

Information Control & State Repression

Anita Gohdes

Universität Mannheim / Human Rights Data Analysis Group

31c3, December 28, 2014

TUNISIE DÉMOCRATIQUE
THANK YOU Facebook



REVOLUTION WILL NOT BE
TELEVISED
IT WILL BE TWEETED

#direngeziparki #occupygezi



Governments control network accessibility.

How does control of the internet inform government repression?

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How does control of the internet inform government repression?

Overview

1. Theoretical Background
2. Types of Repression
3. Dealing with the Dark Figure of Violence
4. Results: Internet Control & Violence

Repression and Riots



■ Hidden 'threats'

Repression and Riots



- Hidden 'threats'
- Fully visible 'threats'

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The Dilemma: Digital response to 'threats'?

Surveil the internet

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Surveil the internet

Censor the internet

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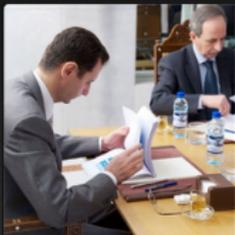
The choice of digital response informs the **type** of state repression used.

The Dilemma: Digital response to 'threats'?

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syrianpresidency

Syrian Presidency Welcome to the official Instagram account for the Presidency of the Syrian Arab Republic - حساب رئاسة الجمهورية العربية السورية على إنستغرام

348 posts

35.4k followers

0 following

December 2014



September 2014



State repression in Syria

Updated Statistical Analysis of Documentation of Killings in the Syrian Arab Republic

Commissioned by
the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

Megan Price, Anita Gohdes, and Patrick Ball*



Human Rights Data Analysis Group
everybody counts.

August 2014

- Uniquely identified documented killings, 03/2011-04/2014:
191,369

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Snapshot of the database

Table 5.1. Snapshot of the database (anonymised)

ID	name*	A*	B*	C*	D*	gov	date_of_death	sex
14567	[..]	1	0	0	0	Aleppo	2012-11-16	M
57860	[..]	0	0	1	1	Homs	2013-09-16	M
58673	[..]	0	0	1	0	Rural Damascus	2012-08-30	M
68900	[..]	0	1	0	0	Hama	2012-04-28	F
23456	[..]	0	1	0	1	Homs	2013-03-24	M
11239	[..]	0	0	1	0	Deir ez-Zor	2012-05-28	M
68900	[..]	0	0	0	0	Rural Damascus	2014-02-25	M
78949	[..]	0	0	1	1	Daraa	2013-03-18	n.a.

* anonymised

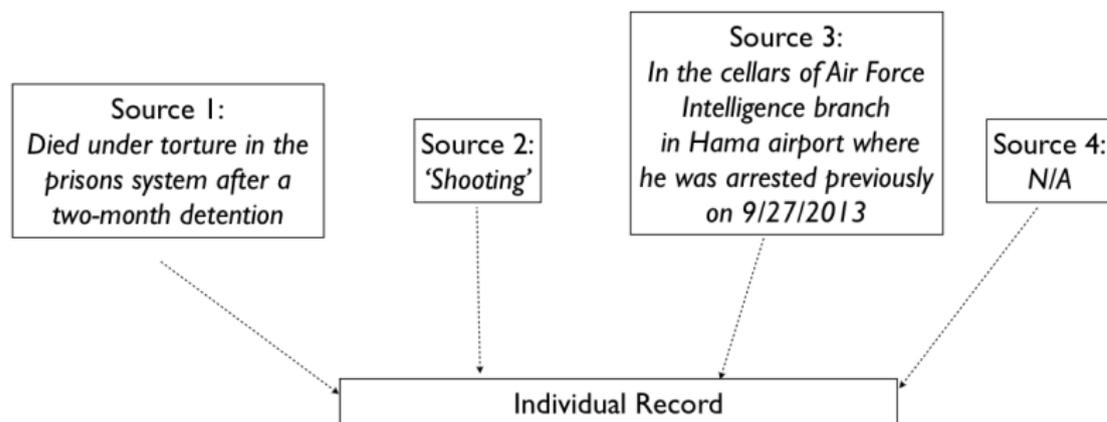
Identifying the type of violence

- Targeted: Intended to eliminate individuals or groups
- Untargeted: 'general' terror

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Identifying targeted and untargeted violence



- Examples of targeted:

arrest, detention, 'found with hands/legs tied', tortured, executed, defector

- Examples of untargeted:

explosion, bombing, shelling, mortar, child

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The Dark Figure

Time, location, and information access all affect our knowledge of what's happening on the ground.

