

Beyond the Battlefield: Armed Conflict and Domestic Violence in Ethiopia

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Motivation

- ▶ Increase in armed conflicts since mid-2000s (Marshall, 2020; Rustad and Bakken, 2019)
 - ▶ 2024: 61 conflicts, the highest number in 70 years (Rustad, 2025)
 - ▶ Lasts longer: From approx. 16 years in the 1990s to over 30 years today
- ▶ Beyond loss of life, conflict has well-known macro consequences (e.g., Sachs, 2005; Bruck et al., 2019)
 - ▶ Entrenching poverty, disrupting education, health costs, destabilizing labor markets
- ▶ Less known about what happens **inside** households
 - ▶ Focus on **intimate partner violence** and **domestic violence against children**

IPV in Conflict Settings

- ▶ IPV is the most common form of violence against women both in conflict and non-conflict settings
 - ▶ Experienced by 30% of women worldwide
 - ▶ Often gets less attention in conflict areas than other forms of VAW (rape, sexual exploitation,...)

IPV in Conflict Settings

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 - ▶ Often gets less attention in conflict areas than other forms of VAW (rape, sexual exploitation,...)
- ▶ Several studies link DHS data with ACLED/UCDP and find that higher conflict intensity is associated with more IPV (e.g., Kelly, 2018, 2020; Østby, 2016; Le and Nguyen, 2022)
- ▶ Ekhtor-Mobayode et al. (2021, 2022): Boko Haram insurgency and Malian conflict using DHS and ACLED
- ▶ La Mattina (2017): Long-term effect of the Rwandan genocide comparing women who married before and after

Domestic VAC in Conflict Settings

- ▶ Domestic VAC defined as physical, emotional, or sexual abuse and neglect perpetrated by caregivers affect 2 out of 3 children worldwide
- ▶ Exposure to political violence is consistently linked to increased physical violence against children (Souza et al., 2024)
- ▶ Violence against children increases after many emergencies compared to the conditions prior to emergencies (Seddighi et al., 2020)
- ▶ Parents engage in harsher parenting practices (including VAC) in times of war (Eltanamy et al., 2021)

Research Questions & Contributions

- ▶ Does proximity to armed conflict affect:
 1. Physical, sexual, psychological IPV?
 2. Physical punishment of children?
- ▶ What mechanisms drive any effects?
- ▶ **Contributions**
 - ▶ First longitudinal evidence (6-wave household panel).
 - ▶ Simultaneous look at IPV *and* domestic VAC.
 - ▶ Mechanism tests: economic stress, male stress, social norms.

Data Sources

- ▶ **Conflict:** Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) 2016-2021
 - ▶ Use 50 km radius
 - ▶ 6 month lag
- ▶ **Households:** Six-wave panel in 5 regions (Amhara, Dire Dawa, Oromia, SNNP, Tigray).
- ▶ Total of 6652 observations across 1262 households
- ▶ Outcomes measured every wave (3-month recall for IPV).

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Conflict Episodes in Ethiopia by Region and Zone(Admin 2), 2015-2021

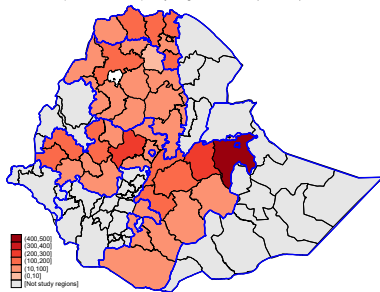


Figure: Spatial distribution of conflict episodes, 2015–2021

Key Variables (WHO definitions)

- ▶ **Physical IPV:** push, slap, punch, kick, choke, threat.
- ▶ **Sexual IPV:** forced sex/acts.
- ▶ **Psychological IPV:** insults, humiliation, threats.
- ▶ **Child punishment:** mother/father physically punishes “sometimes” .

Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	SD
Domestic violence measures		
Physical IPV (3 m)	0.10	0.30
Sexual IPV (3 m)	0.03	0.18
Psychological IPV (3 m)	0.15	0.36
Corporal punishment by mother	0.49	0.50
Corporal punishment by father	0.32	0.47
Conflict measurement		
Conflict events (6 m, 50 km)	4.88	19.37

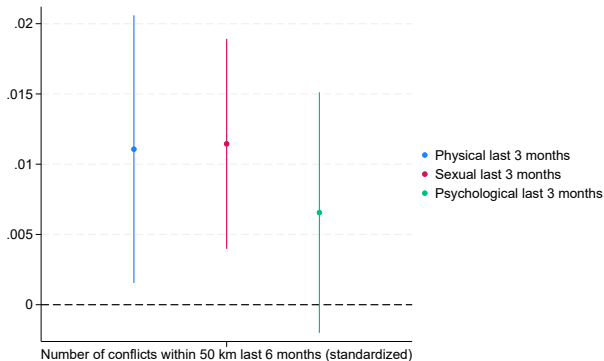
Empirical Strategy

$$y_{ijt} = \alpha + \beta \text{Conflict}_{t-6m} + \mu_i + \gamma_t + \varepsilon_{ijt}$$

- ▶ μ_i : individual fixed effects (controls time-invariant traits).
- ▶ γ_t : wave FE (common shocks).
- ▶ Cluster SE at individual level.
- ▶ Alternative specifications: fatalities, violence against civilians, 25 km buffer, UCDP data, region FE, only Tigray.

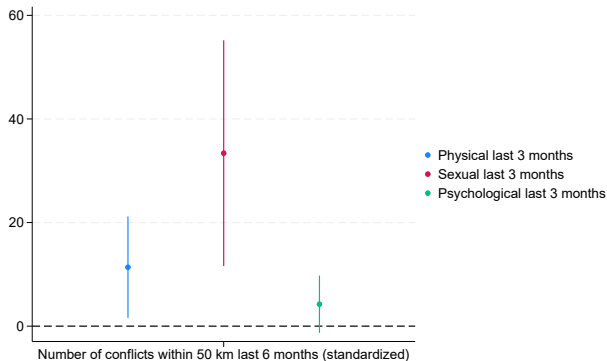
Main Results – IPV

Main Results – IPV



- ▶ A one standard deviation increase in conflict events:
 - ▶ Increases physical violence by 1.1 pp
 - ▶ Increases sexual violence by 1.1 pp
 - ▶ Does not affect psychological violence

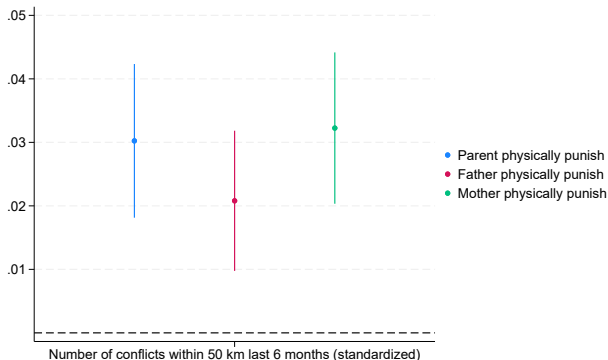
Main Results – IPV in relative terms



- ▶ A one standard deviation increase in conflict events:
 - ▶ Increases physical violence by 11%
 - ▶ Increases sexual violence by 33%
 - ▶ Does not affect psychological violence

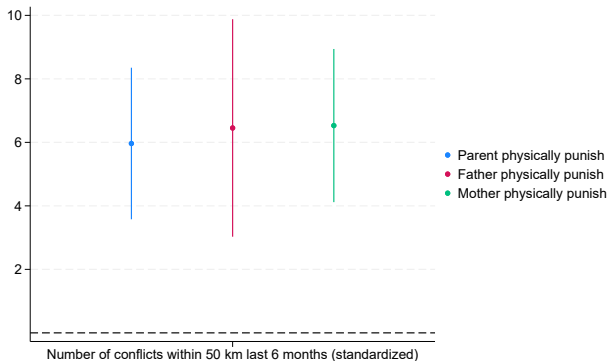
Main Results – Domestic VAC

Main Results – Domestic VAC



- ▶ A one standard deviation increase in conflict events:
 - ▶ Increases any corporal punishment by 3 pp
 - ▶ Increases corporal punishment by fathers by 2.1 pp
 - ▶ Increases corporal punishment by mothers by 3.2 pp

