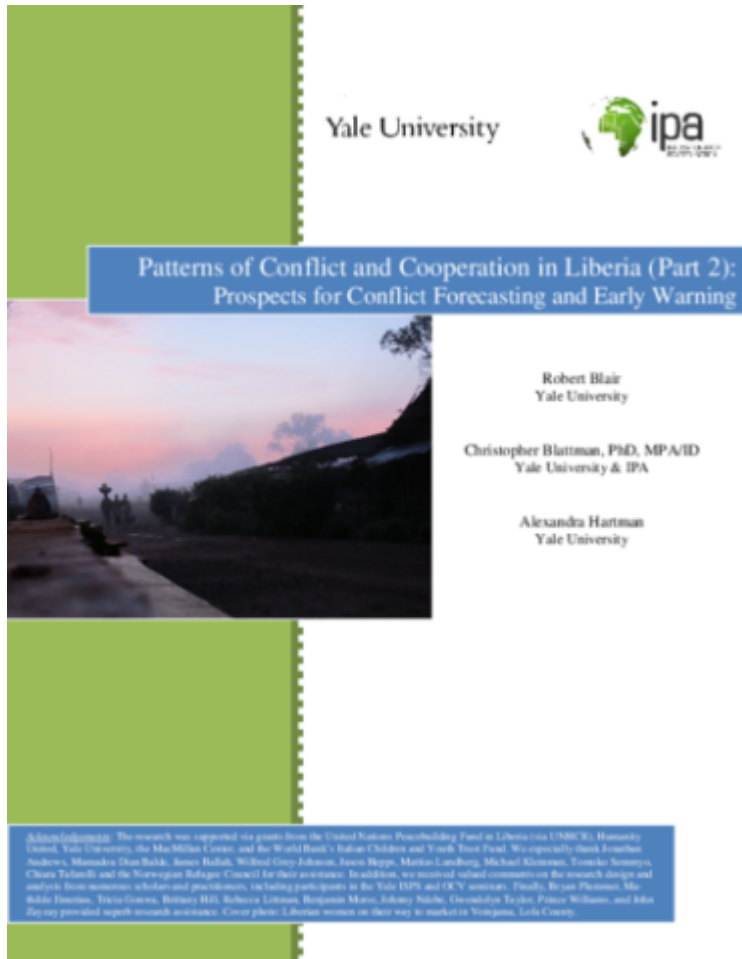**Authors**
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Patterns of Conflict and Cooperation in Liberia (Part 2): Prospects for Conflict Forecasting and Early Warning

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Patterns of Conflict and Cooperation in Liberia (Part 2): Prospects for Conflict Early Warning and Forecasting

Conflict early warning remains an important but elusive goal in Liberia. If outbreaks of violence could be predicted before they occur, early responders could focus their energies and scarce resources on the highest-risk communities. Is such a goal realistic? Early warning requires a simple system for generating reliable predictions—a system that is not only accurate, but is also consistent over time and across counties and communities. This is a

difficult, maybe impossible, task. In this report we describe results from a two-year study that suggest prediction may be more promising than we initially expected. We use fine-grained quantitative data from a survey of 247 rural Liberian towns and villages to assess whether statistical analysis can be used to predict conflict over time. To our surprise, we find that models built on fewer than 10 risk factors measured in 2008 accurately predict up to 75% of all conflicts two years later. We began this exercise skeptical, and these accuracy rates are far higher than we anticipated.

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