

Peace Talks in Focus 2020. Report on Trends and Scenarios



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Executive summary

Peace Talks in Focus 2020: Report on Trends and Scenarios is a yearbook that analyses the peace processes and negotiations that took place in the world during 2019. The examination of the development and dynamics of negotiations worldwide allows to provide a comprehensive overview of peace processes, identify trends and comparatively analyse the various scenarios. One of the main objectives of this report is to provide information and analysis to those who participate in peaceful conflict resolution at different levels, including parties to disputes, mediators, civil society activists and others. The yearbook also aims to grant visibility to different formulas of dialogue and negotiation aimed at reversing dynamics of violence and channelling conflicts through political means in many contexts. Thus, it seeks to highlight, enhance and promote political, diplomatic and social efforts aimed at transforming conflicts and their root causes through peaceful methods.

Methodologically, the report draws mainly on the qualitative analysis of studies and information from many sources (the United Nations, international organisations, research centres, media outlets, NGOs and others), as well as on experience gained during field research. The report also cross-cuttingly incorporates a gender perspective in the study and analysis of peace processes.

The report is divided into six chapters. The first presents a summary and map of the 50 peace processes and negotiations that took place in 2019 and provides an overview of the main global trends. The next five chapters delve into the peace processes and negotiations from a geographic perspective. Each of them addresses the main trends of peace negotiations in Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East, respectively, and describes the development and dynamics of each case in those regions. At the beginning of each of these five chapters, a map is included indicating the countries where peace processes and negotiations have occurred in 2019.

Peace processes and negotiations in 2019

| AFRICA (19) | ASIA (12) | EUROPE (7) |
|---|--|--|
| Burundi Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West and South West) CAR DRC Eritrea – Ethiopia Ethiopia (Ogaden) Ethiopia (Oromia) Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram) Libya Mali (north) Morocco – Western Sahara Mozambique Nigeria (Niger Delta) Rep. of the Congo Senegal (Casamance) Somalia South Sudan Sudan ¹ Sudan – South Sudan | Afghanistan China (Tibet) DPR Korea – Republic of Korea DPR Korea – USA India (Assam) India (Nagaland) Myanmar Papua New Guinea (Bougainville) Philippines (MILF) Philippines (MNLF) Philippines (NDF) Thailand (south) | Armenia–Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh) Cyprus Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia) Moldova (Transdniestria) Serbia – Kosovo Spain (Basque Country) Ukraine |
| | AMERICA (5) | MIDDLE EAST (7) |
| | Colombia (ELN) Colombia (FARC-EP) Haiti Nicaragua Venezuela | Iran (northwest) Iran (nuclear programme) Iraq Israel-Palestine Palestine Syria Yemen |

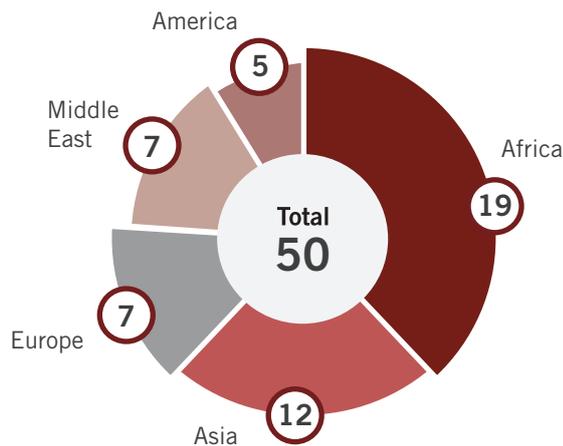
Negotiations in 2019: global overview and main trends

A total of 50 global peace processes and negotiations were identified in 2019: 19 in Africa (38% of the total), 12 in Asia (24%), seven in Europe (14%), another

seven in the Middle East (14%) and five in the Americas (10%). There was a slight increase in the number of peace processes and negotiations worldwide compared

1. In 2019, the three peace processes and negotiations that were taking place in Sudan in 2018 were merged into one, due to the completion of the national dialogue between the government and the opposition after the formation of a transitional government, in addition to the combination of the peace negotiations in Darfur and “Two Areas” (South Kordofan and Blue Nile) into a single process. Both processes (the transition following the ouster of Omar al-Bashir and the negotiations with the armed groups in Darfur and South Kordofan and Blue Nile) are studied together in the chapter.

Regional distribution of peace negotiations in 2019



to previous years, since 49 cases were studied in 2018 and 43 were analysed in 2017. The increase in peace processes in 2019 reflected the higher number of cases in Asia, the Middle East and the Americas. In Europe, there was the same number of peace processes as the previous year, while in Africa the number of processes fell. This decrease was due to the normalisation of relations between Djibouti and Eritrea, which in previous years had been involved in political negotiations analysed in the report, and the end of the president of Ghana's mediation in the internal crisis in Togo. Additionally, the three peace processes and negotiations that were taking place in Sudan in 2018 were merged into a single process in late 2019. Five new negotiating processes and initiatives began in Cameroon in 2019, with the intention of addressing the conflict involving the English-speaking majority regions of the country; in Haiti, with various initiatives to promote a national dialogue between the government and the opposition; in Papua New Guinea, where the Autonomous Bougainville Government and the authorities began talks after the referendum on self-determination held in 2019; in Iraq, the scene of massive anti-government protests in 2019, with exploratory and relatively uncertain initiatives; and in Iran, amidst the tension involving Kurdish political and armed actors in the northwestern part of the country.

Once again, almost all **actors involved in the peace processes and negotiations** were central or state governments in which the conflicts and/or socio-political crises occurred. The governments of the respective states held direct or indirect negotiations with various kinds of actors according to the particular aspects of each context that generally ranged from non-governmental armed groups (individually or as a group) to a more complex combination of armed actors and opposition politicians, opposition groups or political platforms, foreign governments, in the case of interstate disputes, representatives of territories seeking to secede or win recognition as independent and more.

While in many cases it is possible to clearly identify the **third parties involved** in mediation, facilitation

and accompaniment activities, at other times they are carried out discreetly and away from the public eye. According to the analysis of cases in 2019, in the vast majority of cases (40 of 50, corresponding to 80%), a third party was found to participate in facilitation or mediation efforts. This includes internal negotiations with third-party participation (29 cases), interstate negotiations with third parties (seven), national dialogues with third parties (two) and other formats (two). The processes in which no third party was involved or in which contacts were established directly or bilaterally were mostly found in Asia (see the table "Internal and interstate peace processes/negotiations, with and without third parties in 2019"). In practically all processes with mediating actors (35 out of 40) there was more than one mediator. There were many different types of actors involved in mediation or facilitation efforts, though intergovernmental organisations stand out, especially the UN, which was involved in 22 of the 50 processes identified during the year, as well as states, religious organisations and NGOs (See the table "Intergovernmental organisations as third parties in peace processes in 2019").

As for the **negotiating agendas**, we must consider the specific aspects of each peace process and the fact that not all the issues under discussion were made public. Nevertheless, it is possible to verify that, as in previous years, one of the most salient issues in the negotiations on all continents was the search for truces, ceasefires and cessations of hostilities. This topic was especially relevant in armed conflicts, such as in Ethiopia (Oromia and Ogaden), Libya, Mali, the CAR, Sudan, South Sudan, Colombia, Afghanistan, the Philippines, Myanmar, Israel-Palestine, Syria and Yemen. Other important issues on the negotiating agendas were related to the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of combatants, such as in Mali, Mozambique, Ethiopia (Oromia and Ogaden), South Sudan and the Philippines; the status of territories in dispute, in contexts such as Serbia-Kosovo, Moldova (Transdnestrria), Cyprus, Georgia (Abkhazia and South Ossetia), Armenia (Nagorno-Karabakh), Ukraine, the Philippines (MILF and MNLF), China (Tibet), India (Assam and Nagaland), Myanmar, Papua New Guinea (Bougainville) and Thailand (south); and issues related to the distribution of political power, which was reflected in debates on electoral issues (in Venezuela, Nicaragua and Palestine, for example), in attempts to form unity governments (as illustrated in Yemen after the Riyadh agreement) and initiatives to define new constitutional frameworks (such as in the negotiations over Syria). Another topic discussed in some negotiations was control of nuclear proliferation, specifically in Iran and in the process between North and South Korea.

In terms of their **development**, the peace processes analysed in 2019 confirmed a great diversity of trends. Some positive developments were identified in some contexts. In Africa, this was the case in Mozambique and Sudan-South Sudan, which led to agreements signed by

Internal and interstate peace processes/negotiations with and without third parties in 2019

| Peace processes | INTERNAL | | | | | INTERSTATE | |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|--|---|-------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| | Direct negotiations without third parties (8) | Negotiations with third parties (29) | National dialogues without third parties (3) | National dialogues with third parties (2) | Other formats (2) | Direct negotiations without third parties (2) | Negotiations with third parties (7) |
| AFRICA | | | | | | | |
| Burundi | | x | | | | | |
| Cameroon (Ambazonia/ North West-South West) | | x | x | | | | |
| CAR | | x | | | | | |
| DRC | | x | | | | | |
| Eritrea-Ethiopia | | | | | | | x |
| Ethiopia (Ogaden) | | x | | | | | |
| Ethiopia (Oromia) | x | | | | | | |
| Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram) | x | | | | | | |
| Libya | | x | | | | | |
| Mali | | x | x | | | | |
| Morocco – Western Sahara | | | | | | | x |
| Mozambique | | x | | | | | |
| Nigeria (Niger Delta) | x | | | | | | |
| Republic of the Congo | x | | | | | | |
| Senegal (Casamance) | | x | | | | | |
| Somalia | | x | | | | | |
| South Sudan | | x | | | | | |
| Sudan ² | | x | | x | | | |
| Sudan – South Sudan | | | | | | | x |
| AMERICA | | | | | | | |
| Colombia (ELN) | | x | | | | | |
| Colombia (FARC-EP) | | x | | | | | |
| Haiti | | | x | | | | |
| Nicaragua | | | | x | | | |
| Venezuela | | x | | | | | |
| ASIA | | | | | | | |
| Afghanistan | | | | | x | | |
| China (Tibet) | x | | | | | | |
| Korea, DPR –Korea, Republic of | | | | | | x | |
| Korea, DPR – USA | | | | | | x | |
| India (Assam) | x | | | | | | |
| India (Nagaland) | x | | | | | | |
| Myanmar | | x | | | | | |
| Papua New Guinea (Bougainville) | | x | | | | | |
| Philippines (MILF) | | x | | | | | |
| Philippines (MNLF) | x | | | | | | |
| Philippines (NDF) | | x | | | | | |
| Thailand (south) | | x | | | | | |

2. In 2019, the three peace processes and negotiations that were taking place in Sudan in 2018 were merged into one, due to the completion of the national dialogue between the government and the opposition after the formation of a transitional government, as well as the merger of the peace negotiations in Darfur and the “Two Areas” (South Kordofan and Blue Nile) into a single process.

| Peace processes | INTERNAL | | | | | INTERSTATE | |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|--|---|-------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| | Direct negotiations without third parties (8) | Negotiations with third parties (29) | National dialogues without third parties (3) | National dialogues with third parties (2) | Other formats (2) | Direct negotiations without third parties (2) | Negotiations with third parties (7) |
| EUROPE | | | | | | | |
| Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh) | | | | | | | x |
| Cyprus | | x | | | | | |
| Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia) ³ | | x | | | | | |
| Moldova (Transnistria) | | x | | | | | |
| Serbia – Kosovo ⁴ | | | | | | | x |
| Spain (Basque Country) | | | | | x | | |
| Ukraine (east) ⁵ | | x | | | | | |
| MIDDLE EAST | | | | | | | |
| Iran (northwest) | | x | | | | | |
| Iran (nuclear programme) | | | | | | | x |
| Iraq | | x | | | | | |
| Israel-Palestine | | | | | | | x |
| Palestine | | x | | | | | |
| Syria ⁶ | | x | | | | | |
| Yemen | | x | | | | | |

the government and RENAMO in the former process and a border delimitation pact in the latter (See table “Main agreements of 2019”). Real progress was also made in the negotiations in Afghanistan, the Philippines (MILF) and Ukraine, where sturdier new ceasefire agreements were reached and forces were withdrawn from various areas. Other processes faced many difficulties. A good example of this were the processes in the Americas, which were marked by fragility and mistrust towards other parties and facilitating actors. Various obstacles to peace processes and negotiations were also observed on other continents, such as in Africa (Burundi, Cameroon, Mali, Libya, Somalia and South Sudan), and some scenarios were characterised by stagnation and little or no progress, such as in Moldova (Transnistria), Serbia-Kosovo, Israel-Palestine, Western Sahara and other contexts.

Regarding the **gender, peace and security agenda**, the many challenges faced by women to participate in formal processes and to incorporate a gender perspective in the negotiations were once again confirmed. Despite this general assessment, we can identify the existence and/or creation of some formats to guarantee greater female involvement in the negotiations and to integrate the gender perspective in the agreements and their

implementation. Thus, Colombia continued to be a paradigmatic and benchmark case, largely due to the role of women’s organisations in implementing the 2016 peace agreement. Another peace process that enjoyed positive developments in 2019 was the one in Cyprus, where the technical committee on gender equality, which had remained at a standstill in the previous year, was reactivated and a branch of the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network was established. Other peace processes in which some progress was made in the area of gender, peace and security were in Afghanistan, where the inclusion of women in the negotiating delegations was announced, among other initiatives, and in Papua New Guinea, where women’s involvement was guaranteed in the regional government team that must negotiate the political status of the island of Bougainville with the central government. In most contexts, whether alone or with the support of other local, national and international organisations, especially UN Women, women’s organisations played an important role in advocating and lobbying for the start, continuation or resumption of peace processes, leading demonstrations, holding debate forums, carrying out awareness initiatives, presenting proposals to the negotiating parties and criticising the lack of women in formal political negotiations.

3. The nature of the peace processes in Abkhazia and South Ossetia and Russia’s role in those conflicts and peace processes are open to interpretation. Ukraine considers Russia a party to the conflict and a negotiating party, whereas Russia considers itself a third party.
4. The peace process between Serbia and Kosovo is considered interstate because even though its international legal status is still controversial, Kosovo has been recognised as a state by over 100 countries. In 2010, the International Court of Justice issued a non-binding opinion that Kosovo’s declaration of independence did not violate international law or UN Security Council Resolution 1244.
5. The nature of the peace process in Ukraine and Russia’s role in the conflict and peace process are open to interpretation. Ukraine considers Russia a party to the conflict and a negotiating party, whereas Russia considers itself a third party.
6. There are two parallel negotiating processes in Syria (Astana and Geneva). Third parties are involved in both processes, though some of them directly project their interests onto the negotiations.

Main agreements of 2019

| Peace processes | Agreements |
|---|--|
| Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West-South West) | Conclusions of the National Dialogue, held between 30 September and 4 October, in Yaoundé. The main separatist political movements and the armed actors boycotted the initiative. One thousand delegates participated, representing political parties, the Catholic Church and civil society. The recommendations that emerged from the conference included changing the name of the country back to the United Republic of Cameroon, granting a special status to the two English-speaking regions, and making all legal texts available in French and English (both languages are currently co-official, but the predominant language is French). In December, the Cameroonian Parliament approved the recommendations of the National Dialogue, though many groups considered them insufficient. |
| CAR | Khartoum Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation, reached in Bangui on 6 February 2019. From 24 January to 5 February, talks were held in Khartoum (Sudan) as part of the African Union Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the CAR under the auspices of the AU, hence its name. The agreement, the eighth in six years, includes the formation of an inclusive government, a truth and reconciliation commission, an investigative commission to determine the crimes committed, the creation of special mixed security units that will integrate members of the insurgencies over the course of a two-year transition period, a commitment to hold free elections and the creation of an executive committee to monitor the agreement, co-chaired by the AU, the government and armed groups. |
| Ethiopia (Ogaden) | DDR Agreement of 8 February 2019 between the Somali Regional State government and the ONLF. The agreement establishes the procedures for carrying out the disarmament and reintegration of ONLF fighters into the security forces and the public administration. |
| Ethiopia (Oromia) | DDR and ceasefire agreement. On 24 January, the regional government and the armed group OLF signed a ceasefire agreement according to which the OLF fighters also promised to gather in billeting camps in order to proceed with their disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR). |
| Mozambique | Maputo Peace and Reconciliation Agreement signed by the Mozambican government and RENAMO on 6 August. The points of the agreement include guarantees for holding inclusive elections, the decentralisation of the political-administrative system and the launch of the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) process for RENAMO combatants. |
| Sudan | Juba Declaration of Confidence Building Measures and the Preparation for Negotiation, signed on 11 September between the Sudanese transitional government and the armed groups SRF, SLM-MM and SPLM-N (Abdelaziz al-Hilu). It serves as an agreed road map for the resumption of the rounds of merged peace talks (Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile) in Juba, South Sudan. |
| Sudan-South Sudan | Agreement delimiting the shared border between Sudan and South Sudan, reached on 22 October at the close of the 11th Joint Border Commission between both countries, held in Khartoum. Five areas subject to new negotiations remain to be delimited: Dabba al-Fukhar, Jabal al-Muqainis, Kaka, Kefi Kenji and Hofrat Al-Nehass. |
| Yemen | Riyadh Agreement, signed by the internationally recognised government of Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi and southern secessionist groups united under the Southern Transitional Council (STC). The pact was signed on 5 November after the mediation of Saudi Arabia, with the intention of stopping the escalation of hostilities within the anti-Houthi side. Key points of the agreement include the formation of a government with the same number of representatives from the northern and southern parts of the country, the withdrawal of stockpiles from southern cities, the integration of STC-linked militias in the Ye-meni security forces and the inclusion of STC delegates in UN-backed spaces for dialogue and negotiation. |

Regional trends

Africa

- Nineteen peace processes and negotiations were identified in Africa throughout 2019, accounting for 38% of the 50 peace processes worldwide.
- Attempts to promote a political solution to the conflict in Libya were hampered by the escalation of violence in the country, the role of key armed actors and continuous violations of the arms embargo.
- In Mozambique, the government and RENAMO signed a historic peace agreement that lays the foundations for the end of the conflict.
- Switzerland and the HD facilitated meetings between the government and separatist actors from the English-speaking regions of Cameroon.
- The implementation of the peace agreement reached in February between the government of the Somali region (Ethiopia) and the ONLF began with the launch of the DDR program.
- On 6 February, the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic was

reached in Bangui between the country's authorities and 14 armed groups.

- The change of government in Sudan, after 30 years of the regime headed by Omar al-Bashir, gave new impetus to resolving the peace processes in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

America

- Five peace processes took place in the Americas: two in Colombia, one in Venezuela, one in Nicaragua and one in Haiti, representing 10% of the negotiations that took place during 2019.
- Faced with the worsening political and social crisis, the president of Haiti tried to initiate a national dialogue process.
- The Venezuelan government and the opposition held several meetings in Norway and Barbados under the

auspices of the Norwegian government.

- The peace process between the Colombian government and the ELN was completely interrupted after an attack against a police academy in Bogota in January.

Asia

- There were 12 negotiating processes in Asia in 2019, representing about one fifth of the total number of cases around the world.
- The peace talks between the US government and the Taliban insurgency made significant progress, although President Trump cancelled the signing of the peace agreement that had been planned for August.
- Afghan women's organisations unsuccessfully asked to participate significantly in the peace negotiations and complained that their rights were not a subject of discussion with the Taliban insurgency.
- The peace process in Mindanao centred on the institutional development of the new regional framework and the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of the MILF.
- Although the leaders of the US and North Korea had two meetings during the year, the negotiating process was stalled for most of it.
- Negotiations shut down in southern Thailand between the government and MARA Patani, an umbrella organisation for several insurgent groups, but Bangkok sought to resume talks with the BRN, the main armed group in the southern part of the country.
- No formal progress was made in the peace process in Myanmar, but several meetings were held between the Government and the various insurgent groups.

Europe

- 14% of the world's peace processes in 2019 (seven of the 50) took place in Europe.
- Progress was made in the peace process in Ukraine, with the resumption of the Normandy dialogue format, more robust ceasefires and the withdrawal of forces from various areas.

- The political crisis in Moldova slowed down the negotiating process on Transdniestria, without the parties to the conflict achieving a new protocol with confidence-building measures in 2019.
- The peace process in Cyprus remained deadlocked throughout the year and the informal meetings failed to generate enough agreement for them to be formally resumed.
- The dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia remained at an impasse amidst increasing tension and respective demands.
- Armenia approved its first national action plan for the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, but this did not include specific mechanisms for participation in the peace process and focused on the security forces.

Middle East

- The Middle East was the scene of seven processes of negotiation, dialogue and exploratory contacts, accounting for 14% of all such processes in the world in 2019.
- Difficulties in implementing the Stockholm Agreement persisted in Yemen, while Hadi's government and southern separatist forces signed another accord, the Riyadh Agreement, to de-escalate the conflict within the anti-Houthi side.
- Negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis remained stagnant in 2019, although international discussions on formulas for conflict resolution were maintained.
- Obstacles to the reconciliation process between Hamas and Fatah continued in 2019, though some rapprochement was observed at the end of the year.
- The ceasefire agreements and negotiations on the conflict in Syria continued to be characterised by the prominence and influence of regional and international actors involved in the dispute.
- Women's organisations and feminist groups in the region continued to demand greater participation in formal negotiations and made specific proposals to deal with the conflicts they face.

Introduction

Peace talks in Focus 2020. Report on Trends and Scenarios is a yearbook that analyses the peace processes and negotiations that took place in the world in 2019. The examination of the evolution and the dynamics of these negotiations at a global level offers a global view of the peace processes, identifying trends and facilitating a comparative analysis among the different scenarios. One of the main aims of this report is to provide information and analysis for those actors who take part in the peaceful resolution of conflicts at different levels, including those parties in dispute, mediators and civil society, among others. The yearbook also seeks to reveal the different formulas of dialogue and negotiation that are aimed at reversing the dynamics of violence and that aim to channel conflicts through political means in numerous contexts. As such, it seeks to highlight, enhance and promote political, diplomatic and social efforts that are aimed at transforming conflicts and their root causes through peaceful methods.

With regard to **methodology**, this report draws mainly from on qualitative analysis of studies and information from numerous sources –the United Nations, international organizations, research centres, the media, NGOs, and others–, in addition to experience gained in field research. The report also incorporates the gender perspective in the study and analysis of peace processes in a cross-cutting manner.

The analysis is based on a **definition** that understands **peace processes** as comprising all those political, diplomatic and social efforts aimed at resolving conflicts and transforming their root causes by means of peaceful methods, especially through peace negotiations. **Peace**

negotiations are considered as the processes of dialogue between at least two conflicting parties in a conflict, in which the parties address their differences in a concerted framework in order to end the violence and encounter a satisfactory solution to their demands. Other actors not directly involved in the conflict may also participate. Peace negotiations are usually preceded by preliminary or exploratory phases that define the format, place, conditions and guarantees, of the future negotiations, among other elements. Peace negotiations may or may not be facilitated by **third parties**. The third parties intervene in the dispute so as to contribute to the dialogue between the actors involved and to promote a negotiated solution to the conflict. Other actors not directly involved in the dispute may also participate in peace negotiations. Peace negotiations may result in comprehensive or partial **agreements**, agreements related to the procedure or process, and agreements linked to the causes or consequences of the conflict. Elements of the different type of agreements may be combined in the same agreement.

With respect to its **structure**, the publication is organized into six chapters. The first presents a summary of those processes and negotiations that took place in 2019, and offers an overview of the main trends at a global level. The following five chapters detail the analysis of peace processes and negotiations from a geographic perspective. Each addresses the main trends of peace negotiations in Africa, America, Asia, Europe and the Middle East, respectively, and describes the development and dynamics of each of the cases present in the regions, including references to the gender, peace and security agenda.

1. Negotiations in 2019: global overview and main trends

- Fifty (50) peace processes and negotiations were identified around the world in 2019. The largest number of cases were reported in Africa (19), followed by Asia (12), Europe (seven), the Middle East (seven) and the Americas (five).
- Five new negotiating initiatives were identified in 2019 in Cameroon, Haiti, Papua New Guinea, Iraq and Iran.
- Central governments and armed opposition groups or politico-military movements were the main negotiating actors in most of the processes analysed.
- Third parties were involved as mediators and facilitators in most (80%) of the processes and negotiations studied, except in Asia.
- The UN was present in almost half the cases where a third party was involved. The international organisation participated in these negotiating processes through various formats, including special envoys.
- One of the issues that came up the most in the negotiating agendas was the search for truces, ceasefires and cessations of hostilities, following the trend of previous years.
- The analysis of the different processes in 2019 confirmed the difficulties and obstacles that women face in participating meaningfully in formal peace processes and in incorporating a gender perspective in negotiations.

During 2019, a total of 50 peace processes and negotiations were identified on a worldwide level. The analysis of the different contexts reveals a wide variety of realities and dynamics, a result of the diverse nature of the armed conflicts¹ and socio-political crises² that the negotiations are linked to. Without losing sight of the need to consider the specific characteristics of each case, it is possible to draw several conclusions and offer reflections on the general panorama of peace processes and negotiations, as well as to identify some trends. Several conclusions are presented below regarding the geographical distribution of the negotiations, those actors involved in the negotiation processes, the third parties who participated, the main and recurrent issues in the negotiation agendas, the general development of the processes, inclusiveness and the gender dimension in these peace negotiations.

Table 1.1. Summary of peace processes and negotiations in 2019

| Peace processes and negotiations | Negotiating actors | Third parties |
|---|--|--|
| Africa | | |
| Burundi | Government, political and social opposition grouped in the National Council for the Respect of the Peace Agreement and the Reconciliation of Burundi and the Restoration of the Rule of Law (CNARED) | East African Community (EAC), UN |
| Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West and South West) | Government, political opposition (SDF, MRC) and sectors of separatist political opposition | Church, Civil Society Organizations, Switzerland, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue |
| CAR | Government, armed groups belonging to the former Seleka Coalition, Antibalaka militias | The African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation (AU and ECCAS, with the support of the UN, ICGLR, Angola, Gabon, the Rep. of the Congo and Chad), Community of Sant Egidio, ACCORD, International Support Group (UN, EU, among others), Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, China, Russia, Sudan |

1. The School for a Culture of Peace (Escola de Cultura de Pau, ECP) defines armed conflict as any confrontation between regular or irregular armed groups with objectives that are perceived as incompatible in which the continuous and organised use of violence a) causes a minimum of 100 battle-related deaths in a year and/or a serious impact on the territory (destruction of infrastructures or of natural resources) and human security (e.g. wounded or displaced population, sexual violence, food insecurity, impact on mental health and on the social fabric or disruption of basic services) and aims to achieve objectives that are different than those of common delinquency and are normally linked to a) demands for self-determination and self-government or identity issues; b) the opposition to the political, economic, social or ideological system of a state or the internal or international policy of the government, which in both cases leads to fighting to seize or erode power; or c) control over the resources or the territory.
2. A socio-political crisis is defined as that in which the pursuit of certain objectives or the failure to satisfy certain demands made by different actors leads to high levels of political, social or military mobilisation and/or the use of violence with a level of intensity that does not reach that of an armed conflict and that may include clashes, repression, coups d'état and bombings or attacks of other kinds, and whose escalation may degenerate into an armed conflict under certain circumstances. Socio-political crises are normally related to: a) demands for self-determination and self-government, or identity issues; b) opposition to the political, economic, social or ideological system of a state, or the internal or international policies of a government, which in both cases produces a struggle to take or erode power; or c) control of resources or territory.

| Peace processes and negotiations | Negotiating actors | Third parties |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| Africa | | |
| DRC | Government, Alliance for the Presidential Majority, political and social opposition grouped in the Rassemblement coalition (Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS), the Dynamic Opposition and the G7, among others), Union for the Congolese Nation and other political parties | Congolese Episcopal Conference (CENCO), Angola, Tanzania, Uganda, Support Group for the Facilitation of the National Dialogue on the DRC led by the AU, SADC, International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), EU, UN, International Organization of La Francophonie (OIF), USA |
| Eritrea – Ethiopia | Government of Eritrea, Government of Ethiopia | United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, USA |
| Ethiopia (Ogaden) | Government, ONLF military political movement | Kenya, United Arab Emirates and Sweden |
| Ethiopia (Oromia) | Government, OLF military political movement | -- |
| Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram) | Government of Nigeria, Boko Haram (Abubakar Shekau branch), Boko Haram (Abu Musab al-Barnawi branch) | -- |
| Libya | Presidential Council and Government of National Agreement (GAN), House of Representatives (CdR), National General Congress (CGN), LNA | Quartet (UN, Arab League, AU, EU), Italy, France, Germany, Russia and Turkey |
| Mali | Government, Coordinator of Azawad Movements (CMA) – MNLA, MAA and HCUA–, Platform –GATIA, CMFPR, CPA, faction of the MAA– | Algeria, France, ECOWAS, AU, UN, EU, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Carter Center, Civil Society Organizations, Mauritania |
| Morocco – Western Sahara | Morocco, Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and River of Gold (POLISARIO) | UN, Algeria and Mauritania (observers), Group of Friends of the Sahara (France, USA, Spain, United Kingdom and Russia) |
| Mozambique | Government, RENAMO | National mediation team, Community of Sant Egidio (Vatican), Catholic Church, UN, SADC, AU, EU, Botswana, South Africa, Switzerland, Tanzania, United Kingdom |
| Nigeria (Niger Delta) | Government, Pan-Niger Delta Forum (PANDEF), NIGER Delta Consultative Assembly, (NIDCA), Pan Niger Delta Peoples’ Congress (PNDPC), Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) | -- |
| Rep. of the Congo | Government, Ninja militias and the National Council of the Republicans (CNR) of Frédéric Bintsamou (Pastor Ntoumi) | -- |
| Senegal (Casamance) | Government of Senegal, the different factions of the armed group Movement of the Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC) | Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, The Community of Sant Egidio, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau |
| Somalia | Federal Government, leaders of the federal and emerging states (Puntland, HirShabelle, Galmudug, Jubaland, Southwest), political-military movement Ahlu Sunna Wal-Jama’a, clan leaders and sub-clans | UN, IGAD, Turkey, among others |
| South Sudan | Government (SPLM), SPLM / A-in-Opposition (SPLM/A-IO), and several minor groups (SSOA, SPLM-FD, among others) | IGAD Plus: IGAD (Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia and Uganda); AU (Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Chad and Algeria), China, Russia, Egypt, Troika (USA, United Kingdom and Norway), EU, UN, South Sudan Council of Churches |
| Sudan³ | Government of Sudan, the opposition coalition “Sudan Call” formed by national opposition parties and Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF, coalition comprising the armed groups of South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur), Movement for Justice and Equity (JEM), Sudan Liberation Movements, SLA-MM and SLA-AW factions, Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) | African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), Troika (USA, United Kingdom, Norway), Germany, AU, UNAMID, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Uganda |
| Sudan - South Sudan | Government of Sudan and Government of South Sudan | IGAD, African Union Border Programme (AUBP), UNISFA, Egypt, Libya, USA, EU |
| America | | |
| Colombia (ELN) | Government and ELN | Guarantor countries (Brazil, Norway, Cuba and Chile), accompanying countries (Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, Netherlands and Italy) |
| Colombia (FARC) | Government and FARC | UN Verification Mission in Colombia, International Monitoring Mechanism (Technical Secretary of the Notables, Kroc Institute of Notre Dame University) |
| Haiti | Government, political and social opposition | -- |

3. In 2019, the three peace processes and negotiations that were taking place in Sudan in 2018 were merged into one due to the end of the national dialogue space between the government and the opposition after the formation of a transitional government, as well as the merger of the cases of Darfur and the “Two Areas” (South Kordofan and Blue Nile) into a single peace process. Both processes (the transition following the ouster of Omar al-Bashir and the negotiations with the armed groups in Darfur and South Kordofan and Blue Nile) are studied together in the chapter.

| Peace processes and negotiations | Negotiating actors | Third parties |
|--|--|--|
| America | | |
| Nicaragua | Government, political and social opposition | Vatican, OAS |
| Venezuela | Government, opposition (MUD) | Norway, International Contact Group |
| Asia | | |
| Afghanistan | Government, Taliban insurgents, USA | Pakistan, China, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Germany, Norway, UN |
| China (Tibet) | China, Tibetan government-in-exile | -- |
| DPR Korea – Republic of Korea | North Korea, South Korea | -- |
| DPR Korea – USA | North Korea, USA | -- |
| India (Assam) | Government, ULFA-PTF, NDFB-P, NDFB-RD | -- |
| India (Nagaland) | Government, NSCN-IM, NNPG: GPRN/NSCN (Kitovi Zhimomi), NNC, FGN, NSCN(R), NPGN (Non-Accord) and NNC/GDRN/NA, ZUF | -- |
| Myanmar | Government, armed signatory groups of the cease fire agreement (NCA): DKBA, RCSS/SSA-South, CNF, KNU, KNLAPC, ALP, PNLO, ABSDF, NMSP, LDU; armed groups not part of the NCA: UWSP, NDAA, SSPP/SSA-N, KNPP, NSCN-K, KIA, AA, TNLA, MNDAA | China |
| Papua New Guinea (Bougainville) | Government, Autonomous Government of Bougainville | UN, Conciliation Resources |
| Philippines (MILF) | Government, MILF | Malaysia, International Contact Group, Third Party Monitoring Team, International Monitoring Team, Independent Decommissioning Body |
| Philippines (MNLF) | Government, MNLF (faction led by Nur Misuari) | -- |
| Philippines (NDF) | Government, NDF (umbrella organisation of different communist organisations, among them the Communist Party of the Philippines, which is the political arm of the NPA) | Norway |
| Thailand (south) | Government, MARA Patani (umbrella organisation representing several armed groups) | Malaysia |
| Europe | | |
| Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabaj) | Armenia, Azerbaijan | OSCE Minsk Group (co-chaired by Russia, France and USA, the remaining permanent members are Belarus, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Finland and Turkey) |
| Cyprus | Republic of Cyprus, self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus | UN, EU, Turkey, Greece and the United Kingdom (guarantee countries) |
| Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia) | Georgia, representatives of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Russia ⁴ | OSCE, EU, UN, USA, Russia ⁵ |
| Moldova (Transdnistria) | Moldova, the self-proclaimed Republic of Transdnistria | OSCE, Ukraine, Russia, USA and EU |
| Serbia – Kosovo | Serbia, Kosovo | EU, UN |
| Spain (Basque Country) | ETA (dissolved), Government of Spain, Government of the Basque Country, Government of France, Commonwealth of the French Basque Country, political and social actors of the Basque Country, Collective of Basque Political Prisoners (EPPK, for its acronym in Basque) | Permanent Social Forum, Bakea Bidea |
| Ukraine (east) | Ukraine, representatives of the self-proclaimed popular republics of Donetsk and Luhansk, Russia ⁶ | OSCE (in the Trilateral Contact Group, where Ukraine and Russia also participate ⁷), Germany and France (in the Normandy Group, where Ukraine and Russia also participate ⁸) |

4. Russia's status in the peace process in Georgia is subject to different interpretations. Georgia considers it an actor in the conflict and a negotiating party, while Russia considers itself a third party.

5. Ibid.

6. Russia's status in the peace process in Ukraine is subject to different interpretations. Ukraine considers it an actor in the conflict and a negotiating party, while Russia considers itself a third party.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

| Peace processes and negotiations | Negotiating actors | Third parties |
|----------------------------------|---|--|
| Middle East | | |
| Iran (north west) ⁹ | Government, Cooperation Center of Iranian Kurdistan's Political Parties (umbrella organization of Kurdish groups including Komala and KDP factions) | Norwegian Centre for Conflict Resolution (NOREF) |
| Iran (nuclear programme) | Iran, G5+1 (USA, France, United Kingdom, Russia and China plus Germany), EU | UN, France, Japan, Oman |
| Iraq ¹⁰ | Political actors of different sign | UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) |
| Israel-Palestine | Israeli Government, Palestinian Authority (AP), Hamas, Islamic Jihad | Quartet for the Middle East (USA, Russia, UN, EU), France, Egypt, Russia, Oman |
| Palestine | Hamas, Fatah | Egypt, Qatar |
| Syria | Government, sectors of the political and armed opposition | UN, USA, Russia, Turkey, Iran |
| Yemen | Government of Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi, Houthis/ Ansarallah, South Transitional Council (STC), Saudi Arabia | UN, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia |

The peace negotiations in bold type are described in the chapter.
 -- There are no third parties or no public proof of their existence.

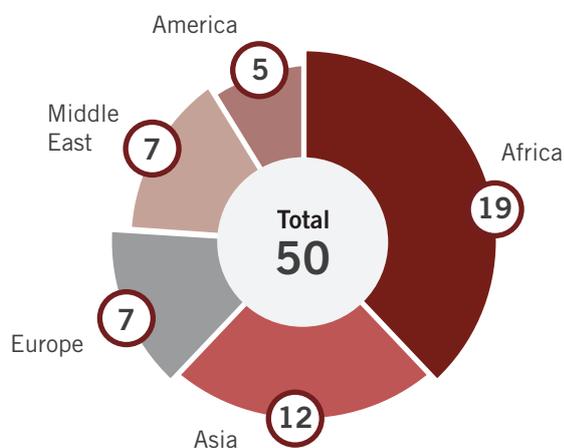
Most of the peace processes and negotiations studied in 2019 were concentrated in Africa, which hosted 19, equivalent to 38% of the total. Asia was the region with the second-highest number of cases, with a total of 12, representing 24% of the negotiations in 2019. The rest of the negotiations were distributed between Europe, with seven (14%), the Middle East, also with seven (14%) and the Americas, with five (10%). The high percentage of negotiations in Africa correlates to the fact that it is also the scene of the highest number of armed conflicts and socio-political crises in the world¹¹. There was a slight increase over the previous year in the number of peace processes and negotiations studied worldwide, since 43 were counted in 2017 and 49 in 2018, compared to 50 in 2019. The increase in peace

Most of the negotiations in 2019 took place in Africa (38%), followed by Asia (24%), Europe (14%), the Middle East (14%) and the Americas (10%)

processes in 2019 reflected the higher number of them in Asia, the Middle East and the Americas. In Europe, the same number of processes and negotiations was identified as in the previous year, while in Africa the number fell. This drop is due to the normalisation of relations between Djibouti and Eritrea, so their political negotiations were no longer analysed in the report, and the end of Ghanaian President Nana Akufo-Addo's mediation in the political crisis in Togo. Although far from being resolved, this crisis was channelled within the country's political institutions. Moreover, the three peace processes and negotiations that were taking place in Sudan in 2018 were merged into one in late 2019. This was due to the fact that the national dialogue promoted by the government of Omar al-Bashir with opposition groups and national armed forces came to an end with the fall of his government after three decades in power. This gave rise to a new negotiating process between the Military Junta and the national opposition, which involved different external actors that pressured for the formation of a civilian-military transitional government that would incorporate the opposition and its demands. Meanwhile, the new transitional government of Sudan merged the peace negotiations in Darfur and the "Two Areas" (South Kordofan and Blue Nile) into a single process in Juba in order to achieve a final and stable peace for the entire region. The three processes (the transition following the ouster of Omar al-Bashir, the negotiations with Darfuri armed groups and the negotiations in South Kordofan and Blue Nile) are analysed together in this report.

New peace negotiations in 2019 took place in Cameroon due to the initiatives promoted by Switzerland and

Graph 1.1. Regional distribution of peace negotiations



9. Exploratory contacts.

10. Ibid.

11. See Annex 1 (Summary of armed conflicts in 2019) and Annex 2 (Summary of socio-political crises in 2019). For more information on the scenario of armed conflicts and tensions at a global level, see Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2020! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2020.

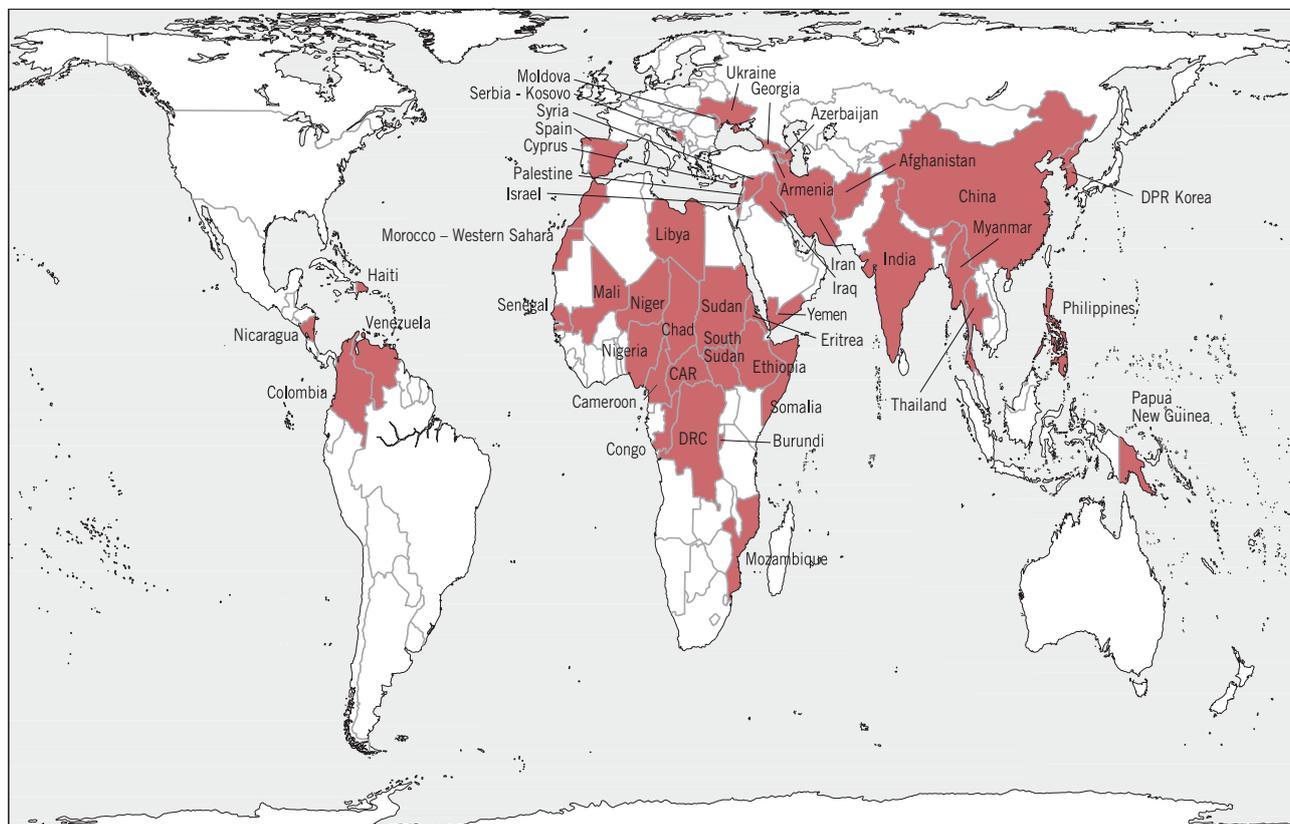
the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue to send the proposals of some separatist political actors from the English-speaking majority regions of the country the Cameroonian national dialogue; in Haiti, where various initiatives began to promote a national dialogue between the government and the opposition; in Papua New Guinea, where the Papuan government and the Bougainville authorities entered into talks following the self-determination referendum held on the island in late 2019; and in the Middle East, where there were two exploratory and relatively uncertain initiatives related to the tension in Iraq due to anti-government protests and to the tension in northwestern Iran centring on the Kurdish political and armed opposition.

Five new negotiation initiatives were identified in 2019: in Cameroon, Haiti, Papua New Guinea, Iraq and Iran

Once again, almost all **actors involved in the peace processes and negotiations** were central or state governments in which the conflicts and/or socio-political crises occurred. The governments of the respective states held direct or indirect negotiations with various kinds of actors according to the particular aspects of each context that generally ranged from non-governmental armed groups (individually or as a group) to a more complex combination of armed actors and opposition politicians, opposition groups or political platforms, foreign governments, in the case of interstate disputes, representatives of territories seeking to secede or win recognition as independent and more.

Negotiations were conducted by governments of states and armed opposition groups or political-military movements in all regions in 2019. These include several processes in Africa, such as the one between the Ethiopian government and the ONLF in Ogaden and the one between the Ethiopian government and the OLF in Oromia; the one between the government of Mozambique and RENAMO; the one between the government of the CAR and groups of the former Séleka coalition and anti-balaka militias; the one between the Sudanese government and the SPLM-N; and the one between the government of South Sudan and the SPLM-IO and other minor groups. In the Americas, the peace processes in Colombia stood out, due to the talks that the government held with the ELN (suspended during the year) and with the former FARC guerilla group, which was transformed into a political party as part of the implementation of the peace agreement reached in 2016. A number of cases were also identified in Asia, sometimes with direct negotiations between the respective governments and armed groups, such as the MILF and MNLF in the Philippines, the Taliban in Afghanistan, the NSCN-IM in India, the KNPP and KIA in Myanmar and the BRN in southern Thailand. Other peace processes were conducted through political organisations that acted as representatives of armed groups, such as in negotiations between the government of the Philippines and the NDF, which has acted as a

Map 1.1. Peace negotiations in 2019



■ Countries with peace processes and negotiations in 2019

representative of the armed group NPA for decades. In several peace processes in Asia, the armed actors involved in the negotiations gathered in joint platforms or umbrella organisations representing various armed groups, as in the case of the Naga National Political Groups in India (which groups seven insurgent organisations in Nagaland), MARA Patani in Thailand (which groups five armed groups) and the Northern Alliance and the Brotherhood Alliance in Myanmar. In the Middle East, the main example was provided by Yemen, since the negotiations involved the internationally recognised government and the armed group known as the Houthis or Ansar Allah. Other processes were between the respective governments and a broader and more complex range of political and armed actors. This included the processes in Libya, Mali, Syria, Somalia and Sudan. A lower number of processes involved the government and political opposition groups or coalitions, such as in Burundi, Haiti, Iraq, Nicaragua, the DRC and Venezuela.

Another group of peace processes dealt with interstate disputes involving the governments of different countries. There were examples of this in all regions, except for the Americas. The peace negotiations in Africa included the different types of negotiating processes between Sudan and South Sudan, which advanced positively during the year, and between Eritrea and Ethiopia, which descended into a dynamic of stagnation. Asia also offered a remarkable overview in this regard, where the interstate negotiating processes begun in 2018 between North Korea and South Korea (and between North Korea and the United States) continued. In Europe, the emblematic interstate process was between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, while in the Middle East it involved Iran and its nuclear programme.

The negotiations in another significant amount of peace processes involved central governments and representatives of groups seeking secession, a new political or administrative status or independence with full international recognition. These groups, some of which were self-proclaimed states, with territorial control, enjoying limited international recognition and usually external support from some regional or international power, participated in the negotiations in various different ways, sometimes as a consulted party but with the capacity for limited influence, and other times involved as a full party. Europe was the scene of several cases of this type, including the peace process in Cyprus, involving the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, which is only recognised by Turkey; the peace process in Moldova, involving the self-proclaimed republic of Transdniestria, which is backed by Russia but lacks international recognition; the one in eastern Ukraine, involving the representatives of the secessionist territories of Donetsk and Luhansk, backed by Russia, those of Georgia (Abkhazia and South Ossetia), which involved the representatives of

Third-party involvement in the peace negotiations was confirmed in the vast majority of cases analysed in 2019 (80%), except in Asia

both territories, recognised by Russia, or Kosovo, which is internationally recognised as a state by more than 100 countries and is acting as a negotiating party in the talks with Serbia. In this vein, other processes with unique aspects were related to the conflict over Western Sahara, involving the Moroccan government and the POLISARIO Front, and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which deals with the governments of Israel and the Palestinian Authority. The UN continues to consider Western Sahara a territory pending decolonisation, whose alleged possession by Morocco is not recognised either by international law or by any UN resolution. Likewise, the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) proclaimed by the POLISARIO Front has not received any international majority recognition. Meanwhile, decades of negotiations between Israeli and Palestinian leaders have not led to the full configuration of a Palestinian state. Nevertheless, Palestine has been recognised as such by other states and has been an “observer member” of the UN since 2012.

Regarding the **third parties involved in peace and negotiation processes**, although in many cases we can clearly identify the actors involved in mediation, facilitation and accompaniment activities, in others these tasks were carried out discreetly or behind closed doors. Our analysis of the overview of the negotiations around the world in 2019 reveals that third-party involvement was found in the vast majority of cases (40 out of 50, corresponding to 80%), including negotiations with third parties (29), national dialogues with third parties (two), other formats (two) and interstate negotiations with third parties (seven) (see table 1.2). The processes in which there was no third party involved and where contacts were established directly or bilaterally were concentrated in Asia, where six were accounted for: China (Tibet), Republic of Korea-DPR Korea, Korea DPR-USA, Philippines (MNLF), India (Assam) and India (Nagaland). This was one less than in 2018 due to the growing role of China in the Myanmar peace process. In Africa, there were four such cases (Ethiopia (Oromia), Nigeria (Niger Delta), Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram) and the Republic of the Congo). Negotiations without third parties were a distinctive feature of the processes in Asia, since they were lacking in half the cases analysed (six of 12). Regarding cases with the presence of third parties, the implication occurred regardless of the format of the negotiations. Therefore, third parties were involved in most internal processes, either in negotiations (29) or national dialogues (two). Most of the interstate negotiations, such as between Eritrea and Ethiopia, Morocco and Western Sahara, Sudan and South Sudan, Armenia and Azerbaijan (over Nagorno-Karabakh), Serbia and Kosovo, Iran (nuclear programme) and Israel and Palestine enjoyed third-party participation (seven of the nine cases).

In nearly all processes with a third party (35 of the 40), more than one actor performed mediation or

Table 1.2. Internal and interstate peace processes/negotiations with and without third parties in 2019

| Peace processes | INTERNAL | | | | | INTERSTATE | |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|--|---|-------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| | Direct negotiations without third parties (8) | Negotiations with third parties (29) | National dialogues without third parties (3) | National dialogues with third parties (2) | Other formats (2) | Direct negotiations without third parties (2) | Negotiations with third parties (7) |
| AFRICA | | | | | | | |
| Burundi | | x | | | | | |
| Cameroon (Ambazonia/ North West-South West) | | x | x | | | | |
| CAR | | x | | | | | |
| DRC | | x | | | | | |
| Eritrea-Ethiopia | | | | | | | x |
| Ethiopia (Ogaden) | | x | | | | | |
| Ethiopia (Oromia) | x | | | | | | |
| Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram) | x | | | | | | |
| Libya | | x | | | | | |
| Mali | | x | x | | | | |
| Morocco – Western Sahara | | | | | | | x |
| Mozambique | | x | | | | | |
| Nigeria (Niger Delta) | x | | | | | | |
| Republic of the Congo | x | | | | | | |
| Senegal (Casamance) | | x | | | | | |
| Somalia | | x | | | | | |
| South Sudan | | x | | | | | |
| Sudan ¹² | | x | | x | | | |
| Sudan – South Sudan | | | | | | | x |
| AMERICA | | | | | | | |
| Colombia (ELN) | | x | | | | | |
| Colombia (FARC-EP) | | x | | | | | |
| Haiti | | | x | | | | |
| Nicaragua | | | | x | | | |
| Venezuela | | x | | | | | |
| ASIA | | | | | | | |
| Afghanistan | | | | | x | | |
| China (Tibet) | x | | | | | | |
| Korea, DPR –Korea, Republic of | | | | | | x | |
| Korea, DPR – USA | | | | | | x | |
| India (Assam) | x | | | | | | |
| India (Nagaland) | x | | | | | | |
| Myanmar | | x | | | | | |
| Papua New Guinea (Bougainville) | | x | | | | | |
| Philippines (MILF) | | x | | | | | |
| Philippines (MNLF) | x | | | | | | |
| Philippines (NDF) | | x | | | | | |
| Thailand (south) | | x | | | | | |

12. In 2019, the three peace processes and negotiations that were taking place in Sudan in 2018 were merged into one, due to the completion of the national dialogue between the government and the opposition after the formation of a transitional government, as well as the merger of the peace negotiations in Darfur and the “Two Areas” (South Kordofan and Blue Nile) into a single process.

| Peace processes | INTERNAL | | | | | INTERSTATE | |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|--|---|-------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| | Direct negotiations without third parties (8) | Negotiations with third parties (29) | National dialogues without third parties (3) | National dialogues with third parties (2) | Other formats (2) | Direct negotiations without third parties (2) | Negotiations with third parties (7) |
| EUROPE | | | | | | | |
| Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh) | | | | | | | x |
| Cyprus | | x | | | | | |
| Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia) ¹³ | | x | | | | | |
| Moldova (Transnistria) | | x | | | | | |
| Serbia – Kosovo ¹⁴ | | | | | | | x |
| Spain (Basque Country) | | | | | x | | |
| Ukraine (east) ¹⁵ | | x | | | | | |
| MIDDLE EAST | | | | | | | |
| Iran (northwest) | | x | | | | | |
| Iran (nuclear programme) | | | | | | | x |
| Iraq | | x | | | | | |
| Israel-Palestine | | | | | | | x |
| Palestine | | x | | | | | |
| Syria ¹⁶ | | x | | | | | |
| Yemen | | x | | | | | |

facilitation tasks. The actors involved in the negotiations were of a diverse nature, highlighting the work of intergovernmental organisations, such as the UN, EU, AU, OSCE, IGAD, OIC, SADC, EAC, ECCAS and OIF, foreign governments, religious organisations and NGOs. In only five cases was a single third party involved, such as Norway's participation in the peace process in the Philippines (NDF), Malaysia's involvement in Thailand (south), NOREF's involvement in Iran (northwest), the United Nations mission in Iraq (UNAMI) and China's growing influence in the Myanmar peace process. In other cases, third-party intervention in the negotiating processes was organised in structured formats, such as in groupings of countries or platforms that brought together actors of various kinds. Examples of the former include the Group of Friends of Western Sahara, which brings together France, the United States, Spain, the United Kingdom and Russia; the Troika in Sudan, made up of the United States, the United Kingdom and Norway; and countries guaranteeing and accompanying the Colombian government's processes with the FARC and the ELN. Third-party formats that included several actors included the Quartet in Libya, consisting of the UN, AU, EU and the Arab League; the African Union Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the CAR, involving the AU and CEEAC with support from the

UN, the ICGLR, Angola, Gabon, the Republic of the Congo and Chad; the International Contact Group in the peace process between the Philippine government and the MILF, made up of four states (Japan, the United Kingdom, Turkey and Saudi Arabia) and four NGOs (Muhammadiyah, the Asia Foundation, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and Conciliation Resources); the Trilateral Contact Group in relation to Ukraine, including the OSCE, Ukraine and Russia); and the Normandy Group also in relation to Ukraine, involving Germany, France, Ukraine and Russia, with the particular status of Russia and Ukraine in both groups; and the Quartet for the Middle East, made up of the UN, the EU, the USA and Russia in the Palestinian-Israeli context.

Our analysis of the processes and negotiations in 2019 confirms the outstanding role played by the UN in mediation and facilitation. Through different formats, the organisation was involved in 22 of the 50 processes identified during the year and in more than half the processes with third-party intervention (56%), a figure that grew compared to the previous year due to the addition of the processes in Iraq (UNAMI), Papua New Guinea (through the Mediation Support Unit) and Mozambique. The action of the United Nations took shape through different formats. Envoys

13. The nature of the peace processes in Abkhazia and South Ossetia and Russia's role in those conflicts and peace processes are open to interpretation. Ukraine considers Russia a party to the conflict and a negotiating party, whereas Russia considers itself a third party.

14. The peace process between Serbia and Kosovo is considered interstate because even though its international legal status is still controversial, Kosovo has been recognised as a state by over 100 countries. In 2010, the International Court of Justice issued a non-binding opinion that Kosovo's declaration of independence did not violate international law or UN Security Council Resolution 1244.

15. The nature of the peace process in Ukraine and Russia's role in the conflict and peace process are open to interpretation. Ukraine considers Russia a party to the conflict and a negotiating party, whereas Russia considers itself a third party.

16. There are two parallel negotiating processes in Syria (Astana and Geneva). Third parties are involved in both processes, though some of them directly project their interests onto the negotiations.

Table 1.3. Intergovernmental organisations as third parties in peace processes in 2019

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| UN (22) | |
| AFRICA | |
| Burundi | UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Burundi |
| CAR | UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the CAR (MINUSCA) UN Secretary-General's Special Representative in the CAR UN is member of the International Support Group for CAR |
| DRC | UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region UN Stabilisation Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) UN Secretary-General's Special Representative in the DRC |
| Libya | UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Libya United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) The UN forms part of the Quartet for the Libyan Political Agreement along with the AU, Arab League and EU |
| Morocco – Western Sahara | UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Western Sahara United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) |
| Mozambique | UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Mozambique |
| Somalia | United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) |
| South Sudan | UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for South Sudan United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) |
| Sudan | United Nations-African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) |
| Sudan-South Sudan | United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) |
| AMERICA | |
| Colombia | United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia |
| ASIA | |
| Afghanistan | United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) |
| Papua New Guinea (Bougainville) | Mediation Support Unit |
| EUROPE | |
| Cyprus | United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) Mission of the Good Offices of the UN Secretary-General in Cyprus UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Cyprus Office of the UN Secretary-General's Special Advisor on Cyprus (OSASG) |
| Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia) | United Nations Special Representative in the Geneva International Discussions |
| Serbia - Kosovo | United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) |
| MIDDLE EAST | |
| Iran | International Atomic Energy Agency The UN Secretary-General regularly reports on implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which validated the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (2015) |
| Iraq | United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) |
| Israel-Palestine | The UN participates in the Quartet for the Middle East along with the United States, Russia and the EU to mediate in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict Special Envoy for the Peace Process in the Middle East |
| Syria | UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Syria |
| Yemen | UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Yemen United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeida Agreement (UNMHA) |
| UE (14) | |
| AFRICA | |
| CAR | EU is a member of the International Support Group for the CAR |
| DRC | EU delegation in the DRC EU Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region |
| Libya | The EU forms part of the Quartet for the Libyan Political Agreement along with the AU, UN and Arab League |
| Mali | EU Special Representative for the Sahel |
| Mozambique | EU Special Envoy for the Peace Process in Mozambique |
| South Sudan | The EU forms part of the IGAD Plus mediation group |
| AMERICA | |
| Venezuela | The EU forms part of the International Contact Group |

| | |
|---|---|
| UE (14) | |
| ASIA | |
| Philippines (MILF) | The EU forms part of the International Monitoring Team and has lent support to the Third Party Monitoring Team |
| EUROPE | |
| Cyprus | High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice President of the European Commission |
| Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia) | EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the Crisis in Georgia, in Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia) EU Observation Mission in Georgia (EUMM) |
| Moldova (Transnistria) | EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM), in Moldova (Transnistria) |
| Serbia – Kosovo | High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice President of the European Commission, in Serbia–Kosovo EU Rule-of-Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX Kosovo) EU Office in Kosovo / EU Special Representative for Kosovo |
| MIDDLE EAST | |
| Israel-Palestine | The EU participates in the Quartet for the Middle East along with the United States, Russia and the UN to mediate in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy EU Special Envoy for the Middle East |
| Syria | The EU and the UN co-organised the third international conference on the future of Syria and the region in March 2019 |
| AU (8) | |
| CAR | The AU leads the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the CAR (the AU with the support of the ECCAS, ICGLR, Angola, Gabon, the Republic of the Congo and Chad) |
| DRC | The AU leads the Support Group for the Facilitation of the National Dialogue in the DRC |
| Libya | The AU forms part of the Quartet for the Libyan Political Agreement along with the Arab League, UN and EU |
| Mali | AU High Representative for Mali and the Sahel The AU participates in the Mediation Team, which supports implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement in Mali |
| Mozambique | The AU is a guarantor of the peace agreement |
| South Sudan | Integrated into IGAD Plus, represented by Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Chad and Algeria |
| Sudan | AU High Level Implementation Panel on Sudan (AUHIP) African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) |
| Sudan – South Sudan | African Union Border Programme (AUBP) |
| OSCE (4) | |
| Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh) | Minsk Group Special Representative of the Rotating Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE for the Con-flict Related to the Minsk Conference of the OSCE |
| Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia) | Special Representative of the Rotating Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE for the South Caucasus |
| Moldova (Transnistria) | Special Representative of the Rotating Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE for the Transnistrian Settlement Process OSCE Mission in Moldova |
| Ukraine | Special Representative of the Rotating Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE in Ukraine and in the Trilateral Contact Group OSCE Special Observation Mission in Ukraine (SMM) OSCE Special Observation Mission at the Gukovo and Donetsk Checkpoints Coordinator of OSCE projects in Ukraine |
| IGAD (3) | |
| Somalia | IGAD delegation |
| South Sudan | The IGAD, which consists of Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia and Uganda, is part of “IGAD Plus” in South Sudan |
| Sudan – South Sudan | IGAD delegation |
| ECOWAS (1) | |
| Mali | ECOWAS in Mali |
| OCI (1) | |
| CAR | OIC delegation in the CAR |
| SADC (2) | |
| DRC | SADC representation in the DRC |
| Mozambique | The SADC is a guarantor of the peace agreement |

| | |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| EAC (1) | |
| Burundi | EAC delegation in Burundi |
| CEEAC (1) | |
| CAR | CEEAC delegation in the CAR |
| OIF (1) | |
| DRC | OIF delegation in the DRC |
| OEA (1) | |
| Nicaragua | OAS Secretary-General's Special Envoy |

and special representatives were important in 2019 due to their influence on the development of peace processes, the difficulty in maintaining fairness and the pressure to which the parties subjected them. Thus, the federal government of Somalia expelled UN Special Representative for Somalia Nicholas Haysom, accusing him of meddling in Somalia's internal affairs, since the diplomat had publicly questioned the legal grounds for arresting the presidential candidate for the state of South West and al-Shabaab's former vice-leader, Mukhtar Robow in December 2018. On 30 May 2019, the UN Secretary-General appointed US diplomat James Swan to be his new envoy for Somalia. The resignation of the new special envoy for Western Sahara, Horst Köhler, who had raised expectations by promoting a meeting in late 2018 between representatives of Morocco and the POLISARIO Front after six years without direct contact, caused deadlock in the peace process and frustration in the POLISARIO Front over the failure to appoint a new special envoy by the end of the year. After bringing together the Hadi government and the Houthis in Sweden in December 2018, in the first contact between both sides in over two years, the new UN special envoy for Yemen, Martin Griffiths, was accused of pro-Houthi bias by Hadi, who even temporarily refused to speak to him. In addition to special envoys, the UN was also involved through missions with mandates that included aspects of verification, ceasefire monitoring, assistance, accompaniment, good offices and other tasks (such as missions in Libya, Mali, the CAR, Western Sahara, Colombia, Afghanistan and Cyprus), as well as mechanisms or platforms supporting the search for a solution to various conflicts (such as the Quartet Supporting the Libyan Political Agreement, the Quartet for the Middle East and the IGAD Plus in South Sudan, to name a few).