The dark figure can be estimated using **multiple systems estimation**.

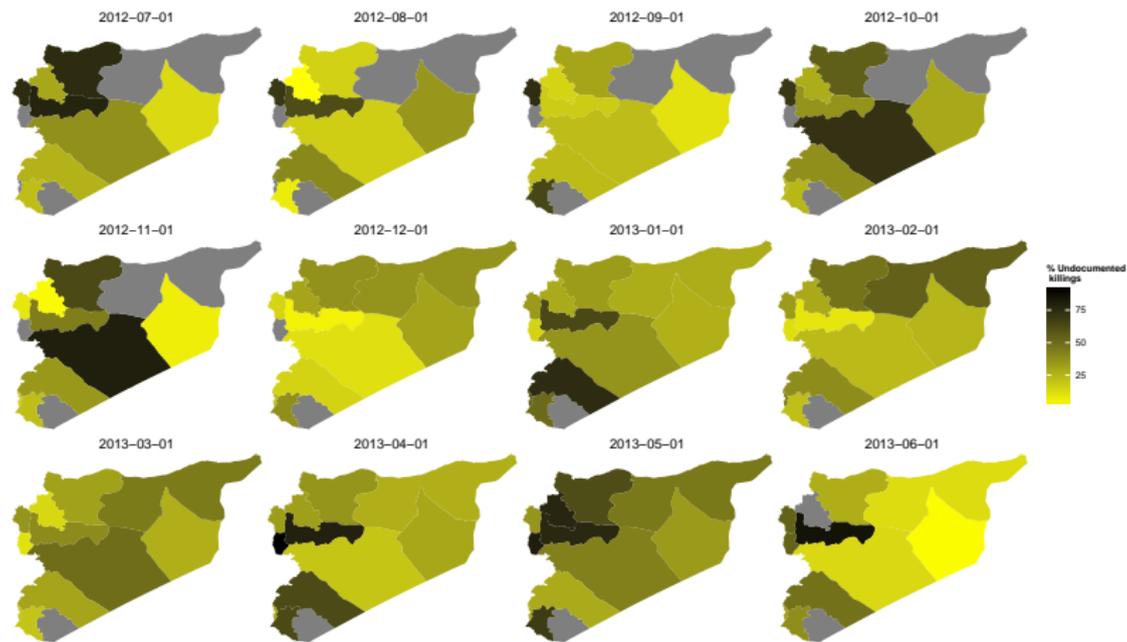
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The Dark Figure of Violence in Syria

Percentage of undocumented killings



Internet access in Syria

Cover Photo Search for people, places and things Anita Home



داري على شمتك بتقيد:
حافظ على ملفاتك ومعلوماتك لأنها مسؤوليتك
#أمنئى سوريا #AmennySyria

صفحة المستجدات الرقمية في سوريا
Syria Digital Reports سوريا
Cause

Like Follow Message



Timeline About Photos Likes More

PEOPLE

68,142 likes

Invite your friends to like this Page

ABOUT

<http://souriya.layer6.org/>

Suggest Edits

APPS

صفحة المستجدات الرقمية في سوريا
Syria Digital Reports added 6 new photos to the album
حالة خدمات الانترنت والاتصالات في سوريا 20/12/2014
22 December at 18:49

تمثل هذه الخرائط حالة الخدمات المقدمة من قبل الحكومة والقطاع الخاص ولا تتشكل الانترنت الفضائي أو الاتصالات الفضائية أو الأنية من دول الجوار في المناطق الحدودية.

