning as a broad umbrella encompassing various local and Islamist militias, the central leadership of the NTC officially pursued the overthrow of the Gaddafi regime to establish a pluralistic, democratic, and secular civil state, prioritizing national political transition over ideological mandates.

36. **Forces of the House of Representatives (LNA)** — The military coalition, predominantly known as the Libyan National Army (LNA) led by Khalifa Haftar, aligned with the Tobruk-based parliament during the Second Libyan Civil War. The faction's stated objective was to defeat rival Islamist and UN-backed coalitions in Tripoli to unify Libya under a centralized military-backed government. Haftar explicitly framed his military campaigns, such as Operation Dignity, as a secular-nationalist war to eradicate Islamist militias and political Islam from Libya.

37. **Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC)** — A separatist movement operating in the Casamance region of Senegal since 1982. The group's armed insurgency is driven by the ethno-nationalist grievances of the predominantly Diola population, citing economic neglect and cultural marginalization by the northern Wolof-dominated government in Dakar. Its demands for independence are secular and rooted entirely in regional and ethnic identity.

38. **Polisario Front** — A Sahrawi nationalist liberation movement fighting for the independence of Western Sahara from Moroccan control. Originating with strong Marxist-Leninist and anti-colonial influences, the organization is strictly secular. Its armed struggle and diplomatic efforts are dedicated entirely to securing territorial sovereignty and self-determination through the establishment of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR).

39. **Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)** — A radical syncretic militant group operating across Uganda, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, and the DRC. Founded by Joseph Kony in 1987, the group's foundational objective was the violent overthrow of the Ugandan government to establish a state governed by the biblical Ten Commandments and Acholi mysticism. While lacking a cohesive political manifesto and driven by a rigid, prophetic religious-ideological mandate rather than secular political grievances, the group operates entirely outside the Islamic ideological frameworks that characterize other religiously motivated insurgencies in this dataset.

40. **Junbish-i Milli-yi Islami** — Afghan political and paramilitary organization founded by Abdul Rashid Dostum in 1992. Despite the word "Islami" in its name, it is a staunchly secular, predominantly ethnic Uzbek militia. It fought for secular governance and Uzbek factional power during the Afghan civil wars, allying at different times with both Soviet-backed and Western forces against Islamist factions.

41. **Afghanistan Freedom Front (AFF)** — An anti-Taliban militant group formed in 2022 following the Taliban takeover. Composed largely of former Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) personnel, the group's objectives are secular and nationalist. It aims to overthrow the Taliban's theocratic regime and restore a democratic, constitutional republic.

42. **Republic of Artsakh** — The unrecognized breakaway state (formerly the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic) that fought for independence and integration with Armenia against Azerbaijan. Its armed forces functioned as a conventional military fighting a strictly ethno-nationalist and territorial war, entirely devoid of religious-ideological goals, despite the broader religious differences between the warring populations.

43. **Somali National Movement (SNM)** — A Somali insurgent group founded in 1981, drawing its support almost exclusively from the Isaaq clan. The group waged a secular, ethno-nationalist guerrilla war against the Siad Barre regime, ultimately declaring the independent (though internationally unrecognized) state of Somaliland in 1991.

44. **United Somali Congress / Somali Salvation Alliance (USC/SSA)** — A major military faction in the Somali Civil War, originally founded in 1989 and rooted primarily in the Hawiye clan. Its armed struggle to overthrow Siad Barre and its subsequent factional warfare in Mogadishu were driven strictly by clan-based political and territorial competition.

45. **Somali Reconciliation and Restoration Council (SRRC)** — A coalition of secular, clan-based Somali warlords formed in 2001 (with significant backing from Ethiopia) to oppose the Transitional National Government and emerging Islamist groups. Its objectives were entirely political and factional, seeking power-sharing and territorial control within a decentralized Somali state.