In addition to the UN, regional organisations also played a role, both in their respective areas and beyond their most direct regional spheres. Thus, for example, the EU played a prominent role in 14 peace processes, particularly in European conflicts, but it was also involved in places beyond Europe, such as in Syria and in several processes in Africa, including Libya, Mali, Mozambique, CAR and the DRC. The African Union participated in eight of the 19 processes in Africa

(Libya, Mali, Mozambique, CAR, DRC, Sudan, South Sudan and Sudan-South Sudan), where other regional organisations were also involved, such as ECOWAS (in Mali) and the IGAD (in South Sudan, Sudan-South Sudan and Somalia). In Asia, in keeping with the more limited presence of third parties, intergovernmental organisations were less involved in mediation and facilitation activities.

Regarding the work of third-party states in negotiations, several European countries made efforts at different latitudes, traditionally the Nordic countries and Switzerland, in addition to France and the United Kingdom due to their colonial past in certain African contexts. In recent years, the role of German diplomacy has grown in the peace processes in Libya, Sudan, Colombia (ELN), Ukraine (east) and Afghanistan. Also notable is the facilitating work of some Middle Eastern states, such as Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab

Emirates (UAE), which is partly linked to their regional struggle to expand their areas of influence, among other issues. Saudi and Emirati efforts came alongside those nations' active involvement in the Yemen armed conflict, where they were interested parties to the conflict. The role of some states as third parties aroused suspicions and mistrust in various processes, where they were perceived as actors with glaring bias for one of the parties in the dispute.

This was true of the Israel-Palestine process, where the Palestinian Authority continued to express its dissatisfaction with US policies aligned with Israel's far right interests. It was also an issue in the peace processes in Georgia (Abkhazia and South Ossetia) and Ukraine (east), where Russia's role remained subject to different interpretations. Moscow presented itself as a third party in these processes, but both the Georgian and the Ukrainian governments consider it a party to the conflict. Russia's role also continued to arouse suspicion in Syria, given its prominent role in support of the Damascus regime, but also as the promoter of a negotiating process parallel to the one sponsored by the UN. Known as the Astana process, this Moscow-based initiative also involves Iran (an ally of Damascus) and Turkey (a defender of some opposition groups). Russia and China also increased their role as a third party through their involvement in peace processes in Africa, such as in the CAR and South Sudan.

The UN participated in over half the cases where the involvement of a third party was identified and was involved in negotiating processes through various formats

With regard to the **negotiating agendas**, we must consider the particular aspects of each case and bear in mind that the details of the issues under discussion did not always become known to the public. That said, our analysis of the various peace processes and negotiations that took place during 2018 identifies recurring themes in the negotiating agendas. **One issue with a greater presence that came up in negotiations in all the continents was the search for truces, ceasefires and cessations of hostilities**, under various formats and closely linked to scenarios of active armed conflict. In various contexts of violence and conflict in Africa, attempts to establish ceasefires were repeated, in some cases due to the lack of political will to consolidate them and in others due to the difficulties in controlling the many factions involved in the conflicts. This was the case in Ethiopia (both the OLF in Oromia and the ONLF in Ogaden declared ceasefires that were key to advancing a cessation of hostilities, although in Oromia there were various clashes between parts of the OLF and the government after the DDR agreement was signed in January), in Libya (where the various ceasefires, including the one in force in the Libyan capital since September 2018, were systematically violated), in Mali (where groups that had signed the 2015 Algiers Peace Agreement clashed in the middle of the year), in the CAR (despite the agreement signed in February between the 14 armed groups and the government, as some groups abandoned the agreement and others violated the ceasefire), in Sudan (where after the ouster of Omar al-Bashir, the Transitional Military Council (TMC) declared a unilateral ceasefire followed by the suspension of hostilities in South Kordofan and Blue Nile by the SPLM-N, although the group was subsequently accused of violating the ceasefire) and in South Sudan (where the parties that had signed the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) upheld the ceasefire, though it was violated several times during the year). In the Americas, the Colombian government continued to demand a ceasefire. In Asia, specifically in Afghanistan, the discussions in the different rounds of negotiations that took place in Doha between the US and the Taliban were focused, among other things, on the withdrawal of US troops, guarantees against terrorism, talks between the Taliban and the government of Afghanistan to reach a political agreement and a lasting ceasefire after the one reached in 2018, the first since the US invasion of the country in 2001. The Philippine government and the NDF did not meet to negotiate during the year, though at the end of the year both parties expressed their willingness to resume the process. As usual, in late December the NDF announced a cessation of hostilities between 23 December and 7 January to mark the Christmas holidays, with the government immediately responding in kind.

Also in Asia, the Burmese government met informally with the KNU and the RCSS separately, as it had been

doing since November 2018, to present its proposal for the peace process, with negotiations for more robust implementation of the ceasefire. Meetings with groups that have not signed the nationwide ceasefire agreement (NCA) took place throughout the year with the aim of reaching a bilateral ceasefire agreement between the Burmese government and the armed groups that are part of the Northern Alliance (the KIA, MNDA, TNLA and AA) as a step towards signing the NCA, although fighting continued throughout the year. In the Middle East, the search for ceasefire agreements was recurrent. This was true for the peace process between Israel and Palestine, where indirect agreements were reported between the Israeli government and the Palestinian groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad; in Yemen, where two of the central topics of the year included the difficulties in implementing the ceasefire in the port of Al Hudaydah established under the Stockholm Agreement (2018) and attempts to guarantee a cessation of hostilities between the Hadi government and southern secessionist groups in the second half of the year; and in Syria, where various actors were involved in attempts to establish a ceasefire or to create “safe zones”, but where the dynamics of violence continued to prevail. Prominent in Europe was the peace process in Ukraine, where sturdier new ceasefire agreements were reached and forces were withdrawn from various areas, among other forms of progress.

One prominent peace process in Europe was in Ukraine, where sturdier new ceasefire agreements were reached and forces were withdrawn from various areas, among other forms of progress

Another issue in various peace negotiations was the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of combatants, notably in various African peace processes, such as in Mali, Mozambique, Ethiopia (Oromia), Ethiopia (Ogaden) and South

Sudan. In Mali, 5,000 combatants were incorporated into the DDR programme provided for in the 2015 agreement and 600 combatants and 18 rebel officers were selected for integration into the security forces. Another 420 officers who had deserted during the 2012 crisis announced their return to the Malian Armed Forces. In Mozambique, the disarmament agreement reached between the government and RENAMO in 2018 was staged with the signing of the Maputo Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, which represented the culmination of the negotiations started in 2016. In early 2019, two agreements were reached to start the DDR programmes in the Ethiopian regions of Oromia and Ogaden. Difficulties related to the integration of SPLA-IO members into the South Sudanese Armed Forces have continued to affect the creation of the country's transitional government, among other factors. In Asia, the peace process in the Philippines (Mindanao) focused on the institutional development of the new autonomous framework and on the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of the MILF.

As in previous years, the **status of the various disputed territories** was one of the underlying issues of many of the conflicts and of the peace processes in Europe and

Table 1.4. Main agreements of 2019

| Peace processes | Agreements |
|---|--|
| Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West-South West) | Conclusions of the National Dialogue, held between 30 September and 4 October, in Yaoundé. The main separatist political movements and the armed actors boycotted the initiative. One thousand delegates participated, representing political parties, the Catholic Church and civil society. The recommendations that emerged from the conference included changing the name of the country back to the United Republic of Cameroon, granting a special status to the two English-speaking regions, and making all legal texts available in French and English (both languages are currently co-official, but the predominant language is French). In December, the Cameroonian Parliament approved the recommendations of the National Dialogue, though many groups considered them insufficient. |
| CAR | Khartoum Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation, reached in Bangui on 6 February 2019. From 24 January to 5 February, talks were held in Khartoum (Sudan) as part of the African Union Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the CAR under the auspices of the AU, hence its name. The agreement, the eighth in six years, includes the formation of an inclusive government, a truth and reconciliation commission, an investigative commission to determine the crimes committed, the creation of special mixed security units that will integrate members of the insurgencies over the course of a two-year transition period, a commitment to hold free elections and the creation of an executive committee to monitor the agreement, co-chaired by the AU, the government and armed groups. |
| Ethiopia (Ogaden) | DDR Agreement of 8 February 2019 between the Somali Regional State government and the ONLF. The agreement establishes the procedures for carrying out the disarmament and reintegration of ONLF fighters into the security forces and the public administration. |
| Ethiopia (Oromia) | DDR and ceasefire agreement. On 24 January, the regional government and the armed group OLF signed a ceasefire agreement according to which the OLF fighters also promised to gather in billeting camps in order to proceed with their disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR). |
| Mozambique | Maputo Peace and Reconciliation Agreement signed by the Mozambican government and RENAMO on 6 August. The points of the agreement include guarantees for holding inclusive elections, the decentralisation of the political-administrative system and the launch of the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) process for RENAMO combatants. |
| Sudan | Juba Declaration of Confidence Building Measures and the Preparation for Negotiation, signed on 11 September between the Sudanese transitional government and the armed groups SRF, SLM-MM and SPLM-N (Abdelaziz al-Hilu). It serves as an agreed road map for the resumption of the rounds of merged peace talks (Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile) in Juba, South Sudan. |
| Sudan-South Sudan | Agreement delimiting the shared border between Sudan and South Sudan, reached on 22 October at the close of the 11th Joint Border Commission between both countries, held in Khartoum. Five areas subject to new negotiations remain to be delimited: Dabba al-Fukhar, Jabal al-Muqainis, Kaka, Kefi Kenji and Hofrat Al-Nehass. |
| Yemen | Riyadh Agreement, signed by the internationally recognised government of Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi and southern secessionist groups united under the Southern Transitional Council (STC). The pact was signed on 5 November after the mediation of Saudi Arabia, with the intention of stopping the escalation of hostilities within the anti-Houthi side. Key points of the agreement include the formation of a government with the same number of representatives from the northern and southern parts of the country, the withdrawal of stockpiles from southern cities, the integration of STC-linked militias in the Yemeni security forces and the inclusion of STC delegates in UN-backed spaces for dialogue and negotiation. |

Asia, although in Europe these issues were still absent or stagnant, such as the negotiations in Serbia-Kosovo, Moldova (Transnistria) and Cyprus, which remained deadlocked or slowed down throughout the year. The discussion on status in the peace process in Georgia (Abkhazia and South Ossetia) continued beyond the scope of the negotiations due to the lack of agreement on how to address it and the strength of reality on the ground, prioritising security issues. Armenia and Azerbaijan continued to disagree fundamentally on resolving the status of Nagorno-Karabakh, while progress was made in other areas related to confidence-building and security measures. There were more developments in Ukraine, however, where the new Ukrainian president announced his support for the Steinmeier formula at the end of the year. Proposed in 2016 by the OSCE chairperson-in-office at the time, the Steinmeier formula simultaneously offers to grant special status to the disputed areas of eastern Ukraine and to hold elections in those areas as a way to move forward on implementing the Minsk agreements and resolving the conflict. In Asia, self-determination, independence, autonomy, land-use and constitutional issues, as well as recognition of the identities of various national minorities, were present in two thirds of the peace

processes. Such cases included those in the Philippines (MILF and MNLF), China (Tibet), India (Assam and Nagaland), Myanmar, Papua New Guinea (Bougainville) and Thailand (south). In Africa, they came up in the Oromia and Ogaden peace processes, in Ethiopia, in Mozambique and in Mali, including in some cases issues of territorial and administrative decentralisation. Some border issues between states were addressed during the year with some progress made between Sudan and South Sudan, while the Eritrea-Ethiopia peace process was partially stalled.

Other recurring issues in various peace processes were related to **political power sharing** (in Burundi, the CAR, the DRC and South Sudan, to name a few cases). In others, struggles for political power were reflected in discussions on electoral issues, such as in Venezuela, Nicaragua and Palestine. In yet other contexts, the relevant issues on the negotiating agenda in the region were attempts to produce **unity governments or to integrate disputed factions** (an issue in the negotiations in Yemen and Palestine), discussions on holding elections (as the peace process in Palestine illustrates), discussions on preparing new constitutional texts (in Syria) and more specific issues, such as nuclear

proliferation and the sanctions system in countries involved in the agreement on Iran's atomic programme, or in the negotiations between North Korea and the United States to denuclearise the Korean peninsula.

Regarding the **evolution of the peace processes and negotiations**, it is usually possible to identify a great variety of trends: a good development of meetings leading to draft agreements; the establishment of negotiations where there had been no talks or the reactivation of dialogue after years of standstill; intense exploratory efforts fuelling expectations; rounds of negotiation that make no progress on key points, but keep a channel of dialogue open; situations of serious impasse and an absence of contact despite the efforts of third parties to facilitate negotiations; obstacles and difficulties in implementing agreements; and contexts in which violence and ceasefire violations have a profound impact on the prospects for peace processes. Our analysis of the different cases in 2019 confirms these diverse dynamics. There were also contexts in which significant progress or historic agreements were achieved, or where negotiations were resumed after years of no dialogue. However, there were difficulties, obstacles and setbacks in a significant number of cases, or deadlock persisted in the negotiations that prevented the substantive issues of the disputes from being addressed, among other issues.

Progress continued to be made in Africa in 2019, especially in the Horn of Africa (in the Ethiopian regions of Ogaden and Oromia), as well as in Mozambique, the Republic of the Congo, the DRC, the CAR, Sudan and between Sudan and South Sudan. Important agreements were also reached in most of these countries, reflecting the development of the peace negotiations. Due to their importance, two of these processes should be highlighted: **Mozambique and Sudan-South Sudan**. Regarding Mozambique, the government of Filipe Nyusi and the leader of RENAMO, Ossufo Momade, reached a historic peace agreement on 6 August, though it was overshadowed by the creation of a RENAMO splinter group called the RENAMO Military Junta, which resumed hostilities against the government. Although the peace process between Sudan and South Sudan was temporarily mired down during the serious crisis in Sudan, significant progress was subsequently made, which was reflected in a border delimitation agreement in October and in improved diplomatic relations between both countries.

Real progress was also made in various peace negotiations in Asia. The two peace processes that developed more positively as a whole were in **Afghanistan and the Philippines (MILF)**. In Afghanistan, there was so much progress in the formal negotiations between the US government and the Taliban that an agreement was almost signed in Camp David in September, but it was cancelled

at the last moment by Donald Trump. Similarly, important achievements were made both in the exploratory phase of possible negotiations between the government of Afghanistan and the Taliban and in the intra-Afghan dialogue. In the southern Philippines, the approval by referendum of the Bangsamoro Organic Law ushered in a new phase of the peace process focused on disarming the MILF and especially on the institutional development of the new Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, temporarily governed by the MILF leader. Partial progress occurred in other cases, such as in the two summits held by Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un in Hanoi and in the North Korean part of the Demilitarised Zone; in direct meetings (up to six) between the Philippine president and the leader and founder of the MNLF, Nur Misuari, to resume talks with such a group; in the resumption of negotiations between Manila and the NDF after many months of deadlock; in the many meetings between the Burmese government and armed groups that did and did not sign the nationwide ceasefire agreement; in the predisposition to dialogue demonstrated by the governments of Papua New Guinea and Bougainville following the referendum on independence; and in the

Progress continued to be made in Africa in 2019, especially in the Horn of Africa (in the Ethiopian regions of Ogaden and Oromia), as well as in Mozambique, the Republic of the Congo, the DRC, the CAR, Sudan and South Sudan

start of direct talks between the government of Thailand and the main armed group in the southern part of the country. **In Europe, progress was made in relation to Ukraine**, with the resumption of the Normandy negotiating format (Ukraine, Russia, Germany and France) and Ukraine's support for the aforementioned Steinmeier formula, though significant obstacles to resolving the underlying issues remained.

Other peace processes faced numerous difficulties and obstacles, such as those in the Americas. For the third consecutive year, the development of all the negotiating processes that took place in the Americas was marked by the fragility produced by the various crises. All the negotiations faced serious obstacles and were suspended at times, without attempts at reactivation to positively change course. The processes continued to be affected by serious mistrust between the parties and towards the facilitating actors, once again affecting attempts to overcome the different crises. They also took place in contexts of violence and even repression against the opposition, as happened in Nicaragua. **In Africa, various processes underwent numerous obstacles and difficulties, such as Burundi, Cameroon, Mali, Libya, Somalia and South Sudan**. These include the development of the processes in Burundi and Libya. In Burundi, regional initiatives to promote inclusive political dialogue failed and divisions appeared within the opposition coalition. Attempts to promote a political solution to the conflict in Libya were hampered by the escalation of violence and the internationalisation of the conflict.

The peace negotiations in Europe and the Middle East were characterised by deadlock and little or no progress

in general terms. The year 2019 was one of impasse in the peace process in Moldova (Transnistria), which was affected by the political upheaval in the country; in Serbia-Kosovo, paralysed since late 2018 with uncertain prospects for resuming due to each side's demands and positions; and in Cyprus, where no formal meetings were held in 2019, although there were informal meetings amidst rising tensions between Cyprus and Turkey over gas exploration in the eastern Mediterranean. In the different negotiating processes in the Middle East, dynamics of persistent stagnation prevailed, as in Israel-Palestine; rounds of meetings between the parties continued without results or with very limited results in terms of agreements or implementation pacts, as in Syria and the negotiations between the Hadi government and the Houthis in Yemen to implement the Stockholm Agreement; and parties directly and gradually distanced themselves from the agreements they had made previously, as illustrated by the Iranian nuclear programme, with continuous Iranian violations of the agreement reached in 2015 during the year following the US decision to withdraw from the agreement in 2018. In this context, Tehran gradually distanced itself from some of the commitments it had made in the deal in 2019. As the US extended its policy of imposing unilateral sanctions against Iran, a series of incidents occurred in the Gulf area, in Yemen and in Iraq, among other places, that led to a volatile scenario dangerously supportive of military escalation between Washington and Tehran. **Other processes in Africa were also affected by deadlock,** such as the negotiations between Eritrea-Ethiopia and Morocco-Western Sahara. Implementation of the peace agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia was partially blocked during the year as a consequence of many factors linked to internal political developments in both countries.

The development of all the peace processes that took place in the Americas was marked by the fragility produced by the various crises

Finally, regarding the **gender, peace and security agenda**, our analysis of the different peace processes in 2018 confirms, like in previous years, the obstacles that women face in participating in formal processes and the difficulties in incorporating a gender perspective in negotiations. **Despite this general observation, some formats and mechanisms have been designed to favour or guarantee greater female involvement in negotiating processes and integrating a gender perspective** in the agreements and their implementation. In this sense, the case of Colombia is paradigmatic. Colombian women's organisations continued to play a very important role in implementing the 2016 peace agreement. The CSIVI Special Advisory Group on Gender was active and presented its evaluation report on implementation, which criticised the blurring of gender as its central line. Civil society organisations also contributed to the report. Another one of the few examples of direct participation in a formal negotiating process was in Cyprus and its technical committee on gender equality. While it remained at a standstill in 2018,

the resumption of its activity was announced in 2019, focusing on issues of equality and climate change, although the committee provided very little information during the rest of the year. Other examples in 2019 included the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network (MWMN), which features female diplomats and civil society activists and announced the establishment of a network representation branch in Cyprus in 2019. The MWMN also established an office in Turkey, a country involved in armed conflict but one that currently lacks an open peace process.

In some cases, progress was even made, such as in Afghanistan and Papua New Guinea, which may lead to the formal participation of women in peace negotiations.

In Afghanistan, the government announced the inclusion of three women (out of a total of 12 members) in the negotiating team for future peace talks, while the Taliban declared that its delegation in Qatar would include women. Consisting of representatives from 20 countries, the Group of Friends of Women in Afghanistan was also created to guarantee women's rights in possible negotiations between Kabul and the Taliban.

In Papua New Guinea, the president of the Autonomous Bougainville Government guaranteed the presence of women in the team that must negotiate with the central government over the political status of the island of Bougainville. Likewise, the process in Mali highlighted the difficulties in truly implementing the commitments made in this area. UN Security Council Resolution 2480 urged the signatory parties to develop a road map to include the full participation of women in the peace process, although the version revised by the parties in July excluded female involvement once again.

Another notable element is the emergence of parallel or indirect spaces and mechanisms for participation in formal negotiating processes to facilitate women's involvement, although their ability to influence formal schemes was limited. Examples of this were initiatives in Venezuela, Syria, Yemen and Georgia. In Venezuela it was announced that one of the complementary tables to the National Dialogue Roundtable would be made up of women's organisations and other actors. In Syria and Yemen, the mechanisms created via the impetus of the UN special envoys in order to guarantee female participation in the processes beyond their involvement in the negotiating tables also continued to operate. Thus, the Yemeni technical advisors who participate in the Technical Advisory Group carried out various activities during the year and the Syrian Women's Advisory Group also remained active. Georgia had institutionalised mechanisms for indirect female participation in the peace process. Thus, in 2019 the government of Georgia maintained its practice of organising meetings between Georgian government representatives in the negotiations and representatives of civil society and the population affected by the conflict, including women. This was

supported by UN Women, which promoted the practice until it was internalised by the government and reflected in Georgia's national action plan on Resolution 1325.

In most contexts, including the examples above, whether alone or with the support of other local, national and international organisations, especially UN Women, women's organisations played an important role in advocating and lobbying for the start, continuation or resumption of peace processes, leading demonstrations, holding debate forums, carrying out awareness initiatives, presenting proposals to the negotiating parties and criticising the lack of women in formal political negotiations. Spaces organised or supported by the UN and the EU were used by female activists to convey demands, including calls for greater participation in negotiating processes, such as in Kosovo. In Myanmar, UN Women promoted different meetings to promote the implementation of Resolution 1325 and the women,

Most of the international peace processes continued to be characterised by the lack of gender architecture in 2019

peace and security agenda. In Sudan, women played a central role in the popular protests that led to the overthrow of the al-Bashir government. After the fall of the regime, dozens of feminist organisations in the country continued to demand structural changes related to the rights of women in the country, including the expansion of their participation in the executive and legislative bodies, Sudan's accession to CEDAW and a greater female presence in peace processes. In Cameroon, the South West / North West Women's Task Force (SNWOT) promoted the #CeaseFireNow campaign and noted that any conflict resolution initiative in the two regions should include them, both in national dialogue and in Parliament, where the proposal for a special statute for the regions was discussed. In Nicaragua, women's and feminist organisations continued to play a prominent role in the opposition movement and also showed their support for different initiatives, such as the national dialogue.

2. Peace negotiations in Africa

- Nineteen peace processes and negotiations were identified in Africa throughout 2019, accounting for 38% of the 50 peace processes worldwide.
- Attempts to promote a political solution to the conflict in Libya were hampered by the escalation of violence in the country, the role of key armed actors and continuous violations of the arms embargo.
- In Mozambique, the government and RENAMO signed a historic peace agreement that lays the foundations for the end of the conflict.
- Switzerland and the HD facilitated meetings between the government and separatist actors from the English-speaking regions of Cameroon.
- The implementation of the peace agreement reached in February between the government of the Somali region (Ethiopia) and the ONLF began with the launch of the DDR program.
- On 6 February, the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic was reached in Bangui between the country's authorities and 14 armed groups.
- The change of government in Sudan, after 30 years of the regime headed by Omar al-Bashir, gave new impetus to resolving the peace processes in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

This chapter provides an analysis of the main peace processes and negotiations in Africa in 2019. First, it examines the general characteristics and trends of the peace processes in the region. Second, it analyses the development of each case throughout the year, including references to the gender, peace and security agenda. In addition, at the beginning of the chapter there is a map identifying the countries in Africa that hosted peace negotiations during 2019.

Table 2.1. Summary of peace processes and negotiations in Africa in 2019

| Peace processes and negotiations | Negotiating actors | Third parties |
|---|---|--|
| Burundi | Government, political and social opposition grouped under the Conseil National pour le respect de l'Accord d'Arusha pour la Paix et la Réconciliation au Burundi et la Restauration d'un Etat de Droit (CNARED) | East African Community (EAC), UN |
| Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West and South West) | Government, political opposition (SDF, MRC) and separatist political opposition groups | Catholic Church, civil society organisations, Switzerland, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue |
| CAR | Government, armed groups belonging to the former Séléka coalition, anti-balaka militias | African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation (AU and ECCAS with the support of the UN, ICGLR, Angola, Gabon, Republic of the Congo and Chad), Community of Sant'Egidio, ACCORD, OIC, International Support Group (UN, EU, among others), Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, China, Russia, Sudan |
| DRC | Government, Alliance of the Presidential Majority, political and social opposition | Episcopal Conference of the Congo (CENCO), Church of Christ in the Congo, Angola, Tanzania, Uganda, Support Group for the Facilitation of the National Dialogue on the DRC led by the AU, SADC, International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), AU, EU, UN, OIF and USA |
| Eritrea – Ethiopia | Government of Eritrea and government of Ethiopia | United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, USA |
| Ethiopia (Ogaden) | Government, military political movement ONLF | Kenya, Eritrea, United Arab Emirates and Sweden |
| Ethiopia (Oromia) | Government, military political movement ONLF | -- |
| Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram) | Government of Nigeria, Boko Haram (Abubakar Shekau faction), Boko Haram (Abu Musab al-Barnawi faction) | -- |
| Libya | Presidential Council and Government of National Agreement (GAN), House of Representatives (CdR), National General Congress (CGN), LNA | Quartet (UN, Arab League, AU, EU), Italy, France, Germany, Russia and Turkey |
| Mali | Government, Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA), including the MNLA, MAA and HCUA, Platform, including GATIA, CMFPR, CPA and MAA faction | Algeria, France, ECOWAS, AU, UN, EU, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Carter Center, Civil Society Organizations, Mauritania |
| Morocco – Western Sahara | Morocco, Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro (POLISARIO) | UN, Algeria and Mauritania, Group of Friends of Western Sahara (France, USA, Spain, United Kingdom and Russia) |
| Mozambique | Government, RENAMO | National mediating team, Community of Sant'Egidio (Vatican), Catholic Church, UN, Southern African Development Community (SADC), AU, EU, Botswana, United Kingdom, South Africa, Switzerland, Tanzania |

| Peace processes and negotiations | Negotiating actors | Third parties |
|----------------------------------|--|---|
| Nigeria (Niger Delta) | Government, Pan-Niger Delta Forum (PANDEF), NIGER Delta Consultative Assembly, (NIDCA), Pan Niger Delta Peoples' Congress (PNDPC), Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) | -- |
| Republic of the Congo | Government, Ninja militias and the National Council of Republicans (CNR) of Frédéric Bintsamou (Pastor Ntoumi) | -- |
| Senegal (Casamance) | Government of Senegal, factions of the armed group Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC) | Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Community of Sant'Egidio, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau |
| Somalia | Federal government, leaders of the federal and emerging states (Puntland, Hirshabelle, Galmudug, Jubaland, South West), political-military movement Ahlu Sunna Wal-Jama'a, leaders of clans and sub-clans, Somaliland | UN, IGAD, Turkey, others |
| South Sudan | Government (SPLM), SPLM/A-in-Opposition (SPLM/A-IO) and a series of minor groups (SSOA, SPLM-FD and others) | "IGAD Plus": IGAD, which brings together Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia and Uganda; AU (Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Chad and Algeria), China, Russia, Egypt, Troika (USA, UK and Norway), EU, UN, South Sudan Council of Churches |
| Sudan¹ | Government of Sudan, "Sudan Call" opposition coalition formed by national opposition parties and the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF, coalition that brings together armed groups of South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur), Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), Sudan Liberation Movement, SLA-MM and SLA-AW factions, Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) | African Union High Level Panel on Sudan (AUHIP), Troika (USA, United Kingdom, Norway), Germany, AU, UNAMID, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Uganda |
| Sudan - South Sudan | Government of Sudan and government of South Sudan | IGAD, African Union Border Programme (AUBP), Egypt, Libya, USA, EU |

The peace negotiations in bold type are described in the chapter.

-- There are not third parties or there is no public proof of their existence

2.1 Negotiations in 2019: regional trends

Nineteen peace processes and negotiations were identified in Africa in 2019, accounting for 38% of the 50 peace processes around the world. This figure is lower than that of the year 2018, when 22 peace processes took place. The drop is due to the normalisation of relations between Djibouti and Eritrea, so their negotiations are no longer analysed in this chapter, and to the end of Ghanaian President Nana Akufo-Addo's mediation in the political crisis in Togo. At the ECOWAS summit in December 2018, the member countries hailed the efforts made to resolve the crisis between the Togolese government and the political opposition. Though far from being resolved, this crisis was channelled through the country's political institutions. Furthermore, the three peace processes and negotiations that took place in Sudan in 2018 were reduced to one at the end of the year. First, the "National Dialogue" promoted by Omar al-Bashir with the national opposition and armed groups came to an end with the fall of his government after three decades in power. This gave rise to a new negotiating process between the Military Junta and the national opposition, in which different foreign actors participated and exerted pressure for the formation of a civilian-military transitional government incorporating the opposition and its demands. Second, the new transitional government

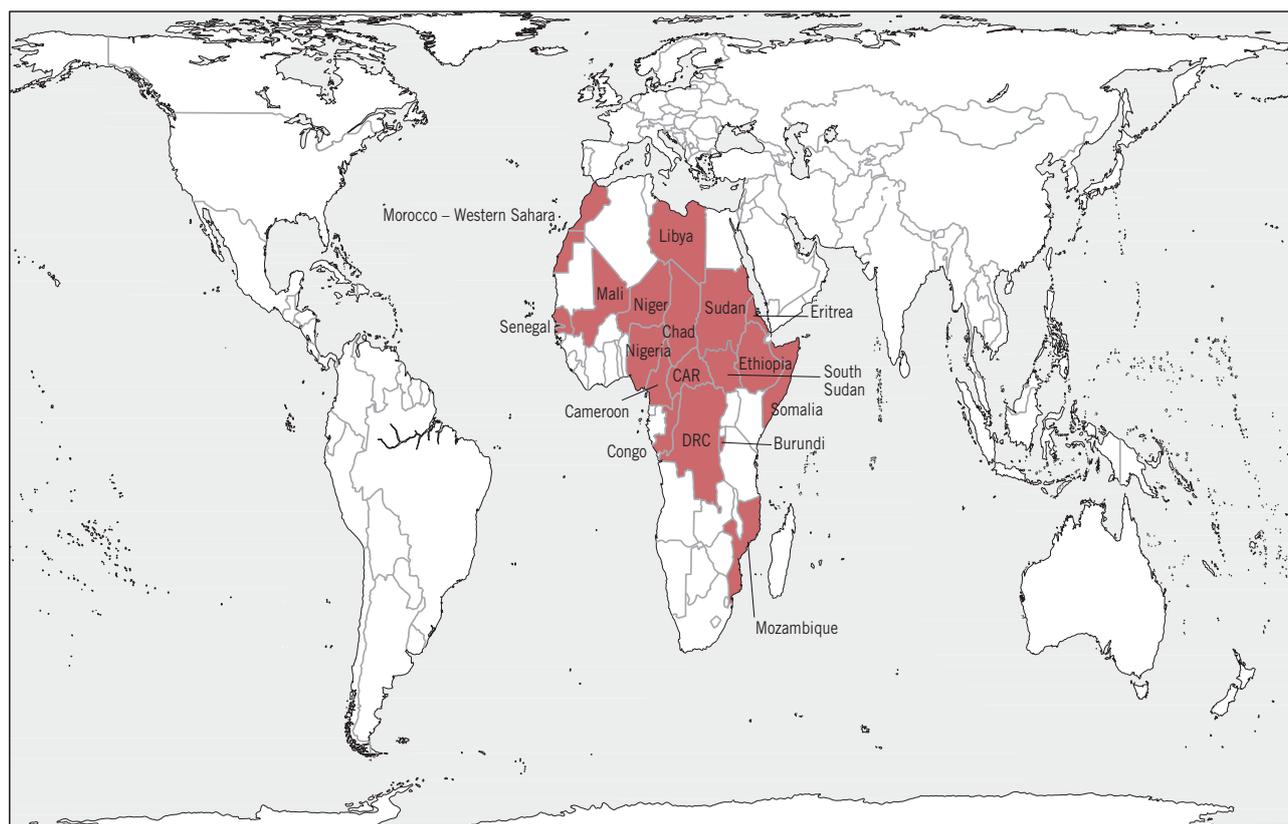
of Sudan merged the Darfur and "Two Areas" (South Kordofan and Blue Nile) peace processes into a single negotiating process in Juba for the purpose of achieving a final and stable peace for the whole country. Both processes (the post-al-Bashir transition and the negotiations with the armed groups of Darfur and South Kordofan and Blue Nile) are analysed jointly in the chapter. Finally, a new case was included due to the initiatives to establish dialogue between the government of Cameroon and the political and armed actors of the English-speaking majority regions of the country.

Nine of these 19 peace negotiations were linked to situations of armed conflict. This was in the case in Burundi, Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West and South West), Libya, Mali, the CAR, the Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram), Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan. The armed conflict in Ethiopia (Ogaden) ended in 2018. Nine other peace processes were related to crises: Eritrea-Ethiopia, Ethiopia (Oromia), Morocco-Western Sahara, Mozambique, Nigeria (Niger Delta), the DRC, the Republic of the Congo, Senegal (Casamance) and Sudan-South Sudan.

In relation to the actors involved in the negotiations, the year 2019 was characterised by continuity with respect

1. In 2019, the three peace processes and negotiations that were taking place in Sudan in 2018 were reduced to one, due to the end of the "National Dialogue" between the government and the opposition after the formation of a transitional government, as well as to the merger of distinct peace processes in Darfur and the "Two Areas" (South Kordofan and Blue Nile) into a single process.

Map 2.1. Peace negotiations in Africa in 2019



■ Countries with peace processes and negotiations in Africa in 2019

to 2018. In a high number of cases (eight of the 19) the negotiations exclusively involved the governments of the respective countries and armed groups or political-military movements. This was the case in Ethiopia (Ogaden), between the government and the armed group ONLF; in Ethiopia (Oromia), between the government and the Oromo armed group OLF; in Mozambique, between the government and the opposition group RENAMO; in the Lake Chad Region, in humanitarian meetings between the Nigerian government and factions of Boko Haram; in the Central African Republic (CAR), between the government and the different members of the former Séléka coalition and anti-balaka militias; in the Republic of the Congo, between the government and the political-military movement of Reverend Ntoumi; in Senegal (Casamance), between the government and the different factions of the MFDC; and in South Sudan, between the government, the armed group SPLM/A-IO and other minor armed groups.

Virtually the other half of the peace processes (eight of the 19) were characterised by a more complex scene of actors, with governments, armed groups and political and social opposition groups. This was the case in Mali, where the negotiating process has involved national authorities and many different armed and political actors in the Azawad region (north) in recent years; in Libya, between political and military actors that control different areas of the country; in Nigeria (Niger Delta), between the government and political and armed actors of the Delta region; in Somalia, between the federal

government, the leadership of the federal states and other political and military actors in the country; and in Sudan, between the government and the political opposition and insurgent groups from various regions of the country. Other cases involved only government actors and the political and social opposition. This was the case in Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West and South West), where the national dialogue has involved political and social actors, and exploratory contacts have involved some separatist political actors; in Burundi, where there were meetings involving the government and CNARED groups; and in the DRC, where negotiations involved the government and opposition parties and coalitions.

Meanwhile, other negotiating processes were conducted by the governments of neighbouring countries as part of interstate disputes. Examples of this included the peace process between Sudan and South Sudan and the negotiations between Eritrea and Ethiopia. The negotiating process in Morocco-Western Sahara involves a government (the Moroccan government) and a political-military actor (the POLISARIO Front) of a self-proclaimed independent territory that lacks international recognition, but is considered a decolonising territory by the UN. Algeria and Mauritania met with Morocco and the POLISARIO Front in an unsuccessful attempt to promote one of the most stalled peace processes in recent decades.

All the processes and negotiations analysed in Africa were supported by third parties with the exception of Ethiopia (Oromia), Nigeria (Niger Delta), the Lake

Chad Region (Boko Haram) and the Republic of the Congo. Although there are many cases where the actors involved in mediation, facilitation and accompaniment were publicly known, in others these efforts were carried out discreetly and away from the public eye. In all cases with third parties, there was more than one actor performing mediation and facilitation roles. The UN predominated in this regard, as it was involved in ten cases: Burundi, Libya, Mali, Morocco-Western Sahara, Mozambique, the CAR, the DRC, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan. Another prominent actor was the AU, involved in eight cases as part of its African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA): Libya, Mali, Mozambique, the CAR, the DRC, Sudan, South Sudan and Sudan-South Sudan.

African regional intergovernmental organisations also participated as third parties, such as the East African Community (EAC) in Burundi; the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Mali; the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) in the CAR and the DRC; the Economic Community of Central African States (CEEAC) in the CAR; the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in Mozambique; the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) in Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan-South Sudan. In addition to African intergovernmental organisations, other intergovernmental organisations from other continents participated as third parties there, such as the EU in Mozambique, Mali, the CAR, the DRC, South Sudan and between South Sudan and South Sudan; the Arab League in Libya; and the International Organisation of La Francophonie (OIF) in the CAR.

States also played a leading role as third parties in peace processes and negotiations in Africa. Two cases had only state third parties: the mediation and facilitation efforts of Saudi Arabia, the USA and especially the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in the negotiations between Eritrea and Ethiopia; and the role played by Kenya, Eritrea, the UAE and Sweden in the negotiations between the Ethiopian government and the armed group ONLF. In the remaining cases with state mediators, many governments from both Africa and other continents were involved in processes in which other mediators and facilitators also participated. Also notable was the role played by local and international third-party religious actors, such as the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Community of Sant'Egidio (Vatican) in the CAR; the local Catholic Church and the Community of Sant'Egidio in Mozambique; the Community of Sant'Egidio in the Senegalese region of Casamance; the Episcopal Conference of the Congo (CENCO) and the Church of Christ in the Congo in the DRC; the Anglophone General Conference (AGC), formed by Catholic, Protestant and Muslim leaders in Cameroon; and the South Sudan Council of Churches in South Sudan.

Amidst the proliferation of mediating actors, **third parties frequently participated in joint formats**, such as groups of friends and support groups. This was the case with the Group of Friends of Western Sahara (France, USA, Spain, the United Kingdom and Russia) in the negotiating process between Morocco and the POLISARIO Front and the International Support Group (which includes the UN and the EU) in the talks in the CAR. Other coordination formats included the IGAD Plus, which facilitates dialogue in South Sudan and which consists of the IGAD, the five members of the African Union High-Level Ad Hoc Committee (Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Chad and Algeria), the states of the Troika (the USA, United Kingdom and Norway), the EU, the AU and the UN. Also notable was the African Union Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation, which was involved in the CAR and promoted by the AU and the CEEAC, with support from the UN, ICGLR, Angola, Gabon, the Republic of the Congo and Chad, and coexisted with other mediators in the CAR. **In some cases, the proliferation of actors and parallel processes prompted misgivings.** Thus, new actors appeared that had thus far been absent in the political negotiations, like Russia and Sudan in the peace process in the CAR since 2018, and Russia and Turkey in Libya in 2019, which ramped up tension between the actors.

In all negotiations with third parties in Africa, there was more than one actor performing mediation and facilitation roles

The topics of the negotiations were diverse in nature, though prominent among them were **ceasefires and cessations of hostilities**. **Violations were reported in virtually all recently signed ceasefires**, highlighting the fragility of this part of the peace processes and the lack of political desire to stick to the agreement. In Ethiopia, the armed groups ONLF (in Ogaden) and OLF (in Oromia) declared unilateral ceasefires in response to the government's confidence-building measures, which resulted in cessations of hostilities underpinned by peace agreements, although in Oromia there were still some sporadic clashes between some sectors of the armed group OLF and the Ethiopian Armed Forces after the DDR agreement was signed in January. The various ceasefires in force in Libya were systematically violated, including the one in the Libyan capital that had been in place since September 2018, and there were persistent violations of the arms embargo by several regional and international actors supporting one side or another. In Mali, signatories of the 2015 Algiers Peace Agreement were involved in clashes in the middle of the year that broke the ceasefire. In the CAR, despite the start of implementation of the agreement reached in February between the government and the 14 armed groups, there were several ceasefire violations and cases of abuse against the civilian population. In Sudan, the Transitional Military Council (TMC) declared a unilateral ceasefire in April, followed by a suspension of hostilities in the Blue Nile and South Kordofan areas by the SPLM-N, although both sides subsequently accused each other of violating the ceasefire. Finally, in South Sudan, the parties that have signed the Revitalised

Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) upheld the ceasefire, though it was violated on some occasions during the year.

Another aspect related to security was **the issue of the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of combatants (DDR), which occurred in some peace processes**, such as in Mali, Mozambique, Ethiopia (Oromia), Ethiopia (Ogaden) and South Sudan. In Mali, 5,000 fighters were incorporated into the DDR programme provided for by the 2015 agreement and 600 fighters and 18 rebel officers were selected by the security forces. In addition, another 420 officers who had defected during the 2012 crisis announced their return to the Malian Armed Forces. In Mozambique, the agreement on disarmament reached between the government and RENAMO in 2018 was staged with the signing of the Maputo Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, which represented the culmination of the negotiations begun in 2016 by the late historical leader of RENAMO, Afonso Dhlakama, who was replaced as leader of the group in January 2019 by Ossufo Momade, and Mozambican President Filipe Nyusi. Agreements were reached in early 2019 to start DDR programmes in the Ethiopian regions of Oromia and Ogaden. In South Sudan, difficulties related to integrating SPLA-IO members into the South Sudanese Armed Forces, among other factors, have continued to affect the creation of the country's transitional government.

Regarding the **gender, peace and security agenda**, there was a widespread lack of women in the negotiating processes and in the agendas of issues of the different peace agreements reached during the year 2019. Notably, however, women's movements and organisations demanded to actively participate in most peace processes. Yet in different countries, such as the CAR, the DRC and Somalia, women raised the proportion for effective presence in state institutions. In Cameroon, a women's coalition called the South West/North West Women's Task Force (SNWOT) promoted the #CeaseFireNow campaign and said that any conflict resolution initiative in the two regions should include them, both in national dialogue and in Parliament, where the proposal to grant special status to the regions was being discussed. In Mali, UN Security Council Resolution 2480 urged the signatory parties to develop a road map that included the full participation of women, although the revised roadmap adopted by the parties on 12 July once again excluded women's participation in the peace process.

There were two cases of positive change in relation to the gender, peace and security agenda. In Somalia, the development of the National Action Plan to promote the effective implementation of Resolution 1325 began

in September. In Sudan, women played a central role in the popular protests that led to the overthrow of al-Bashir's government. After the fall of the regime, dozens of Sudanese feminist organisations continued to demand structural changes in relation to women's rights in the country, demanding greater participation in the executive and legislative bodies, asking for Sudan to join the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and calling for greater involvement in the peace processes.

There was a widespread lack of women in the negotiating processes and in the agendas of issues of the different peace agreements reached in Africa in 2019

Regarding the development of the negotiations in 2019, progress continued in the Horn of Africa (in the Ethiopian regions of Ogaden and Oromia), Mozambique, the Republic of the Congo, the DRC, the CAR and Sudan, as well as between Sudan and South Sudan. In most of these countries, historical agreements were also reached. There were positive developments in and implementation of the different peace processes in Ethiopia, with the signing of

an agreement in February between the Somali regional government and the armed group ONLF to proceed with the disarmament and reintegration of their former combatants, as well as between the regional government of Oromia and the armed group OLF in late January. The international community wanted to reward the leaders who had driven these agreements, as well as the peace agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia reached in 2018, by awarding the Nobel Peace Prize to Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, chief architect of these changes, together with the collaboration of other regional actors. However, in 2019 the implementation of the agreement between both countries was partially stalled. In Mozambique, despite the signing of the historic peace agreement on 6 August 2019, dissidents opposed to the leadership of Ossufo Momade set up a splinter group called the Military Junta of RENAMO, which resumed hostilities against the government. In the Republic of the Congo, the government of Denis Sassou-Nguesso, who has been in power for 40 years, except for an interlude from 1992 to 1997, lifted the ban on the party led by Frédéric Bintsamou, aka Pastor Ntoumi, in April. The ban had been imposed in April 2016, when Ntoumi's former Ninja militias resumed attacks in the Pool region until a new peace agreement was signed in December 2017. In the DRC, Felix Tshisekedi became the new president after defeating Joseph Kabila's successor in controversial elections in

which opposition candidate Martin Fayulu claimed electoral victory. However, Tshisekedi was forced to establish a coalition government with the official FCC coalition, which maintained a large majority in the National Assembly, thereby highlighting the continued control of the reins of power by Joseph Kabila and his followers. In the CAR, despite the peace agreement signed between the government and the 14 main

armed groups of the country and the hopeful start of implementation of various aspects of the agreement, the difficulties were enormous, there was still a climate of popular distrust towards the agreement, there were outbreaks of violence and some groups even abandoned the peace agreement. In Sudan, after the overthrow of Omar al-Bashir, a new unified process was begun in the search for peace in the different war-torn regions of the country under a new transitional government. Although the process to solve the conflict between Sudan and South Sudan was temporarily paralysed during the serious crisis in Sudan, significant progress was later made that resulted in a border delimitation agreement in October and in improved diplomatic relations between both countries.

In Libya and Mali, attempts to promote a political solution were hampered by the intensification of violence and the internationalisation of the conflict

In contrast, **other processes faced many obstacles and difficulties during the year** (in Burundi, Cameroon, Mali, Libya, Somalia and South Sudan). Notably, Burundi, where regional initiatives to promote inclusive political dialogue failed, and divisions also took place within the Burundian opposition coalition that eventually led to the start of contacts between government representatives and some of these opposition leaders. In Cameroon, the government of Paul Biya took some steps to respond to pressure from the international community. Amidst the prolonged and severe climate of violence in the English-speaking majority region, exploratory contacts took place between representatives of the Swiss foreign ministry and the Center for Humanitarian Dialogue with some members of the separatist opposition in order to convey their visions to the national dialogue proposed by Paul Biya and held in early October. The recommendations arising from the dialogue were approved by the Cameroonian Parliament, though they were considered insufficient by the opposition and the insurgent movement. In Mali, despite the start of the DDR programme, the armed conflict resumed with clashes in May and July, which meant an end to the ceasefire. In addition, the deterioration of the security situation in the central and northern regions of the country due to the actions of groups that had not signed the agreement made implementing it difficult. Attempts to promote a political solution to the conflict in Libya were hampered by the intensification of violence and the internationalisation of the conflict with countries taking up sides (Egypt, UAE, Saudi Arabia and Russia supported Haftar's LNA, while the GNA was supported by Turkey and Qatar), division within the EU and erratic policy in Washington. In Somalia there was significant tension between the federal government and the state governments due to attempts by the former to control and supervise the electoral and configuration processes of latter. Finally, given the difficulties in beginning implementation of the R-ARCSS agreement in South Sudan with the formation of the national unity government, the parties agreed to a new extension of the transition phase, preserving the ceasefire.

Finally, **some peace processes were totally stalled throughout the year**, such as the negotiations between Eritrea and Ethiopia and between Morocco and Western Sahara. The implementation of the peace agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia was partially blocked during the year as a result of several factors linked to their respective domestic political developments. In late 2018, the first direct contact took place between Morocco and Western Sahara after six years and in early 2019 a new round of meetings was held, spreading optimism. However, the resignation of former German President Horst Köhler as the special envoy of the UN Secretary General for health reasons paralysed the process diplomatically and fuelled the frustration of the POLISARIO Front.

2.2. Case study analysis

Great Lakes and Central Africa

| Burundi | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Negotiating actors | Government, political and social opposition grouped under the Conseil National pour le respect de l'Accord d'Arusha pour la Paix et la Réconciliation au Burundi et la Restauration d'un Etat de Droit (CNARED) |
| Third parties | East African Community, UN |
| Relevant agreements | Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi (2000), Global Ceasefire Agreement (2006) |

Summary:

The mediation efforts started by Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere in 1998 and brought to a head by South African President Nelson Mandela took shape with the signing of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement in 2000, which laid the foundations for ending the conflict in Burundi that began in 1993. Although this agreement did not fully curb the violence until a few years later (with the signing of the pact between the FNL and the government, in 2006, and the beginning of its implementation in late 2008), it marked the beginning of the political and institutional transition that formally ended in 2005. The approval of a new Constitution formalising the distribution of political and military power between the two main Hutu and Tutsi communities and the elections that led to the formation of a new government laid the future foundations for overcoming the conflict and provided the best chance to put an end to the ethno-political violence that had affected the country since independence in 1962. However, the authoritarian drift of the government after the 2010 elections, denounced as fraudulent by the opposition, overshadowed the reconciliation process and sparked demonstrations by the political opposition. Different signs of how the situation is deteriorating in the country include institutional deterioration and the shrinking of political space for the opposition, Nkurunziza's controversial candidacy for a third term and his victory in a presidential election also described as fraudulent in April 2015, the subsequent escalation of political violence, the failed coup attempt in May 2015,

human rights violations and the emergence of new armed groups. Since then, the EAC has unsuccessfully facilitated political talks between the government and the CNARED coalition, which groups together the political and social opposition, part of which is in exile for being considered responsible for or complicit in the coup d'état of 2015.

The peace process promoted by the Commonwealth of East African States (EAC) in Burundi remained completely stagnant. However, there were divisions within the Burundian opposition coalition that, in the end, made it possible to initiate contacts between the government and some of these opposition leaders during 2019. While part of the political opposition aligned with the values of the international community by focusing efforts on ensuring that the 2020 elections are free and transparent, other groups demanded that President Pierre Nkurunziza be arrested for crimes against humanity. In January, the government reiterated its refusal to talk with the opposition, holding it accountable for the attempted coup d'état of 2015 and asking the EAC governments to extradite their members to Burundi. In addition, the attorney general and the president of the Supreme Court ordered the confiscation of the property of the nine incarcerated members of the military and 32 opposition activists and exiled journalists accused of supporting the coup d'état, increased pressure on and persecuted the political opposition, demonstrating the judicialisation of the conflict, the fragile separation of powers in the country and Nkurunziza's efforts to weaken the already fragile political opposition in the face of the upcoming elections, as highlighted by opposition leaders such as Vital Nshimirimana and Alexis Sinduhije. Four opposition parties and former Vice President Frédéric Bamvuginyumvira withdrew from the CNARED opposition coalition² in January, blaming the coalition president for deviating from his main mission, the restoration of the 2005 Constitution and the 2000 Arusha Agreement. At the EAC Heads of State Summit held on 1 February, the official facilitator of the Inter-Burundi Dialogue, former Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa, presented his final report, in which he denounced the government and the opposition's boycott of the different rounds of negotiations, the lack of EAC summits dedicated to the crisis, the lack of clarity about funding mechanisms and the lack of coordination between key regional and international actors. The EAC leaders pledged to internally consult the steps to take and appointed the presidents of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania to lead the mediation efforts.

In early August, the exiled opposition platform CNARED issued a press release discussing the conditions for its participation in the 2020 elections, which included opening the political space and ending the persecution

Secret contacts between the government of Burundi and political opposition groups took place during the year

of members and supporters of the opposition. CNARED urged the government to collaborate with all Burundian political agents, inside and outside the country, to agree on how to hold credible and inclusive elections in 2020. It also urged the international community to continue pressing the government to create an environment conducive to holding fair elections. In this regard, the UN Human Rights Council said that Burundi had to make drastic changes so that the 2020 elections could be considered credible. The executive secretary of the platform, Anicet Niyonkuru, requested a meeting with the government to agree on the preconditions for the return to Burundi of the members of CNARED, whether they were prosecuted or not. His decision was rejected by other political leaders in exile, particularly those who had resigned from CNARED in early March, who compared it to capitulation. **Secret contacts between the parties took place during the year, according to anonymous diplomatic sources.** Moderates in the Burundian government said that some steps had to be taken to overcome the crisis, which has plunged the country into a situation of violence, diplomatic isolation and deep economic crisis. Hardliners of the historical CNDD-FDD party refused to make concessions, afraid of losing all power.

In this regard, a government delegation headed by the Ombudsman, former Interior Minister Edouard Nduwimana (an ally of Nkurunziza), met with CNARED representatives between 28 August and 2 September in Nairobi. Nduwimana's spokesman released a statement that the meeting was informal and had taken place after several previous meetings held in and outside Burundi with political agents as part of the Ombudsman's usual mandate. The statement said that the meeting had not been part of any official negotiating process and that the Ombudsman did not have a mandate from Nkurunziza. In addition, discussions had focused on the release of political prisoners, the opening of the political sphere, an examination of the composition of the National Independent Electoral Commission, the issuance of passports for some members of the opposition in exile, their repatriation in one group, the annulment of the arrest warrants of some members of the opposition in exile and the provision of security guards for those returning to Burundi³. The statement also underscored that the Nairobi meeting would be the last until the end of the current electoral cycle in 2020. In response, CNARED spokesman Onesime Nduwimana rejected the Ombudsman's statement and insisted that negotiations had been held between CNARED and a government delegation with the approval of the government of Burundi. A senior government official finally acknowledged that Nduwimana had been sent by Nkurunziza, and that the statement had been published only because it had been demanded by "hardliners"

2. CNARED consists of 22 opposition political parties and movements led by Jean Minani, who has been president of the National Assembly twice and the party leader of FRODEBU.

3. IWACU, "Backlash from Burundi Ombudsman", 23 September 2019.

in the government. In early October, Anicet Niyonkuru visited Burundi and on 7 October, after a meeting with the assistant to the Interior Minister, Tharcisse Niyongabo, he announced that he was in Bujumbura to hold talks regarding the return of all exiled CNARED members. That same day, the permanent secretary of the Ministry of the Interior told the media that the exiled political leaders on trial could return to Burundi, but that they would have to answer for their alleged crimes and would be tried upon their return. The apparent opening of the government has also extended to the former colonial power, Belgium, since in 2016 Burundi called its ambassador to Belgium for consultations and a new ambassador was not appointed until October 2019. In addition, CNDD-FDD General Secretary Evariste Ndayishimiye met with the president of the AU Commission and diplomatic sources indicated that there had been a slight reduction in violence. **Another factor that had pushed the government to explore possible contacts with the opposition was the division within CNARED⁴.** On 10 September, eight former CNARED members created a new opposition platform in exile called the Coalition of Burundian Opposition Forces for the Restoration of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement. In a statement issued on 23 August in which they called for the postponement or boycott of the elections, they indicated that preparations for them were taking place in a climate of fear and a shrinking political space and highlighted hate speech, acts of harassment and restrictions on civil and political rights, such as the freedom of expression. They also regretted that the dialogue conducted by the EAC had not yielded the expected results.

Gender, peace and security

Although women participated in the previous Arusha peace process, their presence has been declining. In recent attempts to establish an Inter-Burundian Dialogue, women were excluded from the political negotiations. However, they still play an important role in parliamentary institutions. While the constitutional quota of 30% representation in the National Assembly (36.4%) and the Senate (47%) was reached and exceeded, the representation of women in local decision-making remains low. They account for 17% of the members of the colline councils (2015 elections), 32.7% of the heads of municipalities and 6.4% of the heads of the collines. From 26 to 31 August, the assistant to the UN Secretary-General for Africa, Bintou Keita, visited Burundi and met with representatives of the government, the opposition, the international community and especially youth organisations, women's organisations and religious organisations.

On local developments, between 11 and 22 November 2019, the network Abakanguriramahoro (Women Network for Peace and Dialogue)⁵, created in 2015 by the association Dushirehamwe and the support of UN Women, conducted six pilot training workshops with 144 young women in the provinces of Bururi, Rumonge, Rutana, Cankuzo, Ruyigi and Karusi. This training led to the creation of a branch of young mediators within the network. The objective of this new organisation is to transfer responsibilities for social cohesion and peacebuilding to the next generation. These young mediators had been selected by female mediators of the network based on various criteria, such as their age (18-25 years), entrepreneurship and community leadership experience in their place of residence. After five years of activity, the Abakanguriramahoro network found that the participation of young women in public life was low. The network had identified issues and challenges to consider, such as the difficulty in being aware of their potential and their role within the community, cultural barriers, a lack of trust, fear, the violent debates of young political party activists, ignorance around channels of socio-political integration and poverty.

| CAR | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Negotiating actors | Government, armed groups belonging to the former Seleka Coalition, Anti-balaka militias |
| Third parties | The African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation (AU and ECCAS, with the support of the UN, ICGLR, Angola, Gabon, the Rep. of the Congo and Chad), Community of Sant'Egidio, ACCORD, International Support Group (UN, EU, among others), Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, China, Russia, Sudan |
| Relevant agreements | Republican pact for peace, national reconciliation and reconstruction in the CAR (2015), Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities (June 2017), Khartoum Political Accord for Peace and Reconciliation (Bangui, 6 February 2019) |

Summary:

Since gaining independence in 1960, the situation in the Central African Republic has been characterized by ongoing political instability, leading to numerous coups d'état and military dictatorships. After the 2005 elections won by François Bozizé, which consolidated the coup d'état perpetrated previously by the latter, several insurgency groups emerged in the north of the country, which historically has been marginalized and is of Muslim majority. In December 2012 these groups forced negotiations to take place. In January 2013, in Libreville, François Bozizé's Government and the coalition of armed groups, called Séléka, agreed to a transition Government, but Séléka decided to break the agreement and took power, overthrowing Bozizé. Nevertheless, self-defence groups

4. The East African, "Burundi's beleaguered government reaches out to opponents", 10 October 2019.

5. Since January 2015, UN Women has supported the creation of a network of women that, together with local authorities and civil society, has helped to strengthen effective female participation in local and nationwide mediation initiatives. This network, known as Abakanguriramahoro (Women Network for Peace and Dialogue), has 534 mediators belonging to more than 200 civil society organisations working in the 129 municipalities of the country.

