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Press Release

First Guidebook of Pro-Government Militias Worldwide

Conflict researcher Sabine Carey of the University of Mannheim developed the first online catalog containing extensive information on over 500 pro-government militias worldwide.

Pro-government militias are organized, armed groups that support governments without being part of the formal security apparatus. Whether it's in the Balkan countries, Afghanistan, or many Arabic countries - they are often involved in armed conflicts and have considerable influence on the situation of civilians and the prospects for peace in conflict regions. Until now, there was no global overview of the number, impact, and history of these groups. With the first ever global online catalogue of pro-government militias, political scientist Sabine Carey, PhD, of Mannheim provides an extensive research tool - not only for the academic community, but also for the media as well as the interested public.

As an example, when was the Syrian *Shabiha* group formed? Did it exist before the Syrian civil war started? And where does the Iranian *Revolutionary Guard* get their weapons? How long has this group existed and what is its relationship with the country's civilians? The guidebook contains information on the traits, behavior, history, and form of organization of 504 pro-government militias worldwide between 1981-2014.

"While rebel groups are relatively well researched, pro-government militias have not been of major interest to the scientific community for a long time," says Carey, who received one of the renowned ERC Starting Grants for her work in conflict research in 2007. According to Carey, there is little information on the groups working and fighting with governments which do not belong to the military or police.

To find this information, Carey and her team analyzed media reports from all over the world - big newspapers, but also local publications. Additionally, they examined reports by human rights organizations like Amnesty International, which often report on such groups, as well as country-specific scientific studies.

The basis for the guidebook is the revised database of pro-government militias (PGMD 2.0), which was completely revised and extended by the team. Sage Publications reported on this in January. The high level of response shows how great the need for data of this kind is in the scientific community: only a few days after its publication the database had already been downloaded over a hundred times.

Guidebook: <https://militias-guidebook.com/>

Database: <https://militiasdb.sowi.uni-mannheim.de/militias-public>

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