46. **Forces of Khudoberdiyev** — A rebel military faction led by mutinous Tajik warlord Colonel Mahmud Khudoberdiyev. He led secular military uprisings in 1997 and 1998 against the Tajik government, driven by regional factionalism and strict opposition to the integration of Islamist forces (from the United Tajik Opposition) into the national army following the civil war peace accords.

47. **Mouvement Populaire de l'Azawad (MPA)** — A Tuareg rebel organization founded in 1990 in Mali. While its founder, Iyad Ag Ghaly, much later embraced jihadism, the MPA itself operated during the 1990s Tuareg rebellion as a strictly secular, ethno-nationalist movement seeking autonomy and political representation for the marginalized Tuareg people.

48. **Anjouan People's Movement (MPA / Republic of Anjouan)** — A separatist movement that declared the independence of the island of Anjouan from the Comoros in 1997. The armed struggle was driven entirely by localized political and economic grievances against the central government in Moroni, operating without any religious-ideological framework.

49. **Niger Movement for Justice (MNJ)** — A predominantly Tuareg rebel group that waged an insurgency against the government of Niger from 2007 to 2009. The group's objectives were secular and ethno-nationalist, demanding a greater share of the region's uranium wealth, regional development, and political integration for northern nomadic populations.

50. **Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA)** — A coalition of Tuareg independence and Arab nationalist movements in northern Mali formed in 2014. Serving as the primary secular and ethno-nationalist counterweight to jihadist coalitions like JNIM, the CMA seeks political autonomy and self-determination for the Azawad region, consistently rejecting the imposition of transnational sharia governance.

51. **National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT)** — An umbrella organization formed in 1998 representing the East Timorese struggle for independence from Indonesia. Integrating the armed wing FALINTIL with diplomatic and political fronts, the movement was strictly secular, nationalistic, and focused on achieving sovereign statehood and self-determination for East Timor.

52. **Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy (FRUD)** — A rebel group in Djibouti that launched an insurgency in 1991. Drawing its support primarily from the Afar ethnic group, the organization fought against the perceived political and economic marginalization by the Issa-dominated central government. Its objectives were strictly secular and focused on ethno-political power-sharing.

53. **Rally of Democratic Forces of Guinea (RFDG)** — A Guinean rebel coalition that launched cross-border attacks from Liberia and Sierra Leone into Guinea in 2000 and 2001. Backed by Liberian President Charles Taylor, the group's armed campaign was a secular, political proxy conflict aimed at destabilizing the government of Lansana Conté, entirely devoid of religious framing.

54. **Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)** — A multi-ethnic and multi-religious military alliance formed in 2015, dominated by the Kurdish YPG but including Arab, Assyrian, and Turkmen militias. The SDF was the primary ground force fighting the Islamic State in Syria. Its ideology is rooted in secular democratic confederalism, aiming to establish a decentralized, secular, and pluralistic governance model in northeastern Syria.

55. **Patriotic Salvation Movement (MPS)** — A Chadian rebel group formed in 1990 by Idriss Déby. Operating from bases in Sudan, the group launched a successful insurgency to overthrow the dictatorial regime of Hissène Habré. Its foundational objectives and subsequent governance as Chad's ruling party were rooted in secular political control and regional factionalism rather than any religious mandate.

56. **Popular Front for the Liberation of Azawad (FPLA)** — A Tuareg rebel faction active during the 1990s Tuareg rebellion in Mali. Splintering from other groups over strategic differences, the FPLA pursued a strictly secular, ethno-nationalist agenda, fighting for the political and economic rights of the Tuareg population in the northern Azawad region.

57. **Sudan Liberation Forces Alliance (SLFA)** — A rebel coalition operating in the Darfur region of Sudan. Formed by merging several secular Darfuri factions, its armed struggle is driven by ethno-nationalist grievances, seeking regional autonomy, political representation, and an end to the marginalization of Darfur's non-Arab populations by the central government.

58. **Rwandan Secular Militant Factions (RJF)** — An armed faction operating within the context of the Rwandan conflict system. Its armed struggle is driven by secular political objectives, regional grievances, and factional competition for state resources, operating entirely outside of a religious-ideological mandate.