(anti-balaka), sectors in the Army and supporters of Bozizé rebelled against the Séléka Government, creating a climate of chaos and generalized impunity. In December 2014 a new offensive brought an end to the Séléka Government and a transition Government led by Catherine Samba-Panza was instated. Regional leaders, headed by the Congolese Denis Sassou-Nguesso facilitated dialogue initiatives in parallel to the configuration of a national dialogue process, which was completed in May 2015. Some of the agreements reached were implemented, such as the holding of the elections to end the transition phase, but the disarmament and integration of guerrilla members into the security forces is still pending, and contributing to ongoing insecurity and violence. The various regional initiatives have come together in a single negotiating framework, the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation launched in late 2016, under the auspices of the AU and ECCAS with the support of the UN, which established the Libreville Roadmap in July 2017.

Important and positive steps were taken during the year regarding the peace process in the country, although it faced many obstacles. **On 6 February, the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic was signed in Bangui between the authorities of the country and 14 armed groups (“the Agreement”) after the peace talks conducted in Khartoum (Sudan) from 24 January to 5 February** as part of the African Union Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the CAR, under the auspices of the AU. The leaders of these armed groups control approximately 80% of the country. Three of them (UPC, MPC and 3R) became special military advisors, while other leaders assumed positions within the government. The agreement, the eighth in six years, includes the formation of an inclusive government, a truth and reconciliation commission, an investigation commission to determine the crimes committed, the creation of special mixed security units that insurgents can join over the course of a two-year transition period, the commitment to hold free elections and the creation of an executive committee to monitor the agreement co-chaired by the AU, the government and the armed groups. Although the climate of violence and human rights violations did improve following the agreement, attacks by armed groups continued against civilians. MINUSCA and the Central African Armed Forces continued their armed actions and there were clashes between the armed groups that signed the agreement.

The agreement does not establish any amnesty, but it does give the president discretionary powers to grant pardons. Some analysts pointed to the role played by countries such as Russia, China and Sudan in supporting implementation of the agreement. The formation of the new government in March sparked protests, as it only included representatives of six armed groups. The insurgents rejected the prime minister as interlocutor and demanded direct conversations with the president. On 4 March, five groups rejected the

government and two withdrew from the agreement. The AU then organised a meeting in Addis Ababa to review the proposal for a new government and include representatives of the excluded groups. On 22 March, the formation of the new government was announced, with representatives of 12 groups. In April, the UN, the AU and the EU travelled to Bangui to try to convince the armed groups to respect the agreement.

The agreement also included a review of the status and remuneration of former heads of state, a demand made by former presidents François Bozizé and Michel Djotodia, who participated in the peace process, though it was rejected by some groups. There was still popular distrust of the agreement, especially by the political opposition, while preparations began for the presidential, legislative and local elections planned for 2020 and 2021, which are an integral part of the inclusive political process. In addition, anti-balaka groups were unhappy with the agreement, claiming that it had been more beneficial for ex-Séléka groups. Anti-balaka leaders Patrice-Edouard Nguissona and Alfred Yekatom were being tried at the ICC in The Hague, while no ex-Séléka leader has been handed over to the ICC. Victims’ groups criticised the agreement, saying that it protected the militias from prosecution. However, FDPC leader Abdoulaye Miskine was arrested in Chad in November. Though he had signed the February agreement, Miskine had not assumed his position as a special military advisor and finally rejected the agreement.

The executive monitoring committee was established, the highest decision-making body for implementing the agreement. It met on 14 June, 31 July and 27 September and paid special attention to violations of the agreement. Government and civil society representatives called on guarantors and facilitators, including MINUSCA, to play a more proactive role, particularly through the application of punitive measures against offenders. For the first time since the agreement was signed, the government and 13 of the 14 signatory armed groups met in Bangui on 23 and 24 August. The meeting was co-chaired by Prime Minister Firmin Ngrebada and the special representative and head of the AU Office in the CAR. The special representative for the CAR and head of MINUSCA and representatives of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), as well as Angola, Cameroon, Chad, Equatorial Guinea and the DRC, also participated. The parties agreed to end violence against the civilian population, accelerate the cessation of hostilities, restore state authority and improve communication. They also stressed the need to punish signatories who do not comply with the agreement. Although it held several meetings and initiated the disarmament of its combatants, in September the armed group 3R announced the resignation of its leader as a military

Efforts began to implement the agreement reached in Khartoum in February between the CAR government and 14 armed groups

advisor in charge of the Special Mixed Security Units in the northwest. MINUSCA forced this group to disarm. The DDR programme started off slowly. In July, MINUSCA noted that 450 rebels from five armed groups had laid down their weapons in the western part of the country and 10 groups had shared their lists of combatants. The Special Mixed Security Units were also created, consisting of members of the security forces and former combatants of the armed groups.

Gender, peace and security

Women were absent from spaces of decision-making and political negotiation initiatives and processes. According to the UN Secretary-General's report on the country, most of the mechanisms for implementing and supervising the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic reached in February were operational, though with limited female participation. Although the UN urged the integration of gender into all components of the mission mandate established by the resolutions of the UN Security Council, there was a lack of implementation and the gender dimension was not integrated into government negotiation initiatives. However, MINUSCA tried to promote the spread of the agreement among civil society organisations, religious groups, women's groups and youth groups with the aim of encouraging its appropriation by the actors.

| DRC | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Negotiating actors | Government, Alliance of the Presidential Majority, political and social opposition |
| Third parties | Episcopal Conference of the Congo (CENCO), Church of Christ in the Congo, Angola, Tanzania, Uganda, Support Group for the Facilitation of the National Dialogue in the DRC led by the AU, SADC, International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), AU, EU, UN, OIF and USA |
| Relevant agreements | Sun City Agreement, Pretoria Agreement and Luanda Agreement (2002); Global and Inclusive Agreement on Transition in the DRC (2002); Comprehensive, Inclusive Peace Accord in the DRC (2016) |

Summary:

The demands for democratization in the nineties led to a succession of rebellions that culminated with the so-called "African first world war" (1998-2003). The signing of several peace agreements from 2002 to 2003 led to the withdrawal of foreign troops and the shaping of a National Transition Government (NTG) integrating the previous Government, the political opposition and the main insurgent actors, in an agreement to share political power. Since 2003, the NTG was led by President Joseph Kabila and four vice-presidents, two of whom from the former insurgence.

The NTG drafted a Constitution, voted in 2005. In 2006 legislative and presidential elections were held and Kabila was elected president in a climate of tension and accusations of fraud. In the 2011 elections, which Kabila also won, there were many irregularities, contributing to fuel the instability. Since then the political discussion has focused on ending his second mandate. In today's deep crisis, there is a confluence of broken promises of democratization (Constitutional breaches and the holding of elections on the date agreed), ubiquitous poverty and chronic violence, and the Government's control is growingly dependant on security forces that are largely dysfunctional. President Kabila's attempts to hold on to power beyond the end of the second term (the last permitted by the Constitution) which should have ended on 19 December 2016, is squandering over a decade of progress. The governmental majority hopes to retain power by delaying the presidential elections, while the opposition wants to force the start of a rapid transition that will end Kabila's mandate and lead to elections. The AU facilitated a political dialogue between the Government and the main opposition platforms and parties, although it was the Episcopal Conference (CENCO), who managed to bring the Government and the main opposition coalition, Rassemblement, to sit at the negotiating table and reach an agreement on 31 December 2016. Although the agreement stipulated that elections must be held in 2017, they were finally postponed until December 2018.

The first peaceful transition of power in the history of the DRC took place on 24 January 2019 with the inauguration of Félix Tshisekedi

The first peaceful transition of power in the history of the DRC took place on 24 January 2019 when Félix Tshisekedi was sworn in as the new president of the country following his victory in the controversial presidential, national and provincial legislative elections held on 30 December under suspicion of irregularities and alleged electoral fraud. There was also an opening of the political space and an improvement in the security situation during the year. Developments in 2018 centred on the negotiations between the government and the opposition and preparations for the elections, during which there was a serious increase in political violence and insurgent activity in the provinces of Ituri, North and South Kivu (east) and in the Kasai region (centre), as well as the tension stemming from the Ebola outbreak in the province of North Kivu (east). The implementation of the peace agreement in 2017 and 2018 was affected by the division of the opposition as a result of the leadership vacuum after the death of Étienne Tshisekedi, the historical leader of the opposition UDPS party in early 2017.

Amid accusations of electoral fraud by candidate Martin Fayulu and his Lamuka coalition, on 19 January the Constitutional Court confirmed Félix Tshisekedi's victory by a narrow margin over the second candidate, Martin Fayulu, with the ruling party's candidate, Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary, finishing third. The SADC and various African countries such as Egypt, which assumed the presidency of the AU in February, endorsed the announcement and hailed the transfer

of power. Both Tshisekedi and Kabila considered the results good, though this endorsement of the results was interpreted by some sources as a possible deal to block the rise of Martin Fayulu. Indeed, Martin Fayulu filed a petition before the Constitutional Court alleging electoral fraud and stating that he would have received 62% of the votes and Tshisekedi 18%, according to this estimates. The National Episcopal Conference of the Congo (CENCO), which deployed 40,000 electoral observers, also publicly stated that the official results did not match its own conclusions. Some governments and diplomatic sources also questioned the official results.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) also announced the results of the legislative elections, in which the ruling Common Front for Congo (FCC) coalition maintained a large majority in the National Assembly, as well as in the provincial assemblies. The FCC won 361 of the 485 seats in Parliament, while the coalition to which Félix Tshisekedi's UDPS belonged, Cap pour le Changement (CACH), won only 49 seats, compared to the 90 won by the Lamuka coalition. Consequently, Tshisekedi had no power to choose a prime minister since Kabila's FCC blocked his nominees, which resulted in fresh negotiations between Tshisekedi and Kabila that resulted in the formation of a coalition government and with an FCC prime minister (Sylvestre Ilunga Ilunkamba, who took office on 20 May). The new prime minister, who had held various positions of responsibility during the government of Mobutu Sese Seko, had been the general director of the National Railway Society of the Congo and is a member of the Popular Party for Reconstruction and Democracy, one of the main parties that make up former President Joseph Kabila's FCC. The new government consists of 67 members: the prime minister, five vice prime ministers, 10 state ministers, 31 ministers, three delegated ministers and 17 vice ministers. CACH obtained 23 positions in the Council of Ministers, while the FCC obtained 42. More than 70% of the government is made up of ministers in the office for the first time and 17% are women.

Gender, peace and security

MONUSCO supported efforts to promote women's participation in political and conflict resolution processes. The mission advocated that women be included in traditional government structures, which resulted in the appointment of two traditional female chiefs to the National Assembly. Ninety-seven female politicians, including candidates for the deferred legislative elections in Beni and Butembo, received training from MONUSCO. The mission also trained 314 female peacebuilders and mediators in 14 conflict zones.

| South Sudan | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Negotiating actors | Government (SPLM), SPLM / A-in-Opposition (SPLM/A-IO), and several minor groups (SSOA, SPLM-FD, among others) |
| Third parties | IGAD Plus: IGAD (Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia and Uganda); AU (Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Chad and Algeria), China, Russia, Egypt, Troika (USA, United Kingdom and Norway), EU, UN, South Sudan Council of Churches |
| Relevant agreements | Peace Agreement (2015), Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Access (2017), Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) (2018) |

Summary:

After years of armed conflict between the Central Government of Sudan and the south of the country, led by the SPLM/A guerrilla, South Sudan became an independent State in 2011, after holding the referendum that was planned in the 2005 peace agreement (Comprehensive Peace Agreement –CPA–) facilitated by the mediation of the IGAD. The Peace between Sudan and South Sudan and achieving independence was not achieved, however, were not enough to end the conflict and violence. South Sudan has remained immersed in a series of internal conflicts promoted by disputes to control the territory, livestock and political power, as well as by neo-patrimonial practices and corruption in the Government, all of which has impeded stability and the consolidation of peace. As part of the peace negotiations promoted in April 2013, the President offered an amnesty for six commanders of the rebel groups, but this was not successful initially. At a later date, in December 2013, tensions broke out among the factions loyal to President Salva Kiir and those loyal to the former Vice-President Riek Machar, leader of the the SPL/A-in-Opposition (SPLA-IO), which gave way to a new escalation of violence in several of the country's regions. In January 2014, with the mediation of the IGAD, the Government and the SPLA-IO launched peace conversations in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia). Diplomatic efforts were found against many obstacles to achieve effective ceasefire agreements, after signing nine different commitments to the cessation of hostilities and transitory measures between December 2013 and August 2015, which were systematically violated and have rendered it impossible to lay the foundations for a political solution to the conflict. On 17 August 2015, after strong international pressure and threats of blockades and economic sanctions, the parties signed a peace agreement promoted by the IGAD Plus, although there is still much uncertainty surrounding its implementation, as well as other later agreements. Subsequently, new agreements were reached between the parties, such as the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Access (2017) and the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) (2018), which open new paths to try to end the violence.

During the year, little progress was made in implementing the clauses established in the South Sudan Peace Agreement, except for the maintenance of the permanent ceasefire agreement, which remained in force throughout the year. In September 2018, the government of South Sudanese President Salva Kiir and the main armed opposition group (SPLA-IO) led by Riek Machar had

signed what is known as the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS)⁶. The text, which restores the bases of the 2015 Peace Agreement, establishes a pre-transition period of eight months, and a transitional coalition government to be set up by May 2019. It also establishes a 30-day period for billeting armed actors, a ban on training and recruiting fighters, a permanent ceasefire and other measures. However, the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission for Compliance with the Agreement (RJMEC) lamented the little progress made in its implementation during 2019. **Though it was breached on some occasions during the year, the ceasefire agreement was generally respected by the parties that had signed the agreement, influencing a drop in fighting and violence and facilitating the free mobility of the civilian population and the provision of humanitarian aid.** The most recurrent armed clashes during the year were reported in the Equatoria region between the government and SPLA-IO forces and armed groups that had not signed the pact, mainly the rebel group National Salvation Front (NAS) led by Thomas Cirillo. At the beginning of the year, the Troika member countries (USA, Norway and UK) issued a joint statement condemning the violation of the ceasefire and urging all parties to stop the violence. In an attempt to influence groups that had not signed the peace agreement, Ismail Wais, the IGAD's special envoy for South Sudan, met separately in different places and times with NAS leader Thomas Cirillo, Hakim Dario, the head of the Popular Democratic Movement (PDM), and Paul Malong, the leader of the opposition group United Front of South Sudan (SSUF/A).

The formation of the transitional unity government in South Sudan was postponed twice due to the parties' inability to make progress in implementing the peace agreement

In April, Kiir and Machar visited the Vatican, meeting with Pope Francis, who took advantage of the meeting to urge them to achieve lasting peace. On 3 May, the parties that signed the September 2018 peace agreement agreed at a meeting held in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to extend the pre-transition period for six months, until November. The extension was due to the inability to resolve fundamental aspects prior to the formation of the expected unity government initially planned for 12 May. The unresolved issues include the construction of a unified army, security control issues in the capital, Juba, to facilitate Riek Machar's return to the country (as he is still in exile in Sudan) and the establishment of the number of states and their territorial boundaries. Overall, of the 59 key tasks that should have been implemented before the 12 May deadline, only 27 were completed, with 17 under way and another 15 pending the start of implementation.

In September, President Kiir and rebel leader Machar met for the first time since April in Juba to try to accelerate

the implementation of the agreement. Between 9 and 12 September, both leaders agreed on different aspects, such as forming a 3,000-strong protection unit in charge of providing security to government officials in Juba during the transition period, forming a committee to resolve the issue of the number of states and the location of state borders, creating a special unit called the Republican Guards that will be responsible for protecting opposition leaders, spreading a message of peace and involving armed groups that have not signed the agreement and others in future negotiations. It was agreed to complete the agreement before the national unity transitional government was scheduled to be formed on 12 November, a date that was finally extended. The next phase of the security agreement provides for the two leaders to form the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Rehabilitation Commission (DDR). In light of the progress, the SPLA-IO announced that it would move its headquarters from Khartoum to Juba, although Riek Machar announced that he would not return to Juba until further progress was made. In late October, both leaders met again in Juba without making significant progress, calling into question the fulfilment of the deadlines for forming the government. Machar requested a new extension of the transition deadlines, arguing that the conditions were not suitable and that forming a government could jeopardise the agreed ceasefire. The delegation of the UN Security Council in the country opposed this new extension of the pre-transitional period.

Finally, at an emergency summit held in Uganda on 7 November, mediated by Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, the president of the Sovereign Council of Sudan, General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and the envoy of Kenya, Kalonzo Musyoka, **Kiir and Machar agreed to a second extension of the 100-day deadline (until 22 February 2020)**, preserving the ceasefire. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres welcomed the decision to extend the period to guarantee peace. The African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council urged the parties to systematically address pending issues (security arrangements in Juba, military reform and territorial and internal border administration) in order to form the government by the agreed time, reporting that it will encourage tougher sanctions against rebel groups that have so far refused to sign the agreements. The United States responded by announcing that it would re-evaluate its relationship with the country, and that it would withdraw its ambassador after Secretary of State Mike Pompeo publicly questioned whether Kiir and Machar were suitable to lead the country. In December, Kiir and Machar pledged to form the transitional government before the February deadline, even if they did not resolve the pending political disputes. At the end of the year, Pope Francis and two other religious leaders

6. IGAD-Plus, Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS), 17 September 2018.

(Anglican Archbishop Justin Welby and Reverend John Chalmers, former moderator of the Church of Scotland) sent South Sudanese leaders an extraordinary Christmas appeal exhorting them to keep their promise to form a transitional unity government early in the next year.

| Sudan | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Negotiating actors | Government of Sudan, the opposition coalition “Sudan Call” formed by national opposition parties and Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF, coalition comprising the armed groups of South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur), Movement for Justice and Equity (JEM), Sudan Liberation Movements, SLA-MM and SLA-AW factions, Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) |
| Third parties | African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), Troika (USA, United Kingdom, Norway), Germany, AU, UNAMID, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Uganda |
| Relevant agreements | Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) (2006), Road map Agreement (2016), the Juba Declaration for Confidence-Building Procedures and the Preparation for Negotiation (2019) |

Summary:

Different armed conflicts (Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan) remain active in the country, as well as tensions between the government and the opposition which have led to different peace negotiations and a de-escalation of violence. In Darfur, amidst peace talks to resolve the historical dispute between the north and south of the country, which ended with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005, various armed groups, mainly the JEM and the SLA, rebelled in 2003 around demands for greater decentralisation and development in the region. The Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) was reached in 2006, which included only one SLA faction, led by Minni Minawi, while the conflict persisted amidst frustrated attempts at dialogue, mainly promoted by Qatar as part of the Doha peace process, in which the different parties were involved. Furthermore, in the Two Areas (South Kordofan and Blue Nile), the secession of South Sudan in July 2011 and the resulting national reconfiguration of Sudan aggravated tensions between those border regions and the Sudanese government, since both regions had supported the southern SPLA insurgency during the Sudanese armed conflict. The African Union High Level Panel on Sudan (AUHIP) has mediated to seek a peaceful resolution between the parties (government and SPLM/N rebellion) that revolves around three main lines in the peace negotiations: the ceasefire model, the type of humanitarian access to the Two Areas and the characteristics and agenda of the National Dialogue. In early 2014, Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir asked all armed actors and opposition groups to join the National Dialogue. From the outset, the proposal involved former South African President Thabo Mbeki and the AUHIP to promote peace negotiations and a democratic transformation. After the fall of the al-Bashir regime in April 2019, the different peace processes and scenarios between the new transitional government and the different rebel groups in the Two Areas and Darfur have merged.

The political upheaval in which Sudan has been immersed since the end of 2018, culminating in April 2019 with the overthrow of President Omar al-Bashir, led to a new unified process in the search for peace in the war-torn regions of Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile. After the fall of the government on 11 April, the self-styled Transitional Military Council (TMC) declared a unilateral ceasefire in the three conflict zones of the country. This announcement was followed by another order to suspend hostilities in the areas of the Blue Nile and South Kordofan made by the armed Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), led by Abdulaziz al-Hilu. Subsequently, and in the midst of the open negotiations between the TMC and civilian opposition groups about the formation of a transitional government in the country, on 22 June the TMC decreed the release of all captive members of Darfuri armed groups, calling for new peace talks. Weeks later, on 4 July, 235 members of the armed Sudan Liberation Movement-Mini Minawi (SLM-MM) were also granted amnesty and on 8 August the TMC annulled the death sentence issued in 2014 against the leader of the rebel group SPLM-N, Agar Malik, and his deputy Yasir Arman. All these confidence-building measures and others such as the renewal of the ceasefire occurred as a preliminary step to new peace talks between the rebel groups and the new transitional government and were supported by the constitutional declaration signed on 17 August in Khartoum by the TMC and the opposition civil coalition led by the Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC). The declaration, which was also signed by the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF) rebel alliance, provided for a general amnesty and established peace as a priority for the new government in the war-torn regions during the first six months of the period of the transition⁷.

As part of the agreement, the new government and rebel groups agreed to resume new peace talks in Juba (South Sudan) mediated by the government of South Sudan, led by President Salva Kiir, and supported by regional leaders such as Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni. The negotiations began in September and on 11 September a road map for peace was signed, called the **Juba Declaration for Confidence-Building Procedures and the Preparation for Negotiation**. The text was signed by the government and the SRF, SLM-MM and SPLM-N armed groups led by Abdelaziz al-Hilu. However, the Sudan Liberation Army faction led by Abdel Wahid al-Nur (SLA-AW) refused to participate in the talks. In the roadmap agreed by the parties, they promised to start the rounds of talks on 14 October in Juba and to have a 14 December deadline for signing an agreement. As agreed, on 14 October the peace talks resumed in Juba, although two days later al-Hilu’s SPLM-N left the table denouncing the government for violating the ceasefire in South Kordofan. Abdel Fattah al-Burhan,

7. See the summary on Sudan in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2020! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria Editorial, 2020.

the chairman of the Sovereign Council, decreed a nationwide ceasefire, with the SPLM-N resuming the talks on 18 October. That same day, a Statement of Principles was agreed between the al-Hilu faction and the government that laid out the road map for the peace process in South Kordofan. Meanwhile, as part of the confidence-building measures agreed in September, the government released 26 other prisoners of war on 18 October. The first round of negotiations concluded on 21 October, managing to agree on a general agenda for the negotiations that would allow to overcome the phase of confidence-building and the Declaration of Principles of Juba, and move to the stage of negotiations on the central issues. It was also agreed to allow humanitarian workers access to the areas controlled by the rebels and the signing of a declaration of cessation of hostilities. AUHIP announced a day later that the second round of negotiations would be postponed for a month, initially resuming on 21 November, although it finally started on 10 December. As part of the agreements of the first round of negotiations, Prime Minister Hamdok asked the UN in October for a one-year extension of UNAMID due to the Darfuri armed groups' concerns about the lack of protection of the civilian population that could cause UNAMID to withdraw before peace is signed. The UN Security Council renewed UNAMID's mandate for one year on 31 October. Meanwhile, on 23 October the Sudanese Council of Ministers granted access the World Food Programme access to areas of South Kordofan for the delivery of humanitarian assistance. After meetings with Hamdok in Brussels, the EU announced that it would provide €55 million in humanitarian aid.

In the second round of the peace negotiations, the Sudanese government and the armed movements signed a goodwill agreement to extend the Juba Declaration, which included a mutual two-month ceasefire until 14 February 2020. Although the government and the rebel SRF coalition did not reach a final agreement by the self-imposed deadline, they decided to continue talking, extending the peace talks until 14 February 2020. On 28 December, the government and the Darfuri branch of the SRF agreed on a road map for peace in Darfur. At the end of the year, as part of the Juba negotiations, the government and an SRF rebel faction called "Center Track" signed a peace agreement that paves the way for other dissident rebel groups to join to the peace process. Furthermore, on 12 December the government and the SPLM-N faction led by Abdelaziz al-Hilu agreed in peace talks to form a joint team to study the movement's demands of self-determination and a secular state. The rebel group subsequently requested a two-week recess before resuming dialogue in order to consult with their bases regarding the agreements.

Finally, in further developments, the Nuba and Beni Amer groups, which had clashed in inter-community disputes in Port Sudan in mid-August that left at least 37 dead,

signed a reconciliation agreement on 8 September that was negotiated by the ruling Sovereign Council to end the fighting. In addition, the Sovereign Council fired the state governor and the director of the state intelligence service.

The new Sudanese executive and armed groups achieved a new road map for peace in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile

Gender, peace and security

Women played a central role in the popular protests that led to the fall of the al-Bashir government. After the fall of the regime, dozens of feminist organisations in the country continued to demand structural changes in relation to women's rights, asking to expand their participation in the executive and legislative bodies, as well as to have a greater presence in the peace negotiations. Specifically, the organisations demanded that the new transitional government adhere to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which has not been ratified by the country because the previous government refused.

| Sudan – South Sudan | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Negotiating actors | Government of Sudan, Government of South Sudan |
| Third parties | IGAD, African Union Border Programme (AUBP), Egypt, Libya, USA, EU |
| Relevant agreements | Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) (2005); Cooperation Agreement (2012), Joint Boundary Demarcation Agreement (2019) |

Summary:

The armed conflict between Sudan and its southern neighbour (South Sudan) lasted for more than 30 years and was marked by a growing complexity, the nature of which covered several dimensions relating to the culture and history of both countries, affected by two civil wars (1963-1972; and 1982-2005). The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in January 2005 led to a referendum in the south of Sudan to ratify the independence of this region. The consultation happened in January 2011 and following a clear victory of those in favour of independence, in July 2011 South Sudan declared independence and became a new State. However, the separation of the two countries did not bring an end to the disagreements between Khartoum and Juba over the many unresolved issues. Among the main obstacles to stability there is a dispute over the oil-rich enclave of Abyei and the final demarcation of the border between both countries, as well as disagreement with regards to the exploitation of oil resources (with oil fields in South Sudan but pipelines for exportation to Sudan). Both countries accuse one another of supporting insurgency movements in the neighbour country and have contributed to further destabilizing the situation and threaten the peaceful coexistence of these two countries.

Important progress was made in relations between the governments of Sudan and South Sudan, reflected in the signing of a boundary demarcation agreement. After the boundary demarcation talks were resumed between both states in early 2018, in March 2019, the governments of both countries agreed to reopen the border crossings

and withdraw their troops from the Safe Demilitarised Border Zone (SDBZ). However, the political instability in Sudan during the second quarter of the year, exemplified by the ouster of the Omar al-Bashir regime and the negotiations for the creation of a hybrid civilian-military transitional government provisionally put border issues on the back burner⁸. However, with the agreement to form the Sudanese government and the election of Prime Minister of Abdalla Hamdok in August, the pending issues between both states were resumed. On 12 September, Hamdok made his first official visit to South Sudan to meet with South Sudanese President Salva Kiir. The two leaders again agreed in Juba to reopen the border crossings to improve bilateral trade and freedom of movement, and they also pledged to collaborate and mediate in resolving armed conflicts in both nations. Subsequently, historic progress was achieved at the 11th Joint Border Commission between both countries in Khartoum, with the African Union Border Programme (AUBP) attending. At the close of the event, on 22 October, **Sudan and South Sudan signed an agreement delimiting their shared border**, leaving only five areas subject to new negotiations: the areas of Dabba al-Fukhar, Jabal al-Muqainis and Kaka, as well as the commercial areas of Kefi Kenji and Hofrat Al-Nehass in South Darfur.

Sudan and South Sudan made progress on delimiting the border by signing an agreement

In another notable development in the improvement of diplomatic relations between the two states, South Sudanese President Salva Kiir offered to mediate in peace talks between the government of Sudan and the rebel forces of Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile that began in September in Juba, the South Sudanese capital⁹. **Due to the progress in stability and transition in the two countries, on 29 November the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) asked to lift the sanctions against Sudan and South Sudan.** Furthermore, as part of the progress in the negotiations between both governments, the UN Security Council again approved extending the mandate of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) at different times of the year, finally extending it until 15 May 2020. Abyei is an area disputed between both governments. The resolution maintains a maximum authorised deployment of 3,550 troops and 640 police officers for the mission, although as of September 25 only 34 police officers had been deployed because the government of Sudan had not issued visas. The Security Council expressed its concern about the need to fulfil UNISFA's mandate and to fill the security vacuum in Abyei. The Security Council extended the mission's support to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM) established in 2011. It also maintained the conditions for a future renewal that included specific progress on seven measures on the demarcation of borders, free patrolling by UNISFA and JBVMM and

the establishment of border crossing corridors. Other measures adopted by the Security Council involved reducing the mission's troops, increasing the police, appointing a civilian deputy head of mission and issuing visas. A significant aspect of the implementation of UN Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security was the fact that it demanded greater gender parity in the military and police and more implementation of a plan to include the gender perspective, in line with Resolution 1325.

Horn of Africa

| Eritrea – Ethiopia | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Negotiating actors | Government of Eritrea, Government of Ethiopia |
| Third parties | United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, USA |
| Relevant agreements | Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities (Algiers, 2000), Agreement between the Government of the State of Eritrea and the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia or December Agreement (Algiers, 2000), Decision on Delimitation of the Border between Eritrea and Ethiopia, EEBC (2002), Agreement on Peace, Friendship and Comprehensive Cooperation (2018) |

Summary:

Eritrea became independent from Ethiopia in 1993, although the border between both countries was not clearly defined, causing them to face off between 1998 and 2000 in a war that cost over 100,000 lives. In June 2000 they signed a cessation of hostilities agreement, the UN Security Council established the UNMEE mission to monitor it and they signed the Algiers peace agreement in December. This agreement established that both would submit to the ruling issued by the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC), which is in charge of delimiting and demarcating the border based on the relevant colonial treaties (1900, 1902 and 1908) and on international law. The EEBC announced its opinion in April 2002, assigning the disputed border village of Badme (the epicentre of the war, currently administered by Ethiopia) to Eritrea, though Ethiopia rejected the decision. Frustrated by the lack of progress in implementing the EEBC's ruling due to insufficient pressure on Ethiopia to comply, Eritrea decided to restrict UNMEE operations in late 2005, forcing its withdrawal in 2008. A year earlier, the EEBC had ended its work without being able to implement its mandate due to obstructions in Ethiopia, so the situation has remained at an impasse ever since. Both countries maintained a situation characterised by a pre-war climate, with hundreds of thousands of soldiers deployed on their shared border, sporadic clashes and belligerent rhetoric. A historic agreement was reached in 2018, ending the conflict between them.

The implementation of the peace agreement reached between Eritrea and Ethiopia in 2018 was marked by slow progress and stagnation in 2019. The rapidity with which the first initiatives took place (the reopening

8. See the summary on Sudan in the chapter on Socio-political crises in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2020! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria Editorial, 2020.
 9. See the summary on Sudan in this chapter.

of embassies and border crossings, the resumption of flights and other issues) gave way to a period of stagnation that various analysts blamed on Eritrea, since some issues directly or indirectly linked to the peace agreement require Eritrea to improve its governance and move towards democracy in the country, which seems difficult. Ethiopia also exhibited resistance to change, as was evident in the attempted coup in the Amhara region in June and in the resistance of the TPLF party, which ruled in the Tigray region and had controlled the coalition in power in Ethiopia until the arrival of Abiy Ahmed's government in 2018. Some issues related to border demarcation made the collaboration of the Tigray regional government and the TPLF essential. On 7 January, the leaders of both countries, Eritrean President Isaias Afewerki and Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, solemnly reopened the border crossing between Humera (Ethiopia) and Oum Hajer (Eritrea) as part of the reconciliation process. Both leaders met in Addis Ababa on 22 February to monitor the period between October 2018 and January 2019 since their shared border was opened in September 2018 regarding trade and transport relations with the aim of furthering cooperation. On 19 February, the Ethiopian ambassador to Eritrea said that both countries were close to signing global agreements on cooperation to move forward on issues related to trade, immigration and transport. However, the Eritrean government closed two border crossings with Ethiopia in April without explanation. Subsequently, the Eritrean president met with the Ethiopian prime minister in Asmara on 18 July, one year after the peace agreement was signed, and discussed how to deepen mutual cooperation, but no substantial results were achieved. The countries of the region and the international community supported the process. In this regard, in February the EU announced a 20 million euro programme to build roads that connect the Eritrean ports with the Ethiopian border. On 22 July, Russia lifted the sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council in 2009 as part of the resolution passed by the Security Council in November 2018 that called for eliminating the sanctions policy imposed on Eritrea after the normalisation of relations with Ethiopia and Somalia. Along the same lines, the US removed Eritrea from the list of countries that do not cooperate with its efforts in the fight against terrorism on 29 May.

In October, Abiy Ahmed was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts in resolving the conflict between his country and Eritrea. In other regional developments, Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta visited Eritrea for the first time since 1999 on 24 January and Sudan reopened the border with Eritrea (closed to crack down on the trafficking of weapons and supplies) on 31 January after it had been closed for a year. In March, President Afewerki hosted a tripartite meeting with his counterparts in Kenya and Ethiopia to discuss bilateral and regional issues. In March, the Eritrean president and the Ethiopian prime minister also met with South Sudanese President Salva Kiir in Juba, the capital of

South Sudan, to discuss the peace agreement reached in South Sudan in September 2018. Also, in March, an Eritrean delegation visited Somaliland to strengthen bilateral relations.

| Ethiopia (Ogaden) | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Negotiating actors | Government, ONLF military political movement |
| Third parties | Kenya, Eritrea, United Arab Emirates and Sweden |
| Relevant agreements | Framework Agreement (2018) |

Summary:

The regime that has ruled Ethiopia since 1991 maintains a confrontation with a number of ethno-political armed groups that demand greater autonomy or even independence from the central Government. One of them is the ONLF, which was founded in 1984 and operates in the Ogaden region in the southeast of the country. It demands independence for the region inhabited by the Somali community. The ONLF collaborated with the opposition to overthrow Mengistu, which was successful in 1991. In 1994, the legislative body of the Ogaden region, called the Somali Regional State (SRS), passed a resolution calling for a referendum on self-determination that led to its dissolution by the Ethiopian government. The ONLF has been fighting against the Ethiopian regime ever since, asserting that the conflict will only end when it accepts the principle to exercise the right to self-determination, as established under the Ethiopian Constitution, without preconditions or restrictions. The ONLF also condemns the plundering of the region's natural resources by the government. Over the years unsuccessful sporadic contacts between the parties have taken place, against a backdrop of continual fighting, which since 2006 has been on the rise. The first round of negotiations took place in 2012. Since then, there have been sporadic and mostly confidential meetings between the parties with Kenya mediating. The contacts made in late 2017 bore fruit in 2018 with the signing of a historic peace agreement between the Ethiopian government and the ONLF. In August 2018, the ONLF declared a unilateral ceasefire and on 21 October of that year, the ONLF and the government signed a framework agreement and agreed to establish a joint committee to continue working to address the root causes of the conflict.

The peace process that began in 2017 and culminated in 2018 ended the formalisation of a peace agreement in 2019. Following the framework agreement signed in Asmara (Eritrea) on 21 October 2018 between the ONLF and the government of Ethiopia, both parties agreed to establish a joint committee that will continue working to address the root causes of the conflict. Finally, **on 8 February 2019, the regional government of the Somali Regional State and the ONLF reached an agreement to proceed with the disarmament and reintegration of ONLF fighters into the security forces and the administration. Hundreds of people celebrated the historic agreement in the state capital, Jijiga.**

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed held an official meeting with ONLF leaders on 19 February in Addis Ababa. The disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration

process for former combatants was launched and by April over 2,000 former ONLF combatants had reportedly disarmed and were preparing for their reintegration into society, many of them after returning to Ethiopia from their bases in neighbouring countries, mainly Eritrea.

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Ethiopia (Oromia) | |
| Negotiating actors | Government, OLF military political movement |
| Third parties | -- |
| Relevant agreements | Reconciliation Agreement (2018) |

Summary:

Ethiopia has experienced secessionist movements or rejection of central power since the 1970s. The Oromo OLF emerged between 1973 and 1974 and operates in the Ethiopian region of Oromia, in the centre and south of the country, against the Mengistu dictatorship and with the goal of establishing an independent State for the Oromo community. Despite differences, the political and armed nationalist movements of the Oromo participated together with other insurgent groups in the country to overthrow the Mengistu regime in 1991. However, the OLF split away in 1992 from the transitional Government led by Meles Zenawi's TPLF party, that controls the coalition in power, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) and since then it initiated an armed struggle against the central Government and against other Oromo pro-government political movements. It demands independence for the Oromo community. After the war between Eritrea and Ethiopia, much of its leadership moved to Eritrea and its military wing, the OLA, began to receive training and support from Eritrea. Between 2000 and 2005, the membership of the OLF fluctuated due to government repression against Oromo student activists and general dissidence, as well as internal divisions among factions of the group, which weakened their capacity for action. Since late 2015, the region has become the epicentre of the protests against the Ethiopian regime, causing hundreds of deaths and an increase in armed actions by the Liyu Police, a governmental paramilitary body responsible for serious human rights violations that was created to take action against opposition groups in the Oromia and Ogaden regions. After the war between Eritrea and Ethiopia, much of its leadership moved to Eritrea and its military wing, the OLA, began to receive training and support from Eritrea. Between 2000 and 2005, the membership of the OLF fluctuated due to government repression against Oromo student activists and general dissidence, as well as internal divisions among factions of the group, which weakened their capacity for action. Since late 2015, the region has become the epicentre of the protests against the Ethiopian regime, causing hundreds of deaths and an increase in armed actions by the Liyu Police, a governmental paramilitary body responsible for serious human rights violations that was created to take action against opposition groups in the Oromia and Ogaden regions. Historically there have been attempts at negotiation and contacts have developed since 2017 that have led to results in a peace process.

Significant progress was made in the peace negotiations between the armed group OLF and the

Ethiopian federal and regional institutions in 2019.

This year was marked by the reform process undertaken by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and by politicians' and civil society groups' rejections of the changes undertaken by the government, which found expression in outbreaks of inter-community violence. Thus, there were violent clashes and acute tension between Oromo groups vying for power in the Oromia region. Between 12 and 13 January, the Ethiopian Army carried out air strikes against members of the OLF who had rejected the peace agreement in the western part of Oromia, killing seven civilians. The federal government denied having carried out air strikes, but said it had conducted a "stabilisation operation" at the request of the regional government. These military actions sowed doubts about the peace process. However, on 24 January, the regional government and the armed group OLF signed a ceasefire agreement according to which the OLF combatants pledged to move into billeting camps in order to proceed with their disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR). However, an attack by the OLF on 28 January killed two farmers in the Amaro district. Subsequently, there were new clashes between the OLF and federal security forces. The government announced that 1,000 OLF rebels handed over their weapons and settled in DDR camps. Some sporadic acts of violence were later committed by the OLF, according to media reports that could not be confirmed, but in general they subsided.

In late May, **the OLF, headed by Dawud Ibsa, agreed to work together with the main Oromo party in power, the Oromo Democratic Party (ODP), and the government of the region.** The OLF pledged to support initiatives for the regional government to regain control over stability in the state. In a joint statement by the president of the Oromia region, Shimeles Abdissa, Dawud Ibsa and the deputy chief of staff, Berhanu Jula, the OLF announced that it would never have an armed wing again. In addition, a reconciliation committee of senior leaders was formed in order to mediate between the OLF and the ODP. This committee submitted a report that highlighted the work done to billet OLF militiamen prior to their rehabilitation and training to support their integration into society. Also in May, there was news about the possible merger of the OLF and the Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC) party, led by Professor Merera Gudina. Subsequently, in October, the political parties operating in the Oromia region signed an agreement to work together to end the regional conflicts and ensure that the 2020 elections are free and transparent. Leaders of the OLF, OFC and ODF parties participated in the ceremony, which was also attended by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who chairs the EPRDF coalition, and by the ODP. The parties also agreed to create an umbrella group, the Gadisa Hogensa Oromo, to which all Oromo leaders belong. This umbrella group will mediate the different conflicts that arise in the Oromo community.

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Somalia | |
| Negotiating actors | Federal Government, leaders of the federal and emerging states (Puntland, HirShabelle, Galmudug, Jubaland, Southwest), political-military movement Ahlu Sunna Wal-Jama'a, clan leaders and sub-clans, Somaliland |
| Third parties | UN, IGAD, Turkey, among others |
| Relevant agreements | Road map to end the transition (2011), Kampala Accord (2011), Provisional Federal Constitution (2012), Mogadishu Declaration of the National Consultative Forum (2015) |

Summary:

The armed conflict and the absence of effective central authority in the country have their origins in 1988, when a coalition of opposing groups rebelled against the dictatorial power of Siad Barre and three years later managed to overthrow him. Since 1991, more than 15 peace processes with different types of proposals were attempted to establish a central authority. Of note were the Addis Ababa (1993), Arta (2000) and Mbagathi (2002-2004) processes. The centrality of the Somali state had led to a high degree of authoritarianism during Barre's rule, and the different proposals intended to establish a State that did not hold all of the power, a formula widely rejected by Somali society. However, some clans and warlords rejected the federal or decentralized model because it represented a threat to their power. The resolution of the conflict has been complicated by several issues: the power of some warlords who have turned conflict into a way of life; the issue of representation and the balance of power used to establish the future government between the different stakeholders and clans that make up the Somali social structure in conflict for years during Siad Barre's dictatorship; interference by Ethiopia and Eritrea; and the erratic stance of the international community. The rise of political Islam as a possible governing option through the Islamic courts, and the internationalization of the conflict with the arrival of foreign fighters in the armed wing of the courts, al-Shabaab, as well the Ethiopian invasion and the U.S. role in the fight against terrorism, have all contributed to making the situation more difficult. The Transitional Federal Government, which emerged from the Mbagathi peace process (2004), came to an end in 2012 and gave way to the Federal Government, which was supposed to be in charge of holding the elections in 2016. The National Consultative Forum held in 2015 laid the foundations for the different agreements to be reached on holding the elections in 2016. The elections were held in late 2016 and early 2017.

During the year there was no further information on possible contacts between the federal government and the armed group al-Shabaab. At the same time, the actions of the armed groups al-Shabaab and ISIS persisted alongside **tensions and negotiations between the federated states and the federal government, as well as between the federal government and the self-proclaimed Republic of Somaliland.** The federal government expelled the UN special representative in Somalia, Nicholas Haysom, accusing him of meddling in Somalia's internal affairs, as Haysom had publicly questioned the legal basis for arresting the presidential candidate to South West state and former vice-leader of al-Shabaab,

Tension remained constant between the federated states and the federal government

Mukhtar Robow, in December. The UN Secretary-General appointed US diplomat James Swan to be his new envoy to Somalia on 30 May.

Tension remained constant between the federated states and the federal government. On 22 August, the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission of Jubaland held the presidential election for that state in Kismayo. In a controversial process, Ahmed Mohamed Islam, also known as "Madobe," was re-elected after receiving 56 of the 74 votes cast. In parallel elections held on 22 and 23 August, opposition presidential candidates Abdirashid Mohamed Hidig and Abdirasir Seraan proclaimed themselves president, thereby raising the tension. The federal government rejected Madobe's re-election and asked for a new process to be held, while the authorities of Puntland and Galmudug, many opposition political parties and the government of Kenya recognised Madobe's victory and attended his inauguration. Later, on 12 October, Madobe called for dialogue with the federal government. In Galmudug, negotiations and contacts were held between the federal government and the military political movement Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a (ASWJ) during the year. The special envoy of the IGAD, Mohamed Ali Guyo, who was supporting the process, congratulated the parties and hailed all efforts to undertake reconciliation with the government and the election. On 5 September, the prime minister organised a reconciliation conference in Dhuusamarreeb that brought together more than 720 delegates representing 11 clans from across the state. At that meeting, which ended on 16 September, the participants reached a consensus on ways to establish an inclusive government. In November, the interior minister announced that despite recent military actions between federal troops and ASWJ, the government was committed to forming the new Galmudug regional administration. Finally, the government and ASWJ reached an agreement, as indicated by the parties in statements made on 12 December.

On 1 and 2 October, the federal government held the Forum of Associates for Somalia in Mogadishu, which was chaired by Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khayre and Deputy Prime Minister Mahdi Mohamed Guled and enjoyed the participation of the presidents of the federated member states of Hirshabelle, South West and Galmudug, the governor of Banaadir and representatives of 42 countries and international organisations. Although the federal government maintained cooperative relations with the Hirshabelle, South West, Galmudug and the Banaadir regional administration, little progress was made in restoring political relations with the leaders of Jubaland and Puntland, who did not participate in the Forum of Associates for Somalia. Some analysts pointed to the need to establish a true forum in which federal and state leaders could hold a political dialogue and make decisions.

Gender, peace and security

Some progress was made regarding female participation in political decision-making spaces and bodies in the country, despite the persistence of a widespread climate of violence and impunity. In the August elections in Jubaland, the constant efforts of Somali leaders and activists helped to boost the number of seats held by women in the state from three (4%) to eight (11%), from a total of 74 seats. On 14 August, the special representative of the UN Secretary-General met in Mogadishu with female civil society leaders and discussed ways to facilitate women's effective participation in the national elections. On 13 September, at a meeting convened by the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Promotion of Human Rights in Baidoa, Prime Minister Khayre pledged to ensure women's participation in both the political process and electoral process, among other things, by assigning special quotas, promoting and protecting women's rights and getting 250 professional women to join the public administration.

In August, peace activist and peacebuilder Amina Arale, the executive director of the Somali Women Development Center (SWDC), was invited to provide a civil society-based perspective and recommendations at the UN Security Council meeting to discuss the situation in Somalia. Regarding female participation in peace processes, **Arale said that despite women's active contribution to peacebuilding in the country, 14 of the peace processes in the last 30 years have excluded to women**¹⁰. The last peace agreement in 2000 was signed after women were included, but their role as key contributors to peace remains unrecognised. Until 2019, the Somali government had also not implemented gender provisions in the peace, security and state building agreements. For example, women constitute 11% of the police force, which makes Somalia the country with the third highest percentage of female police in Africa. However, only a female brigadier general plays a decisive role in the police force. In this regard, women have been excluded from the negotiating table, decision-making and leadership roles, in the economy and politics, despite being the main sources of income in approximately 80% of all Somali households. As a result of the advocacy of local and international women's groups, a 30% quota for women was included in the Garowe Principles, although it was not mentioned in the road map attached to the peace or the statutes of the country, so demands were made to implement the quota in the upcoming 2020 elections, which could provide a historic opportunity for women to participate in the first universal suffrage elections in the country in 50 years.

In Somalia work began on an action plan to address the implementation of Resolution 1325

Finally, in September, in partnership with UN Women, the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development began developing a national action plan to comprehensively and coherently address the application of Resolution 1325 on gender, peace and security in Somalia.

Maghreb – North Africa

| Libya | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Negotiating actors | Presidential Council and Government of National Agreement (GAN), House of Representatives (CdR), National General Congress (CGN), LNA |
| Third parties | Quartet (UN, Arab League, AU, EU), Italy, France, Germany, Russia and Turkey |
| Relevant agreements | Libyan Political Agreement or Skhirat Agreement (2015) |

Summary:

After the fall of Muammar Gaddafi's regime in 2011, Libya has experienced a transition process characterized by multiple political, economic, social, institutional and security challenges and by the presence of numerous armed groups. Since 2014, the North African country has been the scene of increasing violence and political instability, which led to the formation of two major poles of power and authority. Given the developments in the country, mediation efforts led by the UN have tried to find a solution to the crisis. Negotiations have confronted several obstacles due to disputes of legitimacy, the diversity of actors involved, multiple interests at stake and the persistent climate of violence in the country, among other factors. In late 2015, the Libyan Political Agreement or the Skhirat Agreement was signed under the auspices of the UN amidst a climate of persistent divisions and scepticism due to the foreseeable problems in implementing it. In October 2017, the United Nations submitted a new plan to start the political transition and facilitate implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement.

Following the trend observed in previous years, **attempts to promote a political solution to the conflict in Libya were hampered by the climate of intense violence in the country and by the key actors' continued commitment to the military solution**. In 2019, the process was particularly affected by the escalation of clashes in and around the Libyan capital. This occurred after General Khalifa Haftar launched an offensive on Tripoli in April, expanding his control of territories to other areas of the country from his stronghold in the east¹¹. Criticism of previous ceasefire agreements, including the one in the Libyan capital since September 2018, and the persistent violations of the arms embargo by regional and international actors supporting either side, helped to fuel the cycle of hostilities and reduce the options for a negotiated solution. This scenario directly affected initiatives to implement the UN plan for Libya, among other issues,

10. The AU mission in Somalia (AMISOM) notes that 18 peace and reconciliation processes were held in Somalia from 1991 to 2008, the date of the last peace process in Djibouti, which led to the peace agreement reached between the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the Alliance for the Reliberation of Somalia (ARS). Subsequent agreements spring from this process.

11. See the summary on the armed conflict in Libya in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2020! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2020.

including a national conference that was to be held in early 2019, but never took place. The national conference was intended to help the participants to agree on the principles of a national charter and a road map to conclude the transitional period, through the holding of parliamentary and presidential elections. The meeting was planned for mid-April, but Haftar's offensive on Tripoli and the escalation in fighting between his forces, the Libyan National Army (LNA), and groups loyal to the Government of National Accord (GAN) earlier that month forced the initiative to be postponed *sine die*. In fact, the beginning of the LNA campaign on Tripoli occurred during the visit to Libya of UN Secretary-General António Guterres, who left the country urging the parties to de-escalate.

Despite appeals from the UN and other international actors, in the months that followed both Haftar and GAN Prime Minister Fayez Sarraj rejected the possibility of agreeing to a ceasefire or of entering into a political dialogue and maintained conflicting positions. In June, Sarraj presented a political initiative excluding Haftar and proposed the formation of a Libyan forum to define a road map, make the necessary decisions to hold parliamentary and presidential elections before the end of 2019 and appoint a legislative committee in charge of writing the rules that would regulate the elections. That same month, Haftar publicly stated that the LNA's control of Tripoli was a precondition for forming a national unity government, holding elections and drafting a new Constitution. General Haftar also warned that after taking control of the Libyan capital, he would eliminate some of the institutions created by the Skhirat agreement (2015), including the Presidential Council. In the first months of the year, Sarraj and Haftar had held meetings (one in Jordan in January and the other in Abu Dhabi in February, with the UN special envoy for Libya, Ghassan Salame), but they had also failed to find common ground during those meetings. The intensification of the conflict also had an impact on the already fragmented Libyan political scene, with various signs of division among the MPs who make up the House of Representatives (HoR). Some legislators who support the GAN began to meet regularly in Tripoli and set up committees, while those who back Haftar and the LNA met and tried to push initiatives in the eastern city of Tobruk. In this context, some 70 MPs met in Egypt in July to discuss ways to reunify the HoR.

In late July, the UN special envoy for Libya presented a three-step proposal to tackle the conflict and give new impetus to the political process. The first step would be the declaration of a truce during the first fortnight of August, coinciding with the Muslim celebration of Eid

al-Adha, which should be accompanied by confidence-building measures between the parties, such as a prisoner swap, the release of people detained arbitrarily and the exchange of remains of people killed in the conflict. Second, Salame proposed holding a high-level meeting between various countries involved in the conflict to guarantee the cessation of hostilities, enforce strict compliance with the arms embargo and promote respect for international human rights and humanitarian law by all Libyan actors. Third, the international meeting was expected to lead to a meeting between Libyan actors from all over the country similar to the one originally planned in the national conference format. Salame insisted that this plan required support from the UN Security Council, but also from other states that were exerting their influence on the ground, and warned the Libyan actors that they were waging war on behalf of others and were thereby destroying their own country.

In this sense, it is worth noting that **the internationalisation of the armed conflict in Libya became even more clear in 2019, as did the involvement of different countries in support of Libyan actors on either side** through the shipment of weapons, including drones and air

Attempts to promote a political solution to the conflict in Libya were hampered by the escalation of violence in the country, the persistent commitment of key actors to a military solution, the constant violations of the arms embargo and other factors

arsenals, logistical and technical support and military aid. Haftar's LNA continued to receive support mainly from Egypt, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia and Russia, while the GAN was supported mainly by Turkey and Qatar. The US, which continued to attack ISIS positions on Libyan soil during 2019, maintained an erratic position regarding the fight between the Libyan actors. The US Secretary of State first condemned Haftar's offensive on Tripoli in early April, but days later Donald Trump spoke by phone with the Libyan general and, according to reports, appreciated his actions as part of a counter-terrorist campaign and his protection of oil fields. Shortly thereafter, the US blocked a

UN resolution calling for a ceasefire in Libya. Towards the end of the year, after a visit by GAN representatives to Washington, the US again condemned the LNA offensive and accused Russia of trying to exploit the conflict. Meanwhile, the EU was unable to articulate a unified position on the conflict and France continued to lean even more openly towards Haftar's side¹². Italy continued to try to maintain diplomatic interest in Libya and kept migration agreements among its priorities.

In this context, in the following months the implementation of Salame's plan was blocked. The Eid al-Adha truce between the LNA and factions loyal or nominally linked to the GAN lasted only two days. Nevertheless, the special envoy made various efforts to try to engage key actors in escalating the conflict. In August and September, Salame visited Turkey, the UAE

12. Tarek Megerisi and Asli Aydintaşbaş, *Turkey in Libya: Filling the European Vacuum*, Commentary, European Council on Foreign Relations, 17 December 2019.

and Egypt to try to obtain commitments from foreign actors ahead of the international conference on Libya initially scheduled for late October in Berlin. Salame also took advantage of the UN General Assembly in New York, part of which included a meeting on Libya led by the foreign ministers of France and Italy. In the months that followed, the German capital hosted five preparatory meetings that the media dubbed the “Berlin process”, but by the end of the year the international meeting on Libya had not yet been held. According to reports, in addition to the difficulties in establishing a ceasefire, one of the most complex issues in organising the international meeting was the disagreement over which countries should participate in it. The signing of a military cooperation agreement between Turkey and the GAN in November and the fact that Ankara contemplated sending troops to Libya, which was approved by the Turkish Parliament on 2 January 2020, further strained the prospects for the political process at the end of the year. Faced with this scenario, Salame denounced that the interference of foreign powers had become the main obstacle to peace in the country, stressing that divisions in the UN Security Council had even prevented a ceasefire despite having debated it 15 times and that the arms embargo had been violated at least 45 times since early April.

Despite this situation, in the second half of the year Salame and the UN mission in Libya (UNSMIL) exerted many efforts to try to implement the three steps of the initiative that Salame had presented in July. Thus, in the preparatory meetings for the Berlin process, work was done on the draft of a communiqué that identifies six key points to end the conflict in Libya: a ceasefire mechanism, means to enforce the arms embargo, a return to the political process, a package of economic and financial reforms, new security agreements for Tripoli and guarantees of respect for international humanitarian law (IHL). Additionally, work was done on an operational addendum in order to commit the members of the Berlin group (countries participating in the international conference) with concrete actions and responsibilities to move the political process in Libya forward. Thus, it was hoped that one of the tangible results of the international conference would be the creation of a monitoring committee that, in collaboration with UNSMIL, would oversee implementation of the final communiqué and support specific initiatives related to the ceasefire, a lack of impunity for violations of IHL and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) processes for the armed groups operating in the country. At the same time, various initiatives were developed in 2019 that involved actors from Libyan society. Thus, for example, more than 120 people, including 23 women, participated in meetings to support local mediators promoted by UNSMIL in order to establish a network of mediators.

At the end of the year, **it emerged that Turkey and Russia were considering establishing a negotiations model for Libya similar to the Astana format used in Syria**, which

would allow both powers to preserve their geostrategic interests, avoid direct confrontation—given their support for competing Libyan actors—and facilitate a ceasefire in the North African country.

Gender, peace and security

Throughout 2019, Libyan women continued to denounce their exclusion from the peace process, and particularly from formal spheres. In a message to the UN Security Council during a meeting on Libya in November, Rida al-Tubuly, an activist and co-founder of the Libyan organisation Together We Build It, stressed the importance of empowering Libyan women and generally everyone who wants peace for the country. She also said that the international actors involved in the process often justify excluding women from formal spheres by arguing that Libyan actors would be against the political participation of women. Along these lines, she raised the challenge of involving the citizens of Libya in the political process to effectively change the situation, warned that the international community was giving power and legitimacy to a violent minority and stressed that some countries were ignoring and allowing the arms flows that fuel the conflict. In a previous speech in Geneva to the Human Rights Council in September in which several Libyan activists participated, al-Tubuly discussed the gap between international support for women to become influential peace actors and real opportunities for them to take part in formal initiatives. She also said that **all the high-level meetings promoted, mediated and facilitated by UNSMIL in recent years had barely included women and that the exclusion of women was resulting in an incomplete analysis of the root causes of the conflicts and on the prospects for peace and security in the country.** Libyan academics and activists, including members of the Libyan Women’s Platform for Peace, also continued to emphasise the historical role of women in mediating conflict at the family, clan, and community levels, a legacy often ignored because it endures more in oral traditions than in written traditions in Libyan culture.

Various voices drew attention to the risks that Libyan women engaged in politics have taken. For example, in 2019 the MP Seham Sergiwa was kidnapped in July after making critical statements about the Haftar offensive on Tripoli. Her whereabouts remained unknown at the end of the year. The UN special envoy for Libya said that her case is part of a worrying pattern of violence against women in the country, including several cases of murder and disappearance. In a message to the UN Security Council, Libyan human rights advocate Marwa Mohamed, of the organisation Lawyers for Justice in Libya, recalled that the murder the human rights activist Salma Burgaighis in 2014 had been a turning point after which civil society had been forced to withdraw from the public sphere and said that Sergiwa’s recent disappearance illustrated how total impunity for intimidation and attacks on activists, especially on

women, did nothing but encourage the perpetrators. In this context, the international NGO platform Working Group on Women, Peace and Security asked the UN Security Council to expand UNSMIL's activities aimed at protecting and promoting women's rights and support their active participation in the political process as a fundamental way to ensure sustainable peace.

| Morocco – Western Sahara | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Negotiating actors | Morocco, Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Río de Oro (POLISARIO Front) |
| Third parties | UN, Algeria and Mauritania (observers), Group of Friends of Western Sahara (France, USA, Spain, United Kingdom and Russia) |
| Relevant agreements | Ceasefire agreement (1991) |

Summary:

The attempts to mediate and find a negotiated solution to the Western Sahara conflict led to a cease-fire agreement in 1991. Since then, and despite the existence of a formal negotiations framework under the auspices of the UN, the Western Sahara peace process has failed. The successive proposals and the many rounds of negotiations has not lead to an agreement between the parties, all of which maintain their red lines: Morocco insists on its territorial claims and is only willing to accept a status of autonomy, whereas the POLISARIO Front claims there is a need to hold a referendum that includes the option of independence. Negotiations on Western Sahara –recognised as a territory which is yet to be decolonised- have been determined by the large asymmetry between the actors in dispute, the inability of the UN to set up a consultation on the future of this territory, and regional rivalry between Morocco and Algeria –a key support for the POLISARIO front– and by the support given to Rabat by some key international actors, such as the USA or France. This, in real terms, has meant a prevalence of the Moroccan thesis when approaching the conflict.

