

# Conflict Behavior in Muslim States

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# International Humanitarian Law (IHL); Laws of Armed Conflict

- IHL are international laws governing all armed conflicts, that for humanitarian reasons, reduce the negative effects of war
- IHL includes the Geneva Conventions that protect persons, treaties that restrict the means and methods of warfare, like the Chemical Weapons Convention, customary law, and international tribunal case law
- LOAC is *lex specialis*, law governing a specific subject, and therefore takes precedent over all peacetime law in times of armed conflict
  - Hence IHL supersedes Human Rights Law in armed conflicts

# Definitions

- International Armed Conflicts (IAC): interstate war
- IACs between Muslim states: both sides Muslim belligerents
- Non-International Armed Conflicts (NIAC): civil war
- Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC): nations that are either Muslim-majority population or identify as Muslim
- Sharia: religious law of Islam

# Building a Conflict Dataset

- Political scientists often assume Muslim states are more conflict prone and do not comply with IHL
- We wanted to test:
  - Whether Muslim states comply with IHL in armed conflicts
  - Whether Sharia is an alternative norm that can mitigate conflicts where IHL is not respected
- Method:
  - We tracked every conflict in which Muslim state members of the OIC were belligerents from 1947-2012 for violations of IHL
  - We examined the existence of Sharia language and human rights language from the OIC member constitutions and identified the density of both
  - Compared the armed conflict dataset to the constitution dataset

# OIC Member States

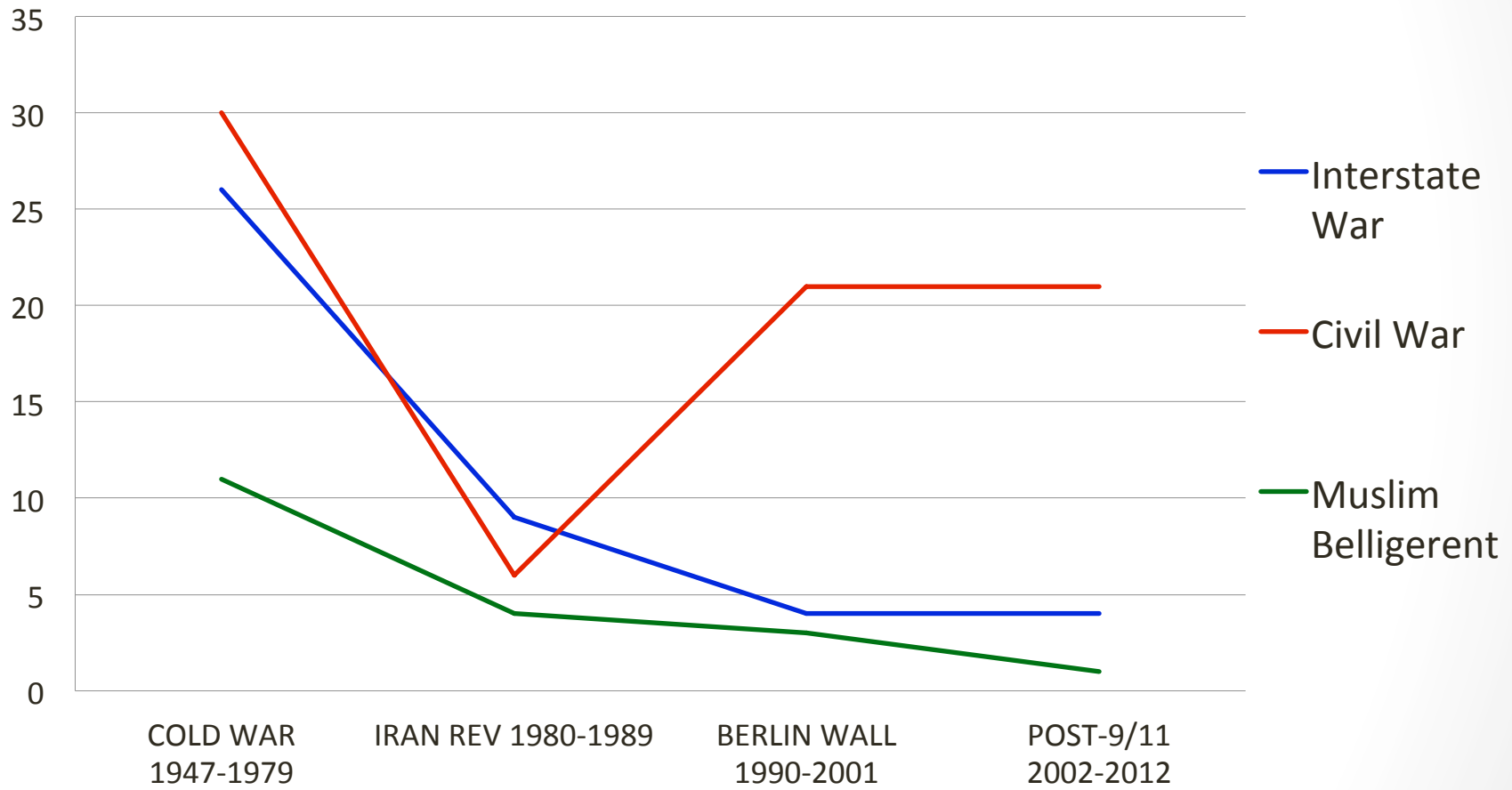
Includes 46 Muslim-majority population states and 11 that identify as Muslim states (†)

- Afghanistan
- Albania
- Algeria
- Azerbaijan
- Bahrain
- Bangladesh
- Benin†
- Brunei-Darussalam
- Burkina Faso
- Cameroon †
- Chad
- Comoros
- Cote d'Ivoire †
- Djibouti
- Egypt
- Gabon †
- Gambia
- Guinea
- Guinea-Bissau †
- Guyana †
- Indonesia
- Iran
- Iraq
- Jordan
- Kazakhstan
- Kuwait
- Kyrgyzstan
- Lebanon
- Libya
- Malaysia
- Maldives
- Mali
- Mauritania
- Morocco
- Mozambique †
- Niger
- Nigeria †
- Oman
- Qatar
- Pakistan
- Palestine\*
- Saudi Arabia
- Sierra Leone
- Senegal
- Somalia
- Sudan
- Suriname †
- Syria
- Tajikistan
- Togo †
- Tunisia
- Turkey
- Turkmenistan
- U.A.E.
- Uganda †
- Uzbekistan
- Yemen