59. **Popular Resistance Committees (PRC)** — A Palestinian militant coalition operating primarily in the Gaza Strip. Formed in 2000 during the Second Intifada, it functions as a cross-ideological umbrella group. While operating alongside Islamist groups, its foundational mandate is rooted in secular Palestinian nationalism and armed resistance against Israel, lacking a specific Islamist state-building agenda.

60. **Popular Front of Tajikistan (PFT)** — A secular, pro-government paramilitary organization active during the Tajikistani Civil War. Composed primarily of Kulyabi and Uzbek

militias, the group fought on behalf of the post-Soviet secular government against the Islamist and regionalist forces of the United Tajik Opposition (UTO), motivated by regional factionalism and the preservation of the secular state apparatus.

61. **United Baloch Army (UBA)** — A secular ethno-nationalist militant group in Pakistan's Balochistan province, formed as a splinter faction from the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA). The group wages a separatist armed struggle against the Pakistani state, driven entirely by demands for Baloch sovereignty and control over regional resources, distinct from religious militant networks.

62. **Alliance of Tuareg of Niger and Mali for Change (ATNMC)** — A cross-border Tuareg rebel alliance formed to coordinate insurgent activities in both Mali and Niger. The group's objectives were strictly secular and ethno-nationalist, demanding economic development, political integration, and cultural rights for the marginalized nomadic Tuareg populations across the Sahel.

63. **Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF)** — An ethno-nationalist paramilitary group and political party in Ethiopia. Rooted in Marxist-Leninist ideology at its founding, the organization pursues secular, ethno-nationalist objectives. Following its ouster from the federal government, its recent armed struggle was driven by demands for Tigrayan regional autonomy and resistance against the central government, entirely outside any religious framework.

64. **OPON Forces** — The Special Purpose Police Unit (OPON) of Azerbaijan. In 1995, this heavily armed state security faction, led by Colonel Rovshan Javadov, engaged in a mutinous armed rebellion against the government of Heydar Aliyev. The conflict was a strictly secular, factional power struggle for control of the Azerbaijani state.

65. **Military Faction (Red Berets)** — An elite airborne commando unit of the Malian army. Following the 2012 military coup by the rival "Green Berets," this faction (loyal to ousted President Amadou Toumani Touré) launched an armed counter-coup attempt in Bamako. The fighting was a secular, internal military factional dispute over state control.

66. **Military Faction (Forces of Shah Nawaz Tanai)** — A mutinous faction of the Afghan communist military led by Defense Minister General Shah Nawaz Tanai, who launched an attempted coup against President Mohammad Najibullah in 1990. The armed uprising was a secular, factional power struggle within the Soviet-backed regime.

67. **Military Faction (Forces of Suret Huseynov)** — A rogue military faction in Azerbaijan led by warlord and army commander Suret Huseynov, who launched a military rebellion in 1993 that ousted President Abulfaz Elchibey. The uprising was an entirely secular, politically motivated military coup.

68. **Presidential Guard (Comoros)** — A mercenary-led military unit, commanded by Bob Denard, that launched an armed takeover of the Comorian state in 1989. Despite its origins as a state security force, it operated during the conflict as an independent, secular military faction driven by political control rather than ideological motives.

69. **Sudan Allied Revolutionary Forces (SARC)** — A rebel coalition operating in the Darfur region. Like other Darfuri groups in this category, its armed struggle against the Sudanese government is driven by secular, ethno-nationalist demands for regional autonomy and an end to systemic marginalization.

70. **Baloch Ittehad** — An ethnic separatist alliance operating in Pakistan's Balochistan province. Its armed struggle is firmly secular and ethno-nationalist, coordinating efforts to achieve an independent Baloch state and control over regional resources.

71. **Council for the Restoration of Arakan (CRA)** — An ethnic Rakhine insurgent group in Myanmar. Operating in Rakhine State, its militant campaign against the central government is driven by secular ethno-nationalist objectives, seeking self-determination and political rights for the Rakhine people.