The limited expectations generated in late 2018 after the first direct contact between Morocco and the POLISARIO Front in six years did not yield any positive developments in 2019. Despite the new round of meetings at the beginning of the year, **the UN-sponsored process was once again characterised by deadlock, especially after the resignation of the UN Secretary-General's special envoy for Western Sahara**, former German President Horst Köhler. In the first few months of 2019, Köhler held a series of meetings with representatives of Morocco, the POLISARIO Front, Algeria and Mauritania in order to continue the meeting held on 5 and 6 December 2018 in Geneva and prepare for the second round, which also took place on the outskirts of the Swiss capital, between 21 and 22 March. The meeting maintained the round table format used in the previous meeting, chosen by Köhler “as a symbol of the willingness of people with different positions to reach agreements through dialogue”¹³. No

further details emerged about what was discussed at the meeting, but the UN confirmed that the four delegations had acted openly and courteously, in an atmosphere of mutual respect, and that they upheld their commitment to continue discussions in order to identify common ground. A consensus was also found between the parties on the benefits of a solution of the Western Sahara issue for the Maghreb and on the region's responsibility in contributing to a solution to the conflict. As part of this meeting, the UN special envoy asked the parties to explore possible gestures of goodwill that would help to build trust. In his report to the UN Security Council, Köhler underscored his intention to convene a third round of direct meetings, but only when he identified signs favourable to substantive negotiations.

However, this new round did not take place during 2019 and the entire negotiating process was stalled after the special envoy decided to resign in May for health reasons. Despite this formal explanation of his resignation, representatives of the POLISARIO Front suggested that Köhler's departure may also have resulted from some political pressure. In practice, the departure of the former German president from office led to diplomatic paralysis and by the end of the year the UN Secretary-General had still not appointed his successor. At the same time, in October, the United Nations Security Council decided to renew the mandate of the mission in Western Sahara (MINURSO) for one more year, and not for a period of six months as it had been doing since April 2018. At the time, the decision to shorten MINURSO's mandate, at the behest of the United States, was interpreted as a way to intensify pressure on the parties, especially Morocco, to overcome the deadlock and enter into negotiations. The decision to extend the mandate again for a year prompted representatives of the POLISARIO Front to question the international commitment to try to promote the resolution of the issue of Western Sahara.

Fatma Mehdi, a member of the POLISARIO Front's negotiating team, publicly stated that the move was a sign that Washington was backing down in its ambitions to push for the resolution of the conflict, coinciding with the departure of National Security Advisor John Bolton from the US Government in September¹⁴. Bolton's time in the White House had fuelled certain expectations in the POLISARIO Front due to his career as an advisor to former UN special envoy for Western Sahara James Baker between 1997 and 2000, his role as the US ambassador to the UN (he threatened to dissolve MINURSO in 2006) and his direct knowledge of the situation in the refugee camps, which he had personally visited in the past. According to media reports, Bolton was the promoter of the US initiative to shorten MINURSO's mandate, given his conviction that the mission must be bestowed with content or dissolved¹⁵. Meanwhile, various Moroccan media reports and analysts supported the POLISARIO Front's assumptions

13. UNSG, *Report of the Secretary General on the situation concerning Western Sahara*, S/2019/282, 1 April 2019.
 14. Fatma Mehdi, “Big Powers at the UN Are Hanging Western Sahara Out to Dry”, *PassBlue*, 5 November 2019.
 15. R. Joseph Huddleston, “Can John Bolton Thaw Western Sahara's Long-Frozen Conflict?” *Foreign Policy*, 9 May 2019.

regarding the right of self-determination and hailed Rabat's ability to circumvent what was dubbed the "Bolton effect". According to some analysts, Morocco would have benefited from the tension between Bolton and the Secretary of State Mike Pompeo¹⁶.

In the months following Köhler's resignation, leaders of the POLISARIO Front expressed their frustration at the failure to appoint a new special envoy and the deadlock in the process, insisting that it caused great frustration among the Sahrawi people and questioning whether the conflict could be resolved peacefully and diplomatically. In this context, at the end of the year the leader of the POLISARIO Front, Brahim Ghali, denounced the UN's inability to overcome the blockade and insisted that the Sahrawi youth were pressing for a change in the status quo. Meanwhile, Morocco maintained its position that the United Nations was the only framework to achieve an acceptable solution to the Western Sahara issue throughout the year. In December, Rabat also approved two decrees to extend maritime sovereignty to Sahrawi territorial waters in a movement described as invalid by the POLISARIO Front. Previously, in early 2019, the European Parliament approved trade agreements with Morocco that affect Sahrawi territory and waters, despite a ruling by the EU Court of Justice that the agreements could not affect Western Sahara without the prior consent of its population.

The government and RENAMO signed a historic peace agreement that sets the stage for the end of the conflict between both sides in Mozambique

some of which were confirmed by international observers, have gone hand-in-hand with a growing authoritarianism and repression of the opposition, and FRELIMO taking over the State (and the communication media and economy). In 2013, RENAMO conditioned its continuation in political life to a series of changes, mainly the reform of the national electoral commission and an equitable distribution of the country's wealth. It threatened to remove its signature from the 1992 peace agreement, and indeed this did happen, throwing the country back into armed fighting in 2013 and the subsequent launch of a new agreed peace negotiation process in August 2014. RENAMO's declaration of a truce in 2016 and the progress made in the peace process during 2017 caused a notable drop in armed actions, though sporadic clashes persist.

Significant progress was made during the year in the search for peace between the Mozambican government and the opposition party RENAMO.

Following the death of the historical leader of RENAMO, Afonso Dhlakama, in May 2018, Ossufo Momade was elected president of RENAMO in January 2019 with about 60% of the votes, subsequently approving his candidacy to run for president in the election planned for October 2019. As part of the peace negotiations between RENAMO and the Mozambican government, in early June Momade signed a demilitarisation agreement with President Filipe Nyusi that produced misgivings and tension among some armed members of the movement, who demanded his resignation, accusing him of betraying the group. Later, **on 6 August, the government and RENAMO**

signed a historic agreement aimed at ending years of conflict. In Peace Square in Maputo, Nyusi and Momade signed the **Maputo Peace and Reconciliation Agreement**, which was the culmination of the peace negotiations initiated by Afonso Dhlakama and Nyusi, mediated by the Swiss ambassador to Mozambique. During the ceremony, they were accompanied by former presidents and regional and continental leaders, including representatives of the UN, the EU, the SADC and the AU, the latter as guarantors of the peace agreement. Among other points, the agreement contained guarantees for the development of inclusive elections planned for October 2019, the decentralisation of the political-administrative system and the implementation of the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programme for RENAMO combatants. Under the DDR programme, the former rebel forces were expected to surrender their weapons, return to civilian life with financial aid or join the state security forces. Through Foreign Affairs Representative Federica Mogherini, who was present at the signing of the agreement, the EU committed €60 million to support implementation of the DDR programme, which is intended to embrace all 5,000 active rebels of the movement. A dissident RENAMO splinter group self-styled as the Military Junta of RENAMO refused to recognise the August peace agreement and claimed responsibility for some

Southern Africa

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|----------------------------|--|
| Mozambique | |
| Negotiating actors | Government, RENAMO |
| Third parties | National mediation team, Botswana, Tanzania, South Africa, United Kingdom, EU, Community of Sant Egidio (Vatican), Catholic Church |
| Relevant agreements | Rome peace agreement (1992), Maputo Peace and Reconciliation Agreement (2019) |

Summary:

The coup d'état against the Portuguese dictatorship in 1974 and the guerrilla warfare carried out by the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) Marxist-Leninist insurgency took Mozambique to Independence in 1975. Since then, the country has been affected by a civil war between the FRELIMO Government and the Mozambique National Resistance (RENAMO) armed group, supported by the white minorities that governed in the former Rhodesia (today Zimbabwe) and South Africa during the apartheid, in the context of the Cold War. In 1992 the parties reached a peace agreement that was considered an example of reconciliation. This was mediated by the Community of Sant'Egidio and ended a 16-year long war that caused one million fatalities and five million displaced persons, and gave way to a period of political stability and economic development, albeit high levels of inequality. In parallel, growing accusations of fraud and irregularities in the electoral processes that followed,

16. Samir Bennis, "How Morocco Neutralized 'The Bolton Effect' on Western Sahara", *Morocco World News*, 13 September 2019.

attacks against government troops in the centre of the country.

However, the presidential, provincial and legislative elections that took place on 27 October were a delicate moment in the country. The election results gave a comfortable victory to the government party, FRELIMO, but were rejected by the opposition, which demanded that they be declared void. President Filipe Nyusi (FRELIMO) won 73% of the vote, while the leader of the main opposition party (RENAMO), Ossufo Momade, got 22% of the vote. FRELIMO also prevailed in the provinces, winning all the provincial assemblies, including those located in RENAMO's historical bastions of support. It also obtained two thirds of the seats of the national Parliament, expanding its majority, while RENAMO dropped from 89 MPs to 60. RENAMO accused the government of "massive electoral fraud" and of using violence and intimidation, meaning that it had violated the peace agreement. Although the electoral observers of the AU and the SADC did detect some irregularities in the elections, they declared them valid. The EU and the US were more critical, detecting several "irregularities and bad practices", and asked the authorities for explanations. However, on 11 November the Constitutional Court rejected RENAMO's request to declare the results void, arguing that there was not enough evidence to support its complaint. In early November, after the results of the elections were known, the dissenting Military Junta of RENAMO claimed responsibility for several attacks that left at least five people dead. RENAMO rejected and condemned the violence and reaffirmed its commitment to the peace agreement.

West Africa

| Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West and South West) | |
|--|---|
| Negotiating actors | Government, political opposition (SDF, MRC) separatist political opposition groups |
| Third parties | Catholic Church, civil society organisations, Switzerland, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue |
| Relevant agreements | -- |

Summary:

After Germany's defeat in the First World War, Cameroon came under the mandate of the League of Nations and was divided between French Cameroon and British Cameroon. In 1961, the two territories that made up British Cameroon held a referendum limiting their self-determination to union with the already independent Republic of Cameroon (formerly French Cameroon) or union with Nigeria. The southern part of British Cameroon (a region currently corresponding to the provinces of North West and South West) decided to join the Republic of Cameroon, whereas the north preferred to join Nigeria. A poorly conducted re-unification in the 1960s based on centralisation and assimilation has led the English-speaking minority of what was once southern

British Cameroon (20% of the country's population) to feel politically and economically marginalised by state institutions, which are controlled by the French-speaking majority. These movements demand a return to the federal model that existed between 1961 and 1972. In 1972, a referendum was held in which a new Constitution was adopted that replaced the federal state with a unitary one and granted more powers to the president, so the southern part of British Cameroon (known as Southern Cameroons) lost its autonomy and was transformed into the two current provinces of North West and South West. In 1993, representatives of the English-speaking groups held the All Anglophone Conference (AAC1) in Buea, which resulted in the Buea Declaration (which demanded constitutional amendments to restore the federation of 1961). The AAC2 was held in Bamenda in 1994, which concluded that if the federal state were not restored, Southern Cameroons would declare independence. Begun over sectoral issues in 2016, the conflict worsened in late 2017. The government arrested the main figures of the federalist movement in 2017, which gave a boost to groups that supported armed struggle to gain independence. Following the declaration of independence on 1 October 2017 and the subsequent government repression to quell the secessionist movement, there was an escalation of insurgent activity. Government repression of the demands of a majority of the population of the region, which demanded a new federal political status without ruling out secession, has led to an escalation of violence and the demand for negotiated solutions to the conflict.

As the armed conflict in the English-speaking majority regions of Cameroon worsened, **calls for dialogue intensified during 2018 and ended up bearing fruit in 2019**. Religious authorities tried to promote negotiation initiatives. The Anglophone General Conference (AGC) was created in July 2018, formed by Catholic, Protestant and Muslim leaders and led by the influential Cardinal Christian Tumi¹⁷. International political pressure increased in the same direction. The UN Security Council discussed the conflict in December 2018 following the presentation of the UNOCA and OCHA report on the Central Africa region, and the US and UK ambassadors called for the release of English-speaking prisoners, the beginning of peace talks between the separatist movement and the government and access to the English-speaking regions for UN agencies and NGOs. Many countries added to the **growing domestic and international pressure by calling for dialogue and the UN renewed its offer to mediate in the conflict**. President Paul Biya wanted to adopt a different approach and change his belligerent image, so he made some concessions in order to reduce internal and international pressure, according to various analysts. On 13 December 2018, Biya ordered the release of 289 English-speaking prisoners who had committed minor offences.

On 13 May 2019, the conflict was discussed for the first time within the UN Security Council, although Equatorial Guinea (on behalf of the three African countries on the Council), Russia and China warned against interference in Cameroonian internal affairs and the politicisation

17. The AGC is also known as the All Anglophone Conference III, due to its previous editions in 1993 and 1994. The AGC was supposed to be held in November 2018, but was postponed.

of the humanitarian situation. Later, one of the actors of the separatist movement, the Interim Government of Ambazonia, announced that it was conducting informal talks with the government, and **Switzerland announced on 27 June that the parties to the conflict had commissioned it to facilitate talks**. On 24 July, the organisers of the Anglophone General Conference, led by Cardinal Tumi, said that a new conference would be held on 30 November. In July, about 60 activists from the opposition party MRC were released. However, one of the leading independence leaders, Julius Ayuk Tabe, was sentenced to life in prison in August. Also in August, Cardinal Tumi advocated federalism as the only solution to the conflict and the AGC organisers met with Prime Minister Dion Ngute on 16 and 29 August, though no progress on holding a peace conference was made. The UN special representative for Central Africa met in Yaoundé with the prime minister between 3 and 7 September to ensure United Nations support for efforts at dialogue, bilingualism and multiculturalism, decentralisation and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration, including through the Peacebuilding Fund, since Cameroon became eligible to receive funding from it in July. On 10 September, the president announced his intention to hold a national dialogue to end the conflict. On 18 September, the **Swiss foreign ministry announced that it had joined forces with the Center for Humanitarian Dialogue to hold meetings with actors of the separatist movement in order to convey their visions to the national dialogue**. However, various analysts said that these separatists did not represent the insurgency or the main separatist movements of the English-speaking majority regions, who refused to participate in meetings with the Swiss mediators due to what they described as lack of transparency, credibility and commitment to the Swiss initiative. The opposition party SDF said that its preliminary conditions for undertaking this process should be a ceasefire and a guaranteed general amnesty for everyone involved in the conflict. Separatist leaders based in Europe and the US said they would not participate in talks unless they were held outside Cameroon and with international mediation.

Finally, between 30 September and 4 October, the national dialogue took place in Yaoundé, presided over by Prime Minister Joseph Dion Ngute¹⁸. Although the president announced that representatives of many factions would participate, including the separatist insurgents, the main separatist political movements and armed actors boycotted the national dialogue. One thousand delegates representing political parties, the Catholic Church and civil society attended the national dialogue. The recommendations arising from the conference were that the name of the country should be restored to the United Republic of Cameroon, that a special status should be adopted for the two English-speaking regions and that all legal texts should be made available in French and in English (both languages

are currently co-official, but French is predominant). Paul Biya announced the pardon and release of 333 prisoners linked to the separatist movement and political opposition. Jailed independence leader Ayuk Tabe rejected the outcome of the conference. In an interview with *Jeune Afrique*¹⁹, he stressed that the dialogue had only brought together the members of the ruling RDPC and other Cameroonian actors, but was not representative; that the conflict was international, so it could not be resolved by a national dialogue; that it was open to negotiation but that it should be conducted by an independent, impartial and credible structure, in neutral territory, that analyses the roots of the conflict; and that there should be guarantees of compliance with the agreement. He also noted that the release of 333 political activists was not exceptional, since nothing justified their imprisonment, and another 3,000 were still detained in addition to the disappeared; that the proposed special status could not be decided by Paul Biya, considering that the Republic of Cameroon and Southern Cameroons were two former territories under the tutelage of the UN, so one party could not decide on a special status for the other. Tabe also asked the government to allow an international commission of inquiry to determine the scope of the responsibilities for the violence committed, including that of the separatist movement. Finally, he revealed his political distance from other leaders, such as the English speaker Cardinal Tumi (who advocates unity with Cameroon under a more federal framework) and Maurice Kamto (leader of the opposition party MRC) and his advisor, Albert Dzungang, who was also in prison. The 333 released prisoners included Maurice Kamto, who was set free in October, nine months after his imprisonment for boycotting and questioning the presidential election of October 2018, which gave Paul Biya a new term of office. Kamto called for a new dialogue and said that he was open to discussion with Biya. The opposition party SDF welcomed the outcome of the dialogue. France announced that it would financially support implementation of the recommendations of the dialogue with 70 million dollars. In December, the Cameroonian Parliament approved some of the recommendations of the national dialogue related to changes in the political status of the two English-speaking majority regions, though they were considered insufficient by many groups.

Gender, peace and security

The national dialogue did not include specific mechanisms for formal female participation. In this regard, the South West/North West Women's Task Force (SNWOT), a coalition of female activists and women's organisations created in 2018 in order to promote peace and prevent conflict in the North West and South West regions, launched the #CeaseFireNow campaign and said that any conflict resolution initiative in the two

18. *Jeune Afrique*, "Cameroun : la question du fédéralisme s'invite au dialogue national", 1 October 2019.

19. *Jeune Afrique*, "Cameroun – Sisiku Ayuk Tabe, chef des séparatistes : Paul Biya n'a pas le pouvoir de décider de l'avenir de l'Ambazonie", 15 October 2019.

regions should include them in the national dialogue and in Parliament, where the proposal for the regions' special status was being discussed. It also released a statement following the conclusion of the national dialogue, calling it the beginning of a process, but complaining that female participation was less than 15%, which meant a violation of Resolution 1325; and noting that the assignment of leadership positions in the national dialogue commissions was not gender-sensitive. It also warned that issues specific to women and children were being taken for granted, since most of the recommendations were general in nature, excluding these groups even more. It also requested the development of a strategic action plan in order to guarantee implementation of the recommendations of the dialogue sincerely and inclusively.

The Government launched its first Action Plan for implementing the women, peace and security agenda in November 2017 for a period of three years. The launch was attended by many women's and civil society organisations, the most prominent of which was WILPF Cameroon. Previously, in 2014, WILPF Cameroon had conducted a study in the East Region to review the degree of knowledge of Resolution 1325 and found that 81.7% of the people interviewed were unaware of it, including humanitarian workers and administration officials.

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Mali | |
| Negotiating actors | Government, Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA) –MNLA, MAA and HCUA–, Platform –GATIA, CMFPR, CPA, faction of the MAA |
| Third parties | Algeria, France, ECOWAS, AU, UN, EU, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Carter Center, civil society organisations, Mauritania |
| Relevant agreements | Peace and Reconciliation Agreement (2015) |

Summary:

The armed conflict affecting Mali since early 2012 resulted in an institutional crisis –which materialized in a military coup– and Tuareg and jihadist groups progressively taking control of the northern part of the country. Since the conflict started, several international actors, including ECOWAS, the AU and the UN, have promoted initiatives leading to re-establishing the constitutional order and recovering Mali's territorial integrity. In parallel with the militarist approaches to face the crisis, exploratory contacts were held with some armed groups (MNLA and Ansar Dine) to find a negotiated way out of the crisis. Despite the announcement of a commitment to the cessation of hostilities from these insurgent groups, at the start of 2013 an offensive by Ansar Dine precipitated an international military intervention led by France. In May 2014 a new negotiation process was started, led by Algeria, where the Mali Government negotiated on both sides with the two coalitions created by the armed groups: the Coordination of Azawad Movements (groups favourable to a federalist/secessionist formula), and

the Platform (groups supporting the Government). In July 2015 the signing of a peace agreement was made possible between the Government, the CMA and the Platform, in Algiers. The jihadist groups were left aside in the negotiation table, which kept alive the hostilities from these groups in the new context of implementing the clauses present in the peace agreement.

Different initiatives were promoted in Mali to make headway in implementing the Algiers Peace Agreement of 2015 during the year, as well as to try to contain violence in the country, including different inter-community peace processes and the opening of a national dialogue. Once again, however, progress in implementing the peace agreement remained affected by a lack of will, reluctance and division among the parties that signed it, as well as by the persistent climate of violence in the northern and central regions of the country due to the continuous armed actions of jihadist groups and inter-community fighting.

In February, the Malian government and the armed groups that signed the Algiers Peace Agreement (the CMA and the Platform) used the Operational Coordination Mechanism (MOC) to announce that 5,000 combatants were joining the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programme provided for in the agreement, and that 600 combatants and 18 rebel officers had been selected to join the Malian security forces. Another 420 Malian Army officers who had defected during the 2012 crisis also announced their return to the Malian Armed Forces, as reflected in the agreement. However, one month later, on 8 April, the Dogon self-defence group Dan Na Ambassagou announced its withdrawal from the DDR programme due to the climate of insecurity in the country. In mid-June, more than 200 ex-combatants began military training in Bamako prior to joining the Malian Army, and in September, over 1,000 ex-combatants were officially integrated into the Malian Army through the DDR programme. Designated an independent observer of the implementation of the peace agreement in Mali in late 2017, the Carter Center issued its second follow-up report of the year on the implementation of the peace agreement in September²⁰. In August 2019, four conditions marking its development were pointed out: the resurgence of the armed conflict between the parties that signed the agreement, with clashes in May and July, which broke the effective ceasefire in place since September 2017; the reshuffling of the government in April, which slowed its implementation; the difficulties experienced by the DDR programme because it was being blocked by the signatory parties; and uncertainty about the future of MINUSMA in the country, despite the fact that the UN Security Council approved its extension for one year in Resolution 2480 on 28 June. In the resolution, the Security Council urged

20. The Carter Center, "Report of the Independent Observer. Observations on the Implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, Emanating from the Algiers Process", 16 December 2019.

the parties that signed the agreement to create a revised road map with a realistic and binding schedule focused on 12 priorities to be implemented before June 2020, which was partially adopted by the Malian parties on 12 July. Meanwhile, the UN Security Council renewed the sanctions system against persons and entities identified as obstacles in the peace process until 31 August 2020. The Carter Center criticised the very little progress made on chapter four of the agreement, concerning the socio-economic and cultural development of the northern regions of the country—specifically, the Northern Development Zone, which was planned for 2015 but was not created until July 2019, and the region's Specific Development Strategy and the Sustainable Development Fund, which were not operational due to disagreements between the Malian parties over the executive and management bodies.

The Malian government proposed to convene an inclusive national dialogue to promote an exchange between all political actors during the year, including the parties that had signed the peace agreement and members of civil society, in order to resolve the political crisis in Mali. However, opposition political parties refused to participate due to the government's refusal to discuss certain issues, in particular the implementation of the Algiers Peace Agreement. After different meetings with different actors, the final phase of the dialogue took place between 14 and 22 December, with delegates from the ten regions of the country participating, as well as members of former rebel forces (mainly from the CMA) and the Malian government. On 22 December, with President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta and former President Amadou Toumani Touré attending, different key resolutions were agreed, including the organisation of legislative elections before May 2020, the holding of a new referendum and a review of the Constitution through an inclusive process. In turn, some participants suggested that the government open formal negotiation channels with jihadist groups, although the proposal was not included in the final resolutions.

Meanwhile, in the centre of the country, in Mopti, the rise in violence prompted the government to appoint Dioncounda Traoré the high representative to central Mali in June in order to lead efforts to stop the escalating

violence. Together with civil society organisations, he launched different peace initiatives in the region. On 1 July, Fulani and Dogon self-defence movements (Dan Na Ambassagou) signed a peace agreement in Mopti, promising to work together for stability in the region. The agreement was made possible by the initiative promoted by the Family and Social Consultation Organisation on the Crisis in Central Mali. In late June, the civil society organisation Faso Dambe Ton began a mediating process between Dogon militias and the jihadist group Katiba Macina. Thanks to this mediation, on 3 August a peace agreement between these groups was signed in Macina in the Ségou region under the supervision of Malian Prime Minister Boubou Cissé, prompting the jihadist group to lift the siege of Toguere Coumbé in Tenenkou. Later, on 16 August, other Fulani, Dogon and Dafing militias signed another peace agreement in Ouenkoro in the circle of Bankass, Mopti, mediated by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (CHD). The signing of these agreements did not reduce violence in the centre of the country due to the activities of other armed actors. Finally, in October, under the mediation of the government of Mauritania, a peace protocol agreement was signed between the Arab communities that are members of the Arab Movement of Azawad-Platform and the Arab Movement of Azawad-CMA in the Malian community of Lerneb, located about 60 kilometres from the Mauritanian border. Though both groups signed the Algiers Peace Agreement, they engaged in various armed clashes in the middle of the year, breaking the ceasefire.

In Mali, the Inclusive National Dialogue agreed to hold legislative elections before May 2020, hold a new referendum and review the Constitution through an inclusive process

Gender, peace and security

Women continued to be excluded from implementing the peace agreement agenda in 2019. UN Security Council Resolution 2480 was adopted in June, which urges the signatory parties to develop a revised road map with 12 priorities to be implemented before June 2020, including women's full, effective and meaningful participation in the mechanisms established by the agreement. However, in July the Malian parties adopted a "Revised Road Map", where they aligned their commitments with those established in the resolution, with the notable exception of women's significant participation in implementing the peace process.

3. Peace negotiations in America

- Five peace processes took place in the Americas: two in Colombia, one in Venezuela, one in Nicaragua and one in Haiti, representing 10% of the negotiations that took place during 2019.
- Faced with the worsening political and social crisis, the president of Haiti tried to initiate a national dialogue process.
- The Venezuelan government and the opposition held several meetings in Norway and Barbados under the auspices of the Norwegian government.
- The peace process between the Colombian government and the ELN was completely interrupted after an attack against a police academy in Bogota in January.

This chapter provides an analysis of the main peace processes and negotiations in the Americas in 2019, both the general characteristics and trends of the negotiations and the development of each case on both continents throughout the year, including references to the gender, peace and security agenda. In addition, at the beginning of the chapter there is a map identifying the countries in the Americas that hosted peace negotiations during 2019.

Table 3.1. Summary of peace processes and negotiations in America in 2019

| Peace processes and negotiations | Negotiating actors | Third parties |
|----------------------------------|---|--|
| Colombia (ELN) | Government, ELN | Guarantor countries (Brazil, Norway, Cuba and Chile), accompanying countries (Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, the Netherlands and Italy) |
| Colombia (FARC) | Government, FARC | UN Verification Mission in Colombia, International Verification Component (Technical Secretariat of the Notables, University of Notre Dame's Kroc Institute) |
| Haiti | Government, political and social opposition | -- |
| Nicaragua | Government, political and social opposition | Vatican City, OAS |
| Venezuela | Government, political and social opposition | Norway, International Contact Group |

3.1 Negotiations in 2019: regional trends

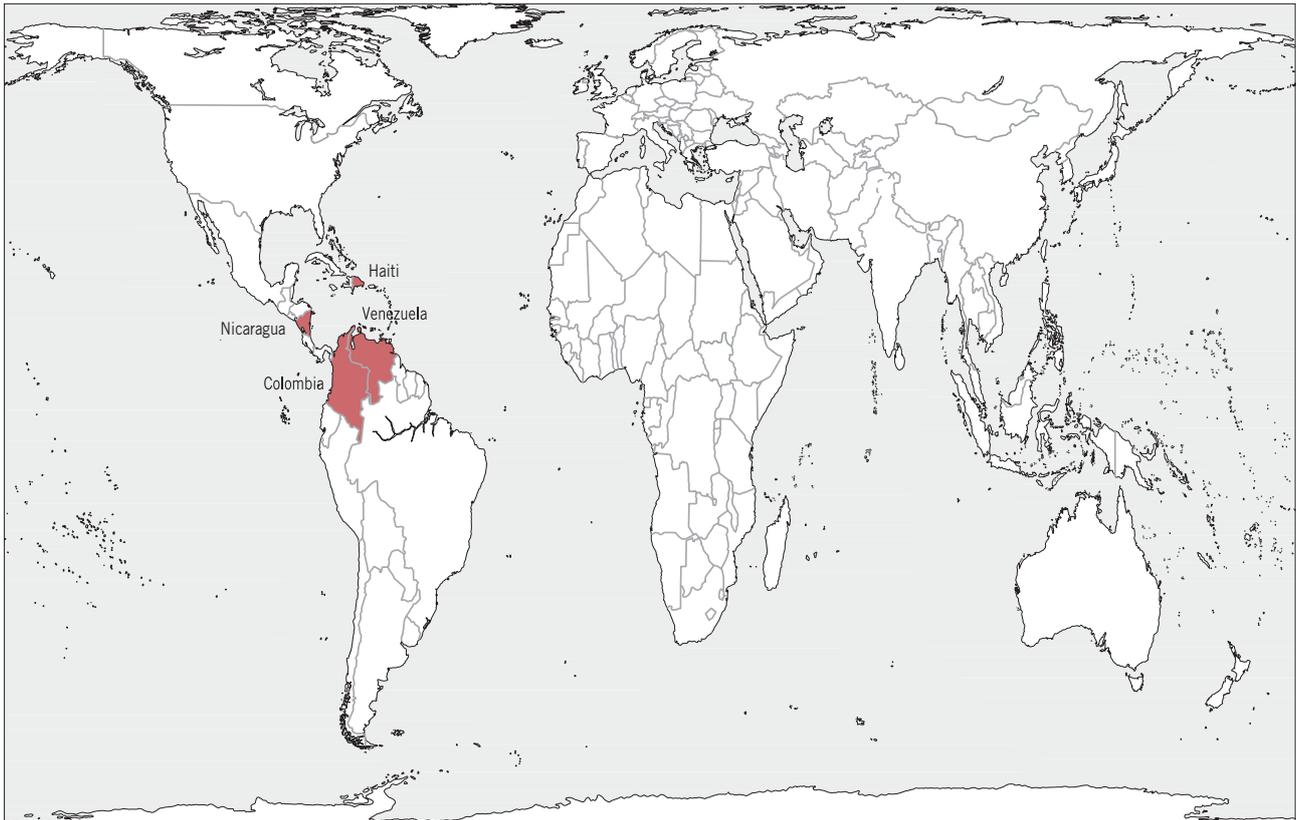
Five peace processes took place in the Americas in 2019, one more than the previous year. Two of the processes took place in Colombia, one in Venezuela, one in Nicaragua and one in Haiti, which began during the year. In Colombia, the process to implement the peace agreement signed between the government and the FARC in 2016 that ended the armed conflict pitting the former insurgency against the security forces continued, though not without difficulties. However, negotiations with the ELN were suspended and could not be formally reactivated throughout the year. In Venezuela, Nicaragua and Haiti, the peace processes were aimed at transforming the serious political crises that the three countries are going through, calling on the governments and political and social opposition movements in different negotiating formats, though none achieved results that could relax the respective political tensions.

With regard to the **parties** involved, the two negotiating processes in Colombia can be distinguished from the

rest of the processes in the Americas. In Colombia, the government negotiated with the political party FARC, formed after the demobilisation of the FARC-EP guerrillas following the signing of the 2016 agreement, as well as with the ELN guerrilla, with which it has pursued a fruitless peace process. In Venezuela, Nicaragua and Haiti, the most significant parties were the governments and the different opposition organisations, grouped in different platforms that brought together political parties and social organisations of different types, such as the Religions for Peace Platform in Haiti and the feminist movement in Nicaragua.

Third parties took a leading role in most processes, playing different roles and tasks. Third parties were both national and international and sought to bring the actors involved in crises and conflicts closer together. In Colombia, they were mostly international actors, both in the armed conflict with the ELN and in the implementation talks with the FARC. The accompaniment format in the failed ELN process

Map 3.1. Peace negotiations in America in 2019



■ Countries with peace processes and negotiations in America in 2019

was that of a group of guarantor countries (Brazil, Norway, Cuba and Chile) after Ecuador withdrew due to diplomatic differences with Colombia and Venezuela's participation was vetoed by the Colombian government, as well as a group of accompanying countries (Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, the Netherlands and Italy). The third parties responsible for verifying implementation of the agreement with the FARC were the UN Verification Mission in Colombia, the International Verification Component formed by the University of Notre Dame's Kroc Institute and the Technical Secretariat of the Notables, which was managed by Colombian organisations CINEP and CERAC. Vatican City and the OAS assumed the role of guarantors, observers and companions in Nicaragua. Norway actively tried to boost the dialogue in Venezuela, even with meetings in Oslo, and especially with negotiations in Barbados, which failed to channel the process. Meanwhile, the International Contact Group was also very active, headed by the EU and Uruguay and made up of Spain, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Bolivia.

The **negotiating agendas** reflected the particular characteristics of each context, though it should be noted that in Haiti, Venezuela and Nicaragua, the opposition was opposed to the continuity of the current governments and intended to initiate processes of

political transition. In Haiti, the opposition demanded the resignation of current President Jovenel Moïse and the government raised several proposals for a transition, including the establishment of a constituent assembly. In Venezuela, the government and the opposition negotiated a six-point agenda whose contents were kept secret, but in public the opposition leader and self-proclaimed "acting president" demanded the resignation of the current government, the formation

of a transitional government and new elections. After these negotiations failed, the government and other sectors of the opposition agreed on the release of political prisoners, electoral reforms and other issues. The agenda of the negotiations in Nicaragua was also focused on electoral issues and the human rights situation, especially political prisoners, reparations for victims and constitutional reforms. In Colombia, the process with the FARC was focused on implementation of the different

points of the peace agreement reached in 2016 and there were notable differences between the parties, which could not be resolved through the mechanisms established in the agreement, such as the Commission to Monitor, Promote and Verify Implementation of the Peace Agreement (CSIVI). Regarding the process with the ELN, the government continued to insist on an end to the kidnappings and the unilateral cessation of violence, while the ELN reaffirmed the agenda agreed during the process.

For the third year in a row, the negotiating processes that took place in the Americas were characterised by constant crises and serious obstacles that endangered their continuity

For the third year in a row, all the negotiating processes that took place in the Americas were marked by the fragility generated by the crises. All the negotiations had to face serious obstacles and were suspended at times, without attempts to reactivate them achieving a positive change in the processes. The processes continued to be affected by the serious distrust between the parties and towards the facilitating actors, once again conditioning the attempts to overcome the different crises in contexts of violence and even repression against the opposition, as happened in Nicaragua.

Regarding the **gender, peace and security agenda**, women’s organisations faced enormous difficulties in being considered interlocutors and protagonists of the negotiating processes, despite the social leadership of these organisations. In Colombia, women’s organisations continued to play a very important role in implementing the 2016 peace agreement. The Special Body on Gender for advising the CSIVI was active and submitted its evaluation report of said implementation, in which it criticised the fact that gender has been blurred as the central axis of implementation, along with contributions from civil society organisations. In Nicaragua, women’s and feminist organisations continued to play a leading role in the opposition movement and showed their support for different peace process initiatives such as the National Dialogue. However, it was not possible for gender issues to be added to the dialogue agendas and the feminist movement deplored the constant violence against women in the country. In Venezuela, it was announced that one of the complementary tables of the National Dialogue Table would be formed by women’s organisations and other actors.

3.2 Case studies

North America, Central America and the Caribbean

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Haiti | |
| Negotiating actors | Government, political and social opposition |
| Third parties | -- |
| Relevant agreements | -- |

Summary:

In recent years, especially after former President Jean Bertrand Aristide left the country in February 2004 and the subsequent deployment of the UN peacekeeping mission (MINUSTAH), there have been several attempts at consultation and dialogue between various political and social sectors to cope with the institutional fragility, political-social polarisation and economic and security crisis facing the country. Yet none of these initiatives, most of which have had international support, have turned into meaningful agreements or have led to permanent or stable spaces or mechanisms for negotiation. Though President Jovenel

Moïse’s mandate has been controversial since its inception after he was accused of electoral fraud in the 2015 election, his attempts to create a national dialogue in 2019 came in response to the deepening crisis in mid-2018 and the outbreak of protests and episodes of violence in 2019.

Given the exacerbation of the political, economic and social crises that began in late 2018, President Jovenel Moïse repeatedly tried to establish a national dialogue with the opposition, but by the end of the year these attempts were not successful, mainly because most of the opposition focused on forcing Moïse to resign. In late February, **Moïse approved a presidential decree that established the Inter-Haitian National Dialogue Facilitation Committee, which had a mandate until 31 May and whose main objective was to establish the framework for negotiations, make recommendations on measures to promote them, encourage the participation of as many actors as possible and synthesise the different proposals submitted during the negotiating process for subsequent implementation.** However, this attempt did not come to fruition as stated in the aforementioned decree for different reasons. Firstly, it failed because the Religions for Peace Platform, which brings together Catholic, Episcopalian, Protestant and Vodou community groups, declined to facilitate the dialogue as the government had proposed, claiming that the political and social conditions were not suitable for that purpose. Secondly, it failed because some of the members of the committee submitted their resignation since some of the objectives of the committee that were made public had not previously been discussed and they needed to be solved by the government, not the National Dialogue. Thirdly, and more importantly, it failed because most of the opposition rejected the negotiations offered by the government, proposing the beginning of a 36-month transition period instead in which a constituent assembly would be created to draft a Constitution and a new electoral council would be established to guarantee free elections. In April, another opposition platform (Progressive Opposition Forces) proposed the formation of an interim government that would lead a national dialogue and appoint a new head of state.

In early October, due to the worsening of the institutional crisis (the country had no government or prime minister due to the opposition’s refusal to ratify the two prime ministers proposed by the president) and the increase in public protests (between 15 September 15 and late October, 42 people are estimated to have died and more than 80 were injured), Moïse proposed another committee to promote a national dialogue. On this occasion, **the Core Group was actively involved in such an attempt to negotiate**, visiting the country and urging different parts of Haitian society to start talks with the government to find a solution to the institutional paralysis. The parliamentary elections could not be held in October, so by January 2020 the terms of many MPs and congressmen will have expired. The Core Group, **which consists of the United Nations, the**

OAS and representatives of France, Spain, Canada, the United States and Brazil, also urged the government to try to overcome the humanitarian crisis. After the United Nations warned that 3.7 million people urgently needed food aid, Moïse appealed to the international community. The international community's greatest efforts to assist the negotiations in Haiti came from the US government, considered by some analysts to be Moïse's main source of support to remain in office. In March, the Trump administration appointed Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs David Hale to try to channel political negotiations in Haiti, so he met with Moïse and with opposition groups several times during the year. However, this time Moïse's call for dialogue fell on deaf ears, since the opposition as a whole thought that the only possible solution to the current crisis was to remove him from power. In fact, four of the seven commissioners appointed in October resigned shortly after being appointed to the position on the grounds that Moïse was not willing to put his potential resignation on the negotiating table. Given this scenario, **in November the president publicly declared that he had begun a series of closed-door talks with various civil society and private sector groups, as well as with moderate opposition factions.** Despite the fact that in mid-December the government declared that these talks were having an effect, the main opposition leaders and the representative of the Episcopal Conference stated that they had no knowledge of them. Until the end of the year the international community continued to support a resumption of the negotiations without conditions, but the main opposition platforms (such as the Alternative Consensus for the Refoundation of Haiti) rejected the option. At the end of the year, Moïse was in favour of amending the Constitution because he thought that the current one limits the executive powers of the presidency and thereby hinders the country's governance.

Finally, the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) began in October. The BINUH will support the government in matters of political governance and will take over from the United Nations Support Mission for Justice in Haiti (MINUJUSTH), which in turn replaced MINUSTAH in 2017, established in 2004. Coinciding with the end of that mission, the Chilean Human Rights Commission and more than a dozen Haitian human rights organisations announced their intention to take legal action against Chilean soldiers deployed in MINUSTAH who sexually abused girls and women between 2014 and 2017. According to a report released at the end of the year after interviewing 2,500 people residing in communities in which MINUSTAH was deployed, 265 children fathered by MINUSTAH troops were abandoned. Many of these pregnancies were the result of rape. About 20% of the documented cases were committed by Chilean soldiers. MINUSTAH was one of the four peacekeeping missions with the highest number of complaints of sexual abuse.

The Haitian president convened a National Dialogue twice to address the worsening crisis, but most of the opposition rejected the offer and focused its efforts on achieving the president's resignation

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Nicaragua | |
| Negotiating actors | Government, political and social opposition |
| Third parties | Episcopal Conference of Nicaragua |
| Relevant agreements | -- |

Summary:
 In April 2018, as a result of the government's attempt to reform the social security system, a series of protests broke out throughout the country that caused the death or disappearance of hundreds of people and plunged the country into the worst socio-political crisis in recent decades. Faced with domestic and international concern over the protests, a repressive crackdown by the state security forces and clashes between government supporters and opponents, in May the government began a National Dialogue with various opposition groups that was facilitated by the Catholic Church. Due to the lack of progress in the dialogue and the government's growing opposition to mediation by the Episcopal Conference, several international players like the United Nations and the Central American Integration System said they were willing to facilitate it, while others, such as the OAS and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, exerted pressure on the government to end the crisis and the many human rights violations it was provoking.

Alongside the political and social crisis that the country has suffered since April 2018 and the growing international pressure on the government due to the human rights situation, **the National Dialogue between Daniel Ortega's government and the Civic Alliance for Justice and Democracy was resumed at the beginning of the year, but the talks were interrupted in May and the government formally terminated them in late July.** In line with what had happened throughout 2018, early in the year, international pressure on the government to resume dialogue with the opposition and to allow international supervision of the human rights situation continued. For example, the OAS Permanent Council met in January to study the possible application of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, which could lead to Nicaragua's expulsion from the international organisation. At the end of the month, Parliament passed the Law on Dialogue, Reconciliation and Peace, but the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) considered that it did not meet international standards of justice, truth and reparations. In February, after a visit by several delegations of the OAS, the EU and the US and a meeting between the government and private sector representatives that was also attended by the Archbishop of Managua and the Vatican Nuncio in Nicaragua, the government announced that the National Dialogue would resume on 27 February. In early March, both parties agreed on a tentative substantive agenda and several procedural and methodological issues for the negotiations, such as holding daily meetings, engaging in consensus-based decision-making, remaining tight-lipped about issues on which there is no agreement, finalising the negotiations for 28 March and asking the Episcopal Conference of Nicaragua to

government release hundreds of people imprisoned since April 2018 that the opposition considers political prisoners or prisoners of conscience.

The second half of March is when the greatest progress in the negotiations was reported throughout the year, since on 20 March the government agreed to release the people arrested since April 2018 under the supervision of the International Committee of the Red Cross, as well as to establish a working table on electoral reforms. Along the same lines, on 29 March, both parties signed the “Agreement to strengthen citizen rights and guarantees”, whereby they had to comply with commitments regarding the right to protest, freedom of the press, procedural guarantees (an end to illegal detentions, due process, effective judicial protection and other aspects), university autonomy and the disarmament of paramilitary bodies within a maximum of 90 days. However, in early April the negotiations were blocked for several reasons, including mass arrests (of around 160 people between 14 and 21 April, according to the opposition), the government’s refusal to allow international human rights organisations to supervise implementation of the agreements reached, disagreements over the election schedule, mechanisms of reparations for the victims and especially the parties’ different interpretations about the number of prisoners to be released (the government recognised about 240 people on a list of approximately 700 people that the opposition had submitted). The Civic Alliance complained that the government was not keeping the promises it had made in March and in late May it abandoned the negotiations in protest of the death of an opposition leader in prison, due to the continuation of what it considered illegal arrests and repressive measures and due to the enactment of an amnesty law for crimes linked to the crisis since April 2018 (which the opposition thought encouraged impunity among state security forces and paramilitary bodies). Meanwhile, the government said it had honoured its commitment to free those arrested since April 2018 after having released about 100 people in late May and another 106 in early June. Although the Civic Alliance made repeated calls to resume a third round of negotiations and several governments and international organisations exerted increasing pressure on Managua, the government ignored the appeals, publicly refused to move up the date of the elections (scheduled for 2021) and sent a letter to the Vatican and the OAS ending the negotiations in late July. Some analysts said that the fact that the letter was signed by the foreign minister and not by Daniel Ortega suggested that the talks could be resumed later, but they were not resumed in 2019. However, after Sommertag’s efforts and pressure from Humberto Ortega (the brother of the president and one of the main leaders of the Sandinista revolution), on 30 December the government transferred 90 prisoners to house arrest, though the opposition that 65 prisoners

In Nicaragua, the National Dialogue between the government of Daniel Ortega and the Civic Alliance for Justice and Democracy was resumed at the beginning of the year, but the it was interrupted in May and the government formally ended it in late July

that they considered political prisoners remained incarcerated.

Finally, given the standstill of the negotiations and criticism about the lack of a unitary vision among the opposition, starting in the final quarter of the year the large government opposition platforms, such as the Civic Alliance (the main actor in the National Dialogue) and Blue and White National Unity (formed by 94 civil society organisations) began contacts to form the Grand Opposition Coalition. In this regard, in mid-December the Civic Alliance, Blue and White National Unity and the Pro-Electoral Reform Group presented a unitary proposal on constitutional and electoral reform, one of the main topics of the negotiations since mid-2018.

Gender, peace and security

Shortly after the start of the National Dialogue in late February, the Broad Women’s Movement, a platform of several feminist organisations, publicly voiced its support for this initiative. Although there is no evidence that the National Dialogue specifically addressed gender equity issues and that there were no women in the six-person negotiating delegation that the Civic Alliance for Justice and Democracy designated to participate in the National Dialogue (there were female substitutes for these representatives, as well as female advisors to the delegation), the Broad Women’s Movement declared that the agenda that the Civic Alliance submitted to the negotiating table had previously been agreed with women’s organisations that continuously provided content for the negotiations. However, in March it emerged that eight protesters imprisoned in La Esperanza prison began a hunger strike in late February because they did not feel represented at the negotiating table between the government and the aforementioned Civic Alliance.

South America

| Colombia (ELN) | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Negotiating actors | Government, ELN |
| Third parties | Guarantor countries (Brazil, Norway, Cuba and Chile), accompanying countries (Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, the Netherlands and Italy) |
| Relevant agreements | “Heaven’s Door” Agreement (1988) |
| Summary: | Since the ELN emerged in 1964, various negotiating processes have tried to bring peace to the country. The first negotiations between the Colombian government and the ELN date from 1991 (Caracas and Tlaxcala). In 1998, |

both parties signed a peace agreement in Madrid that envisaged holding a national convention. That same year, the “Puerta del Cielo” agreement between the ELN and civil society activists was signed in Mainz, Germany, focused on humanitarian aspects. In 1999, the Colombian government and the ELN resumed meetings in Cuba, which ended in June 2000. The government of Álvaro Uribe resumed peace negotiations with the ELN in Cuba between 2005 and 2007, though no results were achieved. At the end of 2012, the ELN showed its willingness to open new negotiations with President Juan Manuel Santos, appointing a negotiating commission, and exploratory meetings were held. Formal peace negotiations began in 2017.

The peace process between the Colombian government and the ELN was fully suspended as the result of a serious bomb attack on a police academy in Bogota in January that killed 21 police officers. After the attack, Iván Duque’s government decided to reissue arrest warrants against members of the ELN who were in Havana as part of the armed group’s negotiating delegation and asked Cuba to extradite them immediately. The peace negotiations had been deadlocked since August 2018, following the inauguration of Duque’s government. The ELN representatives in Cuba completely distanced themselves from the attack in Bogota, noting that they had no responsibility or control over what happened and that they had complied with the negotiating protocols at all times. They also demanded that Duque respect the agreement that protected their safe return to Colombia. Both Cuba and Norway refused to facilitate the extradition of the negotiators, citing the agreement reached between the parties on how to proceed in case of a breach.

Negotiations between the parties were not resumed throughout the year, despite various calls for it, and the government remained firm in its demands that the ELN end the kidnappings and unilaterally halt its attacks. In April, the ELN announced a unilateral truce for Holy Week, which generally remained in place, although the CERAC centre said that it had been violated by an attack against the Caño Limón-Coveñas pipeline. At the end of the year, the armed group ruled out another truce for Christmas, as had happened on other occasions, but it did release three minors belonging to a commission formed by the Ombudsman, the Catholic Church and the International Committee of the Red Cross. It also released two people who had been kidnapped since 2018. However, it also proposed a bilateral truce to generate a climate of trust that could restart the negotiations. This proposal was presented after the arrest of one of its leaders and former peace negotiator Juan Carlos Cuellar, who had served as a “peace manager” between 2017 and January 2019 and who was in contact with the current government. According to the ELN, Cuellar had

The implementation of the peace agreement signed between the government of Colombia and the FARC continued to move forward, though with significant difficulties and many pending challenges

received guarantees from the government that he could continue his efforts ahead of a possible peace process.

| Colombia (FARC) | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Negotiating actors | Government, FARC |
| Third parties | UN Verification Mission in Colombia, International Verification Component (Technical Secretariat of the Notables, University of Notre Dame’s Kroc Institute) |
| Relevant agreements | The Havana peace agreement (2016) |

Summary:

Since the founding of the first guerrilla groups in 1964 there have been several negotiation attempts. In the early 1990s several small groups were demobilized, but not the FARC and the ELN, which are the two most important. In 1998, President Pastrana authorized the demilitarization of a large region of Colombia, around the area of San Vicente del Caguán, in order to conduct negotiations with the FARC, which lasted until 2002 and were unsuccessful. In 2012, and after several months of secret negotiations in Cuba, new talks began with the FARC in Cuba based on a specific agenda and including citizen participation mechanisms. After four years of negotiations, a historic peace agreement for the Colombian people was signed in late 2016.

The process to implement the peace agreement with the FARC underwent a year of difficulties, both due to the objections to the process raised by the government led by President Iván Duque and to the serious setback represented by important FARC leaders’ abandonment of the agreement and resumption of the armed struggle. These leaders included the chief negotiator in Havana, Iván Márquez, who in August joined former commanders such as Jesús Santrich, “El Paisa” or Romaña to declare that they were taking up arms again after refusing to appear before the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP), a transitional justice mechanism established by the peace agreement. Meanwhile, the different institutions established by the peace agreement made progress in their work. The Truth Commission continued to take testimonies and promote activities promoting reconciliation and co-existence. The JEP held more than 80 hearings and more than 12,000 people submitted to this form of transitional justice. The bodies responsible for verifying implementation of the peace agreement noted some progress, but also pointed out the limitations and difficulties. According to the report presented by the Kroc Institute,¹ by April 2019 more than two thirds of the commitments included in the peace agreement were in the implementation phase and one third had been completed or had made substantial progress on implementation. The Kroc Institute also found that

1. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies. *Effective status of the implementation of the peace agreement in Colombia, December 2016 – April 2019*. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies.

after the formation of the new government headed by Iván Duque, implementation faced new obstacles and slowed down. Furthermore, the process to reinstate former combatants of the FARC was delayed, which produced an atmosphere of dissatisfaction and distrust, as demonstrated by the return of some of the FARC's leaders to armed struggle. The Kroc Institute identifies protecting and achieving progress in transitional justice mechanisms, particularly the JEP and the Commission for the Clarification of Truth, as one of the most important challenges. The security situation of social leaders, rights advocates and former members of the FARC were also identified as key challenges, given the many murders and harassment faced by many members of these groups. The Technical Secretariat of the International Verification Component also submitted its follow-up reports,² in which it expressed concern about the lack of approval of the laws necessary to comply with many of the provisions of the agreement. The report indicates that some progress was made, but enormous challenges remained, such as comprehensive rural reform, security guarantees for the exercise of policy or for demonstration and peaceful protest and other aspects of the agreement.

Gender, peace and security

Major challenges remained in implementing a gender approach in the peace agreement between the FARC and the Colombian government. The Special Body of Women for the Gender Perspective on Peace presented its evaluation report on three years of implementation.³ In the report, female civil society representatives indicated that some of the structural causes of inequality and violence that have a special impact on women and rural, indigenous, Afro-Colombian, *palenquero* and *raizal* communities in the country, as well as the LGBTI population, have still not been addressed. They also complained that gender has become blurred as the central line of implementation, since the Framework Plan for Implementation limits its transversal nature. However, the report also highlighted the government's decision to create a governmental High Body on Gender and revealed that institutions in different parts of the country remain ignorant or unaware of the peace agreement, the gender focus and other differentiated approaches. The Kroc Institute also presented its follow-up report on the gender approach, which stressed the difficulties and delays in implementing it.⁴ Compared to 27% of the general commitments of the agreement, whose implementation had not begun by August 2019, 42% of the commitments related to the gender approach had not been begun. In addition, only 8% of the

commitments related to the gender approach had been completed, compared to 25% of those for the whole agreement. The Kroc Institute noted that the greatest progress was made in the sphere of victims' rights.

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Venezuela | |
| Negotiating actors | Government, political and social opposition |
| Third parties | Norway, International Contact Group |
| Relevant agreements | -- |

Summary:

Faced with the worsening political and social crisis that Venezuela experienced after the death in 2013 of President Hugo Chávez, the leader of the so-called Bolivarian Revolution, his successor Nicolás Maduro's narrow victory in the presidential election of April 2013 and the protests staged in the early months of 2014, which caused the death of around 40 people, in March 2014 the government said it was willing to accept talks with the opposition facilitated by UNASUR or the Vatican, but categorically rejected any mediation by the OAS. Shortly after Pope Francis called for dialogue and a group of UNASUR foreign ministers visited Venezuela and held many meetings, preliminary talks began between Caracas and the opposition Democratic Unity Roundtable (MUD) in April 2014, to which the Secretary of State of the Vatican, the former Apostolic Nuncio to Venezuela, as well as the foreign ministers of Brazil, Colombia and Ecuador, were invited as witnesses in good faith. Although the talks were interrupted in May 2014 due to developments in the political situation, both UNASUR and the Vatican continued to facilitate through Apostolic Nuncio Aldo Giordano. In May 2016, shortly after a visit to Venezuela by the former leaders of Spain (Jose Luis Rodríguez Zapatero), Panama (Martín Torrijos) and the Dominican Republic (Leonel Fernández) at the request of UNASUR, the Venezuelan government and opposition met in the Dominican Republic with the three aforementioned ex-leaders and UNASUR representatives. After a meeting between Maduro and Pope Francis in October, both parties met again in Venezuela under the auspices of the Pope's new special envoy, Emil Paul Tscherrig. In late 2017, both sides decided to resume the talks in the Dominican Republic starting in December, accompanied by several countries chosen by both parties (Chile, Mexico and Paraguay by the opposition and Nicaragua, Bolivia and San Vicente and the Grenadines by the government). Although some agreements were reached during the several rounds of negotiations that took place between December 2017 and February 2018, Maduro's unilateral call for a presidential election for 2018 brought them to a standstill and caused the withdrawal of several of the accompanying countries designated by the opposition to facilitate them.

During the year there were several attempts and negotiating formats between the government and the opposition to try to solve the political and

2. Technical Secretariat of the International Verification Component (CINEP/PPP-CERAC). *Sixth verification report on the implementation of the final peace agreement in Colombia for the international verifiers Felipe González and José Mujica*. Technical Secretariat of the International Verification Component (CINEP/PPP-CERAC).
3. Special Body of Women for the Gender Perspective on Peace, Gender perspective and territorial peace: the situation three years after signing the peace agreement, November 2019.
4. Kroc Institute, UN Women, FDI and Sweden, Gender Equality for Sustainable Peace. Second Report on the Monitoring of the Gender Perspective in the Implementation of the Colombian Peace Accord, December 2019.

institutional crisis that worsened at the beginning of the year with the proclamation of Juan Guaidó, president of the National Assembly, that he is the “acting president” of the country and his subsequent recognition by several states (56 by the end of the year). **The negotiations that generated the greatest expectations and media attention were those that took place in Oslo and in Barbados under the auspices of the Norwegian government, but also the National Dialogue Table between the government and several opposition parties, the direct dialogue between Caracas and the US administration and diplomatic talks and negotiations within the International Contact Group led by the EU and Uruguay.** In mid-May, the government and opposition delegations met in Oslo to conduct confidential talks facilitated by the Norwegian government to explore both parties’ willingness to participate in the dialogue. Although Guaidó had repeatedly refused to negotiate with the government, some analysts argue that his relatively unsuccessful call on the Venezuelan Armed Forces to rebel against the government on 30 April weakened his position. In addition, shortly before the start of the exploratory talks in Oslo, Guaidó met in Caracas with the International Contact Group. At the end of these talks in Oslo in late March, Guaidó publicly declared that the resignation of Nicolás Maduro was non-negotiable and that he would defend his road map in any negotiations, which consists of holding a presidential election supervised by the international community one year after Maduro’s resignation. During that one-year period, he would lead a transitional government to carry out economic reforms, free members of the opposition considered to be political prisoners and reform state institutions. Despite these statements, the opposition was splintered between those that accepted the negotiations and those that rejected them and instead requested military intervention from the international community. The peace negotiations facilitated by Norway resumed on 15 July in Barbados. In the days leading up to them, both delegations had agreed on a six-point agenda, which was not leaked, as well as on the creation of a working table that would run continuously. Shortly before travelling to Barbados, both delegations had met in Venezuela with the special representative of the International Contact Group, Enrique Iglesias. According to media reports, the framework in which it was negotiated at the time involved moving up the date of the presidential election to 2020 and reshuffling the Electoral Council in exchange for the opposition working for the withdrawal of international sanctions against Venezuela. However, on 7 August, the government halted its participation in the negotiations, accusing the opposition of supporting and celebrating the new

The negotiations that generated the most media attention were those that took place in Oslo and Barbados under the auspices of the Norwegian government, but the National Dialogue Table between the government and several opposition parties is also worthy of mention

sanctions imposed by the US and of intending to hand over the Esequibe, a territory it disputes with Guyana. In addition, the government had previously criticised the decision of the opposition-led National Assembly to ask the OAS to reinstate the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (known as the Rio Treaty), which many analysts interpreted as a way to facilitate military intervention in Venezuela. In mid-September, Guaidó also announced his withdrawal from the peace process and declared that the format had run its course. When he publicly announced his decision, Guaidó said that the government had not responded to his latest proposal at the negotiating table in 40 days: the resignation of Maduro and Guaidó and the formation of a council in charge of convening the next presidential election formed by members of the government, the opposition and the Venezuelan Armed Forces. Although both the Norwegian government and the International Contact Group continued to carry out diplomatic efforts to resume the talks, they did not resume during the rest of the year.

On the same day that the opposition announced an end to its participation in the negotiations in Barbados, Caracas publicly revealed that it had been holding confidential talks with several opposition parties in recent weeks and that a National Dialogue Table had been formed that had reached six preliminary agreements. These agreements include the release of some prisoners, the reform of electoral legislation and the return to the National Assembly of MPs of the ruling United Socialist Party of Venezuela and its ally, the Great Patriotic Pole, who had withdrawn after the opposition’s victory in the last legislative elections,

which resulted in the establishment of a Constituent National Assembly composed exclusively of the ruling party. Although the majority factions of the opposition downplayed any importance to the agreement between the government and parties such as the Hope for Change Movement, Progressive Advance (led by Henri Falcón, an opponent who did decide to run in the 2018 presidential election), Let’s Change and the Movement for Socialism, the government kept the National Dialogue Table active until the end of the year and made some gestures in compliance with the agreements made in mid-September.

In addition to the aforementioned National Dialogue and the talks facilitated by Norway, there were also other active negotiating frameworks during the year. In August, the governments of the United States and Venezuela acknowledged that they were conducting bilateral talks shortly after it was reported to the press that Diosdado Cabello, one of the leading figures of the ruling party, was in direct contact with

Washington through an intermediary. The US special representative for Venezuela, Elliot Abrams, was also very active diplomatically throughout the year and even travelled to Moscow to address the Venezuelan crisis. In June, representatives of several important stakeholders in Venezuela, such as Cuba, Russia, Vatican City and the United Nations, met in Sweden. Finally, the International Contact Group was created in January for a period of 90 days. Led by the EU and Uruguay and composed of Spain, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Bolivia, the group stated from its inception that any solution to the crisis would involve a new presidential election with international observers.