\* Included in Constitution Database only

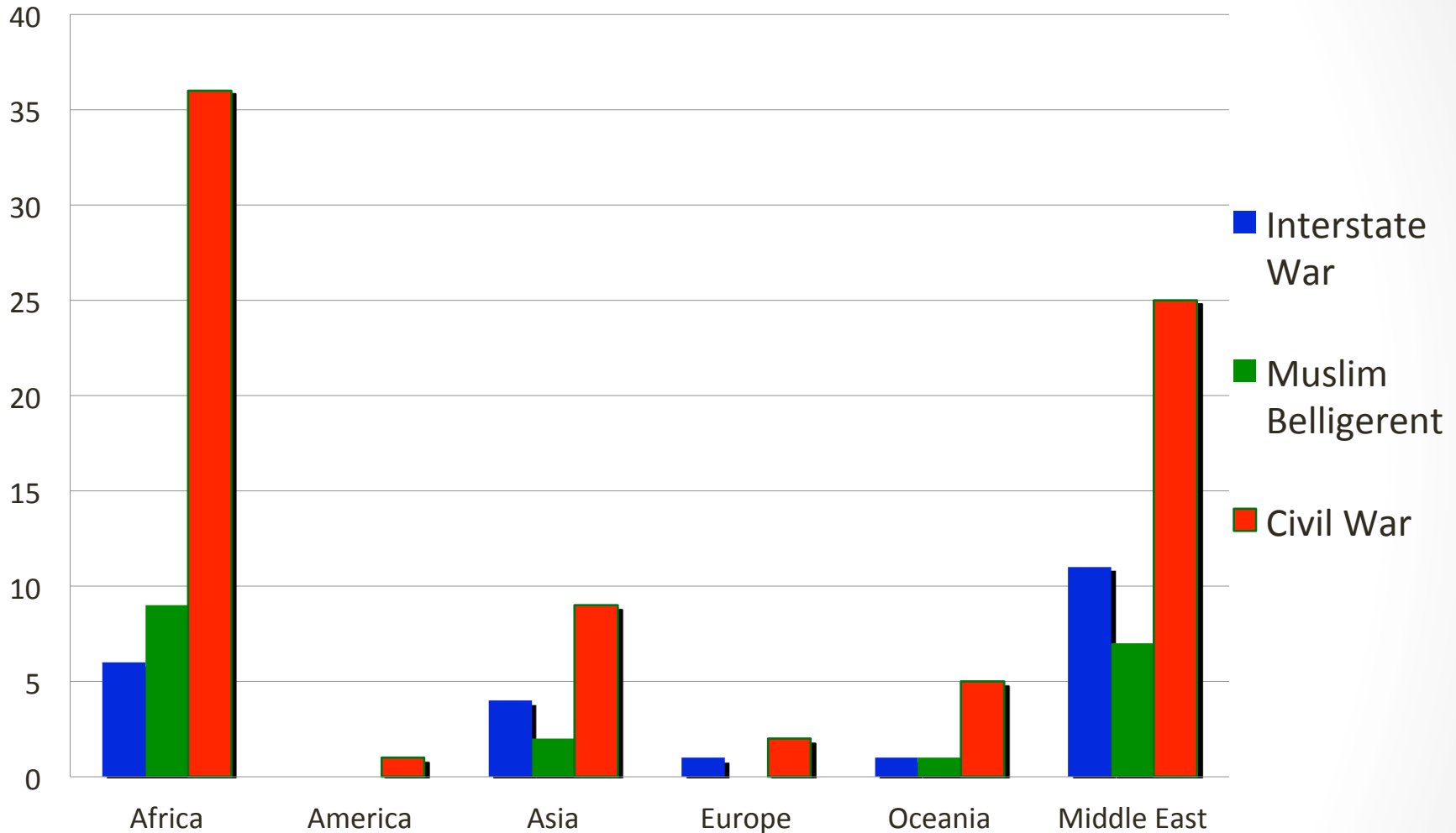
# Findings

Figure 1: Conflicts by Muslim States, 1947-2012



- More civil wars since 1989
- Since 1989 almost every interstate conflict is between Muslim belligerents

