

**Epidemics and Conflict:
Evidence from the Ebola outbreak in Western Africa**

Ada González-Torres *

Draft version : July 3, 2016

Abstract

This paper investigates the impact of a rapidly spreading epidemic on civil violence in the context of the largest Ebola outbreak in history, in Western Africa. The identification strategy relies on the epidemiological features of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD). We exploit the dynamics of the disease and weekly frequency data at district level to causally estimate the impact of an increase in the likelihood of infection on riots, protests and violence against civilians. We discuss direct health effects and other mechanisms underlying the impact of health shocks on violence. The particular setting in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia allows us to explore the role of previous exposure to conflict, ethnic fractionalisation or mistrust in institutions in triggering violence. The paper contributes to a growing literature on conflict by providing light into mechanisms triggering violence.

*ada.gonzalez-torres@berkeley.edu, University of California Berkeley; European University Institute, Department of Economics (PhD candidate).