Gender, peace and security

In September, the Maduro government announced that the National Dialogue Table, which began with certain opposition groups after the breakdown of the negotiations facilitated by Norway, would have eight complementary tables to make progress in the agreements. One of them, the eighth, would be made up of social movements and indigenous, peasant and women's organisations. In September, the First International Congress of Women for Peace and Solidarity among Peoples took place in Caracas, which was attended by 70 delegates from around the world. Organised by the ruling party, the conference took place with six work tables and aimed to lead to a work plan focused on women's rights and struggles.

4. Peace negotiations in Asia

- There were 12 negotiating processes in Asia in 2019, representing about one fifth of the total number of cases around the world.
- The peace talks between the US government and the Taliban insurgency made significant progress, although President Trump cancelled the signing of the peace agreement that had been planned for August.
- Afghan women's organisations unsuccessfully asked to participate significantly in the peace negotiations and complained that their rights were not a subject of discussion with the Taliban insurgency.
- The peace process in Mindanao centred on the institutional development of the new regional framework and the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of the MILF.
- Although the leaders of the US and North Korea had two meetings during the year, the negotiating process was stalled for most of it.
- Negotiations shut down in southern Thailand between the government and MARA Patani, an umbrella organisation for several insurgent groups, but Bangkok sought to resume talks with the BRN, the main armed group in the southern part of the country.
- No formal progress was made in the peace process in Myanmar, but several meetings were held between the Government and the various insurgent groups.

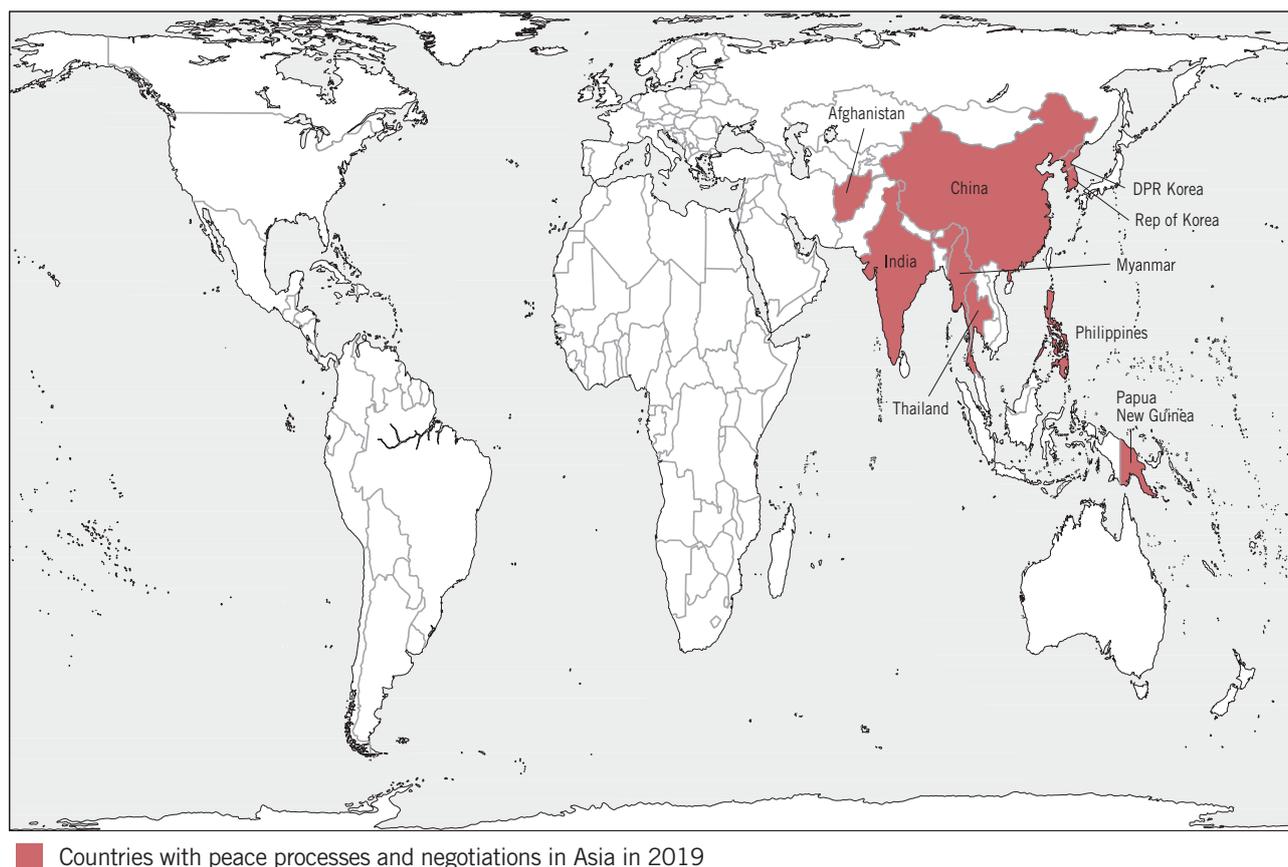
This chapter provides an analysis of the main peace processes and negotiations in Asia in 2019, both the general characteristics and trends of the negotiations and the development of each case on the continent throughout the year, including references to the gender, peace and security agenda. In addition, at the beginning of the chapter there is a map identifying the countries in Asia that hosted peace negotiations during 2019.

Table 4.1. Summary of peace processes and negotiations in Asia in 2019

| Peace processes and negotiations | Negotiating actors | Third parties |
|--|---|---|
| Afghanistan | Government, Taliban insurgents, USA | Pakistan, China, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Germany, Norway, UN |
| China (Tibet) | China, Tibetan government-in-exile | -- |
| DPR Korea – Republic of Korea | North Korea, South Korea | -- |
| DPR Korea – USA | North Korea, USA | -- |
| India (Assam) | Government, ULFA-PTF, NDFB-P, NDFB-RD | -- |
| India (Nagaland) | Indian government, NSCN-IM, NNPG: GPRN/NSCN (Kitovi Zhimomi), NNC, FGN, NSCN(R), NPGN (Non-Accord) and NNC/GDRN/NA, ZUF | -- |
| Myanmar | Government; armed groups that have signed the ceasefire agreement (NCA): DKBA, RCSS/SSA-South, CNF, KNU, KNLAPC, ALP, PNLO, ABSDF, NMSP and LDU; armed groups not part of the NCA: UWSP, NDAA, SSPP/SSA-N, KNPP, NSCN-K, KIA, AA, TNLA, MNDAA | China |
| Papua New Guinea (Bougainville) | Government, Autonomous Region of Bougainville | UN, Conciliation Resources |
| Philippines (MILF) | Government, MILF | Malaysia, International Contact Group, Third Party Monitoring Team, International Monitoring Team, Independent Decommissioning Body |
| Philippines (MNLF) | Government, MNLF (faction led by Nur Misuari) | -- |
| Philippines (NDF) | Government, NDF (umbrella organisation of different communist organisations, among them the Communist Party of the Philippines, which is the political arm of the NPA) | Norway |
| Thailand (south) | Government, MARA Patani (umbrella organisation representing several armed groups) | Malaysia |

The peace negotiations in bold type are described in the chapter.
 -- There are no third parties or no public proof of their existence.

Map 4.1. Peace negotiations in Asia in 2019



4.1 Negotiations in 2019: regional trends

Twelve negotiating processes were reported in **Asia** in 2019, which represents practically a quarter of the total cases around the world. Since the previous year, a new negotiating process was identified between the government of Papua New Guinea and the government of the Bougainville region after the self-determination referendum held on the island in late 2019 where more than 98% of the population voted for independence. The 2001 peace agreement provided for the postponement of a non-binding referendum for the government of Papua New Guinea, so that both governments must negotiate to agree on a proposal that is likely to be put to a vote in the Parliament of Papua New Guinea in a period of time that has yet to be determined. Several negotiations in Asia were linked to active armed conflicts, such as in Afghanistan, the Philippines (NDF), Myanmar and Thailand (south), but most were framed in contexts of socio-political tension, such as in China (Tibet), North Korea-South Korea, North Korea-USA, India (Assam) and India (Nagaland), or they featured armed groups that were no longer actively fighting against the government, such as the MILF and the MNLF in the Philippines. Almost half the negotiations in Asia took place in South-east Asia, while there were three negotiating processes

in South Asia, another three in East Asia and finally another in Oceania. No peace processes were reported in Central Asia.

Two thirds of the negotiating processes were linked to issues of self-determination, independence, autonomy, territorial and constitutional issues and recognition of the identity of various national minorities. Such cases include those in the Philippines (MILF and MNLF), China (Tibet), India (Assam and Nagaland), Myanmar, Papua New Guinea (Bougainville) and Thailand (south). Two of the remaining four cases were mainly focused on the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula and the final two, in Afghanistan and the Philippines (NDF), centred on structural and systemic reforms in the political, social, religious and military spheres.

While almost all of the negotiations were internal in **nature**, they were interstate in the cases of North Korea and the US and North Korea and South Korea. In China, talks are held between the Chinese government and the Tibetan government-in-exile, which is based in a neighbouring country (India).¹ In addition, several other negotiating processes had a clearly international

1. On several occasions Beijing has indicated that it does not recognise the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), commonly known as the Tibetan government-in-exile, so in previous negotiations special envoys of the Dalai Lama interacted directly with Beijing.

dimension, not only because of the participation of foreign third parties or because of the regional impacts of the conflicts, but because sometimes the leadership (or certain leaders) of the armed groups reside abroad or also because much of the negotiations took place outside the country.

The vast majority of the **actors participating in the negotiations** were governments and armed groups (or their political representatives), but in a quarter of the cases the talks took place between governments, either between sovereign states (North Korea and the USA and North Korea and South Korea) or between national and regional governments (Papua New Guinea and Bougainville or China and Tibet), although it should also be noted that in Mindanao, the Philippine government and the Bangsamoro Transitional Authority of the new Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao created a specific body to negotiate and resolve disputes related to the distribution of powers. All negotiations involved the governments of the countries where the peace process was taking place, and in some cases with decisive participation by the highest authorities in the country, as was the case with President Donald Trump in Afghanistan and North Korea, Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte in the three negotiating processes hosted by the Philippines and Kim Jong-un and Moon Jae-in in the inter-Korean negotiations. In some cases, the governments in question had an institutional framework specifically designed to deal with the negotiating processes and peace policies as a whole, such as in Afghanistan, through the High Peace Council; the Philippines, through the Office of the Presidential Advisor on the Peace Processes; Myanmar, through the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre, the Peace Commission and the Secretariat of Peace; and South Korea, through the Ministry of Unification.

Various **armed groups** negotiated directly, like the MILF and the MNLF in the Philippines, the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan, the NSCN-IM in India, the KNPP and the KIA in Myanmar and, according to some sources, the BRN in southern Thailand, or through political organisations representing them, such as in the Philippines, as Manila has negotiated since the mid-1980s with the National Democratic Front (NDF), an organisation that unites different communist groups, including the Philippine Communist Party, whose armed wing is the NPA. In other cases, the negotiations took place between governments and umbrella organisations that group together and represent several armed groups, such as MARA Patani in Thailand, which unites five armed groups; the Naga National Political Groups (NNPG) in Nagaland, which brings together seven insurgent organisations; and the UNFC and the Northern Alliance and Brotherhood Alliance in Myanmar (these

last two unite armed organisations that have not signed the national ceasefire agreement).

Although it is not exclusively typical of Asia, it should be noted that in many cases there was a **remarkable variety of negotiating processes and formats** in the same country. For example, direct negotiations between the US government and the Taliban in Qatar, which were both formal and informal, were held alongside exploratory talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban and intra-organisational dialogue taking place mainly during the National Peace Consultative Loya Jirga and the Intra-Afghan Peace Conference in 2019. In India (Nagaland), the national government negotiated bilaterally with both the NSCN-IM and the insurgent group coordinator NNPG, while at the same time maintaining an exploratory dialogue with Naga tribes and non-Naga communities. In the process involving the MILF in the Philippines, there were direct negotiations between the implementation panels of both parties, but also contacts between the

Two thirds of the negotiating processes in Asia were linked to issues of self-determination, independence, autonomy, territorial and constitutional issues and recognition of the identity of various national minorities

MILF and the MNLF to find common ground between both groups and even achieve the possible harmonisation of both negotiating processes (and their respective resulting peace agreements). Negotiations were also held within the Bangsamoro Transitional Authority (where the MILF and the government appointed members at almost equal levels) and between it and the central government regarding power sharing and other disputes that may arise during the institutional development of the new autonomous authority in Mindanao. In another negotiating process taking place in the Philippines, which features the state and the NDF, the Duterte administration maintained official and formal negotiations with the NDF leadership in a process that dates back to the 1980s and has been facilitated by Norway in recent years, while at the same time initiating “localised peace talks” with units and regional commanders of the NPA, which according to some critics are trying to demobilise the NPA fighters and create strategic dissension between the NDF leaders exiled in the Netherlands and the military command of the NPA on the ground. In Thailand, the government maintained its formal commitment to negotiations with MARA Patani, facilitated by Malaysia, but at the same time it was revealed that Bangkok was trying to enter into direct negotiations with the BRN, the main armed group in the southern part of the country. Finally, the Burmese government held meetings with armed groups that had signed the national ceasefire agreement (NCA), although there were no formal meetings of the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong; as well as with groups that had not joined the NCA, both in a bilateral format (with the KIA or KNPP, for example), and through insurgent group coordinating bodies such as the Northern Alliance and the Brotherhood Alliance

(some armed groups are part of both). In the two cases linked to the Korean peninsula, the negotiations consisted mainly of presidential summits and meetings (some sporadic, others more scheduled and frequent) in order to build trust between the parties and implement the promises made during the presidential summits.

Half the negotiations analysed in Asia the participation of **third parties**, making it the continent with the highest percentage of direct and bilateral negotiations between the parties. The cases in which there was some kind of facilitation of the dialogue by third parties were Afghanistan, the Philippines (MILF), the Philippines (NDF), Myanmar, Papua New Guinea (Bougainville) and Thailand (south), although the degree of internationalisation and complexity of the intermediation structures was very different among those cases. In some instances, the dialogue was facilitated by a single actor, such as Norway in the Philippines (NDF), Malaysia in southern Thailand and China in Myanmar, while in others the mediation space for dialogue was more complex. The high degree of internationalisation of the peace processes in Mindanao and Afghanistan should be noted. In addition to official mediation by the government of Malaysia, the peace process in the Philippines (MILF) enjoys four other international support structures: the International Monitoring Team, in which the EU participates, along with countries such as Malaysia, Libya, Brunei, Japan and Norway; the Third Party Monitoring Team, responsible for overseeing implementation of the agreements signed between the MILF and Manila; the International Decommissioning Body, composed of Turkey, Norway, Brunei and the Philippines; and, finally, the International Contact Group, made up of four states (Japan, the United Kingdom, Turkey and Saudi Arabia) and four international NGOs (Muhammadiyah, the Asia Foundation, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and Conciliation Resources), though since the transformation of the government's and the MILF's negotiating panels into teams to implement the peace agreements, the functions of this dialogue support structure have been reformulated and somewhat diluted. In Afghanistan, prominent roles were played by UNAMA, with its mandate to facilitate the UN dialogue, and Qatar, a country where a Taliban insurgency office was established a few years ago and which in recent years has hosted several meetings between the Taliban and the US government. Other intermediary initiatives that illustrated the international community's interest and intervention in Afghanistan included the Intra-Afghan Dialogue, which held two massive events in 2019, a jirga and a peace conference; the "Moscow format"; and the establishment of negotiations between Kabul and the Taliban, an effort in which countries such as Germany or Norway played a specific role.

In many negotiating processes in Asia, there was a remarkable variety of negotiating processes and formats in the same country

The Afghan government announced that women would be included in the negotiating team in future peace negotiations with the Taliban, who in turn announced that their delegation in Qatar would include women

In some cases, the role played by third parties was more formal and official, as happened with Norway regarding the negotiations between the Philippine Government and the NDF; with Malaysia regarding negotiations between Manila and the MILF and between the Thai government and the insurgency operating in southern Thailand; and with Qatar in the official negotiations already under way between the US administration and the Taliban. In other cases, talks were facilitated more indirectly, such as by the UN and the international NGO Conciliation Resources in their work between the governments of Papua New Guinea and Bougainville through the Post-Referendum Planning Taskforce, or more informally, as is the case with China regarding some Burmese insurgent groups from Shan State or the Northern Alliance, or even the role that South Korean President Moon Jae-in has sometimes played in talks between North Korea and the United States. As also happens on other continents, on several occasions (in fact, in almost half the cases) the states neighbouring the country where the negotiating process took place played some role in facilitating it. This probably denotes a certain interest in preserving regional stability and in thereby preventing the crisis that has triggered the negotiations from expanding beyond the confines of the country. This happened in Pakistan with respect to Afghanistan, a country with which it has always shared a porous border in Pashtun-majority areas; in China with respect to Myanmar, especially regarding the groups operating in the border regions between Myanmar and China; in Malaysia with respect to the Philippines (MILF) and Thailand (south); and in South Korea, with President Moon Jae-in's recent preponderant role in finding common ground and holding presidential summits between the United States and North Korea. States that took on prominent roles included Norway, which was involved in mediation between the Philippine Government and the NDF, in the exploratory talks between Kabul and the Taliban and in the formation of the International Decommissioning Body and the International Monitoring Team; and Malaysia, which is the official facilitator of the negotiations between the Philippines and the MILF and between the Thai government and the insurgency in southern Thailand. The efforts made by many local NGOs to build trust and facilitate dialogue between negotiating parties were joined by international NGOs in some cases, such as Conciliation Resources in Mindanao (together with three other international NGOs), Papua New Guinea, the Berghof Foundation and the Asia Foundation in Thailand.

In comparative terms, **intergovernmental organisations'** lack of initiative in mediating and facilitating talks and in observing and verifying the implementation

of agreements and cessation of hostilities is striking. The United Nations only exercised some of the aforementioned functions in Afghanistan through UNAMA and, more indirectly, in facilitating and providing technical support to the Post-Referendum Planning Taskforce, a working group in which the government of Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Bougainville Government must negotiate the political status of Bougainville after the independence referendum held in 2019. The EU participated indirectly in the peace process in Mindanao through the International Monitoring Team, which oversees the ceasefire between the Philippine government and the MILF. Another organisation that has historically played an important role in Mindanao is the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which first facilitated the negotiations that led to the signing of the 1996 peace agreement between the Philippine government and the MNLF, recognised by the OIC as the legitimate representative of the Moro people, later facilitated talks on the full implementation of the aforementioned agreement and finally sponsored cooperation between the MNLF and the MILF, promoting the coordination and convergence of both negotiating processes. However, although Nur Misuari repeatedly asked for the OIC to play a bigger role in his talks with the state in 2019, lately the OIC has been playing a less proactive role than in previous years because the majority factions of the MNLF have accepted the peace agreement between the government and the MILF as fact and have even been integrated into the resulting structures.

There was no global or structural **trend in the peace negotiations** during the year, with most processes deadlocked or even suffering a setback in general terms. However, concrete progress was made in almost all contexts. The two places where there was a more positive trend in the peace process overall were Afghanistan and the Philippines (MILF). In Afghanistan, there was such a breakthrough in the formal negotiations between the US government and the Taliban that an agreement was almost signed at Camp David in September before it was finally cancelled by Donald Trump. Similarly, there was significant progress both in the exploratory phase of possible negotiations between the government of Afghanistan and the Taliban and in the Intra-Afghan Dialogue. In the southern Philippines, approval of the referendum on the Bangsamoro Organic Law initiated a new phase of the peace process centred on the disarmament of the MILF and especially on the institutional development of the new Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, temporarily governed by the leader of the MILF. Other cases enjoyed partial progress, such as the two summits held by Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un in Hanoi and in the North Korean part of the Demilitarised Zone; the direct meetings (up to six) between the Philippine president and the leader and founder of the MNLF, Nur Misuari, to resume talks with the group; the resumption of negotiations between Manila and the NDF after many months of deadlock; the many meetings between the

government of Myanmar and armed groups that had signed the national ceasefire agreement, as well as some that had not; the predisposition to dialogue shown by the governments of Papua New Guinea and Bougainville after the independence referendum; and the start of direct talks between the Thai government and the main armed group in southern Thailand.

Finally, with regard to the **gender, peace and security agenda** and women's participation in peace negotiations in Asia, in most cases there was no significant presence of women in the negotiations, nor was the gender perspective included in the substantive agenda of the peace processes. Yet in some cases, notable progress was made over previous years. In Afghanistan, for example, the Government announced the inclusion of three women (out of a total of 12 members) in the negotiating team in future peace talks, while the Taliban announced that their delegation in Qatar would include women. In addition, a "Group of Friends of the Women in Afghanistan" was formed, consisting of representatives from 20 countries to guarantee the rights of women in possible negotiations between Kabul and the Taliban. In Myanmar, UN Women also promoted different meetings to favour the implementation of Resolution 1325 and the women, peace and security agenda. In Papua New Guinea, the president of the Autonomous Bougainville Government guaranteed that women would participate in the team that must negotiate the political status of the island of Bougainville with the central government. In other contexts, women's organisations played an important advocacy role and applied pressure for the beginning, continuation and resumption of dialogue, leading demonstrations, holding discussion forums, carrying out awareness-raising projects and presenting proposals to the negotiating parties.

4.2. Case study analysis

East Asia

| DPR Korea – Republic of Korea | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Negotiating actors | North Korea, South Korea |
| Third parties | -- |
| Relevant agreements | Panmunjom Declaration (April 2018) |

Summary:

Although the high points of the negotiations between North Korea and South Korea were the presidential summits held in the 21st century (2000, 2007 and 2018), there have been attempts at rapprochement to move forward on the path of reunification and cooperation since the 1970s. Thus, in 1972, both countries signed the North-South Korea Joint Statement, outlining some measures for reunification and reducing the arms race, among other issues. In late 1991, both countries signed the Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-Aggression, and Exchanges and Cooperation; a few weeks later, they signed the Joint Declaration of the Denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula. The former,

which was achieved after five rounds of negotiations begun in September 1990 between the prime ministers of both countries, was considered a historic agreement and a turning point in the relationship between both countries by much of the international community, as it included commitments to mutual non-aggression, respect for the political and economic systems of each country, peaceful conflict resolution, economic cooperation and the promotion of measures for the reunification of both countries. However, the measures included in the agreement were not fully implemented, partly because of the tensions generated by the North Korean weapons programme. In 1994, former US President Jimmy Carter exercised his good offices between the leaders of both countries to contain the crisis generated by the progress made in the programme and Pyongyang's decision not to allow inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency and to abandon the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In the 21st century, under a policy of rapprochement with North Korea (called the Sun Policy) promoted by Kim Dae-jun and continued by his successor, Roh Moon-hyun, in 2000 and 2007 Pyongyang hosted the first two presidential summits since the end of the Korean War, in which both countries again pledged to boost cooperation to move towards greater stability and the eventual reunification of the Korean peninsula.

The process of dialogue and rapprochement between North Korea and South Korea remained relatively stagnant compared to the previous year, in which up to three summits were held between the leaders of both countries and several agreements were made and measures were taken to promote trust. Negotiations between both governments were virtually non-existent throughout the year and the role of facilitating the dialogue between North Korea and the United States that South Korean President Moon Jae-in had sought and exercised was seriously compromised by the failure of the summit that US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un held in Hanoi in February. Early in the year, the South Korean government was very active in the trilateral preparatory meetings for the summit, which were mainly held in Stockholm. Along the same lines, in his New Year address, Kim Jong-un publicly spoke of his desire to keep on promoting shared and cooperative projects with South Korea, as well as to continue the presidential negotiations and summits that took place in 2018. However, **the North Korean government's position regarding the inter-Korean talks changed significantly after the Hanoi summit**, in which Pyongyang sought an incremental negotiating system in which the US recognised and replicated concrete measures regarding its nuclear disarmament. According to the media, the US summit would have demanded the verifiable, irreversible and virtually complete inventory and dismantling of its infrastructure and weapons capabilities. Shortly after the abrupt end of that summit, North Korean officials stopped regularly attending weekly meetings at the liaison office between the two countries in the border town of Kaesong established the previous year to maintain fluid communication and boost negotiations between them. In addition, in May the

The South Korean president declared his goal for both Koreas to jointly organise the 2032 Olympic Games, as well as to achieve reunification by 2045, the centenary of the liberation of both countries after the Second World War

North Korean government decided not to participate in the commemoration of the first anniversary of the inter-Korean summit in Panmunjom. Nevertheless, in June, **Moon Jae-in made a formal appeal to North Korea to hold a presidential summit (the fourth since 2018) prior to President Donald Trump's visit to the country, but the proposal was rejected** by Pyongyang. However, Moon Jae-in did participate in the meeting that Trump and Kim Jong-un held on 30 June in the Demilitarised Zone to try to resume talks. Previously, the South Korean government had approved the shipment of 50,000 tonnes of rice to its neighbour through United Nations agencies in one of the largest humanitarian aid budget items in recent decades.

In August, **Moon Jae-in publicly declared that both countries can jointly organise the 2032 Olympic Games, as had already transpired in February, as well as to achieve peace and the reunification of both countries by 2045, during the centenary of the liberation of both countries after the Second World War.** Shortly thereafter, on the occasion of his participation in the UN General Assembly in September, the South Korean president continued to work on his road map for the normalisation of relations in the Korean peninsula. First, he proposed turning the current Demilitarised Zone into an International Peace Zone. Second, he presented the three principles that should guide the negotiations: zero tolerance for war, mutual security guarantees between North Korea and South Korea and a commitment to shared prosperity. Meanwhile, the North Korean government stated on several occasions that it would not hold any kind of dialogue with South Korea and that in the event that negotiations were resumed they would be exclusively bilateral between North Korea and the United States. Pyongyang also explicitly asked Seoul not to interfere in its negotiations with Washington. According to some analysts, Moon Jae-in's efforts in recent years for North Korea and the US to redirect their diplomatic relations and establish a sustained dialogue were necessary and recognised by both parties, but in the current scenario, in which North Korea and the US already have direct and continuous communication, Pyongyang believes that it can obtain greater results from bilateral negotiations with the US than from the participation or facilitation of South Korea. According to these analysts, the North Korean government hoped that Moon Jae-in would have interceded more decisively so that the US government would offer greater flexibility in its sanctions policy at the Hanoi summit.

Moreover, **South Korea's facilitating role in the negotiations between North Korea and the United States was also jeopardised to some extent by the tensions that emerged between the Trump administration and the South Korean government.** According to some analysts, the South Korean government believes that the US negotiating strategy should take a more incremental approach and make concessions (mainly in

the area of sanctions) in a more gradual and phased denuclearisation of North Korea. However, given a strictly bilateral negotiating framework between North Korea and the US, there are certain fears within the South Korean government that the latter may focus exclusively on the issue of intercontinental ballistic missiles and on banning new nuclear tests, thereby allowing Pyongyang to retain much of its nuclear arsenal. The US government expressed its discomfort to Seoul, believing that it had been too empathetic and receptive to North Korea's demands regarding its sanctions policy, that it had proposed the resumption of inter-Korean economic projects a few days before the Hanoi summit and that it had pressured North Korean defectors living in South Korea not to testify against the North Korean regime.

| DPR Korea – USA | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Negotiating actors | North Korea, USA |
| Third parties | -- |
| Relevant agreements | Singapore Statement (June 2018) |

Summary:

The US and other countries of the international community began to express their concern about the North Korean nuclear programme in the early 1980s, but the tensions that it produced were mainly channelled through several bilateral or multilateral agreements: in 1985, Korea North ratified the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; in 1991 the US announced the withdrawal of about 100 South Korean warheads under the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START); and in 1992 North Korea and South Korea signed the Joint Declaration on the Denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula, in which both countries pledged not to produce, store, test or deploy nuclear weapons and to allow verification through inspections. Nevertheless, there was a major diplomatic crisis in 1993 due to Pyongyang's decision not to allow inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and to pull out of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, though it eventually stayed its hand after the talks it held with the United States and the United Nations. After a trip to the Korean peninsula by former President Jimmy Carter in 1994, in which he met with North Korean leader Kim Il-sung to resolve diplomatic tensions and seek rapprochement, the US and North Korean governments signed an agreement in Geneva (known as the Agreed Framework) in which, among other things, Pyongyang promised to freeze its nuclear programme in exchange for aid and the relaxation of international sanctions. George W. Bush's inauguration as president of the United States led to a change in policy towards North Korea. Shortly after it was included in the so-called "Axis of Evil", Pyongyang expelled several IAEA inspectors, withdrew from the Non-Proliferation Treaty and announced that it already possessed nuclear weapons. In light of this new situation, six-party multilateral talks between North Korea, South Korea, the United States, Japan, China and Russia began in 2003. Though they led to some important agreements in 2005 and 2008, this negotiating format came to an end in 2009. Despite direct contact between North Korea and the US since then, including an agreement reached in 2012 in which Pyongyang committed to a moratorium on ballistic and nuclear tests, the tension between both countries rose after Kim Jong-un came to power in 2011 and the North Korean weapons programme

intensified. In mid-2018, Kim Jong-un and US President Donald Trump held a historic summit in Singapore where they addressed the normalisation of relations between both countries and the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula.

Although US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un held two meetings during the year, the negotiating process between both countries was stalled for most of the year. **The second summit between both presidents took place in Hanoi in February, but ended earlier than planned and without agreement regarding a third presidential summit.** According to several analysts, in that meeting neither party saw their expectations fulfilled. North Korea did not convince the United States to lift or ease the sanctions, while the promise to close the Yongbyon nuclear reactor, the largest in the entire country, was not enough in the eyes of the Trump administration, which demanded more decisive and verifiable measures of nuclear disarmament. Shortly before the summit, the US Armed Forces had warned that after the 2018 Singapore summit, the tension in the Demilitarised Zone had subsided and military provocations by North Korea had substantially diminished, but no significant progress was reported in the denuclearisation of the country. Despite the lack of concrete agreements, both parties recognised that personal relations between both leaders were very good. In the weeks prior to the Hanoi summit, there was probably the largest number of meetings between the parties all year, as well as progress in the implementation of the Singapore summit declaration of June 2018, the first in history between leaders of the US and North Korea. In his traditional end-of-the-year speech, Kim Jong-un confirmed that his country was not manufacturing or testing nuclear weapons and expressed his readiness to continue negotiations with the US and with South Korea. Thus, in addition to several conversations at the level of work teams that occurred since the beginning of the year, in mid-January a North Korean high-level delegation travelled to Washington to meet with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. Days later, both sides met in Stockholm, with a South Korean delegation attending, while in early February, the US special representative for negotiations with North Korea, Stephen Biegun, travelled to Pyongyang to prepare for the Hanoi summit.

After the Hanoi summit, the negotiating process stalled. **Alongside the resumption of tests with short-range missiles and the use of more aggressive rhetoric regarding the annual joint military exercises between the US and South Korea, the North Korean government began to demand that the United States change its approach and attitude in the negotiations.** Previously, Kim Jong-un had already demanded greater flexibility in the US sanctions policy and had warned of the consequences of forcing the unilateral denuclearisation of his country. Shortly after the summit in Hanoi, Pyongyang already declared that it would allow the US until the end of the year to abandon its hostile policy and offer concrete,

tangible and acceptable measures for North Korea. Otherwise, Pyongyang would take a new path in its relations with the US, in a statement that most media outlets interpreted as a resumption of nuclear tests and intercontinental ballistic missiles.

In June, after Donald Trump visited South Korea and sent a personal letter to Kim Jong-un, both leaders met in the North Korean part of the Demilitarised Zone, making Trump the first US president in office to set foot on North Korean soil. At the meeting, both leaders promised to resume the negotiations and implement the agreements of the Singapore summit, focused on denuclearisation and peacebuilding on the Korean peninsula and the transformation of relations between the two countries. However, other than a personal letter that Kim Jong-un sent to Trump in August explaining his willingness to resume the talks and to implement a new approach to them, the high-level negotiations did not resume again during the year. In October, a technical-level work meeting was held between both parties in Stockholm, but the North Korean delegation left the meeting because it thought that the US had not relaxed its position. In November, the US declared that it was not challenged by the ultimatum brought by North Korea and said that it would postpone joint military exercises as a gesture of goodwill towards Pyongyang. In addition, some analysts believe that given the current domestic policy scene in the US, including the process of impeachment against Donald Trump, it is not in a position to make significant concessions to North Korea, which according to these same analysts would mainly happen in exchange for the partial withdrawal of sanctions and the offer of security guarantees for Pyongyang. North Korea considered the delay of the aforementioned military exercises insufficient and asked the US to stop carrying them out for good. It stressed the consequences of not respecting the 31 December deadline to obtain new concessions from the US and continued to make the progress of its arms programme public at the same time.

Gender, peace and security

Some media outlets echoed the low presence (or visibility) of women at the summit between Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un in Hanoi in February, but others stressed the importance of some women in the negotiations between the two countries, such as Allison Hooker, a specialist on Korea in the US National Security Council and according to some analysts a key person in the preparation of the summit; Choe Son-hui, the North Korean Minister of Foreign Affairs and the senior woman in the North Korean delegation, one of the main people responsible for bilateral relations with the US with previous diplomatic experience in organising visits to the country by former presidents Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton; and Kim Yo-jong, a sister of Kim Jong-un and

Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un met in the North Korean part of the Demilitarised Zone, making Trump the first US president in office to set foot on North Korean soil

a key person in the approach between her brother and South Korean President Moon Jae-in, who several analysts believe exerts a significant influence on the government's foreign policy decisions. However, their role in the respective governments and their participation in the aforementioned summits between Trump and Kim Jong-un was no guarantee that they would include women, peace and security issues on their substantive agenda.

South Asia

| Afghanistan | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Negotiating actors | Government, Taliban insurgents, USA |
| Third parties | Pakistan, China, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Germany, Norway, UN |
| Relevant agreements | Bonn Agreement – Agreement on provisional arrangements in Afghanistan pending the re-establishment of permanent government institutions – (2001) |

Summary:

Afghanistan has been in a state of continuous armed conflict since 1979. The different parties have attempted to negotiate in all of the stages of the struggle. During the 1980s the UN worked to facilitate rapprochement between the US and the USSR. After the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001, the United Nations again facilitated the process that led to the Bonn Agreement, which marked the beginning of the country's transition. In recent years the persistence of armed conflict and the inability to stop it using military means has led the Afghan and U.S. Governments to gradually reach out to the Taliban insurgency, a process that has not been without difficulties and has not passed the exploration and confidence building stages. Different international actors such as the UN and the German and Saudi Arabian Governments have played different roles in facilitating and bringing the parties together.

The peace process in Afghanistan underwent a decisive year in which important progress and rapprochement took place, though no peace agreement was signed. The peace process took place in various formats and tracks. First, **the negotiations between the US government and the Taliban, which acquired a formal character prior to their cancellation by the US in September, consisted of a total of nine rounds.** Second, the different attempts at intra-organisational dialogue led by both the government and other Afghan actors, sometimes with international support, did not bear fruit, but did result in several initiatives.

In January, the US government and the Taliban insurgency announced a framework agreement that began a negotiating process in line with the approaches that had occurred during 2018. After a meeting in Doha between US envoy of Afghan origin Zalmay Khalilzad and a Taliban delegation, it was announced that the draft agreement established that Afghanistan would no longer be used by terrorist groups and provided for a

commitment by the US to withdraw its troops from the country. During this meeting, it was announced that the Taliban's main negotiator would be Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar. His appointment was perceived as a sign of the Taliban's commitment to the process, due to his rank, as second in the hierarchy of command, as well as his previous experience in exploratory meetings to initiate a peace process with the Afghan government. The fact that he had been released by Pakistan (he had been in custody since 2010) was also perceived as a change in the country's attitude toward the negotiations. Discussions in the different rounds of negotiations in Doha focused on the withdrawal of US troops; guarantees against terrorism; talks between the Taliban and the government of Afghanistan to reach a political agreement; and a lasting ceasefire. In April, the United Nations announced that it was lifting the travel bans on 11 Taliban leaders for an initial period of nine months for the sole purpose of allowing them to participate in the peace process.

In August, it emerged that the parties had practically finalised the start of an agreement that established a schedule for US troops to withdraw from Afghanistan (possibly an initial withdrawal of 5,500 military personnel within 135 days) and the Taliban pledged to ensure that the country would not be used to plan terrorist attacks against the US, thereby formalising the agenda agreed in January. The president of the United States had decided that the agreement should be signed at the presidential residence of Camp David, near Washington. The signing of the agreement revealed the internal differences in the US government, with supporters such as US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and the US envoy to Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad, the architect of the agreement, pitted against opponents such as National Security Advisor John Bolton, who supports a troop withdrawal without signing an agreement. The Taliban had been in favour of travelling to Washington as long as the agreement was announced previously, while Trump wanted to sign the agreement at Camp David to present himself as the architect of the pact. Washington also decided to invite the Afghan president to the signing ceremony, despite Taliban opposition. Other aspects that hindered the final agreement included the potential release of thousands of Taliban prisoners in Afghanistan, since the Afghan government thought that it had not been consulted in this regard and only agreed in exchange for a ceasefire, which the Taliban were reluctant to accept. **Unexpectedly, however, President Trump cancelled the signing of the agreement in Camp David,** citing an attack that killed several people, including a US soldier, a few days before the commemoration of the 11 September attacks. However, the media and analysts pointed out that internal divisions in the US government and the aforementioned obstacles were the real reasons for the

In August, the US and the Taliban had practically finalised an agreement on the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan and the Taliban pledged to ensure that the country would not be used to plan terrorist attacks against the US. The signing of this agreement was unexpectedly cancelled by Donald Trump

cancellation, rather than the attack, since a ceasefire had not been a US requirement at any time during the process and the negotiations had been carried out amid very high levels of violence.

After the cancellation, informal efforts and meetings continued and a Taliban delegation travelled to Pakistan, where it met with the US envoy for the peace process. Khalilzad also met with the Pakistani prime minister and the head of the Pakistani Armed Forces. Thus, some confidence-building measures took place, such as the release of 11 Taliban commanders from an Afghan prison in October and the release of three Taliban prisoners in exchange for the release of two foreign prisoners held by the Taliban, an American academic and another Australian kidnapped in 2016. The fact that the released prisoners belonged to the Haqqani network highlighted its strong influence on the Taliban beyond the political alliance between both insurgencies. In December, formal talks resumed in Doha, though an attack near the US base in Bagram led Khalilzad to announce a "brief pause" in the negotiations.

The Intra-Afghan Dialogue and possible negotiations between the Afghan government and the Taliban insurgency did not occur at any time of the year, although both the government and the Taliban spoke about this issue on several occasions and even presented different proposals. In February, there was a meeting in Moscow between a Taliban delegation and a delegation of Afghan politicians led by former President Hamid Karzai. Although the meeting took place without the participation of the Afghan government, it was widely perceived as part of the Intra-Afghan Dialogue, held alongside the negotiations with the US government. The first National Consultative Peace Meeting was held in the same month, in which a large national meeting was announced, which was postponed several times until a National Consultative Peace Jirga was held in late April with the participation of 3,200 people, but with glaring absences such as several presidential candidates, CEO Abdullah and the president of the High Peace Council, demonstrating the lack of unity among the political actors opposed to the Taliban insurgency. The *jirga* came shortly after an intra-organisational dialogue meeting that was due to take place in Doha in April and was suspended due to the imbalance between the delegations that were set to participate, with 25 Taliban representatives compared to 250 people representing different Afghan groups. Finally, this meeting, called the "Intra-Afghan Peace Conference", took place in July, in which the attendees (government representatives, opposition politicians, media figures, civil society activists and the Taliban) participated individually, given the Taliban's refusal to meet with the Afghan government. The conference was prepared jointly by Qatar and Germany. Although

the final resolution called for a reduction in violence, no possible ceasefire was included. In late July, the Afghan government announced that it was preparing the start of these negotiations with the Taliban within two weeks, but this was immediately denied by Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid, who reiterated that the Intra-Afghan Dialogue would not take place until an agreement is made with the US government. The Afghan government had announced the appointment of a negotiating delegation and it had emerged that the talks could take place in Norway, which together with Germany may be trying to boost the intra-Afghan peace process alongside the talks with the United States.

Women's organisations carried out multiple initiatives demanding to be included in the peace process between the US government and the Taliban insurgency

Gender, peace and security

Throughout the year, Afghan women's organisations unsuccessfully asked to participate significantly in the peace negotiations and complained that their rights were not a subject of discussion with the Taliban insurgency. However, different initiatives and events showed a greater ability to influence the process and the main actors than in previous periods. One of the main organisations, the Afghan Women's Network, issued a statement before the meeting in Moscow in February urging the inclusion of women at the table and arguing against the choice of peace over human rights, against any change in the political system and against the endangerment of legislation of the country (in reference to the Taliban's rejection of the Constitution), among other aspects. The Moscow meeting was attended by two women out of a total of 70 to 100 people. Meanwhile, the government team designated for future peace negotiations, announced in late 2018, was attended by three women out of a total of 12 members: Hasina Safi, the Minister of Information and Culture; Alema Alema, the Deputy Minister of Refugees and Repatriation; and Shah Gul Rezai, a former member of Parliament. In February, over 3,000 women gathered in Kabul for the event "Afghan Women's National Consensus for Peace", which was attended by women from all 34 provinces. The process began in 2018 with consultations with 15 women across the country and was co-organised by the Office of the First Lady, female members of the High Peace Council, the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Afghan Women's Network, together with other civil society organisations. The event concluded with a positioning statement similar to the government's position regarding the need for intra-Afghan negotiations and critical of the participants' lack of representativeness and the difficulties in enjoying meaningful participation.

Meanwhile, a delegation of women tried to travel unsuccessfully to Qatar to coincide with the conclusion of the round of negotiations between the US and the Taliban between late February and mid-March. In April, the Taliban announced that their delegation in Qatar would include women, though without revealing their names. Furthermore, the Afghan Ambassador to the United Nations announced the formation of the "Group of Friends of Women in Afghanistan" to ensure that women's rights are part of future peace negotiations with the Taliban. The group is made up of 20 countries with female ambassadors and deputy ambassadors such as the United States, France, Qatar, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates. In terms of international support, a high-level United Nations delegation consisting of Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary General for Political Affairs and Peacebuilding Rosemary DiCarlo, UNFPA Executive Director Natalia Kanem and UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka made a visit to the country in July.

| India (Nagaland) | |
|---|---|
| Negotiating actors | Government, NSCN-IM, NNPG: GPRN/ NSCN (Kitovi Zhimomi), NNC, FGN, NSCN(R), NPGN (Non-Accord) and NNC/ GDRN/NA |
| Third parties | -- |
| Relevant agreements | Framework agreement (2015) |
| Summary: | |
| The Indian state of Nagaland has suffered armed conflict and a socio-political crisis since the 1950s as a result of much of the Naga population's unfulfilled aspiration to win independence and create a sovereign state. There have been different attempts at negotiation since the 1960s, but it was not until 1997 that a ceasefire agreement was reached with the NSCN-IM group, one of the main actors in the conflict. Although the agreement has remained in force to date, the negotiations have not made significant progress on the central issues. In 2012, however, the peace process received a boost from greater involvement from the Naga government and state MPs. Alongside the negotiations with the NSCN-IM, in 2001 the government reached another ceasefire agreement with the NSCN-K insurgent organisation. However, these negotiations have also failed to make significant progress. In 2015, the Government and the NSCN-IM reached a framework pre-agreement, considered a preamble to the final resolution of the conflict. However, that same year, the ceasefire agreement with the NSCN-K was broken, and violent clashes began again. | |

There was no progress in the peace process in Nagaland, despite several rounds of negotiations between the Indian government and the Naga insurgent groups and differences in position between various Naga actors were staged throughout the year. In August, the governor of

Nagaland and negotiator in the peace talks on behalf of the government said that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had established that the negotiations should be finalised and an agreement reached within three months. However, in the months that followed, the armed groups made their disagreements evident in terms of signing the agreement. Moreover, the coordinating body known as the Naga National Political Groups (NNPG), which brings together seven insurgent organisations, approved signing the pact. However, the NSCN-IM group refused to sign it, putting the issue of a flag and a Constitution for the Naga people on the table. In fact, the leaders' disagreement over whether to sign the agreement led several of them to leave the NSCN-IM and join the NNPG. Some details of the framework agreement signed in 2015 emerged, whose contents had been kept secret, such as that the Naga leadership would have accepted to remain in the Indian union. However, it should be noted that during 2019, all Naga insurgent groups were represented at the negotiating table, since the NSCN-K faction representing the Nagas of India was integrated into the NNPG as the NSCN-Khango Konyak in January to participate in the peace negotiations, following the announcement made in this regard in 2018. Therefore, the NSCN-K was only joined by Nagas from Myanmar. In addition, the armed group ZUF also joined the NNPG, representing the Zeliangrong population, one of the Naga tribes spread across Assam, Manipur and Nagaland.

Despite the ultimatum imposed by the Indian government, no peace agreement was signed in Nagaland

Two rounds of negotiations were held in October that were considered to be of great importance since the deadline set by Modi ended on 31 October, in which no agreement was reached. After the deadline set by the government expired, the Interior Minister said that great progress had been made in the peace process and that meetings would be held with all the stakeholders involved prior to any agreement, including the governments of the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Manipur, given the tension that the possibility of an agreement in Nagaland generates in neighbouring states with Naga populations. Alongside the negotiations with the armed groups, Ravi met with representatives of the 14 Naga tribes and non-Naga communities to convey that the government may be willing to sign an agreement that excluded the NSCN- IM. The Naga Hoho, a traditional institution that brings together all Naga tribes, called for all insurgent groups to unite to facilitate a peaceful agreement.

Gender, peace and security

Regarding the gender, peace and security agenda and the participation of women in peace negotiations, it should be noted that they continued to be excluded from formal participation spaces, as well as from the institutional policy of the state in general, which

still did not have any women in the Naga legislative assembly. However, civil society women's organisations became involved in the peace process with different initiatives. In November, a group of representatives of the Naga Mothers Association (NMA) moved to Manipur to meet with the Manipur Meira Paibi women's organisation. The objective of the meeting was to address the tensions that could arise between the populations of both states before the potential signing of a peace agreement in Nagaland, given the Meitei population of Manipur's rejection of any agreement including the Naga population of Manipur that could lead to territorial or administrative changes in the state. The meeting also addressed problems common to women of the two states, such as strong militarisation.

South-east Asia and Oceania

| Myanmar | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Negotiating actors | Government, armed signatory groups of the cease fire agreement (NCA): DKBA, RCSS/SSA-South, CNF, KNU,KNLAPC, ALP, PNLO, ABSDF, NMSP and LDU; armed groups not part of the: UWSP, NDAA, SSPP/SSA-N, KNPP, NSCN-K, KIA, AA, TNLA, MNDAA |
| Third parties | China |
| Relevant agreements | Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (October 2015) |

Summary:

Since the armed conflict between the Armed Forces of Myanmar and ethnic-based insurgent groups began in 1948, several negotiations have take place in an attempt to end the violence. Beginning in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, many armed groups have reached ceasefire agreements with the Burmese Government. Although definitive peace agreements were never reached, violence did decrease significantly as a result of these pacts. In 2011 there was a change in the Administration as a result of the 2010 elections and the new Government made several overtures to the armed insurgency that brought about the start of peace negotiations and the signing of agreements with most of the armed groups operating in different parts of the country. By mid-2012 the Government had signed a ceasefire agreement with 12 insurgent organizations. In 2013, talks began with different insurgent groups aimed at reaching a nationwide ceasefire agreement and promoting political talks. In 2015, the government and eight armed opposition groups signed a ceasefire agreement (NCA), taking the first steps towards political dialogue. In 2016, State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi convened the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong, which brought the government together with the armed opposition groups, beginning a new phase in the peace process. The conference has been convened several times in subsequent years.

There were no formal sessions of the peace process between the government of Myanmar and the different

insurgent organisations operating in the country in 2019, though informal meetings did take place both with the armed groups that have signed the nationwide ceasefire agreement (NCA) and with various groups that have not officially signed it. Regarding negotiations with the groups that have signed the NCA, the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong had not resumed since October 2018. Even though the authorities announced that formal talks would resume at various times of the year, no formal meeting was expected until January 2020.

In March, the peace process steering team (PPST) representing the insurgent groups that have signed the NCA announced a change in its internal leadership to support the negotiations. A new meeting of the armed groups took place in May in which the KNU announced its intention to leave the PPST, proposing the establishment of a new cooperation framework for the insurgent groups. In August, a PPST meeting was held in Thailand where the insurgents decided to resume peace talks with the government through the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre in meetings with one team to address military issues and other team to tackle political affairs. These meetings would aim to boost the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong, which has been deadlocked since 2018. In turn, the government announced the formation of a Peace Secretariat to carry out peace negotiations with the groups that have and have not signed the NCA. Prior to the meeting of the armed groups in Thailand, the government had met informally with the KNU and the RCSS separately, as it had been doing since November 2018, to present their proposal to promote the peace process, with negotiations for more robust implementation of the ceasefire, as well as a framework for political dialogue during 2020 and beyond. In fact, the KNU's leaders met with the head of the Burmese Armed Forces in Yangon in March in a meeting that was described as informal, but also of great importance since the KNU is the only armed group that has direct contact with the chief of the Burmese Armed Forces. In December, the 10 armed groups met again, achieving the terms of reference to form a new organisation bringing together the insurgencies that have signed the NCA, a government proposal to agree on a date for a Joint Implementation Coordination Meeting, the strengthening of the negotiating team and other aspects. The Peace Commission indicated that armed groups that have signed the NCA should obtain permission from the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre to request financial assistance from international donors, noting that the government's intention was not to restrict access to funds for development, but to understand what projects were being financed.

China played a major role in the peace process in Myanmar, in keeping with its greater economic influence in the country

Bilateral meetings with groups that have not signed the NCA, were repeated throughout the year (in January, for example, the government met in Thailand with the KNPP and the KIA), but the government also agreed to negotiate jointly with the armed groups that make up the Northern Alliance (KIA, MNDAA, TNLA and AA). In a meeting with the KIA in China, it was agreed that the meetings would also include the MNDAA, the TNLA and the AA, with which no negotiations had previously been conducted. These groups are involved in the main fighting with the Burmese Armed Forces.² In the first meeting between the government and the insurgency in late February in China, the Northern Alliance proposed a bilateral ceasefire as a previous step to signing the NCA. In April and July, new meetings were held between the Northern Alliance and the government's Peace Commission, during which both parties shared drafts of bilateral ceasefire agreements. Alongside these meetings, the government met in March in Naypyitaw with eight groups (AA, UWSP, KIO, PSC, SSPP, MNTJP, PSLF and KNPP) with which it agreed to hold frequent meetings to resolve their political differences and put an end to the armed conflict, in what was the government's first invitation to participate in a group discussion. As a result of this meeting, in April, the Burmese Armed Forces announced a two-month extension to the unilateral ceasefire of December 2018 in Shan State and Kachin State, which was subsequently extended again as part of the meetings with the Northern Alliance. However, the process with the insurgent groups was partially stalled by the issue of arrest warrants against AA leaders and by armed groups' allegations of ceasefire violations committed by the Burmese Armed Forces, though in September the armed groups AA, TNLA and MNDAA, known collectively as the Brotherhood Alliance, which is in turn part of the Northern Alliance, announced a one-year ceasefire. However, breaches in the ceasefire prompted the Burmese Armed Forces to conclude that the armed groups had no interest in signing the NCA and ended the ceasefire initiated in 2018. The Naga armed group NSCN-K, which operates in India and Myanmar, announced that it had no intention of signing the NCA.

China's role in the peace process grew alongside its greater influence in the country's economic sphere. At various times of the year, Chinese authorities turned to insurgent groups to boost the process. Thus, in January a meeting was held between China's Special Envoy for Asian Affairs and leaders of the armed groups that make up the Northern Alliance at the headquarters of the KIA that addressed stability in the border area and participation in peace negotiations with the government. In August, China urged the TNLA, AA and MNDAA to end their armed clashes in Shan State.

2. See the summary on the armed conflict in Myanmar in Escola de Cultura de Pau, Alert 2020! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding. Barcelona: Icaria, 2020.

Gender, peace and security

In line with the deadlock in the peace negotiations, there was also no significant progress in women's participation and the inclusion of gender equality in the process. Different civil society initiatives took place during the year to strengthen the participation of women's organisations. Thus, with support from the Carter Center, the Women's League of Burma published the report *Broadening Participation of Women of Ethnic Political Parties in the Peace Process*, the outcome of the consultation process carried out both with political representatives and with different women's organisations, discussing needs and recommendations for increasing female participation. UN Women also promoted different events to facilitate the implementation of Resolution 1325 and the women, peace and security agenda. These events were attended by women's organisations and representatives in different parts of the country. In September, the Women's League of Burma convened the Women's Forum for Peace 2019, which was attended by 300 women from across the country. Among other issues, the attendees discussed a possible National Action Plan for Resolution 1325.

| Papua New Guinea (Bougainville) | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Negotiating actors | Government of Papua New Guinea, government of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville |
| Third parties | UN, Conciliation Resources |
| Relevant agreements | Bougainville Peace Agreement (2001) |

Summary:

The armed conflict between the government of Papua New Guinea and the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (1988-1998), which some sources consider to have been the deadliest in Oceania since the Second World War, ended with a cessation of hostilities in 1998 and the signing of a peace agreement in 2001 in Arawa (the largest city in Bougainville). Among other matters, the agreement provided for the establishment of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville (ARB), the disarmament and demobilisation of combatants and the holding of a non-binding independence referendum within a maximum period of 15 years after the election of the first ARB government, which finally took place in 2005. After several years of negotiations between the national and regional governments, in 2018 the Agreement's Joint Supervisory Body created the Post-Referendum Planning Working Group and former Irish President Bertie Ahern was elected chair of the Bougainville Referendum Commission, making him responsible for preparing the census and other logistical preparations for the referendum. After several delays, the referendum was finally held between 23 November and 7 December 2019, with a binary question in which voters could choose between greater autonomy or independence for the region.

Following the self-determination referendum in November and December, the governments of Papua New Guinea and Bougainville expressed their respect for the outcome of the vote and showed their willingness to enter into

negotiations to address the political status of the Bougainville region, in line with the provisions laid down in the 2001 peace agreement. In the aforementioned referendum, in which a binary question was raised between greater autonomy and independence, the option of independence obtained more than 98% support with over 87% turnout. According to the Bougainville Referendum Commission, the referendum was conducted peacefully and without any serious impact. In the months prior to the vote, in addition to the commission's logistical preparations, the Post-Referendum Planning Working Group had met on several occasions, which is co-chaired by the Minister of Bougainville Affairs of the national government of Papua New Guinea and by the Minister for Implementation of the Peace Agreement of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville. Created in mid-2018, this body is charged with designing a road map shared between the two governments on the negotiations that should follow the referendum. According to the 2001 peace agreement, the referendum is not binding, so the Parliament of Papua New Guinea will make the final decision on the political status of Bougainville. The sessions of the Post-Referendum Planning Working Group are technically supported and facilitated by the Mediation Support Unit (of the Department of Political Affairs and Peacebuilding and the Department of Peace Operations) and by the British NGO Conciliation Resources. They also enjoy logistical and economic support from UNDP and the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund.

After the results of the referendum were made public, the president of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, John Momis, expressed his satisfaction about the massive support for the independence of the island, recognised the complexity of the negotiating process that began at the end of the year and expressed his wish that the proposals that arose during it were mutually acceptable to both parties. Momis also announced his willingness to convene the Bougainville Consultation Forum so that public authorities and organised civil society could jointly design the future negotiating strategy of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville. According to some analysts, the aforementioned negotiations could go on for years. Momis promised that the results and conclusions of the forum's discussions will guide the strategy of the Bougainville negotiating team. Moreover, the government of Papua New Guinea said it respected the results of the referendum, voiced its desire to do everything possible to maintain Papua New Guinea's sovereignty over the island and recalled that the 2001 peace agreement does not set a specific timetable for the post-referendum negotiations, which some analysts think should lead to a joint proposal made by both governments that would be put to a vote in the Parliament of Papua New Guinea.

Gender, peace and security

In November, the president of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, John Momis, declared his intention to

form a negotiating team representing women and other groups, such as churches, businesses, the diaspora and war veterans. Several women played a leading role in the negotiations that led to the 2001 peace agreement, such as Josephine Kauona, the founder and president of the Bougainville Women for Peace and Freedom, and Ruby Mirinka, who read a statement from the women during the signing of the peace agreement. In addition, during the year there were demonstrations led by women's organisations to demand respect for women's human rights before, during and after the referendum.

| Philippines (MILF) | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Negotiating actors | Government, MILF |
| Third parties | Malaysia, International Contact Group, Third-Party Monitoring Team, International Monitoring Team, Independent Decommissioning Body |
| Relevant agreements | Agreement for General Cessation of Hostilities (1997), Agreement on Peace between the Government and the MILF (2001), Mutual Cessation of Hostilities (2003), Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro (2012), Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (2014), Organic Law for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (2018) |

Summary:

Peace negotiations between the Government and the MILF, an MNLF splinter group, started in 1997, just months after Fidel Ramos's Administration had signed a peace agreement with the MNLF. Since then, the negotiating process has been interrupted three times (in 2000, 2003 and 2008) by outbreaks of high intensity violence. Despite this, in the over 30 rounds of talks that have taken place since the late 1990s some agreements on security and development have been reached, as well as a ceasefire agreement that has been upheld, for the most part. In October 2012 both parties signed the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro and in March 2014 the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro, which plans to replace the current Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao with a new public body (called Bangsamoro) with a larger territorial scope and broader self-government competences. Since 2014, the peace process has been focused on the drafting and congressional approval of the Organic Law for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, which incorporates the main contents of the two aforementioned peace agreements and was approved by Congress in 2018. Following its ratification in a plebiscite in early 2019, the peace process has hinged on the implementation of the peace agreements, the institutional development of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (governed temporarily by the leader of the MILF) and the disarmament of the MILF.

After the celebration early in the year of the plebiscite in which the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) was ratified, the peace process hinged mainly on the implementation of the 2014 peace agreement, and especially on the establishment of a new autonomous regime and the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of many MILF troops. In the first round of the aforementioned plebiscite, which took place on 21 January, the vast

majority of the population (more than 88%, or 1.7 million people) approved the BOL and, therefore, the replacement of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) by the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). In this first round, the inhabitants of the now extinct ARMM and the cities of Cotabato and Isabela voted, but most of the population in Isabela decided not to join the BARMM. In the second round of the plebiscite, which took place on 6 February, several territories adjacent to the ARMM spoke of their inclusion in the new BARMM. Sixty-three (63) of the 67 barangays (towns) of the province of North Cotabato voted in favour, as did the six cities of the province of Lanao del Norte, but these cities did not join the BARMM because the whole of the Catholic-majority province of Lanao del Norte voted against it. The fact that the MILF has a large presence in some of the cities that voted unsuccessfully to join the BARMM put the government on alert for possible tension and outbreaks of violence.

Also in February, President Rodrigo Duterte presided over the inaugural ceremony of the 80 people who will make up the Bangsamoro Transition Authority in (BTA), the body responsible for governing the BARMM until the elections in June 2022. The MILF appointed 41 members of the BTA and the government appointed the other 39. The historical leader of the MILF, Murad Ebrahim, will temporarily lead the new government for approximately three and a half years. As laid out in the 2014 peace agreement, the new BARMM will have a greater geographical scope, broader powers and a better financing system than the old BARMM. The new autonomous government, the BTA, held its first session on 29 March. In May, it received the Transition Plan from the government and the MILF's peace agreement implementation panels. A kind of road map to guide the transition from the ARMM to the BARMM, the Transition Plan addresses some legislative and government action priorities in areas such as education, governance, valuation, services and public service. In December, the body responsible for resolving disputes between the national government and the BTA met for the first time to agree on the terms of reference.