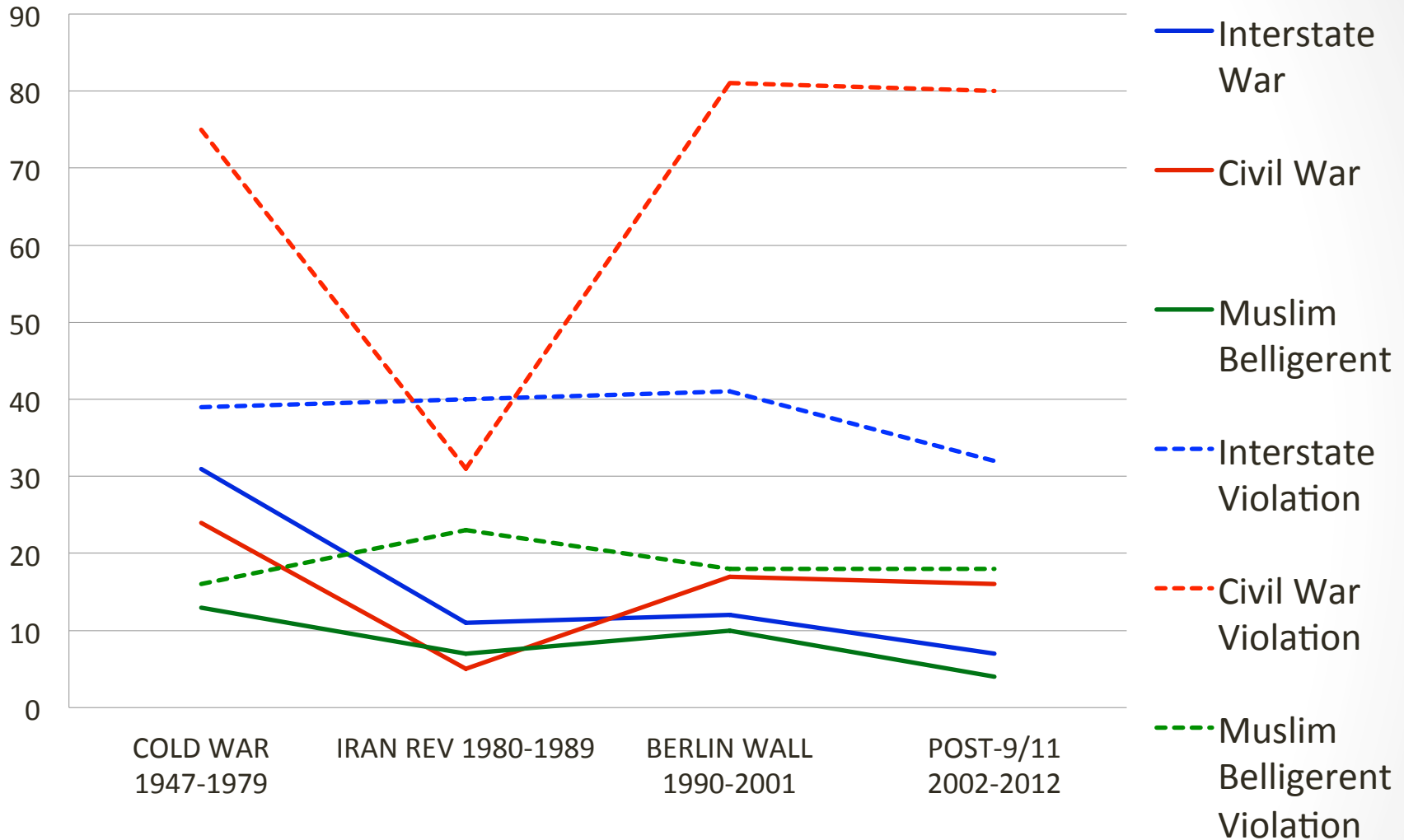
Figure 2: Muslim State Conflict Totals by Region



- Africa and Middle East have the most conflicts
- Africa and Middle East have the most civil wars