72. **Front pour la Défense de la République (FDR)** — An armed rebel faction in Burundi. Operating within the context of the Burundian Civil War, the group's mobilization and armed struggle were driven by secular ethno-political grievances and factional competition for state power.

73. **Front de Libération de l'Aïr et de l'Azawad (FLAA)** — A prominent Tuareg rebel organization active during the early 1990s insurgency in Niger. Its armed struggle was strictly secular and ethno-nationalist, demanding political integration, economic development, and autonomy for the marginalized Tuareg populations of the Aïr region.

74. **Front Patriotique de Résistance du Niger (FPRN)** — A rebel faction active in Niger. The group's insurgency was driven by secular political opposition and regional grievances against the central government, entirely devoid of religious-ideological framing.

75. **FRUD-Combattant (FRUD-C)** — A hardline splinter faction of the Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy (FRUD) in Djibouti. After the mainstream FRUD signed a peace agreement with the government, this faction continued a secular, ethno-nationalist armed struggle to secure greater political representation for the Afar people.

76. **Forces of Khalifa al-Ghawil** — The armed factions and militias loyal to Khalifa al-Ghawil's National Salvation Government in Tripoli during the Libyan civil war. The conflict with rival governments (like the UN-backed GNA or Haftar's LNA) was a secular political struggle for institutional legitimacy and territorial control over the Libyan state.

77. **Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF)** — An ethno-nationalist rebel group operating in the Somali Region of Ethiopia. The group's armed struggle against the Ethiopian state is strictly secular, driven by demands for self-determination, regional autonomy, and the protection of ethnic Somali rights against perceived marginalization by the central government.

78. **Popular Front for the Liberation of Libya (PFLL)** — A Libyan political and militant organization comprised of loyalists to the ousted Muammar Gaddafi regime. Formed in 2016, the group seeks to restore the secular, nationalist Jamahiriya system, operating outside of the religious and tribal factionalism that characterizes much of the ongoing Libyan conflict.

79. **Revolutionary Forces of 1 April** — A Chadian rebel faction that opposed the dictatorial regime of Hissène Habré. Formed in the late 1980s, the group later merged with other secular rebel factions to form the Patriotic Salvation Movement (MPS), which successfully overthrew Habré in 1990. The group's armed struggle was driven by secular political opposition and ethnic factionalism rather than a religious ideology.

80. **Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM)** — A Somali rebel organization founded in 1989, drawing its support predominantly from the Ogaden clan. The group waged an armed insurgency during the Somali Civil War, driven strictly by clan-based factionalism, territorial control, and political power-sharing following the collapse of the Siad Barre regime.

81. **Union des Forces de la Résistance de l'Azawad (UFRA)** — A Tuareg rebel group operating in Mali. Active during the ethno-nationalist insurgencies in the Sahel, the group's

armed struggle is strictly secular, seeking regional autonomy, political representation, and the defense of the marginalized Tuareg populations in the Azawad region.

82. **United Liberation Army (ULA)** — An ethno-nationalist militant group operating in Pakistan's Balochistan province. Like other secular Baloch separatist organizations, its armed struggle against the Pakistani state is driven by demands for ethnic sovereignty, political rights, and control over natural resources, explicitly rejecting the religious militant networks operating in the same region.

83. **United Somali Congress / Somali National Alliance (USC/SNA)** — A powerful Somali political and military alliance led by General Mohamed Farah Aidid. Drawing its primary strength from the Hawiye clan, the faction waged a secular, clan-based armed struggle for control of Mogadishu and the broader Somali state during the civil war, notably clashing with rival warlords and UN peacekeeping forces.

84. **Zintan Military Council** — A powerful coalition of militias based in the Libyan city of Zintan. Emerging during the 2011 revolution, the group later aligned with secular and nationalist forces (such as Khalifa Haftar's LNA) against Islamist and UN-backed coalitions in Tripoli. Its operations are driven by local tribal interests, anti-Islamist sentiment, and the pursuit of political power within the fragmented Libyan state.