Main Results – Domestic VAC in relative terms



- ▶ A one standard deviation increase in conflict events:
 - ▶ Increases any corporal punishment by 6%
 - ▶ Increases corporal punishment by fathers by 7%
 - ▶ Increases corporal punishment by mothers by 7%

Mechanisms

Table: Mechanisms

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Husband stressed	Stressed money	Husband income	Husband hours work	Accept abuse
Conflicts last 6 months (50km)	0.032*** (0.0069)	0.031*** (0.0069)	-1315.0*** (225.9)	-3.28*** (0.38)	0.017** (0.0066)
Mean in sample	0.30	0.27	17126.08	44.40	0.34
N	6462	6462	6255	5315	6652
R-squared	0.42	0.42	0.43	0.53	0.49
Mean X-var	4.62	4.62	4.69	4.55	4.78
SD X-var	18.50	18.50	18.79	17.73	19.08
Wave f.e.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ind. f.e.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: Standard errors, clustered at the individual level, are in parentheses. P-values are ≤ 0.01 ***, ≤ 0.05 ** , and ≤ 0.1 *.

Robustness Checks

- ▶ Alternate conflict measures: fatalities, violence against civilians
- ▶ 25 km buffer
- ▶ UCDP dataset
- ▶ Region FE and Tigray-only subsample

Conclusions

- ▶ Armed conflict spills over into homes
 - ▶ Increase in physical and sexual IPV
 - ▶ Increase in corporal punishment
- ▶ Economic and psychological stress are key channels.
- ▶ Findings are robust across data sources and specifications.
- ▶
- ▶ **Policy takeaway:** Integrate household-violence monitoring and support into all conflict-phase responses—during fighting *and* in the aftermath.

Thank you

Robustness Check

► Alternative conflict measures: fatalities

Table: Alternative conflict measures: number of conflict fatalities

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Physical last 3m	Sexual last 3m	Psychological last 3m	Phys. punish children	Father punish children	Mother punish children
Fatalities last 6 months (50km)	0.012** (0.0047)	0.0099** (0.0038)	0.0038 (0.0043)	0.026*** (0.0061)	0.019*** (0.0056)	0.027*** (0.0060)
Mean in sample	0.10	0.03	0.15	0.51	0.32	0.49
N	6652	6650	6651	6673	6653	6667
R-squared	0.38	0.27	0.39	0.60	0.53	0.60
Mean X-var	20.41	20.42	20.42	20.36	20.42	20.38
SD X-var	87.37	87.38	87.37	87.24	87.36	87.28
Wave f.e.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ind. f.e.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: Standard errors, clustered at the individual level, are in parentheses. P-values are $\leq 0.01^{***}$, $\leq 0.05^{**}$, and $\leq 0.1^*$.

- Alternative conflict measures: number of violence against civilian events

Table: Alternative conflict exposure measure: number of violence against civilians events

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Physical last 3m	Sexual last 3m	Psychological last 3m	Phys. punish children	Father punish children	Mother punish children
Conflicts last 6 months (50km)	0.0091* (0.0051)	0.0079** (0.0038)	0.00084 (0.0048)	0.030*** (0.0065)	0.019*** (0.0060)	0.031*** (0.0065)
Mean in sample	0.10	0.03	0.15	0.51	0.32	0.49
N	6652	6650	6651	6673	6653	6667
R-squared	0.38	0.27	0.39	0.60	0.53	0.60
Mean X-var	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62
SD X-var	2.99	2.99	2.99	2.99	2.99	2.99
Wave f.e.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ind. f.e.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: Standard errors, clustered at the individual level, are in parentheses. P-values are $\leq 0.01^{***}$, $\leq 0.05^{**}$, and $\leq 0.1^*$.