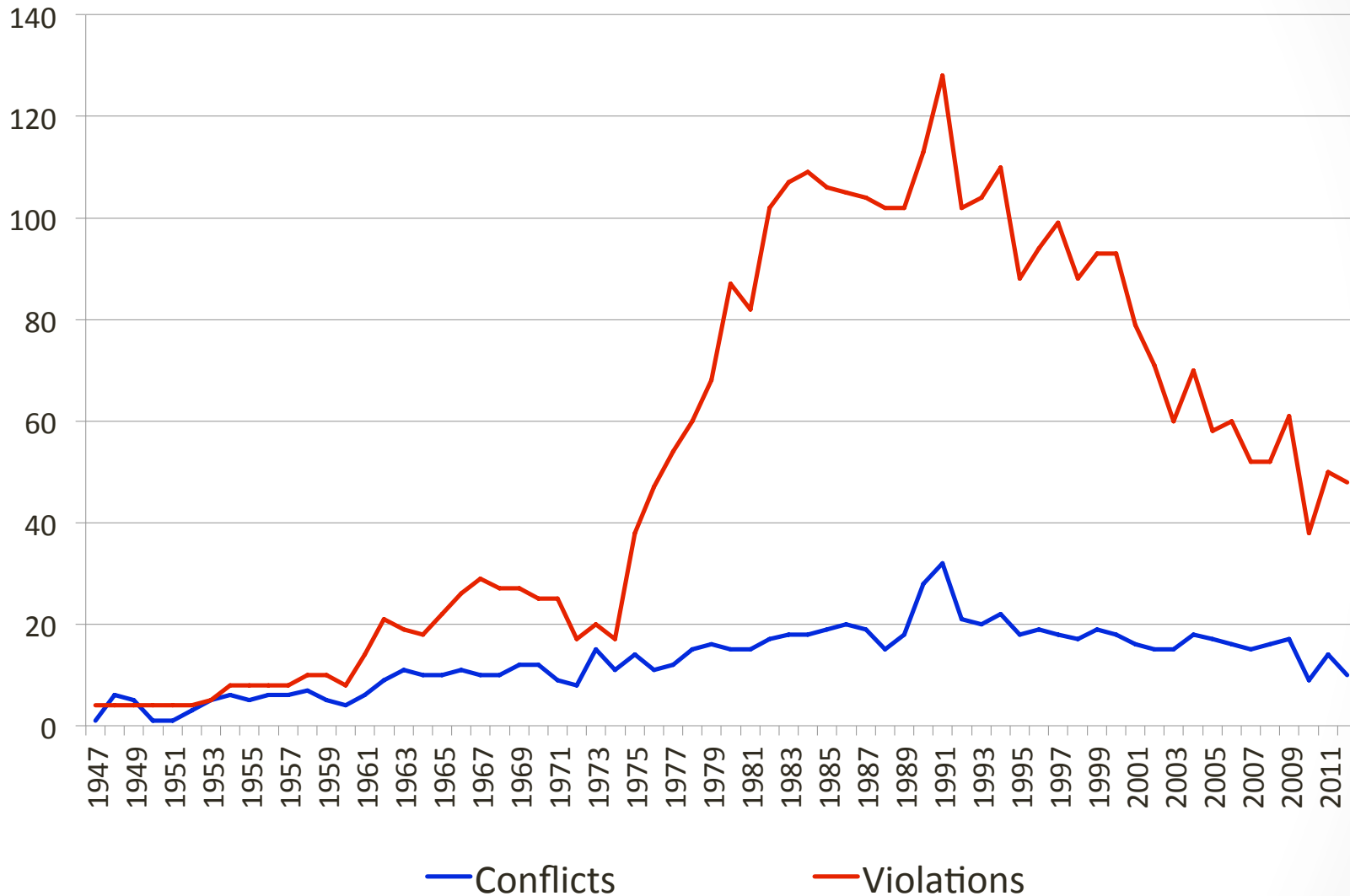


**Figure 3: Conflicts and Violations by Muslim States, 1947-2012**



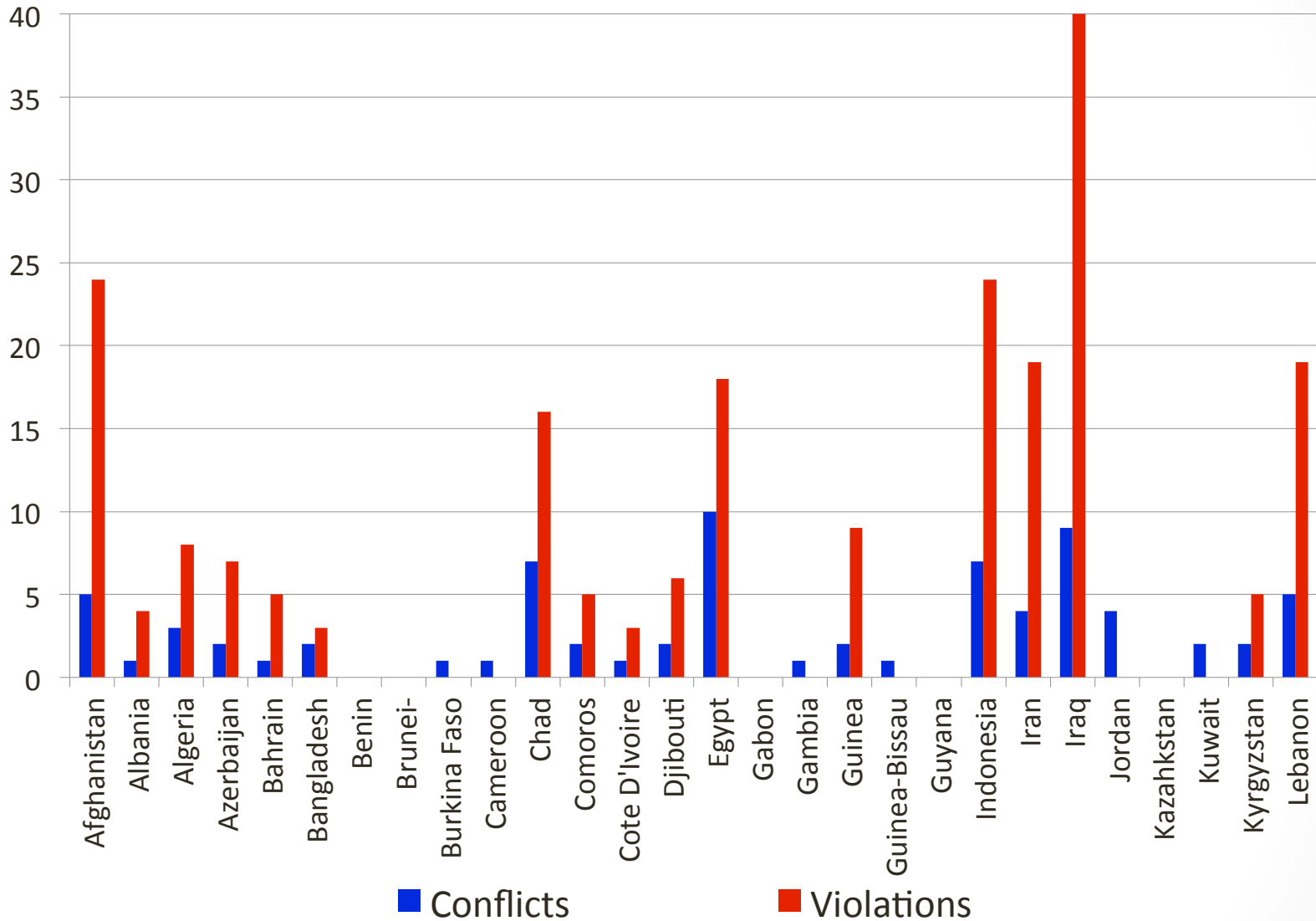
- Number of violations in civil wars greater than violations in interstate wars
- Civil war violations: increase; interstate war violations: decrease

**Figure 4: Total Conflicts and Violations by Muslim States, 1947-2012**



- Drastic increase in violations from 1975 to peak in 1991
- World events: Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Iran-Iraq War, Gulf War