The other area where significant progress was made during the year, in accordance with the provisions of the peace agreement, was in the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of MILF combatants. In the middle of the year, several meetings were held and field visits were made to transform the six MILF camps into civilian communities. Similarly, **in September, the second phase of demobilisation of 12,000 or 30% of the approximately 40,000 MILF combatants began** and over 2,000 weapons were surrendered. This phase should end in April 2020. By late December, around 9,000 fighters had turned in their weapons. In the next phase, another 35% of the combatants should demobilise once the BARMM police force has been established. The remaining 30% should demobilise once an exit or termination agreement is signed by which both parties

consider the peace agreement implemented, supposedly in 2022. By November, about 7,000 combatants had already demobilised. The entire process is being supervised by the Independent Decommissioning Body, created by the two implementation panels and made up of representatives from Turkey, Norway, Brunei and the Philippines. Prior to the start of the process, the government had approved a package of aid measures for the reintegration of former combatants, while Congress discussed an amnesty framework that should cover the vast majority of the former combatants. The government also requested that MILF commanders facing prosecution not be proposed as members of the new Bangsamoro Transition Authority.

Finally, **the government and the MILF's implementation panels, led respectively by Gloria Jumamil Mercado (who is also the undersecretary of the OPAPP) and Mohagher Iqbal (historically the chief negotiator of the MILF and later the head of the Bangsamoro Transition Commission), continued to meet regularly throughout the year.** The first meeting following the ratification of the BOL took place in Kuala Lumpur under the auspices of the Malaysian government, which facilitated the peace negotiations. During the meeting, both parties committed themselves to the full implementation of the peace agreement, ratified all agreements signed since 2016, renewed the mandate of the International Monitoring Team and the Ad-Hoc Joint Action Group and pledged to jointly develop a road map on transitional justice and reconciliation, one of the key aspects of the 2014 peace agreement.

Gender, peace and security

As part of the implementation of the peace agreement and the development of the new Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in the Muslim Mindanao, 12 women (16% out of a total of 75 members) were appointed to the BTA, the interim government that will rule the autonomous region until 2022. Eleven of the 12 women are Muslim. Five were appointed by the MILF and the other seven were named by the government. Four of these 12 women will hold key positions in the new regional structure: two in the government (in the Ministries of Social Services and Science and Technology, respectively), one as the minority leader in Parliament and another as chair of the Regional Commission on Bangsamoro Women, a body responsible for promoting women's empowerment and gender equity policies. This agency will be chaired by Hadja Bainon Guiabar Karon, who has been a member of the MNLF Central Committee, a minister and deputy governor of the ARMM and is currently president of the Federation of United Mindanawan Bangsamoro Women and the Women's Organisation Movement in the Bangsamoro (WOMB). During the year, there was some criticism due the fact that none of the three members representing the indigenous peoples (Lumad) in the BTA are women. Law 1154 (which creates the BARMM) stipulates that women must be represented in the

government and in the Commission of Senior Citizens (which advises the Chief Minister of the BARMM) and also establishes that Parliament must pass laws that protect the rights of women and recognise their role in national construction and regional development processes.

| Philippines (MNLF) | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Negotiating actors | Government, MNLF (faction led by Nur Misuari) |
| Third parties | Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) |
| Relevant agreements | Tripoli Agreement (1976), Final Peace Agreement (1996) |

Summary:
 After five years of high intensity armed hostilities between the Government and the MNLF, both parties signed a peace agreement in 1976 in Tripoli under the auspices of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, which, shortly before, had recognized the MNLF as the legitimate representative of the Moro people. However, the unilateral implementation of this agreement by the dictatorial regime of Ferdinand Marcos caused the armed conflict to re-ignite. After the fall of Marcos and the recovery of democracy in 1986, peace negotiations resumed and in 1996 a new peace agreement was reached for the full implementation of the 1976 Tripoli agreement. Nevertheless, both the MNLF and the OIC considered there were substantial elements of the new peace agreement that had not been implemented, so since the year 2007 a tripartite process to revise the peace agreement started. Despite the advances achieved with that process (the so-called '42 points of consensus'), the attack launched by the MNLF on the town of Zamboanga in September 2013, the search and arrest warrant against the founder of the MNLF, Nur Misuari, the criticism by the MNLF of the peace agreement signed by the Government and the MILF in March 2014 and the differing interpretations between the Government and the MNLF on the conclusion or not of the revision of the agreement led the peace negotiations to a standstill at the end of 2013. With Rodrigo Duterte arriving in power in mid 2016, the conversations resumed with Nur Misuari, who was granted a temporary judicial permit for this purpose. Nevertheless, the majority faction of the MNLF decided to include the main demands of the MNLF in the peace process with the MILF, which led to three of its representatives being included into the Bangsamoro Transition Commission, in charge of drafting the Bangsamoro Basic Law (a new political entity foreseen in the 2014 peace agreement with the MILF and which should replace the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao).

During the year, Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte and the founder of the MNLF, Nur Misuari, met six times to discuss the process of reviewing implementation of the 1996 peace agreement between the government and the MNLF and also to discuss how the MNLF fits into the new regional structure established after the ratification by plebiscite of the Bangsamoro Organic Law, which creates the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region, replacing the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, of which Misuari was governor. In August, Duterte suggested the creation of a joint panel or committee run by the government and the MNLF to address these and other issues, such as peace in Sulu and the MNLF's role in fighting armed groups such

as Abu Sayyaf. This coordination committee should also serve to address the discomfort that certain MNLF groups loyal to Misuari have felt regarding the creation of an autonomous structure (the BARMM) replacing another (the ARMM) that emerged under the 1996 peace agreement. In recent years, the Duterte administration has explicitly discussed its intention to try to harmonise the parallel peace processes run between the MNLF and the MILF, as well as to reconcile implementation of the 2014 peace agreement with the MILF with the 1996 peace agreement with the MNLF. However, by late 2019, the formula proposed by the government for this purpose had not yet been revealed. In this regard, after a meeting held by Duterte and Misuari in the presidential palace, Duterte asked Minister of the Interior Eduardo Año and Minister of Defence Delfín Lorenzana to prepare a draft agreement with the MNLF so that it could be discussed in December as part of the new coordination committee between both parties. On behalf of the government, the panel would be composed of Presidential Spokesman Salvador Panelo, the Presidential Advisor for the Peace Process, Carlito Gálvez, the director of the National Security Council, Hermogenes Esperon, and someone from the Department of Foreign Affairs. By the end of the year, the contents of the agreement that Duterte had requested were still undisclosed, but it should be remembered that the review process of the 1996 peace agreement between the government, the MNLF and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) ended in 2016, after eight years of negotiations, with several agreements, such as the establishment of a Bangsamoro development fund, the joint management of strategic minerals and more political participation for the MNLF. In this regard, it should be noted that **while the MNLF factions loyal to Misuari have been very critical of the 2014 peace agreement between the government and the MILF, other factions of the group, such as the one led by Jikiri, have participated in both the Bangsamoro Transition Commission (responsible for drafting the Bangsamoro Organic Law) and the Bangsamoro Transition Authority, which will govern the new BARMM until mid-2022.** In the middle of the year, as part of one of the meetings between Duterte and Misuari, the latter called for the inclusion of the OIC in negotiations with the government. The OIC has recognised the MNLF as the legitimate representative of the Moro people and Nur Misuari has regularly participated in its summits in recent years. Despite the charges he is facing (due to corruption and the siege of the city of Zamboanga in 2013), Misuari travelled to Abu Dhabi and Morocco to participate in two OIC summits in 2019.

Although the Philippine government dismantled its negotiating panel and suspended the two agreements signed at the start of the peace process with the NDF, at the end of the year it emerged that the negotiations could be resumed in early 2020

Philippines (NDF)

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Negotiating actors | Government, NDF (umbrella organisation of various communist organisations, including the Communist Party of the Philippines, which is the political wing of the NPA) |
| Third parties | Norway |
| Relevant agreements | The Hague Joint Declaration (1992), Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (1995), Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (1998) |

Summary:

Negotiations between the Government and the NDF began in 1986, after the fall of Ferdinand Marcos' dictatorship. Since then, many rounds of negotiations have taken place, but agreement has only been reached on one of the four items listed in the substantive negotiation agenda of The Hague Joint Declaration of 1992, namely human rights and international humanitarian law (an agreement was signed in 1998). No agreement has been reached on the other three items: socio-economic reforms; political and constitutional reforms; and cessation of hostilities and disposition of armed forces. Since 2004, the Government of Norway has been acting as a facilitator between the Government and the NDF, the political organisation that represents the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing (the NPA) in the peace talks. In addition to the significant differences that exist between the Government and the NDF with regard to which socio-economic and political model is best for the Philippines, one of the issues that has generated the greatest controversy between the parties in recent years is that of the security and immunity guarantees for the NDF members involved in the peace negotiations.

Like the previous year, the formal peace negotiations remained deadlocked and even the government formally dismantled its negotiating panel, but at the end of the year both parties publicly declared their willingness to resume the negotiating process. In January and February, both President Rodrigo Duterte and several senior government officials and military officers said they were willing to resume the talks as long as the NPA ended its offensive armed actions and extortion. The negotiations would be held in the Philippines. In January, there was even speculation about the possibility (though it was not finally confirmed) that Duterte had ordered the start of secret talks with the founder of the NPA, Jose Maria Sison. The NDF also expressed its desire to resume the negotiations, though it indicated that Duterte was responsible for taking the initiative, since it was he who formally terminated the peace negotiations in November 2017 and urged the judiciary to list the NPA and the Communist Party of the Philippines as terrorist organisations. However, in the end **not only did the talks fail to resume, but after accusing the NDF of a lack of sincerity regarding the negotiations and of**

using them to reinforce itself militarily, in late March the government dismantled its negotiating panel and suspended the two agreements signed in the beginning of the peace process in the 1990s (the Hague Joint Declaration of 1992 and the Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law of 1998). The Office of the Presidential Advisor for Peace, Reconciliation and Unity, formerly known as the Office of the Presidential Advisor for the Peace Process, though the old acronym OPAPP remains, also announced its intention to strengthen the localised peace negotiations in line with Manila's new strategy to manage the conflict that it made public in December 2018, popularly known as the "Comprehensive approach of the entire nation to achieve an inclusive and lasting peace". According to the OPAPP, the new strategy required much greater participation by local government units. The NDF blasted the government's decision and strongly opposed local peace negotiations because it considered that the improvement of the welfare and development conditions of the population should be addressed through nationwide political, social and social reforms and not through conversations with local NPA units that only covered demobilisation and reintegration programmes for combatants, according to the NDF.

The peace process remained stagnant until December, when Duterte publicly stated that he had asked Silvestre Bello III, the Secretary of Labour and head of the government's negotiating panel until March, to hold exploratory talks with Jose Maria Sison to discuss possibly resuming the talks. In fact, Bello said he had recently been holding these types of conversations with NDF leaders, even when official negotiations were formally suspended. Along these lines, on 7 and 8 December there was a meeting between Bello, the NDF (Sison and the negotiating panel) and a representative of the government of Norway, which has been in charge of facilitating the talks for years. Bello declined to provide details on the contents of the meeting, but was relatively optimistic about the possibility of resuming negotiations in early 2020 and said the NDF had agreed with 90% of the government's proposal, which includes holding negotiations in the Philippines and the establishment of a cessation of hostilities agreement while they take place. **The NDF appreciated the president's gesture and once again declared its willingness to resume the negotiations, but said that it was unacceptable that they take place in the Philippines, both due to security reasons for the negotiating panel and to the fact that the joint agreement on security and immunity guarantees states that negotiations must take place in a neutral country.** Sison also urged Duterte to reaffirm his commitment to the agreements previously signed by both parties, to put an end to repressive action and to resume the interim peace agreement, whose fundamental aspects included a general amnesty, a cessation of hostilities and economic and social reforms, and on which there was a basis for agreement after several rounds of discrete and preliminary

negotiations during 2018. At the end of the year, the government responded to the NDF's refusal to resume the talks in the Philippines, offering security guarantees and striking all criminal charges pending against the members of the NDF's negotiating panel while the negotiations took place. As usual, at the end of December the NDF announced a cessation of hostilities between 23 December and 7 January to mark the Christmas holidays, a gesture that was immediately seconded by the government. Also in late December, Manila announced the reconstitution of its negotiating panel and the inclusion therein of Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea, who according to various media outlets is very close to Duterte. At the end of the year, it was not clear whether the former members of the negotiating panel, including its chief Silvestre Bello III, would continue to be part of it. The NDF welcomed both the appointment of Medialdea and the cessation of hostilities agreed by the parties. In addition, **Sison told the press that a meeting could be held in the second or third week of January 2020 to formalise the resumption of the negotiations.**

Gender, peace and security

During the year, several women's organisations participated in various demonstrations to demand the resumption of peace negotiations between the government and the NDF. Special mention should be made of the 6 March celebration in Manila of the National Peace Forum, co-organised by the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP), the Centre for Peace Education (CPE) at Miriam College and Young Women for Peace and Leadership (YWPL) for the purpose of discussing mechanisms for the participation of women (and other groups such as young people, indigenous people and the LGBTI community) in negotiations between the government and the NDF.

| Thailand (south) | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Negotiating actors | Government, MARA Patani (umbrella organisation representing several armed groups) |
| Third parties | Malaysia |
| Relevant agreements | -- |
| Summary: | Since 2004, the year when the armed conflict in the south of Thailand reignited, several discreet and exploratory informal conversations have taken place between the Thai government and the insurgent group. Some of these dialogue initiatives have been led by non-government organizations, by the Indonesian government or by former senior officials of the Thai State. After around one year of exploratory contacts between the Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and some insurgent groups, at the start of 2013, formal and public conversations started between the Government and the armed group BRN, facilitated by the Government of Malaysia. These negotiations were interrupted by the coup |

d'état in March 2014, but the military government in power since then resumed its contacts with several insurgent groups towards the second half of the year. In 2015 negotiations between the Government and MARA Patani –an organization grouping the main insurgent groups in the south of the country– were made public. Although the insurgency wanted to discuss measures that might resolve the central points of the conflict (such as recognizing the distinct identity of the Patani people or granting some level of self-government to the provinces of Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat), the main point discussed during the initial stages of the process was the establishment of several security areas to reduce the level of violence and thus determine the level of representativeness of MARA Patani and the commitment of insurgent groups (especially the BRN) with the process of dialogue.

Although some progress was reported in January, the official negotiations remained deadlocked after MARA Patani left the negotiating table in early February.

According to some analysts, the main causes of this paralysis were the elections held in March (the first since the coup d'état of 2014) and delays in the formation of a new government, as well as the government's intention to change the format of the peace process and talk directly with the BRN, the most militarily active group, which according to some media boasts around 8,000 members. Although the BRN was formally represented by MARA Patani, both the government and many analysts believe that such representation did not reflect the BRN's political will to participate in the peace negotiations that began in 2015. Thus, for much of these negotiations, the government required MARA Patani to demonstrate its ability to control and influence operational cells in the field. During the first meeting that took place on 4 January between the government's negotiating delegation and the new facilitator of the negotiations, Tan Sri Abdul Rahim bin Mohammed Noor, the former chief of the Malaysian police, appointed in August 2018 after Mahatir's election as Malaysian prime minister, he confirmed having contacted the BRN directly, though he acknowledged that the talks had been preliminary. Shortly before, the new chief negotiator of the government, General Udomchai Thammasarorat, appointed to replace General Aksara Kerdpol in October 2018, had expressed his intention to reformulate the format of the negotiations and had even urged Malaysia to invite the leader of the supreme council of the BRN, Doonloh Wae-mano (aka Abdullah Wan Mat Noor) to the negotiations.

Although some progress was made early in the year, such as the fact that the government stated it was available to discuss models of greater decentralisation or autonomy for the first time, in early February the formal peace negotiations were interrupted and did not resume throughout the year. Following Udomchai

Although the formal peace negotiations between the Thai government and MARA Patani were deadlocked throughout the year, direct meetings took place between Bangkok and the BRN, the most active armed group in the south of the country

Thammasarorat's decision not to attend a meeting between both delegations organised by the Malaysian government in Kuala Lumpur, alleging that he would only meet individually and separately with the head of the MARA Patani delegation, Sukrai Hari, on 3 February, MARA Patani issued a statement announcing its decision to leave the negotiations until after the general elections scheduled for 24 March. In its statement, MARA Patani criticised Udomchai's attitude, blasted what it claimed was a hidden agenda and asked for him to be replaced as the government's chief negotiator. In May, Sukrai Hari announced his resignation as chief negotiator of MARA Patani for medical reasons, although some analysts suggested other possible causes, such as internal rivalries within MARA Patani. Later, Sukrai Hari, who had led the insurgent delegation since 2015, denounced that the lack of progress in that period had mainly been attributable to the government's lack of sincerity and political will, warning that Bangkok did not want to sign any of the commitments made at the negotiating table and stating that the ultimate intention of the dialogue process was to save time for the Military Junta that ruled the country since 2014. Along the same lines, in July MARA Patani published a letter addressed to several stakeholders of the international community (such as the prime ministers of Thailand and Malaysia, the secretaries-general of the UN, the OIC and ASEAN, the Human Rights Commission and organisations such as Amnesty International and Geneva Call) that denounced Bangkok's lack of commitment to address a political solution to the armed conflict, claimed the right of self-determination for the Patani people and signalled that the conflict was no longer just an internal issue but also a regional or international one, so it urged the international community to get involved in solving it.

Although the formal peace negotiations did not resume during the year, in mid-August a secret meeting between the government and the BRN was leaked to the media during which, according to some outlets, the rebels raised their demands, including

the release of everyone accused of having links to the insurgent movement and the promotion of a transparent investigation into alleged human rights violations by state security forces and bodies. After carrying out a visit to the south of the country where he met with the government and with community and religious leaders in June, Abdul Rahim Noor declared the possibility of an imminent resumption of negotiations in the Malaysian town of Penang, though finally this did not come to pass. Finally, on 1 October, General Wanlop Rugsanaoh, who until then had been the head of the National Security Council, took office as the new chief negotiator for the government, replacing Udomchai Thammasarorat. In his first statement, Wanlop

Rugsanaoh confirmed the government's willingness to resume a peace process that included the BRN. Even after it allegedly carried out the most virulent attack in recent years in mid-November (killing 15 people), the government publicly maintained its intention to resume talks with the insurgent movement by 2020. These statements did not receive a reply from MARA Patani or the BRN, but **in early December a direct meeting between representatives of the government and the BRN in Berlin, sponsored and facilitated by an international organisation**, was reported by the media. Though the details of the meeting were not

made public, it was preceded by a series of informal and discreet contacts and conversations between both parties. The Malaysian government acknowledged having been informed of the aforementioned meeting by Bangkok. In this regard, although the Malaysian team to facilitate the negotiations stated that it did not recognise the participation of any other international third party in the peace process, it did welcome the possible addition of the BRN to the negotiations. According to some sources close to the talks, this time the BRN members present at the negotiations were directly able to decide on the group's armed operations.

5. Peace negotiations in Europe

- 14% of the world's peace processes in 2019 (seven of the 50) took place in Europe.
- Progress was made in the peace process in Ukraine, with the resumption of the Normandy dialogue format, more robust ceasefires and the withdrawal of forces from various areas.
- The political crisis in Moldova slowed down the negotiating process on Transdniestria, without the parties to the conflict achieving a new protocol with confidence-building measures in 2019.
- The peace process in Cyprus remained deadlocked throughout the year and the informal meetings failed to generate enough agreement for them to be formally resumed.
- The dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia remained at an impasse amidst increasing tension and respective demands.
- Armenia approved its first national action plan for the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, but this did not include specific mechanisms for participation in the peace process and focused on the security forces.

This chapter provides an analysis of the main peace processes and negotiations in Europe in 2019. Firstly, the main characteristics and general trends on the dialogue processes in the region are presented, followed by the analysis on the evolution of each specific context during the year, including in relation to the gender, peace and security agenda. In addition, at the beginning of the chapter there is a map identifying the countries in Europe that hosted peace negotiations during 2019.

Table 5.1. Summary of peace processes and negotiations in Europe in 2019

| Peace processes and negotiations | Negotiating actors | Third parties |
|---|---|--|
| Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh) | Armenia, Azerbaijan | OSCE Minsk Group (co-chaired by Russia, France and the USA; the remaining permanent members are Belarus, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Finland and Turkey) |
| Cyprus | Republic of Cyprus, self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus | UN, EU; Turkey, Greece and United Kingdom (guarantor countries) |
| Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia) | Government of Georgia, representatives of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, government of Russia ¹ | OSCE, EU and UN; USA, Russia ² |
| Moldova (Transdniestria) | Moldova, self-proclaimed Republic of Transdniestria | OSCE, Ukraine, Russia, USA and EU |
| Serbia – Kosovo | Serbia, Kosovo | EU, UN |
| Spain (Basque Country) | ETA (dissolved), government of Spain, government of the Basque Country, government of Navarre, government of France, <i>Communauté d'Agglomération du Pays Basque</i> (Basque Municipal Community), political and social actors of the Basque Country, Basque Political Prisoners Collective (EPPK) | Permanent Social Forum, Bakea Bidea |
| Ukraine (east) | Government of Ukraine, representatives of the self-proclaimed People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk, government of Russia ³ | OSCE in the Trilateral Contact Group, where Ukraine and Russia ⁴ also participate); Germany and France (in the Normandy Group, where Ukraine and Russia also participate ⁵) |

5.1. Negotiations in 2019: regional trends

Seven peace processes were identified in **Europe** in 2019, the same number as in 2018. These account for 14% of the 50 total peace processes worldwide in 2019. Only one of these seven peace processes referred to an active armed

conflict: the war in Ukraine, which began in 2014. The other active armed conflict in Europe, which has pitted the Turkish government against the Kurdish armed group PKK since 1984, continued without negotiations since the

1. Russia's status in the Georgian peace process is subject to different interpretations. Georgia considers Russia a party to the conflict and a negotiating party, while Russia considers itself a third party.
2. Ibid.
3. Russia's status in the Ukrainian peace process is subject to different interpretations. Ukraine considers Russia a party to the conflict and a negotiating party, while Russia considers itself a third party.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.

last peace talks ended unsuccessfully in 2015, although in 2019 civil society actors continued to be involved in initiatives to promote dialogue in this context.⁶ The rest of the active processes address past armed conflicts or socio-political crises and, with the exception of Spain (Basque Country), all still occurred amidst socio-political crises, with different levels of intensity: medium-intensity socio-political crises between Serbia and Kosovo and Armenia and Azerbaijan around Nagorno-Karabakh, and low-intensity crises in Georgia in relation to Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and Moldova in relation to Transdniestria.⁷

Actors representing self-proclaimed entities such as states stood out as negotiating parties, despite enjoying little or no international recognition (Transdniestria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, the Northern Turkish Republic of Cyprus, the People's Republic of Donetsk and the People's Republic of Luhansk). An exception was Kosovo, which is recognised by more than one hundred countries. All of them participated in the negotiating tables in their various bilateral or multilateral formats, and mostly under the decisive influence of countries that exercised political, economic and military influence over them. The self-proclaimed state of Nagorno-Karabakh, which does not enjoy international recognition, did not play a formal

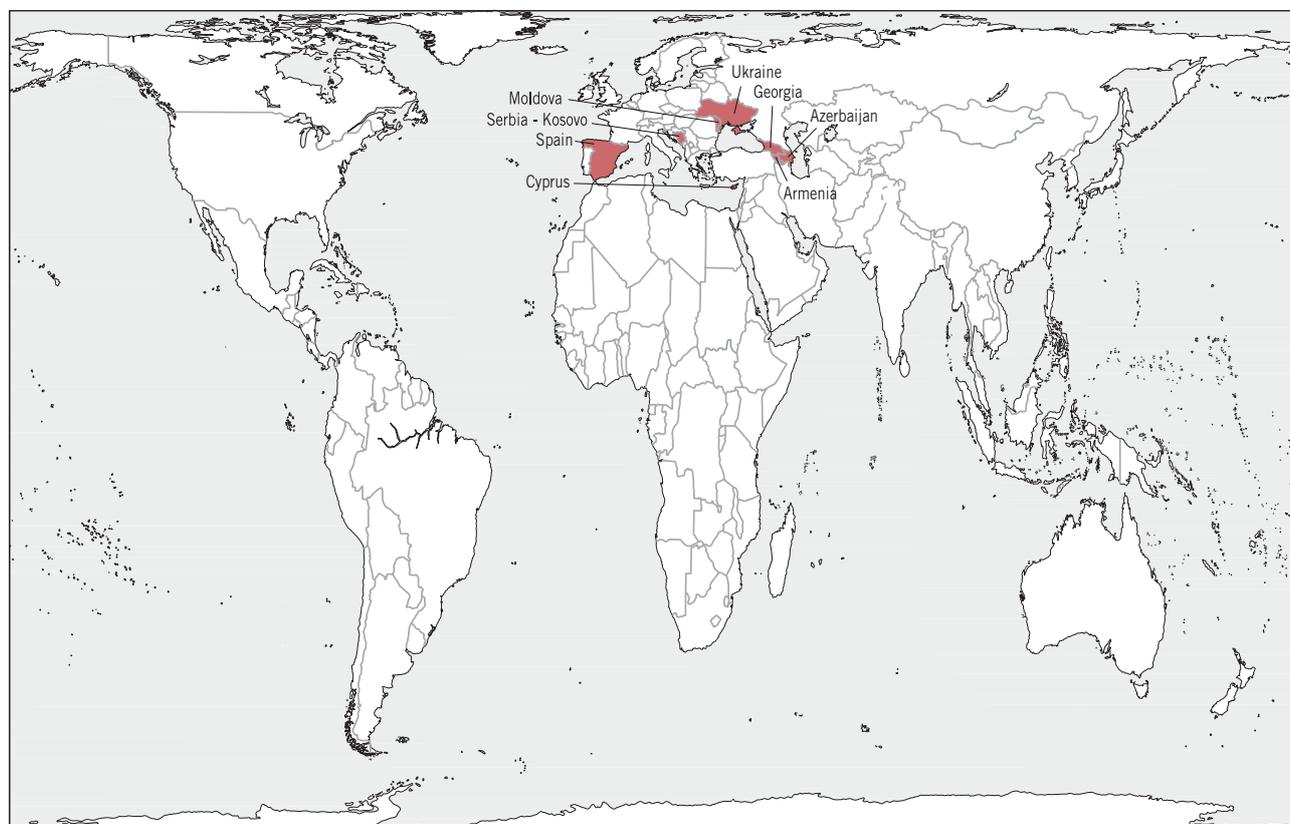
The armed conflict between Turkey and the PKK continued without a negotiating process, despite the urgent need for a negotiated solution amidst growing region-based violence

role in the negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan mediated by OSCE, although it was regularly consulted by the co-mediators. In 2019, the Armenian government again demanded Nagorno-Karabakh's participation in the negotiations, while Azerbaijan continued to reject that option and in 2019 responded by demanding the participation of the displaced population originally from Nagorno-Karabakh.

Moreover, Europe continued to stand out for having third parties in the negotiations taking place there. **All the peace processes involved external parties performing mediation and facilitation tasks.** Most of the mediators and facilitators were intergovernmental organisations. The OSCE was a mediator or co-mediator in four of the seven peace processes in Europe: Armenia-Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh), Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia), Moldova (Transdniestria) and Ukraine (east). The EU was the main facilitator of the peace process between Serbia and Kosovo, a co-mediator in Georgia, an observer in Moldova and an "interested party" in the Cyprus peace process. The UN was the mediator of the long-running process in Cyprus and a co-mediator of the Georgian peace process. Through various functions, it also supported the dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo, facilitated by the EU.

Moreover, some states maintained a prominent role

Map 5.1. Peace negotiations in Europe in 2019



■ Countries with peace processes and negotiations in Europe in 2019

6. See the summary on Turkey (southeast) in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts) of Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2020! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*. Barcelona: Icaria, 2020.
 7. For further information on the development of these crises, see Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2020! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*. Barcelona: Icaria, 2020.

as third parties, such as France and Germany in the Normandy format of the Ukraine peace process, which was reactivated in 2019 after being stalled since 2016 and in which Ukraine and Russia also participate. Both Ukraine and Russia also increased their standing among the international stakeholders calling for a way out of the deadlocked dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo, as did the United States. Washington appointed a new special representative for the Western Balkans in August, Matthew Palmer, and in October it appointed a special envoy for the dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo, which was singled out in some media outlets as a sign of renewed US interest in the region. During the year, Kosovo argued that the United States must be included in the EU-facilitated negotiating. The United States was also an observer in the Moldovan peace process (Transdniestria), as well as a participant in the multilateral Geneva International Discussions (GID) that bring together Georgia, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Russia under the co-mediation of the OSCE, EU and UN. Russia continued to be an active facilitator in Europe, as a co-mediator in the dialogue between Moldova and Transdniestria and as a co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group in the talks between Armenia and Azerbaijan. In that process, in addition to its actions under the umbrella of the OSCE, Russia carried out good offices on its own initiative, such as the meeting with Armenia and Azerbaijan that it convened in 2019. At the same time, its status in the Georgian and Ukrainian peace processes remained subject to different interpretations. Georgia and Ukraine continued to consider Moscow a party to the conflict and a negotiating party, while Russia considered itself a third party in both processes. Finally, some mediators and facilitators carried out their work through specific structures, such as the OSCE Minsk Group (co-chaired by Russia, France and the US) in the negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan regarding Nagorno-Karabakh, and the Permanent Social Forum in the Basque Country, where both organizations and individuals participate.

The formal negotiating processes in Europe continued to be characterised by non-inclusive formats, with only the parties to the conflict and the mediators involved in the negotiating tables. However, in some cases there were mechanisms of dialogue and consultation with civil society actors, although these were mostly non-institutionalised, with the exception of Georgia. Regular consultations took place in 2018 between Georgian government representatives and the local population, including women. However, despite the lack of institutional mechanisms, various kinds of civil society actors promoted and participated in peacebuilding initiatives in all processes, although their capacity to influence formal negotiations was limited.

The formal negotiating processes in Europe continued to be characterised by hardly inclusive formats, with only

the parties to the conflict and the mediators involved in the negotiating tables. One of the exceptions was the Kosovo negotiating delegation, made up of government, political opposition and civil society representatives, and appointed by the Kosovar Parliament in late 2018, although the Kosovo Constitutional Court ruled its mandate unconstitutional in 2019 because it overlapped with other institutions. However, various kinds of civil society actors promoted and participated in peacebuilding initiatives in all processes, although their capacity to influence formal negotiations was limited. In most cases, the spaces for dialogue and indirect talks between civil society and negotiators or facilitators were not institutionalised.

All negotiating processes in Europe were supported by external third parties

The issues on the **negotiating agendas** were diverse and the details on the various elements and status of discussions of each round were not always public. As in previous years, the substantive issues of many of the conflicts and dialogue processes, mostly the **status of the various territories in dispute**, remained missing or deadlocked. Some processes with this underlying issue, such as those in Serbia-Kosovo, Moldova (Transdniestria) and Cyprus, remained at an impasse or slowed down throughout the year. In Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia), the discussion on status continued beyond the scope of the negotiations due to the lack of agreement to address it and the situation on the ground, which prioritised security issues. Meanwhile, Armenia and Azerbaijan maintained their fundamental disagreements over the resolution of the status of Nagorno-Karabakh, while progress was made in other areas related to confidence-building and security measures. Instead there were more developments in Ukraine, where the new Ukrainian president announced his support for the Steinmeier formula at the end of the year. Proposed in 2016 by the OSCE chairperson-in-office at the time, the Steinmeier formula would simultaneously grant special status to the disputed areas of eastern Ukraine and hold elections in those areas as a way to facilitate implementation of the Minsk agreements and move the conflict towards a solution, which was already supported by Russia and the rebel actors. However, it was clear that this formula would require solving security-related issues, such as border control, which Ukraine demanded to settle before moving to the other steps.

The peace processes in Moldova (Transdniestria), Serbia-Kosovo and Cyprus remained at an impasse during 2019

Other topics on the agenda in Europe were related to **security**. In 2019, this included issues such as **incident prevention and ceasefire measures**. Armenia and Azerbaijan pledged to strengthen the ceasefire and the direct incident prevention response mechanism in 2019, with positive repercussions on the ground, as levels of violence fell. In Ukraine, the ceasefire was also renewed and expanded. Despite ceasefire violations, there were significantly less casualties in 2019 than in 2018. In Georgia, while the incident prevention mechanism for South Ossetia convened regularly, except for a short time, the one for Abkhazia remained cancelled

since June 2018, when Abkhazia abandoned it, and Georgia and the co-mediators urged Abkhazia to resume it during rounds of negotiations at the highest level (the Geneva International Discussions, or GID). The GID addressed other security issues, such as restrictions on freedom of movement, the closure of border crossings and militarisation measures carried out by either party to the conflict. In Ukraine, the **withdrawal of military forces and weapons** was addressed. In 2019, this was implemented in three pilot areas agreed in 2016 and there was further agreement to expand it to three other areas in 2020.

Confidence-building measures, including humanitarian measures, included swaps or releases of prisoners in Ukraine, between Armenia and Azerbaijan and Georgia (Abkhazia). In addition, Armenia and Azerbaijan authorised an exchange of visits by journalists from each country for the first time since 2001 and agreed to allow mutual access to prisoners by family members in each country's detention centers. In Cyprus, despite the fact that the peace process remained deadlocked at the highest level, progress was made in the joint technical committees, with confidence-building measures in the cultural, educational, economic and commercial spheres, among others. Meanwhile, Moldova and Transnistria failed to reach a new protocol of measures in areas of common interest before the end of the year.

Regarding the **evolution** of the peace processes, 2019 was a year of impasse in Moldova (Transnistria) due to the political upheaval in the country; the process in Serbia-Kosovo, paralysed since late 2018, had uncertain prospects of a resumption due to the demands and positions of each party; and the process in Cyprus held no formal meetings in 2019, although informal meetings were held amidst rising tension between Cyprus and Turkey over gas exploration in the eastern Mediterranean. However, significant progress was made in Ukraine, with the resumption of the Normandy negotiating format (Ukraine, Russia, Germany and France) and Ukraine's support for the aforementioned Steinmeier formula, although there were still significant obstacles to resolving the underlying issues.

Regarding the **gender perspective**, the peace processes in Europe continued to be characterised mainly by low levels of female participation in the negotiating teams, as well as by the lack of mechanisms or gender architecture. Compared to 2018, there was still only one case that had a gender mechanism in the formal negotiating process in 2019: the Cyprus process and its technical committee on gender equality. While it remained stagnant in 2018, the restart of its activity was announced in 2019, focusing on issues of equality and climate change, although information on the committee was scarce for the rest of the year. None of the peace processes had mechanisms for the direct participation of female civil society activists in formal negotiations. Only one case, in Georgia, were there institutionalised mechanisms for indirect female participation in the peace

process. Thus, the government of Georgia upheld its practice of organising several consultations a year between Georgian government representatives in the negotiations and representatives of civil society and the population affected by the conflict, including women. This was supported by UN Women, which promoted the practice until it was internalised by the government, as reflected in Georgia's national action plan on UNSC Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. In contrast, the Armenian government approved its first national action plan in 2019, but it did not contain mechanisms for direct or indirect participation in the peace process by women's organisations or women affected by the conflict.

Facilitators held sporadic consultations with female civil society activists or with political and social actors involved in implementing the commitments related to Resolution 1325, such as meetings between the current OSCE chairperson-in-office's special gender representative and social actors and politicians in Ukraine. In addition, EU actors, including the head of the Regional Office of the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus, also participated in consultations between Georgian government representatives and civil society representatives, including women, in 2019. Spaces organised or supported by the UN and the EU were used by female activists to convey demands, including demands for greater participation in negotiating processes, like in Kosovo. In addition, in 2019 the EU approved its 2019-2024 action plan for implementing its new Strategic Approach on Women, Peace and Security (2018). After Slovakia ended its turn as the OSCE rotating chairperson-in-office in the opening days of January 2020, Albania took over, announcing the role of women in peace and security as one of the priorities of its term of office. However, the main intergovernmental organisations operating as third parties in Europe, the OSCE and the EU, provided no systematised data on the gender dimension of the processes in which they were involved or on the impacts or results of talks with female civil society activists.

At civil society level, women's organizations and activists carried out peacebuilding initiatives and established mechanisms and raised demands for female participation in the peace processes, as well demands on the substantive issues of the conflicts and dialogue processes. Examples in 2019 include the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network (MWMN) in Cyprus, which includes female diplomats and civil society advocates. In 2019, the network announced that it was establishing the MWMN/Cyprus Antenna. In Georgia, civil society women's organisations began a municipal-level process to implement the national action plan of Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security in 2019, with international financial support. In Ukraine, women activists from different conflict zones gathered around a bridge that was being rebuilt as part of the confidence-building measures of the negotiating process in order to show their support for dialogue and to give visibility to the role of women in peacebuilding.

The peace processes in Europe continued to be characterised mostly by the lack of gender architectures

5.2. Case study analysis

Eastern Europe

| Moldova (Transdnistria) | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Negotiating actors | Moldovan government, self-proclaimed Republic of Transdnistria |
| Third parties | OSCE, Ukraine, Russia, USA and EU |
| Relevant agreements | Agreement on the Principles for a Peaceful Settlement of the Armed Conflict in the Dniester Region of the Republic of Moldova (1992), Memorandum on the Bases for Normalization of Relations between the Republic of Moldova and Transdnistria (The Moscow Agreement) (1997) |

Summary:

Transdnistria is a 4,000 km² enclave with half a million inhabitants that are mostly Russian-speaking. Legally under Moldovan sovereignty, but with de facto independence, since the 1990s it has been the stage for an unresolved dispute regarding its status. The conflict surfaced during the final stages of the breakup of the USSR, when fears increased in Transdnistria over a possible unification between the independent Moldova and Romania, which have both historical and cultural links. Transdnistria rejected Moldovan sovereignty and declared itself independent. This sparked an escalation in the number of incidents, which eventually became an armed conflict in 1992. A ceasefire agreement that same year brought the war to an end and gave way to a peace process under international mediation. One of the main issues is the status of the territory. Moldova defends its territorial integrity, but is willing to accept a special status for the entity, while Transdnistria has fluctuated between proposals for a confederalist model that would give the area broad powers and demands full independence. Other points of friction in the negotiations include cultural and socio-economic issues and Russian military presence in Transdnistria. Since the beginning of the dispute there have been several proposals, partial agreements, commitments and confidence-building measures in the framework of the peace process, as well as important obstacles and periods of stagnation. Geostrategic international disputes also hover over this unresolved conflict, which has deteriorated due to the war in Ukraine.

The negotiations encountered difficulties and slowed down due to an internal political crisis in Moldova, in contrast to previous years of progress on the measures known as “Berlin Plus”.⁸ Early in the year, the current chairperson-in-office of the OSCE (the mediating organisation for the process), Slovakian Foreign Minister Miroslav Lajčák, pointed out that plans for the negotiating process in 2019 included the completion of the Berlin Plus package of measures, including for telecommunications between Moldova and

The negotiating process between the authorities of Moldova and Transdnistria was negatively influenced by the political uncertainty in Moldova

Transdnistria, as well as the identification of new areas in which to make headway. However, the parliamentary elections in Moldova in February and the difficulties in forming a new government due to the lack of a clear majority delayed the negotiating process. In June, after three months of stagnation in the Moldovan political scene and against all odds, the pro-EU Action and Solidarity (ACUM) party and the pro-Russian Socialist Party agreed to form a coalition government with the leader of ACUM Maia Sandu as the new prime minister and the Socialist Zinaida Greceanii as the speaker of Parliament, whose objectives were to remove the Democratic Party of the oligarch Vladimir Plahotniuc from power. The agreement occurred *in extremis*, on 8 June, with different interpretations on whether it met or exceeded the three-month constitutional deadline. A day later, the Constitutional Court declared the formation of the coalition government invalid, as it found that the deadline had passed. It also withdrew powers from President Igor Dodon, whom the Democratic Party accused of failing to dissolve Parliament, and Pavel Filip, of the Democratic Party, was appointed president instead. The new government obtained international support, Filip resigned in the middle of June and a day later the Constitutional Court revoked its previous ruling and recognised the new administration.

The temporary solution to the political crisis in Moldova reactivated the process in Transdnistria, albeit with difficulties. At the end of July there was a meeting between the main negotiators on both sides: the Moldovan Deputy Minister for Reintegration, Vasili Sova, appointed as the new chief negotiator in June, and the head of Transdnistrian Foreign Affairs, Vitaly Ignatiev. It was the first meeting at this level since the beginning of the year. Negotiations were held in the 5+2 format, which brings together the parties to the conflict, as well as the mediators (OSCE, Russia, Ukraine) and observers (USA and EU), in Bratislava (Slovakia) on 9 and 10 October. At the meeting, the delegations reviewed the situation regarding the Berlin Plus package and addressed new priorities for building trust. However, they failed to reach agreement on a new protocol. According to the OSCE, the parties were very close to a new agreement.

Some analysts pointed out in June that the new scenario of the coalition government led by ACUM represented a change in the approach to conflict resolution. ACUM was reportedly critical of the mediators' strategy to move forward with confidence-building measures, arguing that they gradually establish the sovereignty of Transdnistria and move away from Moldova's preferred solution of maintaining its territorial

8. “Berlin Plus” refers to eight measures around which the parties have been negotiating since 2016 and which are included in various protocols, such as the Berlin Protocol (2016) and the Vienna Protocol (2017). These measures include: the reopening of the Gura Bicului-Bychok Bridge, which connects the two banks of the Dniester/Nistru River; official certification by Moldova and the subsequent recognition of Transdnistrian university diplomas; guarantees of the continued service of Latin alphabet schools administered by Moldova, but located in Transdnistria; fixed and mobile telephone communications between Moldova and Transdnistria; the provision of Transdnistria vehicle registrations; freedom of movement for the population on both sides of the conflict line; access to farmland in the Dubasari district; and the termination of criminal cases against politicians of the parties to the conflict.

integrity and granting special status similar to that of the Gagauzia region in Moldova. Moldovan President Igor Dodon of the Socialist Party also reportedly expressed reservations about accelerating the political negotiations and was moving away from his previous positions in favour of a federal solution. In addition, according to some analysts, both government partners prioritise not putting the government coalition at risk. Speaking in July, the prime minister had denounced the illicit enrichment and economic corruption of Transdniestria actors related to the conflict. According to Sandu, it was necessary to re-establish order in the economic sphere to resolve the conflict. The Transnistrian authorities accused the government of Moldova of non-compliance with previous commitments at different times of the year and blamed it for failing to reach a new protocol at the 5+2 meeting in October.

The negotiating process was affected at the end of the year by a new political crisis in Moldova due to the collapse of the coalition government in November, after it lost a censure motion promoted by the Socialist Party following disagreements over the procedure to appoint the attorney general. Some analysts highlighted the Socialist Party's reluctance to move towards an independent judiciary that could help to fight against corruption in the country. The Parliament approved a new government in the middle of the month led by the former Minister of the Economy and presidential advisor Ion Chicu, temporarily until new elections were held. The new government, half of whose members are former advisors of Dodon, won the support of the Democratic Party.

Gender, peace and security

The peace process continued without specific mechanisms for women's formal participation. Regarding gender balance in high-level positions, after the change of government in Moldova, the chief negotiator, Deputy Prime Minister for Reintegration Cristina Lesnic, was replaced by a man, Vasili Sova. Likewise, the position of the OSCE's special representative for the negotiating process continued to be held by a man, the Italian Franco Frattini, who was re-elected for that position by the Slovakian OSCE chairperson-in-office.

In early September, the Moldovan capital hosted the Beijing+25 sub-regional forum for the countries of the Eastern Association and Romania, with experts participating, that analysed the course of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995. UN Women Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia Alia El-Yassir noted the need for countries in the region to move from legal commitments to practical results in gender equality. She also pointed out the need for intergenerational dialogues and for greater participation by civil society. During her

visit, El-Yassir met with new Moldovan Prime Minister Maia Sandu, who pledged to align the regulatory framework with the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention). In addition, a regional conference was held in Georgia to boost implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova and Ukraine as part of a project involving the Foreign Policy Association of Moldova that aims to encourage local and central authorities and civil society organisations to promote the role of women in negotiations and peace-building processes in the region.

| Ukraine (east) | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Negotiating actors | Government of Ukraine, representatives of the self-proclaimed People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk, government of Russia ⁹ |
| Third parties | OSCE in the Trilateral Contact Group, where Ukraine and Russia ¹⁰ also participate); Germany and France (in the Normandy Group, where Ukraine and Russia also participate ¹¹) |
| Relevant agreements | Protocol on the results of consultations of the Trilateral Contact Group (Minsk Agreement) (2014), Memorandum on the Implementation of the Provisions of the Protocol on the Outcome of Consultations of the Trilateral Contact Group on Joint Steps Aimed at the Implementation of the Peace Plan (Minsk Memorandum) (2014), Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements (Minsk II Agreements) (2015) |

Summary:

The armed conflict active in eastern Ukraine since April 2014 pits state forces against pro-Russian separatist militias backed by Russia over the status of those areas and is fuelled by many other contextual factors. It is the subject of international negotiations involving the Trilateral Contact Group (OSCE, Russia and Ukraine) and pro-Russian militias, as well as the diplomatic initiatives of some foreign ministries. Since the Trilateral Contact Group was created in May 2014, various agreements have been attempted, including a peace plan, a brief, non-renewed truce and a pact (Minsk Protocol) including a bilateral ceasefire supervised by the OSCE, the decentralisation of power in areas under militia control; as well as a memorandum that same year for a demilitarised zone, which completed the Minsk Protocol. New escalation of violence led to Minsk II agreement in 2015, but violence continued and disagreements between the sides hindered the implementation of the peace deal. The obstacles to resolving the conflict include its internationalisation, mainly owing to Russian support for the militias and the background of confrontation between Russia and the West projected onto the Ukrainian crisis. The armed conflict was preceded by a serious general crisis in Ukraine (mass anti-government protests, the departure of President Yanukovich and the annexation of Crimea by Russia), when there were also some attempts at negotiation between the government and the opposition.

9. Russia's status in the Ukrainian peace process is subject to different interpretations. Ukraine considers Russia a party to the conflict and a negotiating party, while Russia considers itself a third party.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

The peace process around the conflict in eastern Ukraine experienced progress, in contrast to the impasse in 2018, despite underlying difficulties in moving forward on the substantive issues of the conflict. During the year, the parties agreed to new ceasefires, as well as new agreements to withdraw military forces from various areas and confidence-building measures. Furthermore, at the end of the year, the Normandy negotiating format (Ukraine, Russia, Germany and France) was resumed, the highest-level political dialogue mechanism, which had been deadlocked since October 2016. Its resumption complemented the negotiations of the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG), facilitated by the OSCE. The process took place in a new political context in Ukraine, given Volodimir Zelenski's runoff victory in the presidential election in April. At his inauguration, Zelenski made achieving peace in eastern Ukraine a top priority, declaring that all necessary measures would be taken.

During the year, **the ceasefire was renewed and expanded on several occasions.** On 8 March, under the TCG, the parties reached an agreement to renew the ceasefire, which led to a decrease in incidents in the days immediately following it, although in the following weeks there were new incidents. On 17 July, also as part of the TCG, the parties agreed to a complete, lasting and unlimited ceasefire, which prohibited all types of shooting. However, the Ukrainian authorities noted that it did not rule out the use of fire in response to attacks. The agreed ceasefire was accompanied by a ban on placing heavy weapons in or near populated areas, especially alongside civilian infrastructure and facilities, including schools, kindergartens and hospitals. The agreement significantly reduced the violence as soon as it went into force on 21 July and until the beginning of September.

Progress was also made in other areas during the year, such as the implementation of the withdrawal of forces agreed in 2016 in three pilot areas (Stanytsia Luhanska, Zolote and Petrivske). Thus, the withdrawal into Stanytsia Luhanska, a key area, as it is one of the main transit points for civilians crossing between areas under government control and areas under rebel control, began and was completed in the final days of June. Furthermore, the parties agreed to repair the Stanytsia Luhanska bridge, which had been damaged since 2015, in order to facilitate the movement of civilians with mobility difficulties. The bridge was cleared, repaired and opened on 20 November. Between the end of October and the beginning of November, forces and weapons were withdrawn from Zolote, an area previously affected by ceasefire violations. In early November, the forces were withdrawn from Petrivske. In addition, in September, Russia and Ukraine carried out an exchange of prisoners linked to the conflict, 35 from each side, including the 24 Ukrainian sailors detained by Russia amidst naval tensions in the Sea of Azov.

Progress was made in the peace process in Ukraine, with the resumption of the Normandy dialogue format, new more robust ceasefires and the withdrawal of forces from various areas

Progress was made in the final months of the year. In October, **the Ukrainian president announced his support for the Steinmeier formula**, floated in 2016 by German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier (current President of Germany) during his term as the OSCE chairperson-in-office in order to move forward to hold elections in the disputed areas of eastern Ukraine and grant them special status. He proposed to combine both processes to break the impasse on his order, although it did not resolve the issue of Ukraine regaining control of the border. Zelenski said that he supported the Steinmeier formula, but warned that Ukraine must regain control of the border before elections were held in conflict zones under Ukrainian law. Russia had previously supported the Steinmeier plan. Meanwhile, the leaders of Ukraine, Russia, Germany and France met in Paris in December under the Normandy format. Ukraine and Russia agreed to a full and comprehensive ceasefire by the end of the year, as well as the exchange of all prisoners related to the conflict. The withdrawal of forces and equipment from three other additional zones was also agreed for March 2020. The exchange of prisoners took place on 29 December. Though not total, it was extensive, with 124 people released by Ukraine, including five former members of the Ukrainian riot forces accused of killing activists during the 2014 anti-government (Maidan) protests, and 76 freed by the Donbas rebel authorities. In a phone conversation at the end of the year, Zelenski and Russian President Vladimir Putin agreed to address the possibility of a new prisoner swap, Ukraine reported. Furthermore, Ukraine and Russia reached a five-year agreement in late December for the continued transit of Russian natural gas through Ukrainian territory.

Gender, peace and security

Ukraine's negotiating process remained characterised by the lack of participation from women and civil society and the poor integration of the gender perspective at various levels, as reported by women's activists and organisations at different stages of the process. Meanwhile, the **special gender representative of the current OSCE chairperson-in-office, Melanne Verbeke, made a trip lasting several days to Ukraine, in which she met with various political and social actors,** including with the representative of Ukraine in the Trilateral Contact Group's working group on humanitarian issues, as well as with other government representatives. The meetings focused on implementation of the Ukrainian government's national action plan on UNSC Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. It is a plan that prioritises the participation of women in security and defence, without mechanisms for the effective and sustained direct or indirect participation of women in the peace process. The meetings also addressed other issues such as the participation of women and civil society in the legislative reform processes. Furthermore, the OSCE also reported on the

special gender representative's meetings with members of civil society organisations in Kiev and Kramatorsk.

Some female civil society activists continued to carry out peace-building initiatives, which included providing services and promoting dialogue. To mark the International Day of Non-Violence, on 2 October, four female activists from both sides of the conflict gathered next to the Stanytsia Luhanska bridge, which was being repaired at the time after being damaged in fighting in 2015. As part of her visit to Ukraine, Verveer met with some of them, who stressed the need for better conditions at checkpoints passing from either side of the conflict, an end to the violence and other aspects.

Some progress was made in the peace process between Armenia and Azerbaijan regarding Nagorno-Karabakh, with the parties committing to strengthen the ceasefire and some humanitarian and citizen diplomacy measures

in 2019.¹² **Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Pashinyan met in Vienna in March under the auspices of the OSCE**

Minsk Group co-mediators in a meeting praised by both leaders. They pledged to strengthen the ceasefire and the direct communication mechanism approved in 2018, as well as to develop humanitarian measures. The Armenian leader ruled out that the meeting marked a milestone, but noted that a new process had begun and that the meeting had been good for improving mutual understanding. The Azerbaijani leader also noted that the meeting marked a new beginning for the negotiating process. It was preceded by a meeting in Paris in January between the foreign ministers of Armenia, Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, and Azerbaijan, Elmar Mammadyarov, with the co-mediators of the OSCE Minsk group and the personal representative of the current

OSCE chairperson-in-office. At the meeting, the parties agreed on the need to adopt concrete measures to prepare the populations of both countries for peace. Furthermore, on Russia's initiative, the Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers met again in Moscow in April, with the OSCE co-mediators participating. They reasserted their desire to find a diplomatic solution to the conflict, pledged to further stabilise the line of contact, especially during the course of agricultural activities, and agreed on measures to mutually grant family members access to prisoners in detention centres. The ministers also expressed their willingness to start working on establishing contact between the populations, including through reciprocal visits by journalists.

Russia and the Caucasus

| Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh) | |
|---|--|
| Negotiating actors | Government of Armenia, Government of Azerbaijan |
| Third parties | OSCE Minsk Group (Co-chaired by Russia, France and USA; other permanent members are Belarus, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Finland and Turkey) |
| Relevant agreements | Bishkek Protocol (1994), Ceasefire agreement (1994) |

Summary:

The armed conflict going from 1992 to 1994 between Azerbaijan and Armenia over the status of Nagorno-Karabakh – an enclave of Armenian majority belonging to Azerbaijan that declared independence in 1992 – ended with a cease-fire agreement in 1994, after causing more than 20,000 dead and one million displaced people as well as the military occupation by Armenia of several districts around Nagorno-Karabakh. Since then negotiations have been in place between Armenia and Azerbaijan, with several failed attempts to reach peace plans during the first years and a renewed impulse through the Prague Process, which started in 2004 and since 2005 has focused on negotiating some basic principles to base the discussions on a future agreement (withdrawal of Armenia from the occupied territories around Nagorno-Karabakh, granting provisional status to Nagorno-Karabakh, the right for displaced persons to return, an eventual decision on the final status of the territory through a binding expression of will, international security safeguards). The deadlock of negotiations since 2010 and the fragile cease-fire have increased the alert warning in a context of an arms race a bellicose rhetoric and a regional scenario of geostrategic tensions.

The negotiating process made some headway, building on the progress made at the end of 2018. This came amidst a change of leadership in Armenia, with Nikol Pashinyan assuming office as the new prime minister after the massive peaceful protests and parliamentary elections that year. The security situation around the line of contact also improved

In separate new meetings between the foreign leaders of both countries and the Minsk group (on a trip by the co-mediators to the region in May and in the US in June), the co-mediators expressed concern about incidents of violence that caused victims and called for the ceasefire to be respected. The ministers met again in New York in September, coinciding with the UN General Assembly, and separately with the co-mediators in the region in October. However, there was no significant progress in the last quarter of the year and there was some tension when the accusatory rhetoric between the parties escalated. Thus, the government of Armenia accused Azerbaijan of adopting a maximalist position in October. In November, the Azerbaijani president reaffirmed Azerbaijan's sovereignty over Nagorno-Karabakh and ruled out any possibility of independence for the territory. The foreign ministers of both countries met in December, with the OSCE mediating, but without significant results.

At various times of the year, the Armenian government advocated that Nagorno-Karabakh should become part of the negotiating format (its authorities are currently consulted by the co-mediators, but they do not have any formal status). According to Pashinyan, such a position was not a precondition, but was necessary. Following a visit to Armenia in November, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey

12. See the summary on Armenia–Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh) in chapter 2 (Socio-political crises) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2020! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2020.

Lavrov approved recognising Nagorno-Karabakh in the negotiations. Azerbaijan continued to reject the Armenian demand for a change in format and responded by calling for the participation of the displaced population from Nagorno-Karabakh in the process in November.

Some confidence-building and humanitarian measures were launched during the year, such as an exchange of two prisoners in June, facilitated by the International Committee of the Red Cross. Likewise, following the commitment made by the parties at the high-level summit in March, **there was an exchange of visits by journalists from each country** in November. The trips took place out of the public eye, although they were revealed days later in the media. It was the first such initiative since 2001.

Gender, peace and security

The peace process continued to lack specific mechanisms for women's participation or the inclusion of a gender perspective and it also continued to shut out other parts of the civilian population. Regarding women's social perception of peace and the peace process, an investigation by the Swedish NGO Kvinna till Kvinna found that women in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh perceived their own society as more peaceful and tolerant than the others and that all of them felt resigned and lacked confidence in the peace process.¹³ In some cases, especially among women residing in areas near the border, greater militarisation was considered necessary. Most of the interviewees considered themselves to be outside the peace process, which they viewed as an elite male sphere, and did not consider themselves or women more directly involved in that sphere to be real peacebuilders.

Furthermore, the “Women for Peace” campaign, launched in 2018 by Anna Hakobyan, the journalist and wife of Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, which aims to promote a peaceful resolution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, was presented in Washington in March, months after its presentation in Moscow in 2018. Amidst international appeals and greater openness by the parties to the conflict to the implementation of confidence-building measures, some analysts identified a greater opportunity for promoting peacebuilding through women's initiatives. In addition, **in February 2019 the government of Armenia adopted its first national action plan on the implementation of UN Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security** for the period 2019-2021. Azerbaijan remained without a national action plan for Resolution 1325. **The Armenian national action plan did not include any mechanism for women's organisations or women affected by the conflict to participate in the peace process directly or indirectly**, despite announcing in its preamble that the government attaches special importance to the active participation of women in all phases of the conflict.

The objectives of participation were specified in the plan in the form of promoting female participation and the gender perspective in the security forces, cooperation between government bodies and participation in the economic, social, educational and environmental spheres. The plan also addressed the situation of women affected by the conflict through the promotion of awareness campaigns and programs aimed at women's organisations affected by the conflict, as well as protection measures.

| Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia) | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Negotiating actors | Government of Georgia, representatives of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, government of Russia ¹⁴ |
| Third parties | OSCE, EU and UN; USA Russia ¹⁵ |
| Relevant agreements | Agreement on Principles of Settlement of the Georgian–Ossetian Conflict (Sochi Agreement) (1992), Agreement on a Ceasefire and Separation of Forces (1994) (agreement dealing with conflict on Abkhazia), Protocol of agreement (2008), Implementation of the Plan of 12 August 2008 (2008) |

Summary:

The war between Georgia and Russia in August 2008, which began in South Ossetia and spread to Abkhazia and territory not disputed by Georgia, ended in a six-point peace agreement mediated by the EU. The peace plan included the start of international talks on security and stability in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, two small territories in the northwest and north-central Georgia bordering Russia that are internationally recognised as regions of Georgia, though de facto independent since the end of the wars between Abkhaz and Georgian forces (1992-1994) and between Ossetian and Georgian forces (1991-1992) regarding their status. The 2008 agreement gave way to the start of talks known as the Geneva International Discussions (GID), which bring together representatives of Georgia, South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Russia under international mediation (the OSCE, EU and UN, with the US as an observer). According to the agreement, the talks were supposed to focus on provisions to guarantee security and stability in the region, the issue of the refugees and displaced populations and any other issue agreed by the parties, so the disputed status of the territories was not explicitly addressed. Thus, after the 2008 war, Russia formally recognised the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and established agreements and a permanent military presence there despite Georgian opposition. The post-2008 phase involved the dismantling of previous dialogue and observation mechanisms, including the OSCE and the UN missions, and replaced the previous separate talks with a single format covering both disputed regions. An EU observation mission was also authorised, though it was given no access to the disputed territories. The GID have two working groups (on security and humanitarian issues) and under its aegis one Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism was created for each region in 2009, facilitated by the EU and OSCE. Amidst a context of geopolitical rivalry between Russia and Western political, economic and military players (the US, EU and NATO) and chronic antagonism between the disputed regions and Georgia, the negotiating process faces many obstacles.

13. Kvinna till Kvinna, *Listen to Her – Gendered Effects of the Conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh and Women's Priorities for Peace*, 2019.

14. Russia's status in the Georgian peace process is subject to different interpretations. Georgia considers Russia a party to the conflict and a negotiating party, while Russia considers itself a third party.