► Alternative buffer: 25km

Table: Alternative buffer zone (25 km)

	(1) Physical last 3m	(2) Sexual last 3m	(3) Psychological last 3m	(4) Phys. punish children	(5) Father punish children	(6) Mother punish children
Conflicts last 6 months (25km)	0.0100** (0.0048)	0.011*** (0.0037)	0.0060 (0.0045)	0.029*** (0.0061)	0.020*** (0.0056)	0.031*** (0.0060)
Mean in sample	0.10	0.03	0.15	0.51	0.32	0.49
N	6652	6650	6651	6673	6653	6667
R-squared	0.38	0.27	0.39	0.60	0.53	0.60
Mean X-var	1.96	1.96	1.96	1.96	1.96	1.96
SD X-var	8.67	8.67	8.67	8.65	8.67	8.66
Wave f.e.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ind. f.e.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: Standard errors, clustered at the individual level, are in parentheses. P-values are $\leq 0.01^{***}$, $\leq 0.05^{**}$, and $\leq 0.1^*$.

Table: Main results, UCDP data

	(1) Physical last 3m	(2) Sexual last 3m	(3) Psychological last 3m	(4) Phys. punish children	(5) Father punish children	(6) Mother punish children
Conflicts last 6 months (50km)	0.012** (0.0050)	0.012*** (0.0040)	0.0067 (0.0044)	0.027*** (0.0064)	0.018*** (0.0058)	0.029*** (0.0063)
Mean in sample	0.10	0.03	0.15	0.51	0.32	0.49
N	6652	6650	6651	6673	6653	6667
R-squared	0.38	0.27	0.39	0.60	0.53	0.60
Mean X-var	2.62	2.62	2.62	2.62	2.62	2.62
SD X-var	10.51	10.51	10.51	10.49	10.51	10.50
Wave f.e.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ind. f.e.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: Standard errors, clustered at the individual level, are in parentheses. P-values are $\leq 0.01^{***}$, $\leq 0.05^{**}$, and $\leq 0.1^*$.

Table: Main results, region FE

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Physical last 3m	Sexual last 3m	Psychological last 3m	Phys. punish children	Father punish children	Mother punish children
Conflicts last 6 months (50km)	0.011** (0.0048)	0.013*** (0.0037)	0.0039 (0.0046)	0.014** (0.0065)	0.011* (0.0059)	0.017** (0.0065)
Mean in sample	0.10	0.03	0.15	0.51	0.32	0.49
N	6680	6678	6679	6701	6681	6695
R-squared	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.05	0.04
Mean X-var	3.04	3.04	3.04	3.04	3.04	3.04
SD X-var	14.22	14.22	14.22	14.20	14.22	14.20
Wave f.e.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
F.E.	Region	Region	Region	Region	Region	Region

Notes: Standard errors, clustered at the individual level, are in parentheses. P-values are $\leq 0.01^{***}$, $\leq 0.05^{**}$, and $\leq 0.1^*$.

Table: Main results, in Tigray

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Physical last 3m	Sexual last 3m	Psychological last 3m	Phys. punish children	Father punish children	Mother punish children
Conflicts last 6 months (50km)	0.011** (0.0046)	0.0075** (0.0037)	-0.0030 (0.0040)	0.0093* (0.0056)	0.0090* (0.0051)	0.010* (0.0055)
Mean in sample	0.10	0.04	0.18	0.49	0.26	0.48
N	3121	3121	3121	3121	3120	3121
R-squared	0.35	0.29	0.40	0.69	0.57	0.68
Mean X-var	4.53	4.53	4.53	4.53	4.53	4.53
SD X-var	20.21	20.21	20.21	20.21	20.21	20.21
Wave f.e.	No	No	No	No	No	No
Ind. f.e.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: Standard errors, clustered at the individual level, are in parentheses. P-values are $\leq 0.01^{***}$, $\leq 0.05^{**}$, and $\leq 0.1^*$.