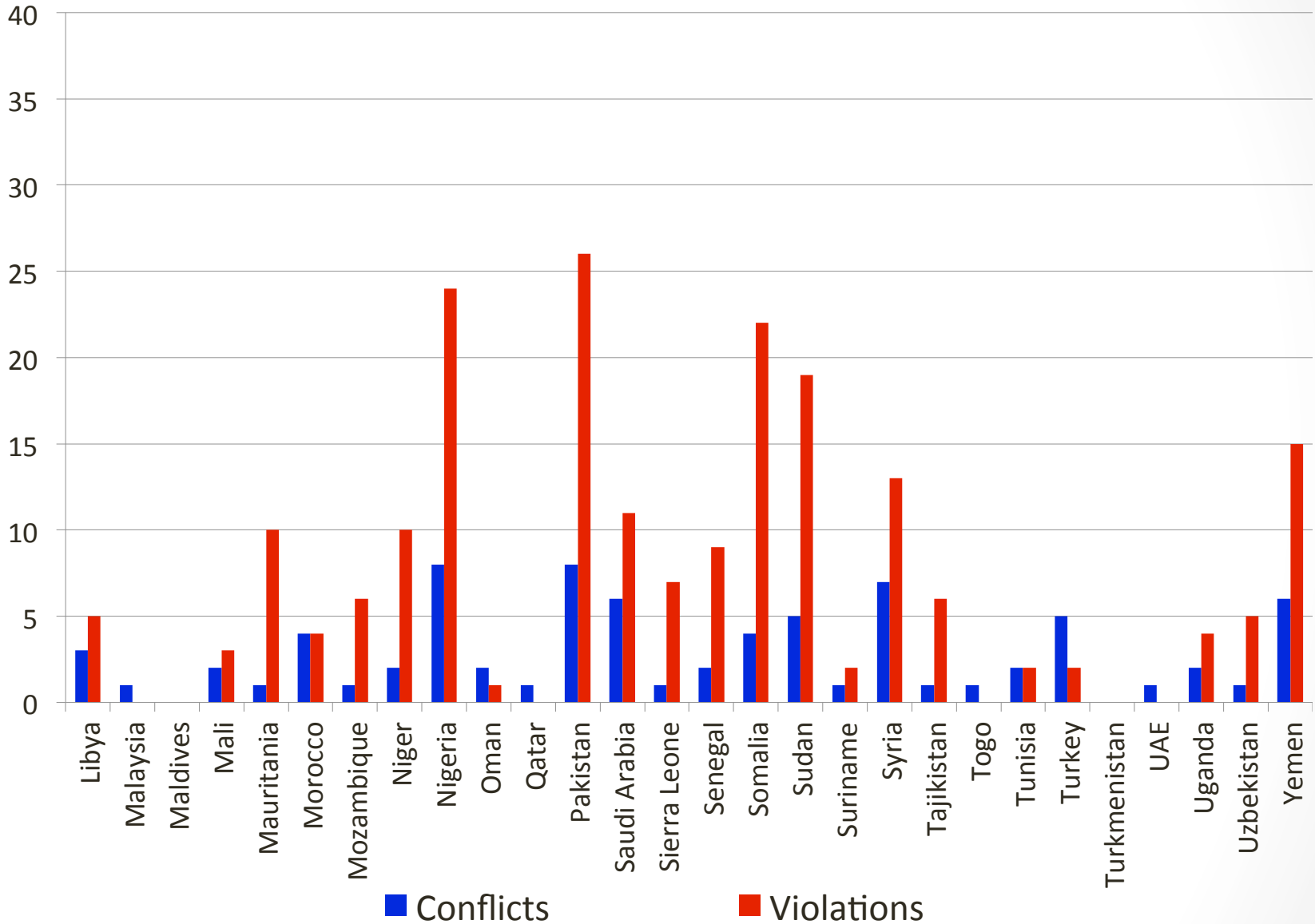
**Figure 5: Total Conflicts and Violations by Country (A-Le), 1947-2012**