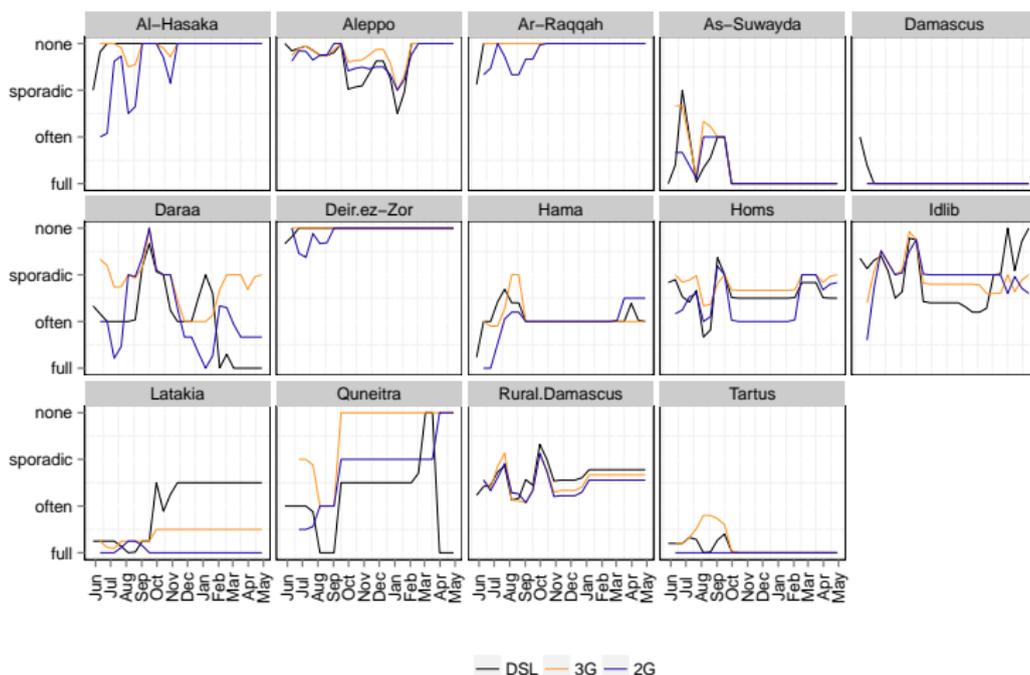
2G GPRS ACCESSIBILITY IN SYRIA (BY DISTRICT)
الإنترنيت من الجيل الثاني حسب المناطق 20/12/2014



- 100%
- 75%
- 50%
- 25%
- 0%

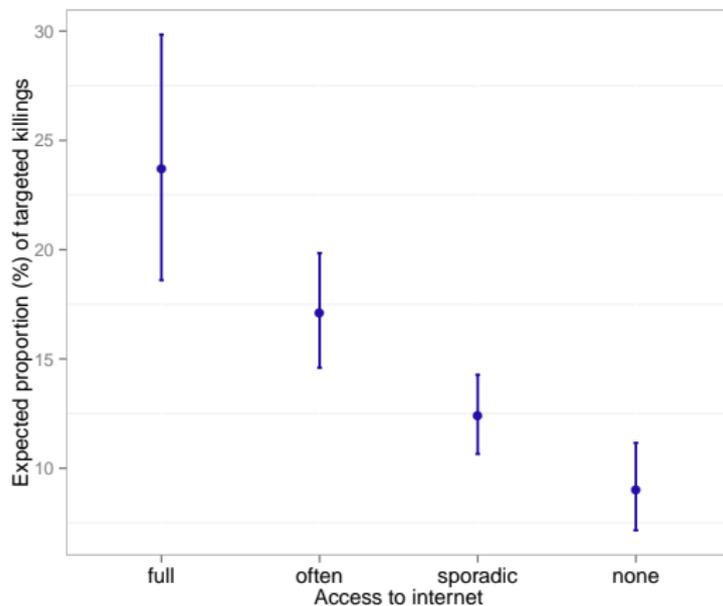
Internet (DSL, 3G, and 2G) accessibility

by Syrian governorate, June 2013 - April 2014



Internet restrictions & the choice of violence

Expected proportion of targeted killings, given internet (DSL) accessibility



Take-Away

In governorates where internet fully accessible \Rightarrow 1 in 4 targeted killings.

In governorates with no internet \Rightarrow less than 1 in 10 targeted killings.

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Conclusion: Internet Control + Violence

Strategic part of larger repressive campaign

Varies **spatially** and **temporally**, repression adapted accordingly

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Thank you!

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PGP: 6B68 BC34 5106 5B25 C4C7 D5C5 7178 8392 4B10 F78B

@argohdes