15. Ibid.

In 2019, the dialogue faced obstacles at both levels of the peace process: the Geneva International Discussions (GID), which is the highest political level, and the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM). Four rounds of the GID were held in 2019 (April, July, October and December). **Russia, South Ossetia and Abkhazia again abandoned GID working group sessions on humanitarian issues, preventing them from addressing the issue of the displaced population.** In the security working group, the parties stuck to their opposing positions. Georgia emphasised militarisation by Russia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which conducted military exercises and erected barriers in border areas. It also denounced the violation of the rights of the Georgian population in areas under the control of the de facto independent regions, including the right to education in their mother tongue. Georgia also denounced illegal arrests and kidnappings. It called for an investigation into the deaths of several Georgian people, including a young Georgian man killed in police custody in Abkhazia in March 2019. It demanded the withdrawal of Russian troops in both regions and the establishment of international security mechanisms. Russia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia highlighted stability in the border area in the GID rounds in 2019. They denounced relations between Georgia and NATO and NATO exercises in Georgia as a security threat to the region. According to Russia, Georgia's insistence on withdrawing troops blocked the negotiations.

The GID were influenced by the regional and local context. The atmosphere in the July round of the GID was affected by Georgia's anti-government and anti-Russia protests in late June. More than 240 people were injured in clashes with the police as protesters tried to enter Parliament. The protests were triggered by a meeting of Orthodox MPs in Georgia during which a Russian MP took the seat of the speaker of the Georgian Parliament. There were hundreds of detainees and allegations of excessive use of force. In reaction, Russia imposed temporary measures, such as a ban on flights to Georgia. Some groups held daily protests in the following weeks, which were resumed more widely in September. In November there was a new wave of opposition demonstrations in Georgia, protesting the failure to approve a new electoral system, which broke the government's commitments made during the June crisis, and in December there were also opposition and pro-government protests. The GID also addressed the closure of border crossings, such as the Enguri bridge, closed by Abkhazia in June based on allegations of provocative Georgian protests in the nearby Zugdidi district, although it reopened in the October round. The rising tension in the area around Chorchana and Tselisi was also addressed in the October GID. Russia accused Georgia of starting a dispute by building a police checkpoint in the area, which led South Ossetia to issue an ultimatum for its withdrawal, to set up another and to impose the temporary closure of the border. The Georgian government denounced the mobilisation of military personnel and equipment in the area after the Ossetian ultimatum and warned of the risk of serious confrontation. The co-mediators urged containment. Russia blasted Georgia's refusal to delimit the border in the disputed areas. In early December, South

Ossetia eased some of the restrictions on the border, only for the departure of people who are retired or in serious health conditions, and released some Georgian people detained for crossing the border, including a well-known Georgian doctor. In the last round of the GID in 2019, held on 10 and 11 December, the co-mediators warned that the situation on the ground was deteriorating, especially in the Chorchana and Tselisi area. They also warned of restrictions on freedom of movement and the closure of the crossing points on the administrative border between Georgia and South Ossetia for more than five months.

The IPRM mechanism in Abkhazia remained cancelled since June 2018, abandoned by Abkhazia. The Georgian government and the co-mediators urged its resumption at the GID, without success. The South Ossetian IRPM, suspended between September and December 2018, was called regularly, although in late August the increase in tension led to its disruption, according to the EU EUMM mission. Topics addressed in the South Ossetia IPRM during the year included the security situation, crossing points, investigations into fatalities, the erection of barriers in border areas, the use of the direct lines of communication between the parties to manage incidents and reports of airspace violations.

The new Georgian president, Salome Zurbishvili, in office since December 2018, called for a higher political profile for the GID during the year, arguing that it was too technical. He advocated a more active and effective format to achieve a political solution. Likewise, during the year the Georgian government launched confidence-building measures aimed at the population of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as part of its plan "A step to a better future", announced in 2018. They included measures to recognise citizenship, provide subsidies and a launch a programme to facilitate the entry of students from the two regions into the Georgian university system.

Gender, peace and security

The Georgian government maintained its institutionalised practice of holding meetings between government representatives participating in the GID and the IPRM and the civilian population affected by the conflict, including women's organisations. This is an approach initiated by UN Women in 2013 that was later organised by the government, with the support of the UN agency. Meetings of this type were held regarding the IPRMs, such as those in Gori in April and in two locations in the Tsalenjikha and Zugdidi districts in June. The results of the IPRMs were discussed at these meetings and women's organisations, other parts of the affected population and experts shared priorities such as the need to address the security situation around the border demarcation line and barriers in the border area. They also called for improvements to motorway infrastructure, telephone and internet coverage, irrigation systems and health services, as well as more information on the direct communication system between the opposing sides to manage incidents. They also stressed the economic

difficulties in the border areas as a factor leading to the exodus of the population, especially young people, from these areas. The interruption of Abkhazian IPRMs and strategies for their resumption were also addressed.

Participants from Georgia and parts of the affected population, including women's organisations, also met in the GID in May, with the support of UN Women and the US State Department, in which the results of the 47th round of the GID held in April were discussed. The issue of women's participation in peace negotiations was addressed. According to UN Women, representatives of women's organisations and experts raised issues such as freedom of movement, environmental issues, cases of trafficking of women and strategies to prevent trafficking. They also noted the need to promote human rights instruments, especially for women and girls from Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Meanwhile, three organisations in Georgia (an association for internally displaced women called Consent, the Women's Information Centre and the Sukhumi Humanitarian-Cultural Fund), UN Women and the US State Department began a process to implement the national action plan on Resolution 1325 locally in 10 municipalities in Georgia, selected for their proximity to the border demarcation line and for their high concentrations of displaced people. The process includes meetings and consultations on local priorities. According to UN Women, the topics highlighted by the participants include problems of subsistence and accommodation, arrests of people crossing the border, human rights violations and the impacts of the closure of border crossings with Abkhazia.

The Mediterranean Women Mediators Network established an antenna in Cyprus

by a demilitarised zone known as the buffer zone or "Green Line", supervised by the UN. Since the division of the island there have been efforts to find a solution, such as high-level dialogues in the 70s and initiatives in the following decades promoted by successive UN Secretaries-General. The Annan Plan for a bizonal bicomunal federation was approved in referendum in 2004 by the Turkish Cypriots and rejected by the Greek Cypriots. After the failure of the Christofias-Talat dialogue (2008-2012), a new phase of negotiations began in 2014, which has generated high expectations.

The peace process remained at an impasse, with informal meetings but without a formal resumption of negotiations, which have suspended since 2017, and amidst persistent tension between Turkey and Cyprus over gas exploration in the waters around the island and a rise in tension in the buffer zone (Green Line) in Cyprus. The UN Secretary-General's special representative, Deputy Special Advisor Elizabeth Spehar, met with the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders Nikos Anastasiades and Mustafa Akinci in February and August in order to reach an agreement on the terms for restarting substantive negotiations regarding the conflict on the island. United Nations senior official Jane Holl Lute also conducted separate consultations with both leaders, with the guarantor countries (Greece, the United Kingdom and Turkey) and with the EU (observer at the Cyprus Conference). **UN Secretary-General António Guterres held an informal meeting with the two leaders in November. Guterres promised to work with the parties and the three guarantor powers to explore the possibility of an informal meeting in the 5+ format sponsored by the UN in November.** Throughout the year and at the meeting with Guterres, the parties reaffirmed their commitment to achieving

a solution to the conflict based on the establishment of a bizonal and bicomunal federation with political equality, as well as their commitment to the Declaration of 2014 and the six points proposed by the UN in 2017 (territory, political equality, property, equal treatment, security and guarantees). Despite this commitment, the parties' public rhetoric continued to be divisive.

The parties to the conflict did make progress in the dialogue at the level of the technical committees and in the area of confidence-building measures. In February, the two leaders pledged to intensify the work of the committees and the previously paralysed working groups were reactivated during the year. Some were especially active, such as the working group on economic and commercial affairs, culture and education. In addition, a mechanism funded by UNDP and the EU was established to support the committees' activities. The confidence-building measures carried out included the implementation of the interoperability of mobile phones and the interconnection of electricity networks. Furthermore, the two leaders reaffirmed their agreement to demine in nine areas in each community. There was also an exchange of Greek Cypriot pictorial works of art that had remained under Turkish Cypriot control since the division of the island and of audiovisual recordings by Turkish Cypriot artists that had been in Greek Cypriot custody. A pilgrimage was made to a mosque in the port city of Larnaca, facilitated the UN

South-east Europe

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Cyprus | |
| Negotiating actors | Republic of Cyprus, self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus |
| Third parties | UN, EU; Turkey, Greece and United Kingdom (guarantor countries) |
| Relevant agreements | 13 February agreement (2004) |

Summary:

Inhabited by a Greek majority, a Turkish population and other minorities, the island of Cyprus faces a situation of long-lasting unresolved conflict. Preceded by the violence of the 1950s, followed by independence in 1960, Cyprus was affected by a crisis in which the Turkish Cypriot population was displaced from power, calling into question the distribution of power stipulated in the Constitution and triggering new violent incidents, which led to the deployment of the UNFICYP peacekeeping mission in 1964. There was an underlying confrontation between the aspirations of enosis (union with Greece) of the Greek Cypriot population and taksim (partition) by Turkish Cypriot population. A coup in 1974 with the aim of promoting unification with Greece triggered a military invasion of the island by Turkey. The crisis led to population displacement and the division of the island between the northern third under Turkish Cypriot control and two-thirds in the south under Greek Cypriot control, separated

mission (UNFICYP) and the Religious Track, an initiative for dialogue between religious leaders on the island to contribute to the peace process, with the support of Sweden. For the first time since 1963, former Turkish Cypriot inhabitants of a town in the Nicosia district were able to pray in the mosque of that town, in the buffer zone, in a welcoming atmosphere provided by the Greek Cypriot inhabitants, according to the UN, whose peacekeeping mission ensured access to many other religious and commemorative events throughout the year.

The peace process took place amidst an international dispute between the Greek Cypriot government and the Turkish government over gas in waters near the island. Following the announcement in February of new findings of significant gas reserves by ExxonMobil in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of Cyprus, delimited by Cyprus with neighbouring countries Israel, Egypt and Lebanon, the Turkish Cypriot government stated in April that it would conduct resource exploration activities in the EEZ with Turkey. Ankara also announced exploratory activity and deployed several ships in EEZ waters, escorted by warships and military drones. In response, the EU agreed on sanctions against Turkey in July. The Turkish government signed a deal in November with the internationally recognised Libyan government (GNA) on security issues and on the demarcation of the maritime border of its exclusive economic zones, overlapping with other countries and attributing to Turkey gas exploration rights over a wide area of the eastern Mediterranean.¹⁶ Cyprus, Greece and Egypt, which according to the Turkish-Libyan pact should obtain authorisation from Turkey to explore the disputed area, criticised the agreement, as did the EU. In general, Turkey rejects Cyprus' exploration and drilling activity given the unresolved conflict situation and calls for it to stop until there is a reunification agreement for the island. The Turkish Cypriot government also calls for a mechanism to share the revenue from exploiting these resources. Meanwhile, the Greek Cypriot government defends its sovereignty over the EEZ and alleges that part of the benefits will be delivered to the Turkish Cypriot side once a resolution agreement is reached.

The peace process in Cyprus remained at an impasse and the informal meetings of 2019 did not generate enough agreement to resume it

highlighted the work for peace done by women from both communities on the island and the potential in this area.

Furthermore, **the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network (MWMN) announced the establishment of an antenna in Cyprus in May.** The announcement followed a meeting held in Cyprus in 2018 between around 30 women from both island communities, organised by the Cyprus Women's Lobby, with support from the MWMN, Women Mediators Across the Commonwealth, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and UNFICYP. The purpose of the meeting was to address the situation, needs and demands surrounding the conflict and to identify opportunities for peacebuilding. The official launch of the branch in Cyprus in 2019 included a public event on the challenges of the effective participation of women in mediation and peacebuilding and a workshop on mediation.

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Serbia – Kosovo | |
| Negotiating actors | Serbia, Kosovo |
| Third parties | EU, UN |
| Relevant agreements | Military Technical Agreement between the International Security Force (KFOR) and the Governments of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Serbia (1999), First agreement of principles governing the normalization of relations between the republic of Kosovo and the Republic of Serbia (Brussels Agreement) (2013) |

Summary:

Since the end of the 1998-1999 war between Serbia and the Kosovar Albanian armed group KLA, with the participation of NATO, the status of Kosovo has remained in dispute. This Albanian-majority land has historically been part of the Ottoman Empire, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and more recently the Republic of Serbia in Yugoslavia (as an autonomous region and autonomous province, successively). Following an interim international administration for Kosovo with a mandate from the UN Security Council (Resolution 1244, of 1999), a process to discuss its status began in 2006 under the aegis of the United Nations. Kosovo supported the proposal made by the UN Secretary-General's special envoy, Martti Ahtisaari, entailing internationally supervised independence for Kosovo and decentralisation for its Serbian minority, though Serbia rejected it. This was followed by fresh attempts at dialogue facilitated by a troika (USA, EU, Russia) that also failed. In 2008 Kosovo unilaterally proclaimed its independence and pledged to implement the Ahtisaari plan. The start of a new process of dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo in 2011 under facilitation of the EU (Brussels Process) opened the doors to rapprochement on technical and political issues. Since its inception there has been significant progress, including the agreement to dismantle parallel political, judicial and security structures of the Serb-inhabited areas of Kosovo; as well as to create an association/community of Serb municipalities in Kosovo. However, there are still outstanding pending challenges, especially in the field of implementation of the agreements, reconciliation and the final resolution of the political status.

Gender, peace and security

The peace process' technical committee on gender equality, established in 2015, resumed its activity in March, following the impasse in 2018. This was announced by its co-leaders Xenia Loizidou and Mine Yücel, who indicated that the working group would focus on climate change issues. However, information from the committee was scarce during the rest of the year. In February, the UN Secretary-General's special representative and deputy special advisor highlighted the negative impact that the deadlocked negotiations have on society, including women, in terms of disappointment, while at the same time pointing out the need for a more inclusive peace process. The special representative

16. See the summary on Libya in chapter 6 (Middle East).

The peace process between Serbia and Kosovo remained at an impasse in 2019, with no meetings between its negotiating teams during the year and complex prospects for its resumption, given the parties' unwillingness to budge. The process had been suspended in late 2018 by Serbia in protest of Kosovo's imposition of 100% tariffs on products from Serbia in retaliation for what it considers to be Serbian obstacles to Kosovo's international recognition. Throughout 2019, Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić insisted that striking down the tariff was an essential condition for restarting the negotiations. The Kosovar authorities insisted at various times that the tariff would remain in force unless Serbia changed its position on international recognition and that trade relations could not be dealt with separately from the political talks with Serbia. The prime minister hinted that the recognition of Kosovo was a starting point for continuing the talks, while the Serbian government noted that the outcome of the process could not be established in advance and questioned whether Kosovo was willing to negotiate.

International calls to resume the negotiations followed in the form of meetings, summits and political positions. EU High Representative Federica Mogherini called on the Kosovar authorities to scrap the tariffs on several occasions, including during a meeting she held with the Kosovar negotiating delegation in January. Germany and France increased their efforts to find a solution to the crisis during an informal summit on the Western Balkans in Berlin in April that had generated expectations for a chance at rapprochement between both sides. Although the leaders of Kosovo and Serbia agreed to continue efforts to implement the agreements reached thus far, the process was not resumed. The follow-up meeting scheduled to be held in Paris in July was cancelled. Furthermore, the Quintet (USA, Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy) urged Kosovo to strike down the tariffs in August and asked Serbia to end its campaign to withhold recognition from Kosovo. The UN Secretary-General called for the removal of all obstacles to dialogue, warning that the stalemate in the negotiations was slowing down progress towards normalising relations and posed a threat to stability. Kosovo argued that the United States be included in the negotiating format provided by the EU during the year. At the end of the year, the presidents of Serbia and Kosovo held an informal meeting under the auspices of French President Emmanuel Macron as part of an international summit on governance. Vučić reiterated that eliminating the tariffs was a necessary condition for resuming the talks. Kosovar President Hashim Thaci said he was ready to resume the talks quickly if Serbia did not set any conditions.

Furthermore, the process faced uncertainties regarding the Kosovar negotiating team. In June, the Kosovo Constitutional Court ruled that the mandate and powers of the Kosovar negotiating team were unconstitutional, as they overlapped with those of other institutions. In March 2019, the Kosovar Parliament had passed legislation on the negotiating team's responsibilities and powers without the Kosovo Serb MPs from the Serbian List participating. The team had been established in December 2018 and

composed of representatives of the government, the political opposition and civil society activists, without any Kosovo Serbs participating. The approved mandate established less leeway for dialogue with Serbia, for which it had been criticised by Kosovo Serb political representatives and the Serbian government. The Constitutional Court's ruling stripped the negotiating team of any effectiveness. The period after the ruling was shaped by the interim political situation in Kosovo following the resignation of Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj in July after he was summoned by the Specialised Chambers and the Specialised Prosecutor's Office, which investigate crimes against humanity, war crimes and other crimes committed between 1998 and 2000, and the early parliamentary elections held in October. In the period running up to the election, Kosovar Albanian political groups hardened their positions regarding the conditions for dialogue with Serbia. In this context, with the previous negotiating team having been legally annulled, Kosovo's new mandate, team and approach to the negotiations was subject to the position of the new government. In December, the leader of Vetevendosje and possible future prime minister, Albin Kurti, said that the negotiating process should not continue to be led by the presidents of both territories.

Gender, peace and security

Paralysed during 2019, the negotiating process still lacked specific mechanisms for the participation of women and civil society activists in Kosovo and Serbia. Furthermore, representatives of civil society, including women's organisations, called for the increased presence of women in high-level political processes in Kosovo during an event on the women, peace and security agenda co-organised by the UN and the EU in March. Other recommendations resulting from the event included the need for greater efforts to implement the law on gender equality, with special attention paid to women from non-majority communities; higher gender quotas in Parliament and the inclusion of women in advisory positions; the inclusion of the needs and concerns of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence on the agenda of political processes; and greater impetus for and acceleration of the initiative of the Regional Commission Tasked with Establishing the Facts about All Victims of War Crimes and Other Serious Human Rights Violations Committed on the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia (RECOM).

Furthermore, the Kosovar government commission charged with verifying and recognising the status of victims of conflict-related sexual violence and providing redress remained active. From its inception in February 2018 until mid-September 2019, it received 1,057 applications and recognised the survivor status of 406 people (394 women and 12 men). Various civil society events were held to raise awareness about the issue during the year. In his October report, the UN Secretary-General expressed concern about the limitations of the reparation process by failing to include cases of sexual violence shortly after the end of the war and victims of non-majority communities, so he

called for a fully inclusive approach. Some Kosovar NGOs indicated that the verification process was proceeding very slowly and that it did not include any supervisory bodies. The Kosovo Women's Network (KWN), which groups together 141 organisations, visited the commission in June and showed support for its work. Also in June, civil society representatives demonstrated in the capital before Parliament in support of victims of sexual violence during the war and in protest of the use of experiences of sexual violence as political tools. In Serbia, activists from Women in Black and other civil society organisations demonstrated in front of the Serbian Parliament in March to remember the Kosovar Albanian victims of the war and denounce institutional silence about them.

Western Europe

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Spain (Basque Country) | |
| Negotiating actors | ETA (dissolved), government of Spain, government of the Basque Country, government of Navarre, government of France, <i>Communauté d'Agglomération du Pays Basque</i> (Basque Municipal Community), political and social actors of the Basque Country, Basque Political Prisoners Collective (EPPK) |
| Third parties | Permanent Social Forum, Bake Bidea |
| Relevant agreements | -- |

Summary:

Since the end of the Franco dictatorship in Spain, there have been several attempts to resolve the conflict involving the armed organisation ETA, created in 1959 to meet demands for self-determination of the territories considered Euskal Herria and for the creation of a socialist state. Throughout decades of conflict, multiple forms of violence were denounced, including deaths caused by ETA's violence (837 deaths), by security forces action (94) and paramilitary groups (73), as well as other human rights violations, including torture by security forces and ETA's economic extortion. Negotiations in 1981 and 1982 led to the dissolution of ETA political-military at the Seventh Assembly in 1982. The Conversations of Algiers in the late 1980s under the social-democratic PSOE-led government failed. The conservative PP-led government's approaches to ETA in the late 1990s, accompanied by truces, were also unsuccessful. During these decades the conflict continued in multiple expressions, including the violent activity of ETA and the GAL police organisation, protected by parts of the central government. The socio-political and military tension continued in the 2000s, with new attacks by ETA and the banning of the Batasuna party (2003), as well as the arrest and prosecution of other political and social actors alongside secret rapprochement between Basque socialist leaders and the Abertzale left, public calls for dialogue, new political proposals and a transformation in the Abertzale left in support of peaceful means. Exploratory meetings led to the formalisation of a new process in 2005, which included two parallel negotiations: one between political parties and the other between the government and ETA, which was backed by a new truce. The process failed amidst multiple hurdles and a new attack in late 2006. The following decade began with new initiatives and declarations, such as the Abertzale left's Alasua Proposal (2009) and Zutik Euskal Herria (Euskal Herria on Its Feet) (2010), which included the Mitchell

principles of negotiation, and the Brussels Declaration (2010), signed by international figures. International facilitators called for ETA to observe a permanent, unilateral and verifiable ceasefire and civil society organisations called for a new push for peace, with international cooperation. Following the Aiete International Peace Conference, ETA announced the definitive end of its armed activity in 2011 and took new steps towards unilateral disarmament in subsequent years, with the involvement of civil society, and ETA's final dissolution in 2018. Stakeholders such as the International Contact Group and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (Switzerland) were involved as third parties in the negotiating process.

One year after ETA's historic announcement in 2018 that it was dissolving its structures for good, many challenges in memory, coexistence and prison policy persisted.

The committee on memory and coexistence of the Basque Parliament, a parliamentary forum that started in 2011, was interrupted at various periods by disagreements between political groups and restarted in 2017, without the participation of the Popular Party, experienced difficulties during the year due to disagreements between the parties PNV and PSE-EE in March regarding the non-public document summarising the work carried out. According to the media, some representatives of the PSE-EE stated that the document lowered the so-called "ethical ground", in reference to the agreement reached in 2012 between PNV, PSE-EE, PP, IU, UPyD and part of Aralar group to establish bases of democratic coexistence. Its leader, Idoia Mendia, demanded that the committee make it explicit that there were no reasons to justify terrorism or any violation of human rights. The parties participating in the committee took a few days to decide on the future of the forum. After a meeting behind closed doors on 15 March, the media reported that the committee was ongoing. However, the forum remained deadlocked in the following months. In October, it emerged that Podemos was willing to explore ways to find common ground through informal meetings with the groups.

In another development related to coexistence, in October the Basque Parliament passed a resolution rejecting "publicly ostentatious" events to recognise ETA prisoners who are released from prison, since they revictimise the victims of ETA and make coexistence that much harder to build. The text was supported by all parties except EH Bildu. In previous months, the leader of the Abertzale left, Arnaldo Otegi, argued that the events had no intention to humiliate anyone and asserted that they would continue to be carried out with all the prisoners. He also rejected the proposal of the Social Forum, a civil society initiative that promotes the peace process, that they be conducted in private, arguing that this format was not a solution. During the year, the Basque government demanded that the nationalist left not organise any more events of recognition.

In prison policy, early in the year the Spanish government and the Basque government announced the planned schedule of negotiations for the transfer of 33 pending matters, including control over Basque prisons. The schedule was to start in January and last 12 months. However, the political

instability in Spain made the dialogue and negotiations difficult and they were interrupted in April. At the end of the year, after the November general elections, as part of the negotiations between the PSOE and PNV to reach an investiture agreement, both parties achieved a 12-point deal that includes proceeding to negotiate and transfer pending statutory powers in 2020. Likewise, 85,000 people demonstrated in support of changes in prison policy in Bilbao and Bayonne in January. The march received support from all the unions in the Basque Country. That same month, Spanish Interior Minister Fernando Grande-Marlaska pointed out that since ETA had been dissolved, it was no longer necessary to maintain the policy of dispersing prisoners. According to Grande-Marlaska, it was an anti-terrorism policy and not a prison policy. He also said that they should be brought closer by enforcing legislation and in contact with the victims' associations. The prisoner support platform Sare welcomed Grande-Marlaska's statements about ending the dispersion policy and urged that it be implemented urgently. Some prisoners were relocated closer to their families during the year. According to the Social Forum, 27 prisoners out of a total of 210 (169 men and 28 women) imprisoned in Spain were transferred to prisons near the Basque Country between June 2018 and November 2019, of which 128 (61%) were in the first degree situation, compared to 204 (92%) before June 2018. The Social Forum highlighted that the conditions for a definitive solution were gradually being established. It also hailed the fact that between mid-2018 and late 2019, the institutional, political, unionist and social consensus on prison policy had consolidated around the application of ordinary legislation and a standardised prison policy. Furthermore, **after going missing for 17 years, the historical leader of ETA, José Antonio Urrutikoetxea, also known as Josu Ternera, was arrested in France in May in a joint operation conducted by the French General Directorate of Internal Security and the Spanish Civil Guard police force.** The Paris Court of Appeals released him under judicial control in June and hours later he was detained again, pending examination of the demands of the Spanish judicial authorities, including two Euro-orders

and extradition requests. The court rejected his lawyers' demand for his release in September.

In the social sphere, the Basque Country NGO on development platform, made up of about 80 organisations, apologised to the victims of ETA and of other expressions of violence for their position of "neutrality" against violence. The platform indicated that recognition of the damage caused to victims should be central and urged that the principles of truth, justice and reparation be guaranteed for all victims. The Basque government also postponed the launch of a teaching unit on ETA and on the Basque situation between 1960 and 2018 after criticism from ETA victims' associations and the parties PP and PSOE, despite support from the educational sector.

Gender, peace and security

Various peacebuilding initiatives with a gender perspective followed one another in 2019. The Pastoral Diocesan Theology Institute; Bakeola, a centre specialised in dealing with conflicts; and the Peace and Reconciliation Commission of the Diocese of Bilbao organised the course "Women Standing for Peace" in March. The initiative was based on the recognition that violence and human rights violations during a long period in the Basque Country have caused social trauma and unfair suffering for many victims. It hailed the collective and individual roles of many women in peacebuilding and the call to coexistence, and aimed to discuss, reflect and share their contributions to the achievement of peace in various spheres, including social, institutional, organisational and religious ones. Furthermore, the Gender Group of the Permanent Social Forum and the Feminist Justice Seminar organised a working day on feminist justice in June. The Feminist Justice Seminar is a work space where sectors of women from the feminist movement come together with groups linked to dealing with the consequences of the conflict in the Basque Country and peacebuilding, during which they address issues such as restorative justice and the role of the community in conflict management.

6. Peace negotiations in the Middle East

- The Middle East was the scene of seven processes of negotiation, dialogue and exploratory contacts, accounting for 14% of all such processes in the world in 2019.
- Difficulties in implementing the Stockholm Agreement persisted in Yemen, while Hadi's government and southern separatist forces signed another accord, the Riyadh Agreement, to de-escalate the conflict within the anti-Houthi side.
- Negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis remained stagnant in 2019, although international discussions on formulas for conflict resolution were maintained.
- Obstacles to the reconciliation process between Hamas and Fatah continued in 2019, though some rapprochement was observed at the end of the year.
- The ceasefire agreements and negotiations on the conflict in Syria continued to be characterised by the prominence and influence of regional and international actors involved in the dispute.
- Women's organisations and feminist groups in the region continued to demand greater participation in formal negotiations and made specific proposals to deal with the conflicts they face.

This chapter studies the main peace processes and negotiations in the Middle East during 2019. Firstly, the main characteristics and general trends on the negotiation processes in the region are presented. Secondly, the evolution of each different context during the year is analysed, including in relation to the gender, peace and security agenda. At the start of the chapter there is a map identifying the countries in the Middle East that were the scenario of negotiations during 2019.

Table 6.1. Summary of peace processes and negotiations in the Middle East in 2019

| Peace processes and negotiations | Negotiating actors | Third parties |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Iran (northwest)** | Government, Cooperation Centre of Iranian Kurdistan's Political Parties (umbrella organisation for Kurdish groups that includes the Komala and KDP factions) | Norwegian Centre for Conflict Resolution (NOREF) |
| Iran (nuclear programme) | Iran, P4+1 (France, United Kingdom, Russia and China, plus Germany), EU | UN, France, Japan, Oman |
| Iraq** | Various types of political actors | UNAMI |
| Israel-Palestine | Israeli government, Palestinian Authority (PA), Hamas, Islamic Jihad | Quartet for the Middle East (USA, Russia, UN, EU), France, Egypt, Russia, Oman |
| Palestine | Hamas, Fatah | Egypt, Qatar |
| Syria | Government, political and armed opposition groups | UN, EU, USA, Russia, Turkey, Iran |
| Yemen | Government of Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi, Houthis/Ansar Allah South Transitional Council (STC), Saudi Arabia | UN, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia |

* The peace negotiations in bold type are described in the second section of the chapter.

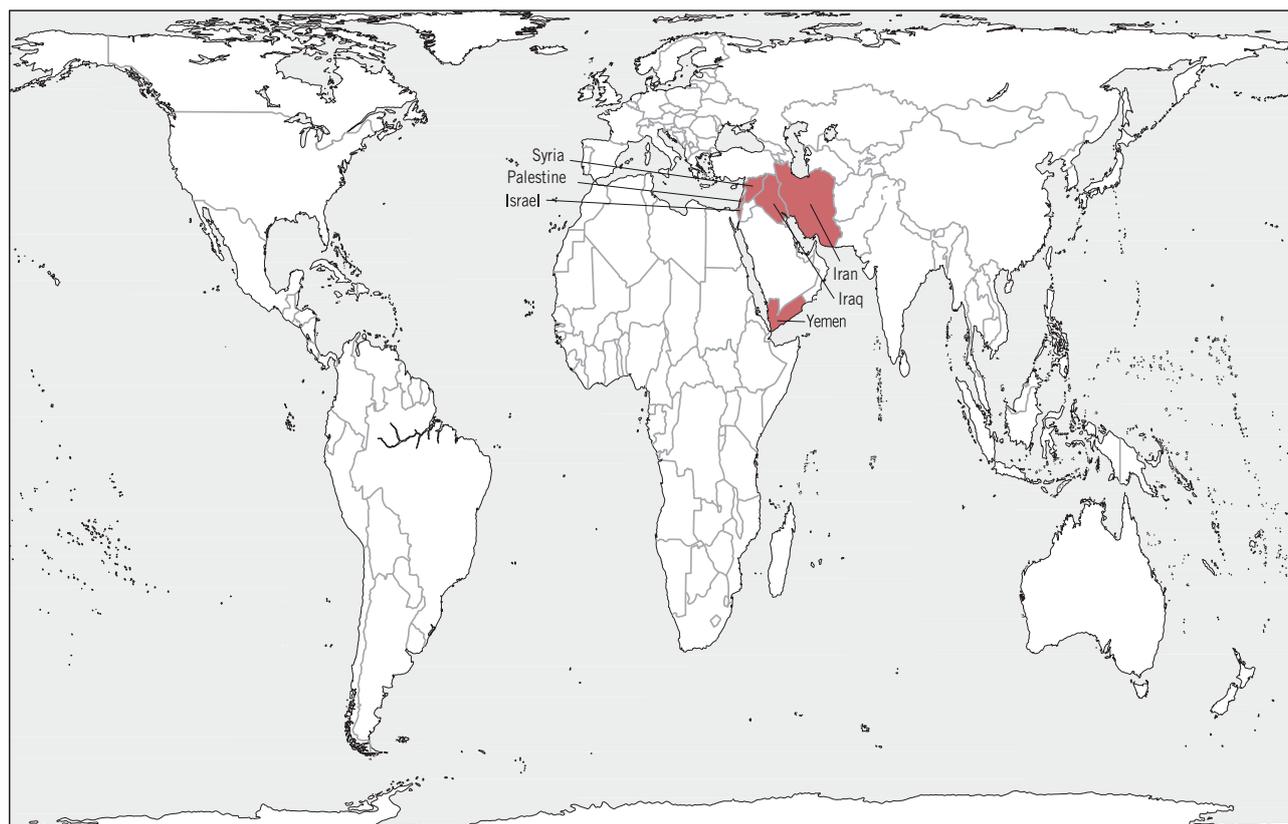
** Exploratory contacts

6.1. Peace negotiations in 2019: Regional trends

This chapter analyses seven processes of negotiation, dialogue and exploratory contacts that took place in the Middle East in 2019, two more than the previous year and accounting for 14% of all peace processes identified worldwide. Three of these negotiations were linked to armed conflicts: Israel-Palestine, Syria and Yemen. The other four processes were related to crisis situations. One was connected to the struggle between the Palestinian groups Hamas and Fatah and another to

tensions around the Iranian nuclear programme, while two other exploratory and relatively shaky processes were linked to the crisis in Iraq, involving anti-government protests and tension in northwestern Iran linked to political and armed opposition by Kurdish actors. With the exception of the intra-Palestinian dispute, which is internal, the rest of the processes were linked to internationalised internal contexts (armed conflicts in Syria and Yemen and tensions in

Map 6.1. Peace negotiations in the Middle East in 2019



■ Countries with peace processes and negotiations in the Middle East in 2019

Iraq and northwestern Iran) or international contexts (the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and tension over the Iranian nuclear programme). Four of the analysed processes were located in the Mashreq (Iraq, Israel-Palestine, Palestine and Syria) and three were in the Gulf subregion (Yemen and the two involving Iran).

All the various negotiating processes in the region enjoyed the roughly active participation of the respective governments, though according to the case sometimes indirectly. The

governments negotiated with various kinds of actors, including armed groups, political opposition organisations and the governments of other countries. Thus, for example, the Iranian government maintained contacts with the countries that remained faithful to the agreement on the nuclear programme signed in 2015 (France, the United Kingdom, China, Russia and Germany, known as the “P4+1” group) and stepped up pressure on those states to help to soften the blow of US sanctions imposed on Iran after Washington abandoned the deal in 2018. In Yemen, the internationally recognised government of Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi, which controls part of the country, participated in negotiations that involved armed groups and political actors. During the year, negotiations continued for the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement signed in late 2018 by

The peace processes and negotiations in the Middle East in 2019 accounted for 14% of all cases around the world and were linked to three armed conflicts and four crisis scenarios

the Hadi government and the group known as the Houthis, also called Ansar Allah. At the same time, in September 2019, the Hadi government was involved in another negotiating channel with southern separatist groups gathered under the umbrella of the Southern Transitional Council (STC) as part of a process that sought to avoid a confrontation within the anti-Houthi side.

The interests of the parties to the Israel-Palestine conflict were still represented by the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority (PA), although the process remained deadlocked during 2019, as in recent years. The meetings with the most tangible results in the dynamics of the conflict were informal and non-direct. Held between the Israeli government and the Palestinian groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad, they focused on ceasefire agreements in the face of escalating direct violence during the year. The PA and Hamas participated in the internal process in Palestine, as in recent years they have tried unsuccessfully to overcome the intra-Palestinian crisis that has been going on since 2006 and has prevented the formation of a unity government. The Syrian government also maintained its participation in both the UN-led Geneva process and the Russian-led Astana/Nur-Sultan process. However, it should be noted that the Syrian president expressly voiced his preference

for the Moscow-led process and made statements that questioned Damascus' commitment to the Geneva process. All the while, the regime remained committed to a military solution. As for the other actors involved in the negotiations, the high-level processes related to Syria continued to be characterised by the weakness of the opposition delegations due to their lack of influence over the actors on the ground, among other factors, as well as the exclusion of some key actors, such as the Kurdish group YPG, which is banned by Turkey for its relationship with the PKK.

There was a regional and international dimension to most of the armed conflicts and crises that were subject to negotiations in the Middle East, which resulted in a **significant role for external actors in the development and dynamics of the processes analysed**. One of the most emblematic examples continued to be Syria, where the Turkish ban on Syrian Kurdish actors was observed, as was the direct involvement of actors such as the United States, Russia and Turkey in the negotiations to establish "safe zones" or "de-escalation zones" in their areas of influence on Syrian soil. The establishment of the Astana/Nur-Sultan process has been perceived as an attempt to produce a negotiating scheme more favourable to the interests of some of the foreign actors supporting different sides in the conflict in Syria (Russia and Iran, who support the Syrian regime, and Turkey, which provides key support for some opposition groups), which also provides them with a space to manage their own strategic differences. In this context, some analysts called attention to attempts to replicate the "Astana model" outside the Middle East, particularly in Libya, where Moscow and Ankara also support opposing factions.¹

Syria was an example of a negotiating process directly influenced by the projection of regional and international interests in the conflict

Another illustrative case of regional and international influence was posed by Yemen, taking into account Saudi Arabia's prominent role as leader of the international military coalition that intervened in 2015 in support of the Hadi government and the projection of both the regional dispute between Saudi Arabia and Iran and the growing tension between the United States and Iran into the Yemeni conflict. Thus, Saudi Arabia engaged in indirect contacts with the Houthis in 2019 to favour de-escalation in the border area during a war that included several attacks in Saudi territory, for which Riyadh and Washington held Iran responsible. Riyadh also promoted negotiations between the Hadi government and southern separatist groups that resulted in the signing of an agreement aimed at preventing an internal war on the anti-Houthi side. In this sense, Saudi Arabia is an example of an actor that acts as a negotiator and as a party in complex negotiating processes with several overlapping

channels and in which regional and/or international actors operate as supporters of some of the warring parties. This same reflection applies to the role of Russia and Iran with respect to Syria, since both countries act as promoters of the Astana/Nur-Sultan process and are also decisive actors in supporting the Assad regime. Another emblematic example is the US role in the Palestinian-Israeli process. Throughout 2019, the Trump administration continued to announce a "definitive" plan to resolve the conflict, which remained undisclosed by the end of 2019, while simultaneously taking steps openly aligned with the interests of the Israeli government, such as ceasing to consider the Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories as illegal and recognising Israeli sovereignty over the Syria's Golan Heights, occupied by Israel since the 1967 Arab-Israeli War.

Third parties were present in all the negotiating processes analysed in the Middle East. **The UN remained involved in most cases in the region through various formats, including through the figure of "special envoys" active in Yemen, Israel-Palestine and Syria.** The UN also participated in formats such as the Quartet for the Middle East, constituted to address the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and in efforts to monitor the commitments made by the parties after the agreement on the Iranian nuclear programme was signed in 2015. Additionally, some countries in the region officiated as third parties, such as Egypt, due to their sway over Palestinian actors, and Kuwait, which was available to host negotiations linked to the Yemeni conflict. Meanwhile, **Oman emerged as a regional actor that could serve as a possible bridge between the US and Iran to promote de-escalation in the face of increased tension between both countries,** linked in part to the agreement on the Iranian nuclear programme. Enjoying good relations with both the US and Iran, Oman made some efforts during moments of high tension between the parties in 2019. Oman, which acts primarily as a facilitator and not as a mediator in the negotiations, was also a third party in the contexts of Israel-Palestine and Yemen. From the second half of the year, it facilitated communication channels between the Houthis and Saudi representatives aimed at reducing hostilities between the parties in Yemen.

The negotiations in the Middle East addressed a wide variety of topics, though one of the recurring themes was the search for ceasefire agreements, as in previous years. This was true of the conflict in Israel-Palestine, where indirect agreements were reported between the Israeli government and the Palestinian groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad; in Yemen, where two of the central themes of the year included the difficulties in

1. See the summary on Libya in chapter 2 (Peace negotiations in Africa).

implementing the ceasefire in the port of Al Hudaydah established in the Stockholm Agreement (2018) and the attempts to guarantee a cessation of hostilities between the Hadi government and secessionist groups in the south in the second half of the year; and in Syria, where various actors were involved in attempts to establish a ceasefire or “safe zones”, though the dynamics of violence continued to prevail. Other significant issues on the negotiating agenda in the region were attempts to produce unity governments or integrate disputing factions, which happened in the negotiations in Yemen and Palestine; discussions about holding elections, as the case of Palestine illustrates; debates over preparing new constitutional texts, in Syria; and more specific issues, such as nuclear proliferation or the sanctions system, in the countries involved in the agreement on the Iranian atomic programme.

As for the development of the negotiations and peace processes in 2019, the situation in the region was not particularly encouraging, as in previous years. In general terms, the situation was characterised by dynamics of deadlock in the talks (like in Israel-Palestine), successive rounds of contacts or meetings between the parties without results or with very limited results in terms of agreements or the implementation of deals (like in Syria and in the negotiations between the Hadi government and the Houthis in Yemen to implement the Stockholm Agreement) and the parties’ direct and gradual drift from agreements made previously (as illustrated by the Iranian nuclear programme, with continuous violations of the deal by Iran in 2019, following Washington’s decision to distance itself from the agreement the previous year). **In this context, some dynamics aroused some positive expectations in at least three scenarios about the possibilities of fleshing out the political approach to these disputes, though they were limited and shrouded in scepticism.** The first such scenario was Palestine. Although the persistent disagreements between Hamas and Fatah in making headway in the reconciliation process continued to be evident, in late 2019 there were some signs of rapprochement in the parties’ positions regarding the need to hold elections. The rapprochement came in a Palestinian political context marked by the presentation of an initiative presented by eight Palestinian groups aimed at overcoming the deep divisions between Hamas and Fatah since 2007.

In the second scenario, Syria, the launch of a Constitutional Committee as part of the Geneva process, designed and supported by the powers promoting the Astana process, was presented as a milestone by bringing together representatives of the disputing parties in a direct dialogue for the first time in five years, as well as by including civil society representatives. However,

One of the recurring themes on the negotiating agenda in the Middle East continued to be the search for ceasefire agreements between actors involved in hostilities

The processes and negotiations in the Middle East continued to illustrate the efforts of women and feminist organisations in dealing with female exclusion from formal negotiating spaces

the initiative was developed amidst a sceptical climate due to various factors, including doubts about the Syrian regime’s level of commitment, divisions in the civil society delegation, weaknesses in the opposition delegation and the persistent commitment of various actors involved in the military dispute. Some key actors were also excluded, such as the YPG/YPJ, banned by Turkey. Yemen is the third scenario, since during the second half of the year and under the auspices of Saudi Arabia, the Hadi government and southern secessionist groups signed the Riyadh Agreement in order to curb the particularly bloody hostilities that the parties had engaged in since August 2019 and thereby avoid a new war, this time within the anti-Houthi side. The pact was hailed as an opportunity to generate a more inclusive peace process in tune with the complexity of the actors in Yemen, given that the key points of the agreement include the formation of a unity government with an equal number of representatives from the north and the south and the inclusion of delegates from the southern zone in future rounds of negotiations promoted by the UN to address the conflict in the country. Nevertheless, the difficulties in implementing this agreement and the obstacles to making progress in achieving the provisions established in the Stockholm Agreement between the Hadi government and the Houthis led analysts to predict a complex path towards 2020.

With regard to the gender dimension of the peace processes and negotiations in the Middle East, the cases analysed continued to illustrate efforts to address the exclusion of women from formal negotiation spaces, a persistent phenomenon despite international frameworks that seek to promote their participation in these areas and initiatives promoted by women’s organisations that criticise women’s marginalisation and demand greater female participation. **Both in Yemen and in Syria, they continued to demand a 30% minimum threshold of participation for women in the negotiating processes.** In this regard, it should be noted that the Constitutional Committee created as part of the Geneva process in order to discuss a new Constitution for Syria enjoyed nearly 30% female participation. In Syria and Yemen, the mechanisms created at the behest of the UN special envoys also continued to operate in order to ensure female participation in the processes beyond their involvement in the negotiating tables. Thus, Yemeni technical advisors participating in the Technical Advisory Group carried out various activities during the year and the Syrian Women’s Advisory Group also remained active.

In addition, various initiatives promoted by civil society and supported by international NGOs and United Nations agencies facilitated meetings between

women and gave visibility to the proposals of women's organisations and feminist groups on the future of their countries and ways to transform conflicts that affected them. Thus, for example, Yemeni women held meetings in which they discussed their role in peacebuilding, the necessary political and security agreements for Yemen and the priorities on the agenda for a potential transition. In Syria and Palestine, women put forward concrete proposals on reconstruction needs from a feminist perspective. In Syria, some women's organisations also made gender-specific recommendations for the creation of a new Constitution and for the safe, voluntary and sustainable return for people forcibly displaced by the conflict. In most of these contexts, women's and feminist organisations also continue to work to make gender dynamics visible in the conflicts and crises they face.

Beyond the contexts analysed in detail in the next section of this chapter, **there were two other cases in the region in which contacts of an exploratory nature and uncertain development occurred at the end of the year. The first such case was in Iraq, where some efforts were made to try to address internal tensions that encouraged massive anti-government protests in the last quarter of 2019.** The protests were internal, but they also had an anti-Tehran component and were severely repressed by pro-Iranian authorities and militias operating in Iraq, resulting in violence that killed at least 400 people. The UN mission in Iraq (UNAMI) intervened to try to mediate the conflict. Under the leadership of the diplomat Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, it proposed a road map that described the end of the violence as an immediate priority. The plan also included other measures such as the immediate release of detained protesters, an investigation into the excessive use of force in protests and the disappearance of protesters, electoral reforms and anti-corruption measures. At a later stage, other issues related to constitutional reforms and infrastructure legislation would be addressed. Although Hennis-Plasschaert got the plan supported by key actors such as the top Shia spiritual leader in the country, Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, as well as by Washington, and met with Iraqi lawmakers to discuss the plan, the prospects for the initiative remained in doubt at the end of the year. All this happened amidst the political crisis that resulted in the resignation of the Iraqi prime minister and the impact of the escalation of tension between Washington and Tehran that resulted in serious acts of violence in Iraq at the end of the year.

The second case involved **the exploratory contacts established during 2019 between the Iranian government and Kurdish organisations.** The scope and continuity of these contacts is difficult to specify, since it was a series of secret meetings held in Oslo. According to media reports, the meetings were facilitated by the

Norwegian Centre for Conflict Resolution (NOREF) and were held at least twice in the Norwegian capital in May and June. The Kurdish delegation reportedly involved four representatives of an umbrella organisation called the Cooperation Centre of Iranian Kurdistan's Political Parties, created in 2018 in an attempt to circumvent divisions between Kurdish groups. Among them, there were delegates belonging to two of the three Komala factions (the Society of Revolutionary Toilers of Iranian Kurdistan and the Komala Party of Iranian Kurdistan) and two other factions of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (KDPI) and Central Committee of the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan). Meanwhile, the Iranian government delegation was reportedly headed by a veteran diplomat, Mohammad Kazem Sajjadpour, with experience as a representative of Iran before the UN delegation in Geneva, and by members of the Iranian security apparatus. According to media reports, Kurdish actors demanded that the Iranian delegation be led by a senior diplomat, taking into account the experience of former KDPI Secretary-General Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou, who was assassinated in Vienna in 1989 after negotiating with Iranian representatives.

Meanwhile, the Iranian delegation reportedly demanded that the meetings be kept secret. Before news of the meetings was leaked by Kurdish actors, media outlets asked about the continuity of the contacts, such as whether a third round scheduled for August would be held. In a brief public statement in July, the Kurdish group platform involved in the meetings confirmed that they had met with international centres to find a peaceful solution to the Kurdish issue. The news about the meetings provoked critical and sceptical reactions from other Kurdish groups. This included questions about the representativeness of the participating Kurdish actors, since groups such as the Komala Communist faction and the PJAK, a branch of the PKK in Iran, were not involved in the initiative, according to media reports, as well as the limited information on what was discussed in the meetings. The Iranian government's alleged intention to divide Kurdish groups and to warn of possible partnerships with the US or other actors amidst growing tensions between Washington and Tehran and between regional powers was also noted. Others said that the mere fact that meetings took place was an admission of Kurdish actors as dialogue partners and implicitly recognised that the Iranian regime's repressive strategy against the country's Kurdish minority had failed. Kurdish sources participating in the meetings asserted that the process was a first step that could not be categorised as negotiations, although it emerged that the parties to the talks exchanged views on the guarantees of minority rights in the Iranian Constitution. The meetings may have taken place alongside periodic episodes of violence between Iranian security forces and Kurdish armed actors in the northwestern part of the country.²

2. See the summary on Iran (northwest) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2020! Report on conflicts, human rights and peace building*. Barcelona: Icaria, 2020.

6.2 Case study analysis

Mashreq

| Israel-Palestine | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Negotiating actors | Israeli Government, Palestinian Authority (PA), Hamas, Islamic Jihad |
| Third parties | Quartet for the Middle East (USA, Russia, UN, EU), France, Egypt, Russia, Oman |
| Relevant agreements | Israel – PLO Mutual Recognition (1993), Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (Oslo I Accords), Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area (Cairo Agreement) (1994), Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (Oslo II) (1995), Wye River Memorandum (1998), Sharm el Sheikh Memorandum (1999), Road Map to a Permanent Two-State Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (2003), Annapolis Conference Joint Understanding on Negotiations (2007) |

Summary:

The Palestinian-Israeli peace process launched in the 1990s has not resulted in an agreement between the parties on the most complex issues borders, Jerusalem, settlements, Palestinian refugees and security or the creation of a Palestinian state. Since the timetable established by the Oslo Accords broke down a series of rounds of negotiation have been conducted and various proposals have been made, but they have all been unsuccessful. The peace process has developed amidst periodic outbursts of violence and alongside the fait accompli policies of Israel, including about its persisting occupation. These dynamics have created growing doubts about the viability of a two-state solution. Meanwhile, after periods of escalating violence, truce and cessation of hostilities agreements have been reached between the Israeli government and Palestinian armed actors.

As in recent years, the negotiations between Palestine and Israel remained at a deadlock in 2019, though international discussions continued on formulas for conflict resolution, mainly in view of the expectations of a (repeatedly postponed) peace deal for the region to be proposed by the government of Donald Trump and other initiatives from Washington. However, **the prospects for resuming meetings and reestablishing negotiations were thwarted by the positions and policies of the Israeli government, which aimed to further entrench the occupation and annex Palestinian territories, by the US decision to push a Middle Eastern agenda that was clearly favourable to Israeli interests, by the weakness of the Palestinian negotiating position and other international actors' lack of initiative in engaging more actively to find a solution to the conflict** and other factors. Thus, the most concrete mediation efforts in 2019 focused on restoring the ceasefire between Israel

In 2019, the Trump administration continued to postpone the presentation of its proposal to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and took new steps favourable to Israel

and Palestinian actors in Gaza in the face of successive acts of violence reported during the year.³

Several times during 2019, Washington announced the publication of its anticipated peace plan for the Middle East, described by the US government as “the deal of the century”, promoted as the final plan to end the conflict, though its public presentation was repeatedly postponed. Led by Trump advisor and son-in-law Jared Kushner (Director of Innovations at the White House), who is known for his pro-Israeli positions, the deal was first reported to be made public after the Israeli elections in April. It was later said that it would be revealed after Ramadan, and subsequently that it would be announced after the Israeli elections in September. By the end of the year, the plan had still not yet been released. After the two Israeli elections in 2019, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu failed to form a government, which forced a new election in 2020. To pave the way for the plan, **in 2019 Washington promoted an international conference called “Prosperity for peace” to publicise what is supposedly the economic component of the plan. In summary, it proposes promoting economic prosperity as a precursor to a definitive solution to the conflict.** Held in Bahrain in June, Kushner used the conference to suggest sending 50 billion dollars to the region, both to countries hosting the Palestinian refugee population, as an incentive for them to integrate Palestinian communities there, and to the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, which would receive around 27.8 billion dollars in investments within 10 years. Although the conference was supposed to be an event to obtain support from Arab countries for the plan, his proposal aroused little interest and was criticised by some as an attempt at bribery. Likewise, its usefulness was questioned in the absence of a political approach to address the conflict. In his speech, Kushner hinted that the Arab Peace Initiative, promoted in 2002 by former Jordanian King Abdullah, was no longer viable. The day after the conference, Oman announced that it would open an embassy in Ramallah, which analysts interpreted as an attempt to strengthen its position as a diplomatic channel to facilitate contact between conflicting actors in the Middle East, considering Netanyahu’s unprecedented visit to Oman in 2018.

In the months that followed, however, the prospects for a negotiating process were affected by Israeli policies, and particularly by Netanyahu’s controversial election campaign promises, including his declared intention to annex almost one third of the land occupied by Israel if reelected. Specifically, the Israeli leader presented a map that proposed expanding Israeli sovereignty to most of the Jordan Valley and the area north of the Dead Sea, which would leave the West Bank completely surrounded

3. See the summary on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2020! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*. Barcelona: Icaria, 2020.

and cut Palestinian territory off from Jordan. Netanyahu also proposed annexing the Israeli settlements located in the Palestinian city of Hebron. He claimed that the country had not had an opportunity of this kind since the 1967 war and stressed that he would promote the proposal in maximum coordination with Trump. The proposal was openly rejected by the Palestinian Authority, the Arab League and other international actors, such as Russia, Turkey, the EU and the United Nations. Veteran Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat said that it would eliminate any possibility of achieving peace between Palestinians and Israelis, while Saudi Arabia, which has exhibited greater understanding with Israel in recent years due to their common animosity towards Iran, said that the proposal was a dangerous form of escalation against the Palestinian people. Days after the announcement, Netanyahu met with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Sochi for the third time in 2019. Putin reportedly warned Netanyahu about his proposal's impact on increasing regional tensions and on the possibilities of achieving peace between Arabs and Israelis.

The most concrete mediation efforts in 2019 focused on restoring the ceasefire between Israel and Palestinian actors in Gaza

In this context, **the decision made by the Trump administration in November to stop considering Israeli settlements in occupied Palestinian territory illegal helped to strain the atmosphere and hamper the possibilities of dialogue.** The US announcement encouraged protests in various Palestinian cities and, like Netanyahu's promises, was criticised by various international actors. This decision by Washington, clearly aligned with Israeli interests, was joined by other measures promoted by the Trump administration in favour of Israel in previous years, such as the decision to recognise the capital of Jerusalem and move the US embassy there from Tel Aviv, the suspension of aid to the UN agency for the Palestinian refugee population (UNRWA) and, in March 2019, the recognition of Israeli sovereignty over the Syrian Golan Heights, occupied since the 1967 war. In this context, the Palestinian authorities refused to recognise the US as a mediator in the conflict. The new PA government established in 2019 expressed its willingness to negotiate with Israel, but as part of a process under the auspices of Moscow and the international community. Palestinian authorities also participated in initiatives to resume the old negotiating terms of the peace process during the year, including a meeting between Arab countries and the EU held in Ireland and a meeting between the Arab League and the EU in Egypt, both in February.

Thus, throughout 2019, the mediation efforts with the most tangible impact on the ground were deployed by Egypt and by the UN envoy for the Middle East, Nikolai Madlenov, to try to restore the ceasefire between Israel, on the one hand, and Hamas and Islamic Jihad, on the other. These indirect and informal contacts mainly

resulted in the suspension of hostilities, the reopening of border crossings and the restoration of the fishing area in waters around Gaza, although the agreements were continuously violated. Some economic agreements were also reached between Israelis and Palestinians, which also showed the Palestinian side's fragility and limited room to apply pressure. In February, the PA decided to reject the funds collected through Israeli taxation due to Israel's decision to withhold part of the resources earmarked for "families of Palestinian prisoners and martyrs".

However, amidst a severe Palestinian economic crisis, the PA and Israel decided to reactivate the joint committees established under the Paris Protocol, a mechanism that defines economic relations between Palestinians and Israelis. Days later, Israel began transferring funds to the PA, but withheld the line item that had prompted the blockade in February.

Gender, peace and security

Palestinian women's and feminist organisations and human rights NGOs continued their work in 2019, investigating and reporting the impacts of the Israeli conflict and occupation from a gender perspective. Despite the deadlock in the negotiations, local organisations also continued to promote greater female participation in decision-making areas and worked on developing some specific proposals, including ideas for rebuilding Gaza from the perspective of Palestinian women in a context of occupation and also of division between Hamas and Fatah. This project was promoted by the Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy (MIFTAH), an NGO that also developed a guide during the year to promote women's participation in peace and security. During 2019, it also emerged that a second National Action Plan for the implementation of United Nations Resolution 1325 is expected to be drafted, with objectives similar to those of the first plan, valid for the 2017-2019 period. One such aim is the improvement of the participation of Palestinian women in local and international decision-making processes.⁴

| Palestine | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Negotiating actors | Hamas, Fatah |
| Third parties | Egypt, Qatar |
| Relevant agreements | Mecca Agreement (2007), Cairo agreement (2011), Doha agreement (2012), Beach Refugee Camp agreement (2014) |
| Summary: | Since the start of the confrontation between Hamas and Fatah, which materialized as of 2007 with a de facto |

4. For further information on this subject, see Pamela Urrutia Arestizábal, *Ocupación, conflicto y patriarcado: impactos en las mujeres palestinas y Mujeres, paz y Seguridad: aplicación, retos y límites en Palestina*, Escola de Cultura de Pau – Associació Hèlia, September-October 2019.

separation between Gaza and the West Bank, several mediation initiatives have been launched in an attempt to reduce tensions and promote an approximation between these two Palestinian formations. It was not until May 2011 that the confluence of several factors –including the deadlock in negotiations between the PA and Israel, changes in the region as a result of the Arab revolts and the pressure exerted by the Palestinian public opinion– facilitated the signing of a reconciliation agreement between the parties. The diverging opinions between Hamas and Fatah on key issues have hampered the implementation of this agreement, which aims at establishing a unity government, the celebration of legislative and presidential elections, and reforming the security forces. Successive agreements have been announced between both parties since, but they have not been implemented.

As in previous years, **the difficulties in promoting a reconciliation process between Hamas and Fatah were again evident in 2019, despite the attempts of various stakeholders to mediate, and it was not until the end of the year that some rapprochement was observed** in the Palestinian factions' positions. The year got off to a bumpy start after Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas decided to ratify the Constitutional Supreme Court's ruling ordering the dissolution of the Palestinian Legislative Council (Parliament) in late December 2018, in which Hamas had a majority. In this context, in late January Abbas accepted the resignation of the prime minister of the Palestinian Authority (PA) and moved to form a new government. This move was rejected by Hamas, but also by other Palestinian political groups who believed that Abbas's party, Fatah, was trying to centralise power at the expense of deeper intra-Palestinian division. Representatives of several Palestinian groups then met in Moscow in February to address a possible national reconciliation, but with no result. Shortly thereafter, in early March, the appointment of Mohammed Shtayyeh (Fatah) as the new Palestinian prime minister was announced, but Hamas questioned the legitimacy of the new government, arguing that it had not been ratified by the Palestinian Legislative Council. The Shtayyeh government assumed power in mid-April with a cabinet composed mostly of Fatah members. Shortly thereafter, Abbas announced the formation of a new Fatah delegation for talks with Hamas sponsored by Egypt. Egyptian representatives who traveled to Gaza to establish a truce and prevent a new escalation of violence between Israel and the Palestinian groups in Gaza took the opportunity to probe formulas aimed at intra-Palestinian reconciliation. Meanwhile, there was a series of incidents in the first half of the year that heightened the tension between the parties, including attacks on PA offices in Gaza, the withdrawal of PA officials from the Rafah border post between Gaza and Egypt, Hamas' seizure of the passage

An initiative promoted by eight Palestinian groups aimed at overcoming the deep divisions between Hamas and Fatah since 2007 was announced in September and the parties had found common ground to hold elections by the end of the year

between Gaza and Israel after expelling PA personnel and the PA's halt on the payment of salaries to around 5,000 employees, prisoners and relatives of Palestinians killed in Gaza due to their alleged links with Hamas or Islamic Jihad.