- No conflicts: 7

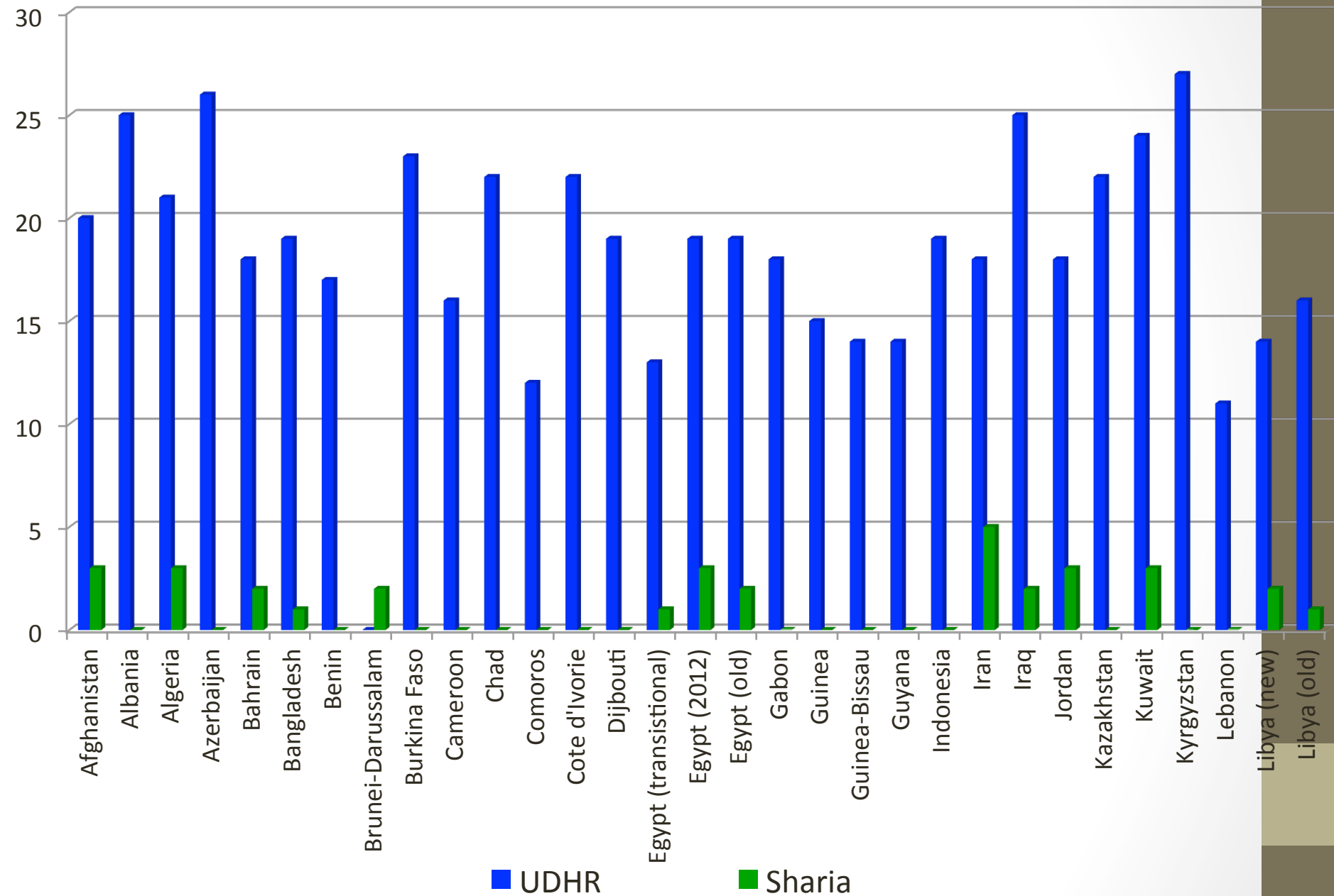
- Conflicts but no violations: 10

**Figure 6: Total Conflicts and Violations by Country (Li-Y), 1947-2012**



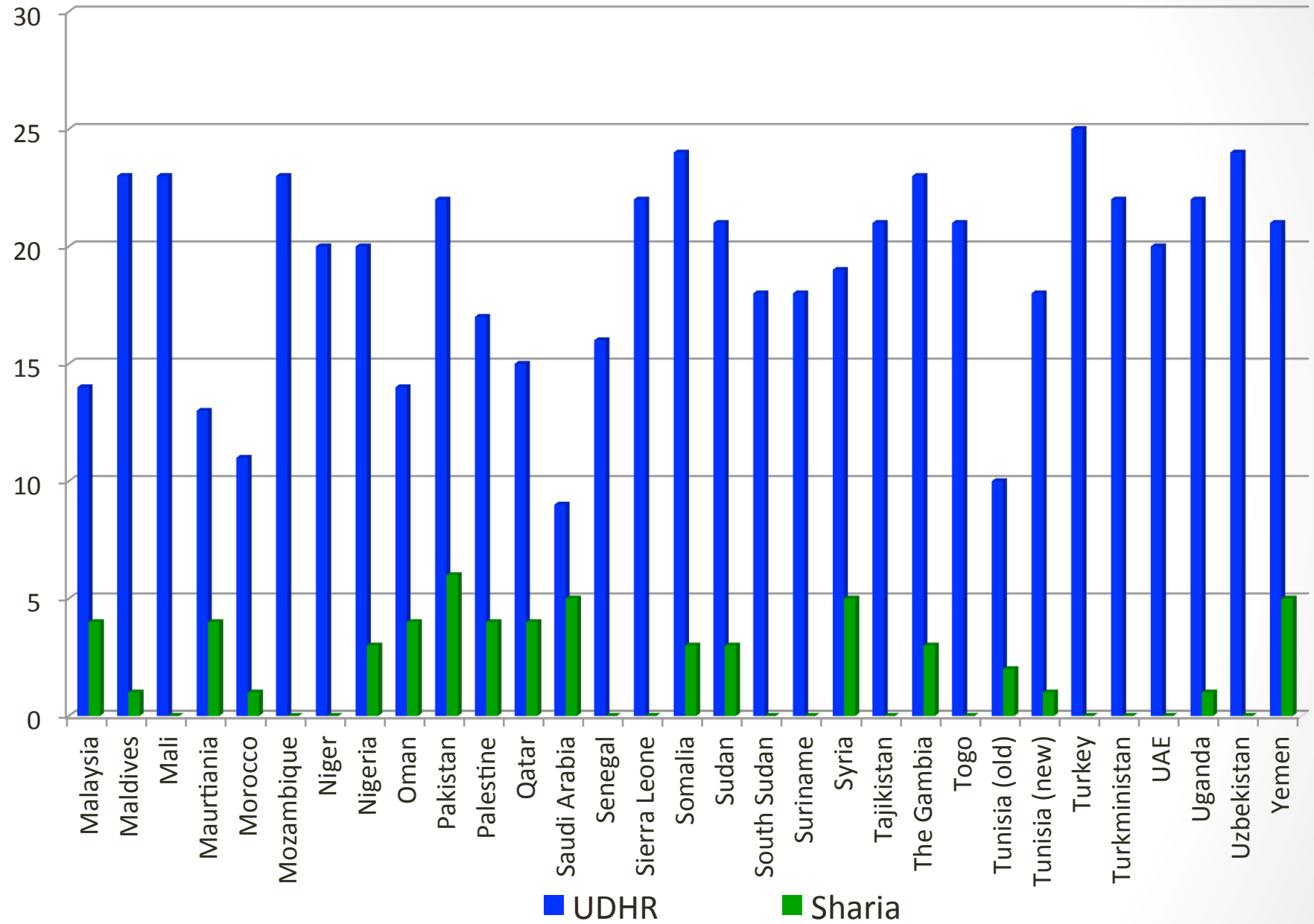
High Violators: Iraq (40), Pakistan (26), Afghanistan (24), Indonesia (24), Nigeria (24), and Somalia (22)

Figure 7: Constitution Language: UDHR & Sharia Content (A-L)



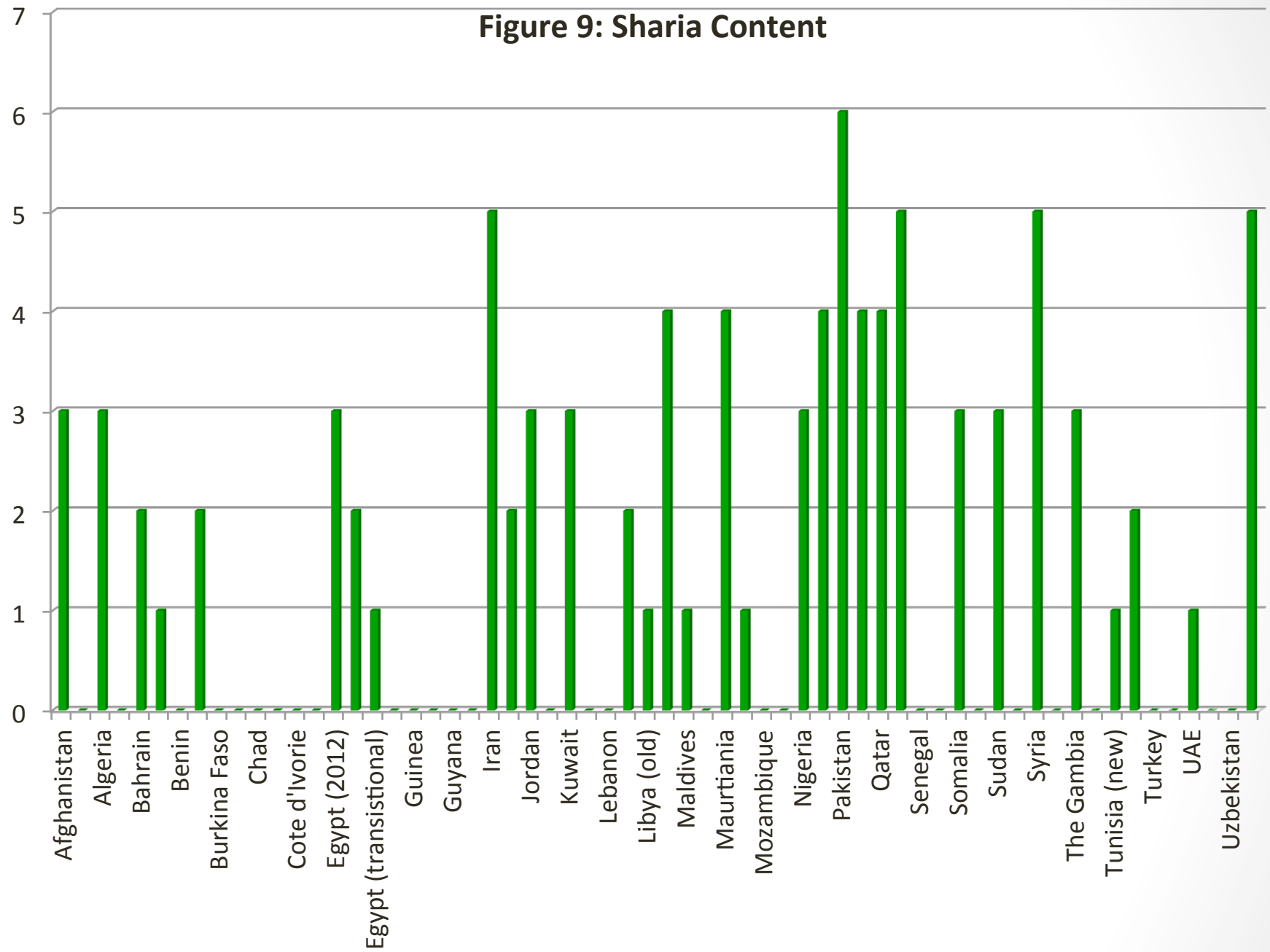
UDHR content present in all but 1 constitution

**Figure 8: Constitution Language: UDHR & Sharia Content (M-Z)**



Sharia content present in 32 of the 62 constitutions examined

Figure 9: Sharia Content



Countries with highest Sharia density: Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Yemen

**Figure 10: Total Conflicts and Violations with Sharia Content by Country (A-Le)**

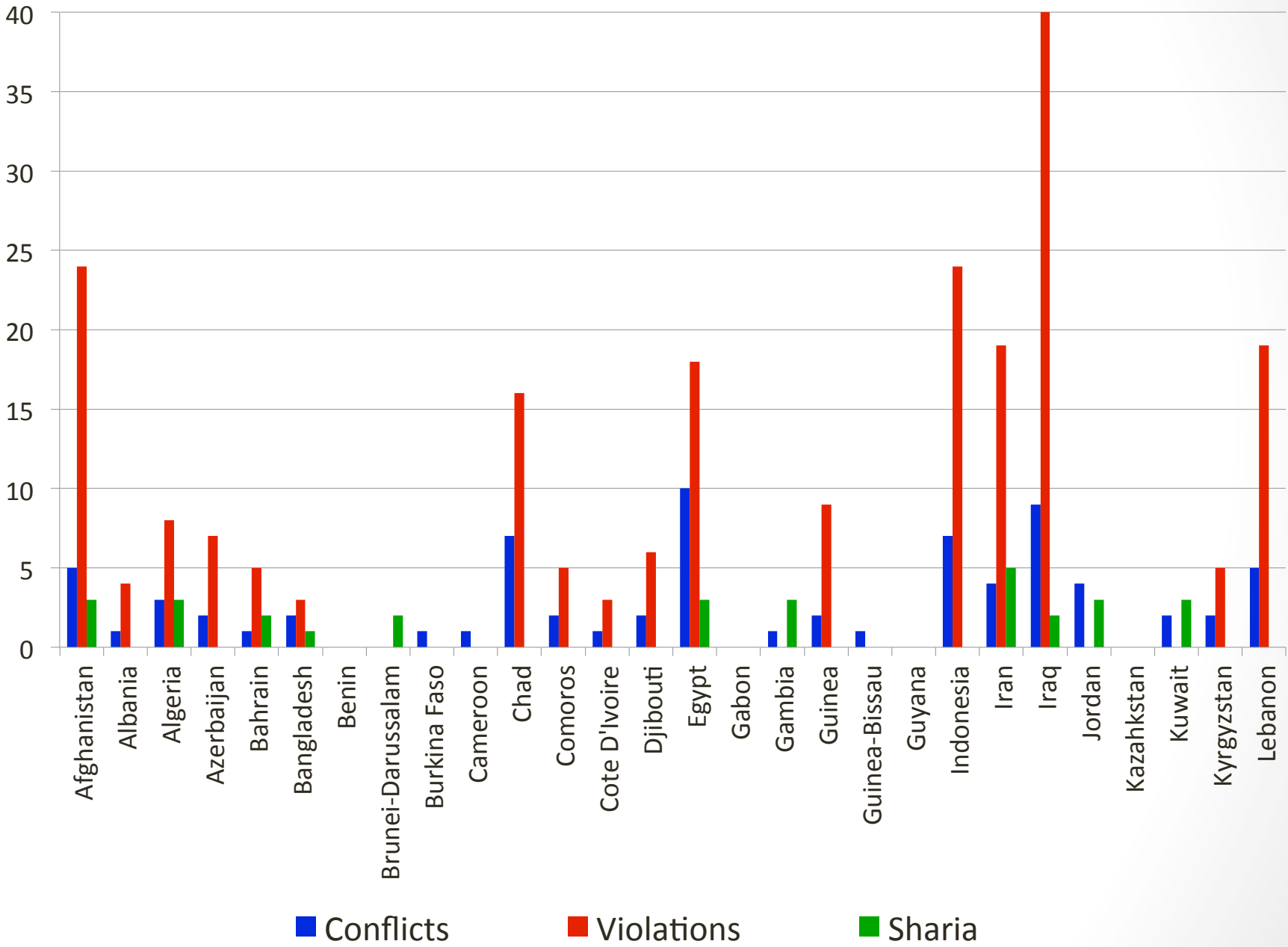
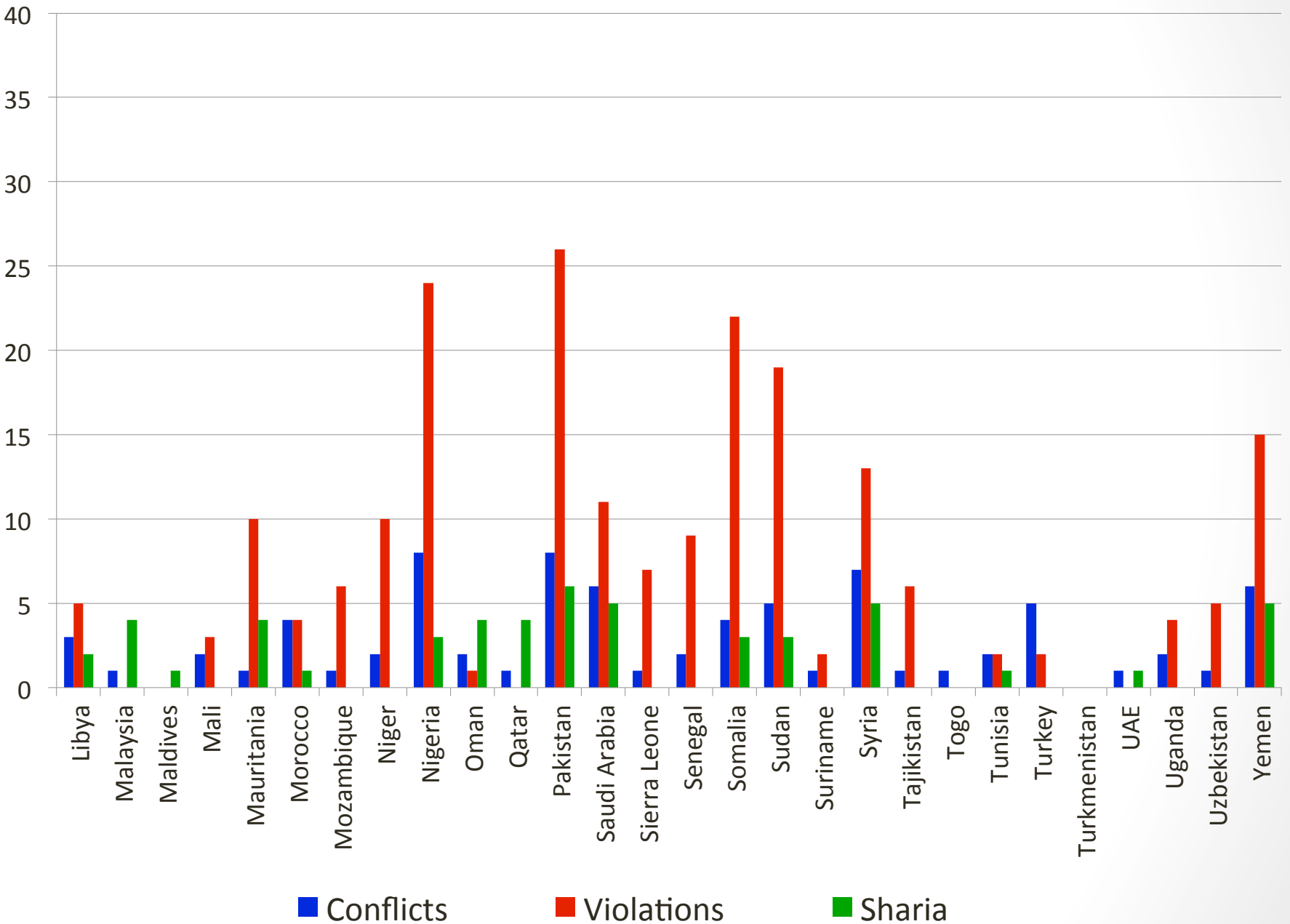




Figure 11: Total Conflicts and Violations with Sharia Content by Country (Li-Y)



# Summary of Findings

- More civil wars occur than interstate wars, mostly in Africa and the Middle East
- More violations of IHL occur in civil wars than interstate wars
- Number of conflicts and violations increase until 1991 when they peaked and then drastically declined
- UDHR is prevalent in almost all OIC constitutions but only Sharia content is present in only half of the constitutions
- Based on preliminary research, it is difficult to discern a correlation between Sharia density and IHL violations

# Policy Implications

- More violations of IHL occur in civil wars so more aid should be given to civil war conflict mitigation
- Countries who receive large amounts of U.S. foreign aid have a record of significant violations of IHL so U.S. support needs to be coupled with IHL training, implementation, and compliance
- For countries that have a history of IHL violations and are soliciting U.S. support, the U.S. should require compliance assurance before giving support