During the second half of the year, and especially in the final months, a relative rapprochement was observed between the Palestinian factions in a context marked by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's campaign promises to annex new Palestinian territories to Israel (September) and US positions that once again reinforced Israeli stances in the conflict, especially Washington's decision to no longer consider Israeli settlements built in the occupied Palestinian territories to be "illegal" (November). Thus, **in September eight Palestinian groups launched an initiative aimed at overcoming the deep division between Hamas and Fatah since 2007**. At a press conference in Gaza, the eight factions (Islamic Jihad, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Palestinian People's Party, the Palestinian National Initiative, the Palestinian Democratic Union, the General Popular Front and As-Sa'iqa) announced that they had sent copies of their proposal to the Palestinian president, the political head of Hamas, Ismail Haniyeh, the Egyptian authorities and the Arab League. The plan

suggests activating a PLO development committee in which representatives of all Palestinian factions, including Hamas and Islamic Jihad, would also participate as part of its temporary leadership. According to the plan, this committee would provide a consensual vision to form a transitional national government at the end of 2019 that would operate until new elections are held. Thus, the period to work effectively on reconciliation would extend from October 2019 to July 2020. At this stage, measures such as the release of political prisoners would be taken and the parties would be urged to avoid incendiary speeches and not take steps such as those that the PA has taken against Gaza in the past, like salary cuts for officials. According to the plan, legislative, presidential, and Palestinian National Council elections will be held in mid-2020, following a review of the electoral laws. **The plan was framed and presented as a continuation of Egyptian efforts to mediate the dispute and, as reported, would start from the basis of some benchmarks present in previous reconciliation agreements** (in 2005, 2011 and 2017) that have not yet been implemented. The initiative also assumes recommendations to reconfigure the Palestinian National Council prepared in 2017 by the Beirut preparatory committee, in which all the PLO factions participated as observers, in addition to Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

Hamas gave public support to the initiative promoted by these eight factions. Meanwhile, Fatah leaders said that no new plans were needed to end the division and that Palestinian organisations should focus on pressuring Hamas to comply with the 2017 agreement and particularly to promptly restore control of the Gaza Strip to the PA. Some Palestinian analysts said that this proposal was late in coming and believed that it had little chance of being implemented, but at the same time they thought that Fatah and Hamas could not ignore it. Regardless of how it was evaluated by the eight Palestinian factions, at the end of the year there was rapprochement about holding Palestinian elections (the last ones took place in 2006). In November, Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh approved of the new elections called by the Palestinian president for 2020, with the understanding that the elections were not an end in themselves, but a way to navigate the current Palestinian crisis. Along these lines, he stressed the need for Abbas to call for a national dialogue to finish discussing the terms of the elections. Regardless of Hamas' approval, the media and analysts warned of other obstacles to the elections, since Abbas explained that the vote should take place in the West Bank and Gaza, but also in East Jerusalem, which in practice requires consent from Israel. In this regard, Haniyeh said that neither Fatah nor Hamas would accept East Jerusalem's exclusion from the elections.

Gender, peace and security

Palestinian women continued to mobilise to try to promote reconciliation between the Palestinian factions and to ensure that their skills and priorities in peace and security are taken into account.⁵ Thus, for example, during 2019 the Palestinian organisation MIFTAH presented an investigation on the reconstruction of Gaza from the perspective of women that underlines the importance of taking related resolutions such as Resolution 1325 into account and published a guide to promote female participation in peace efforts, with special emphasis on the search for intra-Palestinian reconciliation. This resource was intended to support the work of the WIFAQ women's shadow committee. Created in 2016 to develop a movement to promote reconciliation and the end of the intra-Palestinian political division, the WIFAQ committee is made up of women from Gaza and the West Bank that aims to influence both conflicting parties to foster rapprochement and expose the sufferings of those hit hardest by the division, especially women. The launch of a new Action Plan for Resolution 1325 was also planned. In line with the previous plan, it covers the period from 2017 to 2019 and aims to improve female participation in decision-making processes.

5. Ibid.

6. Both the Geneva Communiqué of 2012 and United Nations Security Council Resolution 2254 are reference documents for the negotiations, but neither has been signed by the parties to the conflict.

7. The capital of Kazakhstan, Astana, was renamed Nur-Sultan in March 2019 in honor of the country's first president, Nursultan Nazarbayev.

| Syria | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Negotiating actors | Government, sectors of the political and armed opposition |
| Third parties | UN, EU, USA, Russia, Turkey, Iran, International Syria Support Group (ISSG) |
| Relevant agreements | GGeneva Communiqué from the Action Group for Syria (2012); UNSC Resolution 2254 in support of the International Syria Support Group Roadmap for a Peace Process (Vienna Statements (2015)) ⁶ |

Summary:

Given the serious consequences of the armed conflict in Syria and amidst concern about the regional repercussions of the crisis, various regional and international actors have tried to facilitate a negotiated solution and commit the parties to a cessation of hostilities. However, regional actors' and international powers' different approaches to the conflict, together with an inability to reach consensus in the UN Security Council, have hindered the possibilities of opening the way to a political solution. After a brief and failed attempt by the Arab League, the UN took the lead in the mediation efforts, led by special envoys Kofi Annan (2012), Lakhdar Brahimi (2012-2014), Staffan de Mistura (2014-2018) and Geir Pedersen (since 2018). Other initiatives have come from the EU, United States, Russia and leaders of the International Syria Support Group (ISSG). In 2015, the ISSG peace talks in Vienna -led by Washington and Moscow and in which twenty countries and international organizations participated- resulted in a peace plan for Syria that was endorsed by Security Council resolution 2254 the ONU. As of 2017, in parallel to the UN-led Geneva process - which has included intra-Syrian talks promoted by De Mistura- a new channel began: the Russian-backed Astana process, which also involve Turkey and Iran. The various rounds of negotiations held since the beginning of the armed conflict have shown the deep differences between the parties and have not been able to halt the high levels of violence in the country.

In line with what has been observed in recent years, ceasefire agreements and negotiations related to the conflict in Syria were characterised by the prominent role and influence of the regional and international actors involved, thereby reflecting its internationalisation and complexity. This dynamic was evident both in mostly unsuccessful attempts at a truce aimed at halting the hostilities and creating "safe zones", as well as in the high-level diplomatic processes promoted by the UN (the Geneva process) and by Russia (the Astana/Nur-Sultan process),⁷ which offered some progress towards the end of the year. In general terms, however, **as has happened since the beginning of the conflict, the armed actors involved remained committed to a military solution during the year and at the end of 2019, scepticism reigned regarding the prospects of a negotiated peace.**

In the first months of the year, the clashes and the regime's intense, Moscow-backed offensive against opposition groups led by the armed organisation Hayat Tahir al-Sham

(HTS) on the northwestern front, particularly in Idlib, raised questions about the designation of the area as a “de-escalation area” in the agreement reached between Turkey and Russia in Sochi in September 2018. Ankara accused the Syrian government of boycotting the agreement. Although Turkey and Russia tried to discuss measures to reverse the escalation of violence and Moscow issued ceasefires, Russian forces continued with the attacks. The fragility of the “memorandum on stabilisation” reached in 2018 to curb the violence in this area was also evident in the many attacks on hospitals, even though they were identified as such as part of the mechanisms of de-escalation. Faced with the regime’s offensive in northwestern Syria, Turkey became more actively involved in support of related armed groups halfway through the year. Thus, in September Ankara reported an attack on a Turkish convoy in Hama governorate as a violation of the 2018 Sochi agreement and threatened to defend itself. In September, Russia and China vetoed a UN Security Council resolution that sought a ceasefire in Idlib. Moscow justified the decision by arguing that the resolution did not provide an exception for military operations against armed groups designated as terrorists by the UN.

On the northeastern front, meanwhile, negotiations between the US and Turkey began in January to establish what was termed a “safe zone” in the border area between Turkey and Syria, aimed at forcing the withdrawal of the Kurdish forces supported by Washington, the YPG, who lead the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). Ankara argued that the creation of this “safe zone” was Turkey’s right under the Adana Agreement signed with the Syrian government in 1998. This agreement would allow Syria to fight the PKK on Syrian soil and entitle Turkey to intervene militarily in Syria. Russia supported the proposal, while Bashar Assad’s regime warned that renewing this agreement between Turkey and Syria depended on Ankara ceasing to support Syrian opposition groups and withdrawing its forces from northwestern Syria.

Contacts between Turkey and the US resulted in an agreement in June providing for the withdrawal of Kurdish forces to a future “safe zone” and the launch of joint patrols in September. However, the situation in the area changed dramatically in October, when the Trump administration decided to withdraw from Syria, leaving its Kurdish allies at Turkey’s mercy. In early October, Ankara launched an intense armed offensive in the area. Ankara issued an ultimatum to the YPG to retreat to a strip 30 kilometres from the Turko-Syrian border. Meanwhile, Washington announced that it would keep forces in Syria to protect the oil fields under control of the SDF. Before their abandonment by the US, Kurdish forces approached the Syrian regime again with the intention of curbing the Turkish attack and engaged in negotiations with Russia, which led to the deployment of Russian and Syrian government forces in northeastern Syria for the first time in years. As part of an agreement between Putin and

Erdogan, Russia and Turkey began joint patrols in the area at the end of October. In mid-2018 the political arm of the SDF, the Syrian Democratic Council (SDC), had meetings with the Damascus regime, including a meeting between a delegation led by the leader Ilham Ehmed and a high representative of the regime, Ali Mamlouk, but these talks did not continue in part because of US objections to direct negotiations between Kurds and Damascus. The US may have influenced the Kurdish forces to attempt an agreement with Turkish-backed opposition groups, despite their involvement in the Afrin campaign, but they refused and subsequently supported Ankara’s offensive. Following the US withdrawal, the SDC reportedly tried to negotiate with the government using its control of oil fields as a bargaining chip on the condition that Shia militias leave the country, which according to some analysts are regarded with increasing annoyance by Moscow.

The most significant activities of the high-level diplomatic processes established to seek a political solution to the Syrian conflict, at least formally, took place towards the end of the year. The process promoted by Russia, Turkey and Iran held some meetings during the year, involving the Syrian regime and some opposition groups. One such meeting took place at the Sochi resort in February, after which Moscow defended the inevitability of the military offensive against HTS in Idlib,

while another was held in Nur-Sultan in April, where the “guarantor countries of Astana” condemned the Trump administration’s decision to recognise Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights in March, occupied since the Arab-Israeli war in 1967, in line with the criticism from the Syrian regime and the Arab League. These meetings in Sochi and Nur-Sultan did not yield concrete results regarding the negotiations over Syria and it was not until September that some developments occurred. Meeting in Ankara, the governments of **Turkey, Iran and Russia ratified their commitment to the Sochi agreement of September 2018 and signed a joint communiqué announcing the establishment of a Constitutional Committee as part of the Geneva process** for the purpose of drafting a new Constitution for Syria. The 14th meeting under this format, held in December, addressed the situation in Idlib (the target of an intense military offensive by Damascus and Moscow at the end of the year) and Israeli strikes in Syria, among other issues. At the same time, it emerged that Turkey and Russia were considering a model similar to that of Astana/Nur-Sultan for the conflict in Libya.

The Geneva process was led by the UN special envoy for Syria, Geir Pedersen, following the resignation of Staffan de Mistura in late 2018, who had held the position since 2014. The Norwegian diplomat made his first visit to Syria in January and one month later announced the five objectives to which he wanted the Syrian, regional and international actors involved in the dispute to commit. These included: 1) to initiate and deepen a sustained dialogue with the Syrian government and opposition to build trust in order to establish a calm, safe and neutral

During 2019, various mostly unsuccessful initiatives were deployed to halt hostilities and reduce violence in Syria

environment; 2) to take more concrete action on people detained, disappeared and kidnapped through the commitment of the guarantors of the Astana/Nur-Sultan process, Syrian actors and others; 3) to involve a large number of Syrian people and to emphasise their role in the process; 4) to convene a credible, balanced and inclusive Constitutional Committee as soon as possible; and 5) to help different international actors to delve further in their own dialogue with a view to reaching a sustainable and internationally legitimate political agreement for the Syrian conflict. In the months that followed, Pedersen met with communities of refugees and internally displaced persons, with representatives of civil society and with the Syrian Women's Advisory Board, created during De Mistura's term of office. The UN special envoy also attended the meetings of the guarantors of Astana in April and May and met with Small Group on Syria, consisting of Egypt, France, Germany, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom and the United States. In March, the UN and the EU also held the third international conference on the future of Syria and the region in Brussels.

In this context, the special envoy reported few results regarding prisoners (in July, 21 people arrested by the government and armed opposition groups were released simultaneously) and efforts in September that resulted in an agreement on forming the Constitutional Committee, considered the first political agreement between the disputing parties that should theoretically begin implementation of the road map adopted in 2012, which was also supported by UN Security Council Resolution 2254 in 2015. The idea of the Constitutional Committee was floated by Moscow during a meeting in Sochi in January 2018. **The Constitutional Committee consists of 150 people: 50 loyal to the Syrian regime, 50 members of the opposition, mostly from groups supported by Turkey and Saudi Arabia and 50 civil society representatives selected by the UN.** Nearly 30% of the commission's representatives are women. The civil society representatives caused much of the delay in forming the committee due to disagreements between regional powers about who should be a representative and objections to the people proposed by the UN, mainly by the Syrian regime. Each delegation included Kurdish representatives (there are seven in total in the commission), but there were no representatives from the SDF or YPG, as in previous rounds of the Geneva process, due to Turkey's veto over its links with the PKK. The opposition delegation brought together five dissident platforms and was led by Hadi al-Bahra. The pro-government group was headed by Ahmad Kuzbari. Pedersen acted as the supervisor of the process, while al-Bahra and Kuzbari served as co-chairs.

The Committee held its first round in Geneva in late October. A code of conduct was adopted, along with rules of procedure for the co-chairs, and each of the

delegations appointed 15 people to form a subcommittee responsible for preparing a draft of the Constitution that will be submitted to the committee for approval, ideally by consensus or by a majority of at least 75%. The Committee's first task was to define a common agenda that would allow the subcommittee to develop constitutional principles. However, the second round of contacts concluded in late November without agreement. The opposition accused the government delegation of rejecting its proposed agenda on at least five occasions and of attempting to address issues unrelated to constitutional reform.

The Constitutional Committee was presented as a milestone for committing the representatives of the warring parties to direct talks for the first time in five years, and for involving civil society in the negotiations for the first time. However, several factors boosted scepticism about its possible outcomes among analysts, diplomats and observers. One was the Syrian regime's increasing distance from the Geneva process as the formation of the committee drew near. In statements to the media, Bashar Assad said that Damascus

was not part of the negotiations, that the pro-government delegation represented its interests, but had no power to compel the government, and that its participation in the committee did not imply recognition of the other parties. Assad also expressed a clear preference for the Astana/Nur-Sultan process led by Russia. Another factor was the disagreement between civil society representatives and the weak opposition delegation, which has little influence on the ground and does not include key actors, such as the YPG. Media reports stressed that the opposition is under intense pressure to lower their demands. A third factor is the high threshold established for agreements in the committee, which makes it difficult to reach a consensus. Beyond these assessments of the committee's prospects, various analysts agreed that the Assad regime has little incentive to compromise and make concessions in a political process to address the conflict, taking its military strength into account. Thus, it has been suggested that the Syrian regime did not participate in any of the previous rounds of the Geneva process with a real intention to negotiate, but merely to show a formal commitment to a potential political agreement while intensifying its brutal military offensive.

However, some analysts stress that Russia is not in a position to take on the reconstruction of Syria after the conflict and that a potential Western commitment to provide financial support or lift sanctions depends on whether the Assad regime makes certain promises and progress with regard to the Geneva process. Thus, Pedersen acknowledged that the committee would not resolve the conflict alone, but was hopeful that it could open the door to a broader political process and that it be accompanied by some confidence-building measures, such as the release of women and children detained by

the parties. Other analysts pointed out that despite its flaws, the Geneva process is the only forum that currently brings together all the actors involved in the conflict.

Gender, peace and security

As mentioned above, the special envoy for Syria held several meetings with the Syrian Women’s Advisory Board in 2019. At these meetings, the Syrian Women’s Advisory Board echoed civil society organisations’ demand that women should account for at least 30% of the participants in political decision-making on the future of Syria, including the Constitutional Committee. It also said that the constitutional process should guarantee and advance women’s rights and noted the Syrian people’s lack of confidence in the political process, mentioning the Geneva process in recent years. In this context, the Constitutional Committee was set up in late October with almost 30% female representatives. Pedersen said the UN had pressed to guarantee this minimum threshold of representation. Sabah al Hallak, of the Syrian Women’s League, hailed it as a step forward to increase women’s participation in formal political spaces. One of the members of the civil society delegation, the academic Samira Moubayed, said that any future democracy in Syria needed to recognise and respect the human rights of men and women and asserted that Syrian women would eventually press for 50% representation in all areas of political decision-making. Moubayed also warned that there is still a lack of awareness about the importance of having women in these spaces. Other prominent Syrian activists have stressed the issue, including Fadwa Mahmoud, of the Families for Freedom association. During an event held in 2019, the activist talked about her experience after being invited to participate in the advisory committee for negotiations attached to the High Negotiations Committee opposition platform in 2016 and her disappointment at the limited or non-existent role and influence of the 12 women participating, herself included, who had no chance to discuss her cause on prisoners and detainees in Syria.

Aside from formal high-level spaces, Syrian women continued to work for peace in a wide spectrum of fields. Their various initiatives included one created by the Syrian Women’s Political Movement, established in 2017, to demand significant female participation in political processes. The organisation conducted a series of meetings between December 2018 and March 2019 in eight locations in Syria and with the diaspora, with the support of the international organisation WILPF. As a result of the meetings, the movement produced three documents with recommendations for sustainable peace in Syria in three main spheres: the Constitution, return and reconstruction.

The movement demands a democratic Constitution with a gender perspective and based on the values of freedom, dignity, participation and equality. It insists

that the voices of women must be considered both in the process and the content of the new Constitution and states that during the consultation process, a “feminist human rights manifesto” was created based on the principles to be promoted in the new Constitution, which focus on gender discrimination. The second document is a feminist road map to ensure a safe, voluntary and sustainable return for both refugees and internally displaced persons. The organisation denounces that the regime and its allies are using the issue of the displaced population’s return as a negotiating instrument for narrow political and geostrategic interests and underlines that any return will only be possible as part of a political transition process with active transitional justice mechanisms and a neutral body that guarantees the returning people’s safety. The third document is aimed at the challenge of rebuilding the country after nearly a decade of devastating armed conflict and asserts that the regime is using reconstruction to secure its material gains and to continue its war on the opposition by marginalising and excluding dissent. Therefore, reconstruction must prioritise public infrastructure and services, identify the needs and capabilities of men, women and young people, promote an active role for women and be subject to monitoring and accountability mechanisms, among other actions.

The Gulf

| Iran (nuclear programme) | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Negotiating actors | Iran, P4+1 (France, United Kingdom, Russia and China plus Germany), EU |
| Third parties | UN, France, Japan, Oman |
| Relevant agreements | Joint Plan of Action (provisional agreement, 2013), Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (2015) |

Summary:

Under scrutiny by the international community since 2002, the Iranian nuclear programme has become one of the main sources of tension between Iran and the West, particularly affecting Iran’s relationship with the United States and Israel. After more than a decade of negotiations, and despite the fact that various proposals were made to resolve the conflict, the parties failed to reach an agreement and remained almost unchanged in their positions. The US, Israel and several European countries remained distrustful of Tehran and convinced of the military objectives of its atomic programme, whilst Iran continued to insist that its nuclear activities were strictly for civilian purposes and in conformance with international regulations. In this context, the Iranian atomic programme continued to develop whilst the UN Security Council, US and EU imposed sanctions on Iran and threats of military action were made, mainly by Israel. Iran’s change of government in 2013 favoured substantive talks on nuclear issues, facilitated new rounds of negotiations and led to the signing of agreements aimed at halting the Iranian atomic programme in exchange for lifting the sanctions. Negotiations on the Iranian nuclear programme have been met with resistance by Israel, certain countries such as Saudi Arabia and groups in the United States in a context marked by historical distrust, questions of sovereignty and national pride, disparate geopolitical and strategic interests, regional struggles and more.

The prospects for implementing the deal on the Iranian nuclear programme, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), signed in 2015, continued to deteriorate. While the process was affected by the US decision to withdraw from the agreement in 2018, **Tehran gradually distanced itself from some of the commitments it had made in the deal in 2019. As the US extended its policy of imposing unilateral sanctions against Iran, a series of incidents occurred in the Gulf area, in Yemen and in Iraq, among other places, that led to a volatile scenario dangerously supportive of military escalation between Washington and Tehran.** During the year, the Iranian regime tried to step up pressure on countries that remained committed to the deal after the United States' withdrawal, known as P4+1 (France, the United Kingdom, China, Russia and Germany)⁸ in order to alleviate the impact of the economic sanctions imposed by Washington. Thus, after the US withdrew exemptions that had until then allowed several countries to continue importing Iranian oil, Tehran issued a 60-day ultimatum in May and threatened to increase uranium enrichment. In July, it emerged that Iran had exceeded the enriched uranium reserves allowed by the JCPOA and a new ultimatum was issued, warning against fresh violations of the agreement. In the months that followed, these threats resulted in Iran lifting the limits on nuclear research and development and activating the centrifuges in the Fordow plant (south of Tehran). While early in the year the IAEA had confirmed Iran's compliance with what was agreed in the JCPOA (in line with previous evaluations since the agreement was signed) in November it warned that the country had accumulated more heavy water than the expected limit in the deal and complained that Tehran had prevented one of its inspectors from temporarily leaving the country.

The EU and the European countries involved in the agreement rejected Iran's successive ultimatums and at the end of the year warned of the possibility of activating the dispute resolution mechanism provided for in the JCPOA, which could lead to new sanctions on the Islamic Republic. Iran warned that if this mechanism were put in place, it would reconsider its commitments to the UN in nuclear matters. Steps were taken to implement a European instrument to facilitate trade with Iran to avoid US sanctions in 2019, called the Instrument for Supporting Trade Exchanges (INSTEX). Promoted by France, the United Kingdom and Germany (E3), six other countries (Belgium, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden) joined in November. However, in December Iran expressed frustration that no specific agreement had been produced under this mechanism. At the same time, throughout 2019 the US extended sanctions against the Islamic Republic, including against the supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, and in April Washington listed the Islamic Revolutionary

Guard Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist organisation. In response, Tehran blacklisted the US Central Command for the Middle East and Central Asia (CENTCOM). **The Iranian government insisted that the US lift the sanctions as a precondition for future talks.**

During the year, mediation and facilitation efforts were attempted by various actors. Oman, which has good relations with both Washington and Tehran, tried to help to de-escalate the tension at critical times. For example, media outlets reported that the Omani foreign minister visited Iran shortly after the US secretary of state had a telephone conversation with the sultan of Oman in May. France also tried to promote a de-escalation agreement and encouraged rapprochement during the G-7 summit in Biarritz (August) and the UN General Assembly in New York (September). France suggested a schedule of steps to which Iran and the US should commit, but its prospects were slowed down by the outbreak of protests in Iran. In December, Japan, which had already tried to mediate in June, attempted to recover the French initiative and there was also an exchange of prisoners released by Iran and the US in Zurich.⁹ At the end of the year, however, the escalating tension between Tehran and Washington, which was mainly caused by the rise in Iranian attacks against US bases and interests in Iraq and by US attacks against pro-Iranian targets in Iraq, including an attack in Baghdad that claimed the life of Iranian General Qassem Suleimani in early January 2020, led analysts to warn of possible effects on the continuity of the JCPOA. These analysts also suggested ways to save the agreement, such as the intervention of a mutually acceptable third party, like Oman, to de-escalate the conflict, as well as more determined European involvement.¹⁰

| Yemen | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Negotiating actors | Government of Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi, Houthis/Ansar Allah, Southern Transitional Council, Saudi Arabia |
| Third parties | UN, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia |
| Relevant agreements | Stockholm Agreement (2018), Riyadh Agreement (2019) |

Summary:

The source of several conflicts in recent decades, Yemen began a difficult transition in 2011 after the revolts that forced Ali Abdullah Saleh to step down as president after more than 30 years in office. The eventful aftermath led to a rebellion by Houthi forces and former President Saleh against the transitional government presided over by Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi, who was forced to flee in early 2015. In March 2015, an international coalition led by Saudi Arabia decided to intervene militarily in the country in support of the deposed government. Since then, levels of violence in the conflict have escalated. Given this turn of

8. After the US withdrew from the pact in 2018, the group of countries that were previously known as "P5+1" (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, plus Germany) became known as "P4+1".
 9. International Crisis Group, *The Iran Nuclear Deal at Four: A Requiem?*, ICG, Middle East and North Africa Report no. 2010, 16 January 2020.
 10. Ibid

events, the United Nations, which has been involved in the country since the beginning of the transition, has tried to promote a political solution to the conflict, joined by some regional and international actors. Despite these initiatives, the meetings were unsuccessful, and the talks have been at an impasse since mid-2016. It was not until late 2018 that meetings between the parties resumed and led to the signature of the Stockholm Agreement at the end of that year, arousing cautious expectations about the possibilities of a political solution to the conflict. The hostilities have significantly worsened the security and humanitarian situation in the country.

The difficulties in implementing the Stockholm Agreement signed in December 2018 were evident throughout 2019. Although some events that encouraged some optimism about the prospects for a peace process in Yemen took place in the last quarter of the year, scepticism remained high at the end of the year due to the lack of progress in the promises made by the parties and to the uncertain impact of growing regional tensions on the country, and particularly the crisis between Iran and the US that sharpened significantly at the end of the year. **In the opening months of 2019, the problems in implementing the provisions of the Stockholm Agreement became clear.** Promoted by the UN, the agreement defined three issues: a ceasefire and demilitarisation of the port of Al Hudaydah and two other minor ports (Ras Issa and Saleef), a prisoner swap and the formation of a committee to de-escalate tension in the Ta'iz area. Inspired by the urgent need to avoid aggravating the humanitarian crisis in the country and to help to lift the blockade on Al Hudaydah, the agreement was conceived as a first step that could possibly lead to future negotiations to solve the Yemeni conflict. However, several analysts pointed out that the vague wording of the agreement influenced the parties to focus on its interpretation in the months that followed, especially with regard to Al Hudaydah.

The agreement gave rise to the formation and deployment of a truce monitoring force by the UN called the United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA). However, the internationally recognised government of Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi and the Houthis (Ansar Allah) continued to disagree about the security forces that would assume control of the area and the extent of the withdrawal. Amidst a climate of pressure on UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and efforts to publicly censor the Houthis, particularly from the United States, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the diplomat asked the Houthis

to withdraw unilaterally from Al Hudaydah as a sign of goodwill. The Houthis agreed in May, which won them praise from both Griffiths and the head of the UNMHA, General Michael Anker Lollersgaard (Denmark). Anti-Houthi groups, however, said that they had only changed the name of some of their forces and still controlled the ports. This sparked a wave of accusations of bias against Griffiths from Hadi, who even temporarily refused to speak with the UN special envoy. According to some analysts, the Hadi government is suspicious of the agreement in general and fears that the UN approach legitimises the Houthis' territorial control.¹¹ Moreover, the Houthi withdrawal took place alongside an intensification of the group's attacks against Saudi Arabia, which reduced the potential positive impact of the withdrawal and further encouraged accusations that the Houthis are acting as pawns of Iran in the area. In fact, the US insisted during the year that it viewed all the Houthis' actions as backed by Iran.¹²

In this context, international pressure on Hadi prevented the derailment of the process and led to new talks between the UN special envoy and representatives of the Hadi government to discuss the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement. Meanwhile, the UAE, which provides key support for southern Yemeni forces and was about to launch a large-scale attack against the Houthis in Al Hudaydah in 2018, decided to withdraw the troops it maintained on Yemen's Red Sea coast and the heavy weapons it kept at Al Hudaydah in July. The scope of this withdrawal was considered key to reducing the immediate possibilities of a major battle in the port. In the following months, the negotiations on security in Al Hudaydah remained at a standstill due to the disagreements between Houthi representatives and the Hadi government in the Redeployment

Coordination Committee. The only progress reported involved the release of prisoners, for example, entailing the unconditional release of some 300 detainees by the Houthis in late September. At this time of the year, the dynamics in Yemen were determined by two main issues. Firstly, by the escalation of violence between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis, particularly after an attack on Saudi oil facilities in September for which they claimed responsibility, but which Washington and Riyadh blamed on Iran. Secondly, by the intensification of disputes in the anti-Houthi side, which in August led to an open struggle over Aden between Hadi's forces and southern separatist groups united under the Southern Transitional Council (STC). The fighting went on for several months until the parties reached an agreement following mediation by Saudi Arabia.

In November, the Hadi government and southern separatist groups signed the Riyadh Agreement in order to de-escalate the conflict on the anti-Houthi side and avoid a new war within the Yemeni armed conflict

11. International Crisis Group, *Saving the Stockholm Agreement and Averting a Regional Conflagration in Yemen*, ICG Middle East Report no.203, 18 July 2019.

12. See the summary on the armed conflict in Yemen in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2020! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2020.

After holding talks in Jeddah, **on 5 November the Hadi government and the STC signed the Riyadh Agreement in the Saudi capital, conceived as a formula to avoid a new war within the Yemeni armed conflict.** The key points of the agreement include the formation of a 24-member government based in Aden made up of representatives from the north and south in equal numbers, the inclusion of STC forces in Yemeni military and security structures and the withdrawal of heavy weapons from cities in the southern part of the country. The agreement also provides for the inclusion of STC delegates in government delegations in future rounds of talks promoted by the UN to define the country's political future. In November, Kuwait offered to host negotiations promoted by the United Nations. Some analysts said that this agreement would allow for a more inclusive peace process in greater tune with the complexity of the actors operating in Yemen, since the agreement fostered by the UN in December 2018 had only favoured a deal between two of the parties to the conflict.¹³ The UN special envoy hailed Saudi Arabia's initiative and the Riyadh Agreement as a fact that encouraged optimism and expectations about a Yemeni leadership more prone to concessions and peace. **Griffiths also highlighted the reduction in the levels of violence in the conflict following the Houthis' announcement on 20 September that they were suspending their attacks on Saudi Arabia and the reduction of Saudi attacks on Yemeni soil.** According to UN data, in the last two weeks of November there were 80% less air attacks in the country than in the previous two weeks and 48-hour periods without air strikes were identified for the first time since the escalation of violence in 2015.¹⁴ Oman, which has been trying to promote a communication channel between the Houthis and representatives of Riyadh since 2015, facilitated contacts between the parties in September in order to address specific issues, such as the end of Houthi attacks against Saudi Arabia, the reopening of the Sana'a airport and the creation of a safe zone along the Yemeni-Saudi border area under Houthi control.

However, at the end of the year, the balance sheets and prospects were less optimistic. **In December, one year after its adoption, Griffiths said that the Stockholm Agreement had allowed for some humanitarian progress, but discussions about the demilitarisation of the port of Al Hudaydah persisted.** The diplomat also expressed his disappointment about the lack of progress in the exchange of prisoners, despite reports that 60 Houthis and 75 pro-government prisoners had been swapped in December. Even so, informal talks between Riyadh and the Houthis to de-escalate in the border area continued. Media outlets reported that implementation of the Riyadh Agreement was slow and that several deadlines had passed, including the one-month deadline set to form a government with the same number of northern and southern representatives, without the parties

reaching an agreement. Analysts stressed that the deadlines were ambitious and warned of the fragility of the security situation in southern Yemen. Thus, on 1 January 2020, spokesmen for the southern separatist movement announced their withdrawal from the joint committees responsible for implementing the agreement in protest against acts of violence reported in Shabwah governorate, which the STC and UAE blamed on the Islamist party Islah, a key player in the Hadi government. Tehran rejected the deal between the Hadi government and the STC, claiming that it promoted the Saudi occupation of Yemen. A few days after it was signed, Tehran recognised a senior Houthi representative as Yemen's ambassador to Iran. Some analysts said that this was intended to strengthen Tehran's relationship with the Houthis since, according to Iran's calculations, a unilateral Saudi withdrawal as a result of friction in the anti-Houthi camp would be preferable to a peace agreement led by Riyadh.

Gender, peace and security

Through various initiatives, Yemeni women claimed a role in resolving the conflict and defining the political future of their country. Thus, for example, early in the year, Yemeni activists took advantage of the United Nations' Universal Periodic Review (UPR) on Yemen to demand to be heard. The occasion gave visibility to the recommendations made by six Yemeni human rights organisations gathered under the umbrella of the Yemeni Women's Solidarity Network, with the support of the international organisation WILPF, as revealed in December 2018. Their recommendations included the urgent need to improve humanitarian assistance and social services, end sexual and gender-based violence, halt arbitrary detention and forced disappearance, prevent the proliferation of weapons and explosives, stop the use of child soldiers and ensure significant participation in public and political life. In this regard, they insisted on a minimum threshold of 30% women, in line with the promises made after the National Dialogue Conference (2014). The UN-sponsored peace negotiations for Yemen that resulted in the Stockholm Agreement in December 2018 involved only one woman, Rana Ghanem, in the delegation of the Hadi government (representing 4% of all negotiators).

The group of Yemeni women who act as technical advisors to the UN special envoy for Yemen was also active in 2019, within the framework of the Technical Advisory Group, created in 2018. Meanwhile, meetings of Yemeni women were held with the intention of giving visibility to their views on the conflict and encourage their participation in the peace process. Thus, for example, in March, UN Women promoted a "Mediators for Peace" conference that brought together 100 Yemeni women

13. Peter Salisbury, *The Beginning of the End of Yemen's Civil War?*, Commentary, International Crisis Group, 5 November 2019.

14. OESGY, *Briefing of the Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary General for Yemen to the Open Session of the UN Security Council*, 22 November 2019.

in Amman (Jordan) and was attended by Griffiths. During the two-day meeting, the participants discussed women's role in peacebuilding in Yemen, while the UN envoy stressed the need to ensure greater female representation in future formal talks. In late October, women from the Technical Advisory Group and another 20 women from Yemen and the diaspora met again in Amman as part of a negotiating process organised by the office of the UN special envoy to collect women's perspectives on the necessary political and security agreements in Yemen, as well as their priorities for the agenda of a potential transition.

Additionally, Yemeni women gathered in spaces facilitated by civil society organisations. Thus, for example, in July

several Yemeni leaders met in Amman in a five-day meeting to reflect on a feminist peace process in the country, in an event promoted by the Yemeni Peace Track Initiative and WILPF in collaboration with the Clingendael Institute, the Dutch Institute of International Relations, the NGO MADRE and the office of the UN special envoy. A total of 36 women from the north and south of the country and from the diaspora shared information, identified training needs, received tools to improve negotiating skills, shared concerns with diplomats and representatives of international agencies working in Yemen and reflected on issues such as opportunities for and obstacles to formal negotiations, lessons on local peace experiences and challenges on issues such as the release of prisoners and the issue of southern Yemen.

Annex 1. Summary of armed conflicts in 2019¹

| Conflict ² -beginning- | Type ³ | Main parties ⁴ | Intensity ⁵ |
|--|---------------------------------|---|------------------------|
| | | | Trend ⁶ |
| Africa | | | |
| Algeria -1992- | Internationalised internal | Government, armed groups AQIM (formerly GSPC), MUJAO, al-Mourabitoun, Jund al-Khilafa (branch of ISIS), ISIS, governments of North Africa and the Sahel | 1 |
| | System | | End |
| Burundi -2015- | Internationalised internal | Government, Imbonerakure Youth branch, political party CNDD-FDD, political party CNL, armed groups RED-TABARA, FPB (previously FOREBU), FNL | 1 |
| | Government | | ↑ |
| Cameroon (Ambazonia/ North West and South West) -2018- | Internationalised internal | Government of Cameroon, self-proclaimed Interim Government of Ambazonia, the armed groups ADF, SCACUF, SOCADEF and SCDF and dozens of smaller militias | 3 |
| | Self-government, Identity | | ↑ |
| CAR -2006- | Internationalised internal | Government, rebel groups of the former coalition Séléka (FPRC, RPRC, MPC, UPC, MLCJ), anti-balaka militias, 3R militia, LRA armed Ugandan group, other local and foreign armed groups, France, MINUSCA, EUFOR | 2 |
| | Government, Resources | | ↓ |
| DRC (east) -1998- | Internationalised internal | Government, FDLR, factions of the FDLR, Mai-Mai militias, Nyatura, APCLS, NDC-R, Ituri armed groups, Burundian armed opposition group FNL, Rwanda, MONUSCO | 2 |
| | Government, Identity, Resources | | = |
| DRC (east – ADF) -2014- | Internationalised internal | Government of DRC, Government of Uganda, Mai-Mai militias, armed opposition group ADF, MONUSCO | 2 |
| | System, Resources | | ↑ |
| DRC (Kasai) -2017- | Internal | Government, various ethnic militias (Bana Mura, Kamwina Nsapu) | 1 |
| | Government, Identity | | End |
| Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram) - 2011- | Internationalised internal | Government of Nigeria, Boko Haram (BH), Boko Haram-ISWAP, Boko Haram-Abubakar Shekau, civilian militias, MNJTF regional force (Benin, Niger, Nigeria, Cameroon and Chad) | 3 |
| | System | | ↑ |

1. Table from Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2020! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2020.
2. This column includes the states in which armed conflicts are taking place, specifying in brackets the region within each state to which the crisis is confined or the name of the armed group involved in the conflict. This last option is used in cases involving more than one armed conflict in the same state or in the same territory within a state, for the purpose of distinguishing them.
3. This report classifies and analyses armed conflicts using two criteria: on the one hand, the causes or clashes of interests and, on the other hand, the convergence between the scenario of conflict and the actors involved. The following main causes can be distinguished: demands for self-determination and self-government (Self-government) or identity aspirations (Identity); opposition to the political, economic, social or ideological system of a state (System) or the internal or international policies of a government (Government), which in both cases produces a struggle to take or erode power; or the struggle for the control of resources (Resources) or territory (Territory). In respect of the second type, the armed conflicts may be of an internal, Internationalised internal or international nature. An internal armed conflict is defined as a conflict involving armed actors from the same state who operate exclusively within the territory of this state. Secondly, an internationalised internal armed conflict is defined as that in which at least one of the parties involved is foreign and/or in which the tension spills over into the territory of neighbouring countries. Another factor taken into account in order to consider an armed conflict as internationalised internal is the existence of military bases of armed groups in neighbouring countries (in connivance with these countries) from which attacks are launched. Finally, an international conflict is one in which state and non-state parties from two or more countries confront each other. It should also be taken into account that most current armed conflicts have a significant regional or international dimension and influence due, among other factors, to flows of refugees, the arms trade, economic or political interests (such as legal or illegal exploitation of resources) that the neighbouring countries have in the conflict, the participation of foreign combatants or the logistical and military support provided by other states.
4. This column shows the actors that intervene directly in the hostilities. The main actors who participate directly in the conflicts are made up of a mixture of regular or irregular armed parties. The conflicts usually involve the government, or its armed forces, fighting against one or several armed opposition groups, but can also involve other irregular groups such as clans, guerrillas, warlords, armed groups in opposition to each other or militias from ethnic or religious communities. Although they most frequently use conventional weapons, and more specifically small arms (which cause most deaths in conflicts), in many cases other methods are employed, such as suicide attacks, bombings and sexual violence and even hunger as a weapon of war. There are also other actors who do not directly participate in the armed activities but who nevertheless have a significant influence on the conflict.
5. The intensity of an armed conflict (high, medium or low) and its trend (escalation of violence, reduction of violence, unchanged) are evaluated mainly on the basis of how deadly it is (number of fatalities) and according to its impact on the population and the territory. Moreover, there are other aspects worthy of consideration, such as the systematisation and frequency of the violence or the complexity of the military struggle (complexity is normally related to the number and fragmentation of the actors involved, to the level of institutionalisation and capacity of the state, and to the degree of internationalisation of the conflict, as well as to the flexibility of objectives and to the political will of the parties to reach agreements). As such, high-intensity armed conflicts are usually defined as those that cause over 1,000 fatalities per year, as well as affecting a significant proportion of the territory and population, and involving several actors (who forge alliances, confront each other or establish a tactical coexistence). Medium and low intensity conflicts, with over 100 fatalities per year, have the aforementioned characteristics but with a more limited presence and scope. An armed conflict is considered ended when a significant and sustained reduction in armed hostilities occurs, whether due to a military victory, an agreement between the actors in conflict, demobilisation by one of the parties, or because one of the parties abandons or significantly scales down the armed struggle as a strategy to achieve certain objectives. None of these options necessarily mean that the underlying causes of the armed conflict have been overcome. Nor do they exclude the possibility of new outbreaks of violence. The temporary cessation of hostilities, whether formal or tacit, does not necessarily imply the end of the armed conflict.
6. This column compares the trend of the events of 2019 with those that of 2018. The escalation of violence symbol (↑) indicates that the general situation in 2019 has been more serious than in the previous year; the reduction of violence symbol (↓) indicates an improvement in the situation; and the unchanged (=) symbol indicates that no significant changes have taken place.ict.

| Conflict -beginning- | Type | Main parties | Intensity |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|-----------|
| | | | Trend |
| Africa | | | |
| Libya -2011- | Internationalised internal | Government of National Accord with headquarters in Tripoli, government with headquarters in Tobruk/Bayda, numerous armed groups including the Libyan National Army (LNA), militias from Misrata, Petroleum Facilities Guard, Benghazi Defence Brigades (BDB), ISIS, AQIM, mercenaries; USA, France, UK, Egypt, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Turkey, Qatar, Russia, among other countries | 3 |
| | Government, Resources, System | | ↑ |
| Mali -2012- | Internationalised internal | Government, CMA (MNLA, MAA faction, CPA, HCUA), Platform (GATIA, CMPFPR, MAA faction), MSA, Ansar Dine, MUJAO, AQIM, MRRA, al-Mourabitoun, JNIM/GSIM, Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), Islamic State in the West Africa Province (ISWAP), Katiba Macina, MINUSMA, France (Operation Barkhane), G5-Sahel Joint Force (Mauritania, Chad, Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso) | 3 |
| | System, Self-government, Identity | | ↑ |
| Mozambique (North) -2019- | Internationalised internal | Government, Ahlu Sunnah Wa-Jama (ASWJ), russian mercenaries (Wagner Group) | 2 |
| | System, Identity | | ↑ |
| Somalia -1988- | Internationalised internal | Federal government, pro-government regional forces, Somaliland, Puntland, clan militias and warlords, Ahlu Sunna wal Jama'a, USA, France, Ethiopia, AMISOM, EUNAVFOR Somalia, Operation Ocean Shield, al-Shabaab | 3 |
| | Government, System | | = |
| South Sudan -2009- | Internationalised internal | Government (SPLM/A), SPLM/A-in Opposition armed group (faction of former vice president, Riek Machar), dissident factions of the SPLA-IO led by Peter Gatdet and Gathoth Gatkuoth, SPLM-FD, SSLA, SSDM/A, SSDM-CF, SSNLM, REMNASA, NAS, SSUF (Paul Malong), SSDA, communal militias (SSPPF, TFN, White Army, Shilluk Agwelek), Sudan Revolutionary Front armed coalition (SRF, composed of JEM, SLA-AW, SLA-MM and SPLM-N), Sudan, Uganda, UNMISS | 3 |
| | Government, Resources, Identity | | ↓ |
| Sudan (Darfur) -2003- | Internationalised internal | Government, PDF pro-government militias, RSF paramilitary unit, pro-government militias <i>janjaweed</i> , Sudan Revolutionary Front armed coalition (SRF, composed of JEM, SLA-AW, SLA-MM and SPLM-N), several SLA factions, other groups, UNAMID | 1 |
| | Self-government, Resources, Identity | | ↓ |
| Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile) -2011- | Internationalised internal | Government, armed group SPLM-N, Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF) armed coalition, PDF pro-government militias, Rapid Support Forces (RSF) paramilitary unit, South Sudan | 1 |
| | Self-government, Resources, Identity | | ↓ |
| Western Sahel Region -2018- | International | Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, G5-Sahel Joint Force (Mauritania, Chad, Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso), Joint Task Force for Liptako-Gourma Region (Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso), MINUSMA, France (Operation Barkhane), USA, Group of Support for Islam and Muslims (GSIM), Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), Macina Liberation Front (FML), Ansaroul Islam, other jihadist groups | 3 |
| | System, Resources, Identity | | ↑ |
| America | | | |
| Colombia -1964- | Internationalised internal | Government, ELN, FARC (dissidents), EPL, paramilitary groups | 1 |
| | System | | ↑ |
| Asia | | | |
| Afghanistan -2001- | Internationalised internal | Government, international coalition (led by USA), NATO, Taliban militias, warlords, ISIS (ISIS-KP) | 3 |
| | System | | ↑ |
| India (CPI-M) -1967- | Internal | Government, CPI-M (Naxalites) | 1 |
| | System | | = |
| India (Jammu and Kashmir) -1989- | Internationalised internal | Government, JKLF, Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT), Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, United Jihad Council, All Parties Hurriyat Conference | 2 |
| | Self-government, Identity | | ↑ |
| Myanmar -1948- | Internationalised internal | Government, armed groups (Ceasefire signatories: ABSDF, ALP, CNF, DKBA, KNU, KNU/KNLA-PC, PNLO, RCSS, NMSP, LDU; Non-signatories: KIA, NDAA, MNDAA, SSPP/SSA, TNLA, AA, UWSA, ARSA, KNPP) | 1 |
| | Self-government, Identity | | = |
| Pakistan -2001- | Internationalised internal | Government, Armed Forces, intelligence services, Taliban militias, international militias, USA | 2 |
| | System | | ↓ |
| Pakistan (Balochistan) -2005- | Internal | Government, Armed Forces, intelligence services, BLA, BRP, BRA, BLF and BLT, civil society, LeJ, TTP, Afghan Taliban (Quetta Shura) | 1 |
| | Self-government, Identity, Resources | | ↓ |

| Conflict -beginning- | Type | Main parties | Intensity |
|----------------------------------|---|---|-----------|
| | | | Trend |
| Asia | | | |
| Philippines (Mindanao) -1991- | Internationalised internal | Government, Abu Sayyaf, BIFF, Islamic State of Lanao/ Dawlay Islamiyah/ Maute Group, Ansarul Khilafah Mindanao, factions of MILF and MNLF | 2 |
| | Self-government, System, Identity | | = |
| Philippines (NPA) -1969-- | Internal | Government, NPA | 1 |
| | System | | = |
| Thailand (south) -2004- | Internal | Government, separatist armed opposition groups | 1 |
| | Self-government, Identity | | ↓ |
| Europe | | | |
| Turkey (southeast) -1984- | Internationalised internal | Government, PKK, TAK, ISIS | 2 |
| | Self-government, Identity | | ↑ |
| Ukraine (east) -2014- | Internationalised internal | Government, armed groups in the eastern provinces, Russia | 2 |
| | Government, Identity, Self-government | | ↓ |
| Middle East | | | |
| Egypt (Sinai) -2014- | Internationalised internal | Government, Ansar Beit al-Maqdis (ABM) or Sinai Province (branch of ISIS), other armed groups (Ajnad Misr, Majlis Shura al-Mujahideen fi Aknaf Bayt al-Maqdis, Katibat al-Rabat al-Jihadiya, Popular Resistance Movement, Liwaa al-Thawra, Hassam), Israel | 2 |
| | System | | = |
| Iraq -2003- | Internationalised internal | Government, Iraqi and Kurdish (peshmerga) military and security forces, Shia militias (Popular Mobilization Units, PMU), Sunni armed groups, Islamic State (ISIS), international anti-ISIS coalition led by USA, USA, Iran, Turkey, Israel | 3 |
| | System, Government, Identity, Resources | | = |
| Israel-Palestine -2000- | International | Israeli government, settler militias, PA, Fatah (Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades), Hamas (Ezzedin al-Qassam Brigades), Islamic Jihad, FPLP, FDLP, Popular Resistance Committees, Salafists groups | 1 |
| | Self-government, Identity, Territory | | ↓ |
| Syria -2011- | Internationalised internal | Government, pro-government militias, Free Syrian Army (FSA), Ahrar al-Sham, Syrian Democratic Forces (coalition that includes the YPG/YPJ militias of the PYD), Jabhat Fateh al-Sham (formerly al-Nusra Front), Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), ISIS, international anti-ISIS coalition led by USA, Turkey, Hezbollah, Iran, Russia, among other armed parties | 3 |
| | System, Government, Self- government, Identity | | = |
| Yemen (AQAP) - 2011- | Internationalised internal | Government, AL Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP/Ansar Sharia), ISIS, USA, international coalition led by Saudi Arabia, UAE, tribal militias, Houthi militias/Ansar Allah | 1 |
| | System | | = |
| Yemen (Houthis) -2004- | Internationalised internal | Armed forces loyal to Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi's Government, followers of the cleric al-Houthi (al-Shabaab al-Mumen/Ansar Allah), armed factions loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, tribal militias linked to the al-Ahmar clan, Salafist militias, armed groups linked to the Islamist Islah party, international coalition led by Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Iran | 3 |
| | System, Government, Identity | | = |

1: low intensity; 2: medium intensity; 3: high intensity;

↑: escalation of violence; ↓: decrease of violence ; = : unchanged; End: no longer considered an armed conflict

Annex 2. Summary of socio-political crises in 2019¹

| Conflict ² -beginning- | Type ³ | Main parties | Intensity ⁴ |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|------------------------|
| | | | Trend ⁵ |
| Africa | | | |
| Algeria | Internal | Government, military, social and political opposition, Hirak movement | 2 |
| | Government | | ↑ |
| Angola (Cabinda) | Internal | Government, armed group FLEC-FAC, Cabinda Forum for Dialogue | 1 |
| | Self-government, Resources | | ↑ |
| Benin | Internal | Government, political and social opposition | 1 |
| | Government | | ↑ |
| Central Africa (LRA) | International | AU regional force (RTF, composed of the Ugandan, Congolese and South Sudanese Armed Forces), Operation Observant Compass (USA), self-defence militias from DRC and South Sudan, the LRA, the former Central African armed coalition Séléka | 1 |
| | Resources | | = |
| Chad | Internal | Government, armed groups (UFR, UFDD), political and social opposition, communitary militias | 3 |
| | Government | | ↑ |
| Congo, Rep. of | Internal | Government, political and social opposition | 1 |
| | Government | | ↓ |
| Côte d'Ivoire | Internationalised internal | Government, militias loyal to former President Laurent Gbagbo, mercenaries, UNOCI | 1 |
| | Government, Identity, Resources | | = |
| DRC | Internal | Government, political and social opposition | 2 |
| | Government | | ↓ |
| DRC – Rwanda | International | Governments of DRC, Rwanda, armed groups FDLR and M23 (former CNDP) | 1 |
| | Identity, Government, Resources | | = |
| DRC – Uganda | International | Governments of DRC and Rwanda, ADF, M23 (former CNDP), LRA, armed groups operating in Ituri | 1 |
| | Identity, Government, Resources, Territory | | = |
| Equatorial Guinea | Internal | Government, political opposition in exile | 1 |
| | Government | | = |
| Eritrea | Internationalised internal | Government, internal political and social opposition, political-military opposition coalition EDA (EPDF, EFD, EIPJD, ELF, EPC, DMLEK, RSADO, ENSF, EIC, Nahda), other groups | 2 |
| | Government, Self-government, Identity | | ↓ |
| Eritrea – Ethiopia | International | Government of Eritrea, Government of Ethiopia | 1 |
| | Territory | | ↓ |

1. Table from Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2010! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2020.
2. This column includes the states in which socio-political crises are taking place, specifying in brackets the region within each state to which the crisis is confined or the name of the armed group involved in the conflict. This last option is used in cases involving more than one socio-political crisis in the same state or in the same territory within a state, for the purpose of distinguishing them.
3. This report classifies and analyses socio-political crises using two criteria: on the one hand, the causes or clashes of interests and, on the other hand, the convergence between the scenario of conflict and the actors involved. The following causes can be distinguished: demands for self-determination and self-government (Self-government) or identity aspirations (Identity); opposition to the political, economic, social or ideological system of a state (System) or the internal or international policies of a government (Government), which in both cases produces a struggle to take or erode power; or struggle for the control of resources (Resources) or territory (Territory). Regarding the second type, the socio-political crises may be of an internal, internationalised internal or international nature. As such, an internal socio-political crisis involves actors from the state itself who operate exclusively within its territory. Secondly, internationalised internal socio-political crises are defined as those in which at least one of the main actors is foreign and/or the crisis spills over into the territory of neighbouring countries. Thirdly, international socio-political crises are defined as those that involve conflict between state or non-state actors of two or more countries.
4. The intensity of a socio-political crisis (high, medium or low) and its trend (escalation, decrease, no changes) is mainly evaluated on the basis of the level of violence reported and the degree of socio-political mobilisation.
5. This column compares the trend of the events of 2019 with 2018, using the (↑) symbol to indicate that the general situation during 2019 is more serious than in the previous one, the (↓) symbol to indicate an improvement in the situation and the (=) symbol to indicate that no significant changes have taken place.

| Socio-political crisis | Type | Main parties | Intensity |
|-------------------------------|--|--|-----------|
| | | | Trend |
| Africa | | | |
| Ethiopia | Internal | Government (EPRDF coalition, led by the party TPLF), political and social opposition, various armed groups | 3 |
| | Government | | = |
| Ethiopia (Oromia) | Internal | Central government, regional government, political opposition (OFDM, OPC parties) and social opposition, armed opposition (OLF, IFLO) | 3 |
| | Self-government, Identity | | ↓ |
| Gambia | Internal | Government, factions of the Armed Forces, political opposition | 1 |
| | Government | | = |
| Guinea | Internal | Government, Armed Forces, political parties in the opposition, trade unions | 2 |
| | Government | | ↑ |
| Guinea-Bissau | Internationalised internal | Transitional government, Armed Forces, opposition political parties, international drug trafficking networks | 1 |
| | Government | | = |
| Kenya | Internationalised internal | Government, ethnic militias, political and social opposition (political parties and civil society organisations), armed group SLDF, Mungiki sect, MRC party, Somali armed group al-Shabaab and groups that support al-Shabaab in Kenya, ISIS | 3 |
| | Government, System, Resources, Identity, Self-government | | ↓ |
| Malawi | Internal | Government, political and social opposition | 1 |
| | Government | | ↑ |
| Madagascar | Internal | High Transitional Authority, opposition leaders, state security forces, dahalos (cattle rustlers), self-defence militias, private security companies | 1 |
| | Government, Resources | | = |
| Morocco – Western Sahara | International ⁶ | Morocco, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), armed group POLISARIO Front | 1 |
| | Self-government, Identity, Territory | | = |
| Mozambique | Internal | Government, RENAMO | 2 |
| | Government, System | | = |
| Nigeria | Internal | Government, political opposition, Christian and Muslim communities, farmers and livestock raisers, community militias, IMN, IPOB, MASSOB | 3 |
| | Identity, Resources, Government | | ↑ |
| Nigeria (Niger Delta) | Internal | Government, armed groups MEND, MOSOP, NDPVF, NDV, NDA, NDGJM, IWF, REWL, PANDEF, Joint Revolutionary Council, militias from the Ijaw, Itsekiri, Urhobo and Ogoni communities, private security groups | 2 |
| | Identity, Resources | | = |
| Rwanda | Internationalised internal | Government, Rwandan armed group FDLR, political opposition, dissident factions of the governing party (RPF), Rwandan diaspora in other African countries and in the West | 2 |
| | Government, Identity | | ↑ |
| Rwanda - Burundi | International | Government of Rwanda, Government of Burundi, armed groups | 2 |
| | Government | | ↑ |
| Rwanda - Uganda | International | Government of Rwanda, Government of Uganda | 2 |
| | Government | | ↑ |
| Senegal (Casamance) | Internal | Government, factions of the armed group MFDC | 1 |
| | Self-government | | = |
| Somalia (Somaliland-Puntland) | Internal | Republic of Somaliland, autonomous region of Puntland, Khatumo State | 2 |
| | Territory | | = |
| Sudan | Internal | Government, political and social opposition | 3 |
| | Government | | ↑ |

6. Although Western Sahara is not an internationally recognised state, the socio-political crisis between Morocco and Western Sahara is considered “international” and not “internal” since it is a territory that has yet to be decolonised and Morocco’s claims to the territory are not recognised by international law or by any United Nations resolution.

| Socio-political crisis | Type | Main parties | Intensity |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|-----------|
| | | | Trend |
| Africa | | | |
| Sudan – South Sudan | International | Sudan, South Sudan | 1 |
| | Resources, Identity | | ↓ |
| Togo | Internal | Government, political and social opposition | 1 |
| | Government | | ↑ |
| Tunisia | Internal | Government, political and social opposition, armed groups, including the Uqba bin Nafi Battalion and the Okba Ibn Nafaa Brigades (branch of AQIM), Jund al-Khilafa (branch of ISIS), ISIS | 1 |
| | Government, System | | ↓ |
| Uganda | Internal | Government, political and social opposition | 1 |
| | Government | | ↑ |
| Zimbabwe | Internal | Government, political and social opposition | 1 |
| | Government | | ↑ |
| America | | | |
| Bolivia | Internal | Government, political and social opposition | 2 |
| | Government | | ↑ |
| Chile | Internal | Government, political and social opposition | 2 |
| | Government | | ↑ |
| Colombia | Internal | Government, political and social opposition | 2 |
| | Government | | ↑ |
| Ecuador | Internal | Government, political and social opposition | 2 |
| | Government | | ↑ |
| El Salvador | Internal | Government, political and social opposition, cartels, gangs | 2 |
| | Government | | ↓ |
| Guatemala | Internal | Government, political and social opposition, gangs | 1 |
| | Government | | = |
| Haiti | Internationalised internal | Government, political and social opposition, BINUH, gangs | 1 |
| | Government | | ↓ |
| Honduras | Internal | Government, political and social opposition, cartels, gangs | 2 |
| | Government | | ↓ |
| Mexico | Internal | Government, political and social opposition, cartels, armed opposition groups | 3 |
| | Government, Resources | | ↑ |
| Nicaragua | Internal | Government, political and social opposition | 2 |
| | Government | | ↓ |
| Peru | Internal | Government, armed opposition (remnants of Shining Path), political and social opposition (farmer and indigenous organisations) | 1 |
| | Government, Resources | | = |
| Venezuela | Internal | Government, political and social opposition | 3 |
| | Government | | ↑ |
| Asia | | | |
| Bangladesh | Internal | Government (Awami League), political opposition (Bangladesh National Party and Jamaat-e-Islami), International Crimes Tribunal, armed groups (Ansar-al-Islami, JMB) | 2 |
| | Government | | ↓ |
| China (Xinjiang) | Internationalised internal | Government, armed opposition (ETIM, ETLO), political and social opposition | 1 |
| | Self-government, Identity, System | | = |

| Socio-political crisis | Type | Main parties | Intensity |
|---|--|--|-----------|
| | | | Trend |
| Asia | | | |
| China (Tibet) | Internationalised internal | Chinese government, Dalai Lama and Tibetan government-in-exile, political and social opposition in Tibet and in neighbouring provinces and countries | 1 |
| | Self-government, Identity, System | | = |
| China (Hong Kong) | Internal | Government, political and social opposition | 2 |
| | Self-government, Identity, System | | ↑ |
| China – Japan | International | China, Japan | 1 |
| | Territory, Resources | | = |
| China – Taiwan | International | China, Taiwan | 1 |
| | Territory, Resources | | ↑ |
| India | Internal | Government, political and social opposition | 2 |
| | System, Government | | ↑ |
| India (Assam) | Internationalised internal | Government, armed groups ULFA, ULFA(I), NDFB, NDFB(IKS), KPLT, NSLA, UPLA and KPLT | 2 |
| | Self-government, Identity | | = |
| India (Manipur) | Internal | Government, armed groups PLA, PREPAK, PREPAK (Pro), KCP, KYKL, RPF, UNLF, KNF, KNA | 1 |
| | Self-government, Identity | | ↓ |
| India (Nagaland) | Internal | Government, armed groups NSCN-K, NSCN-IM, NSCN (K-K), NSCN-R, NNC, ZUF | 1 |
| | Identity, Self-government | | ↓ |
| India – Pakistan | International | India, Pakistan | 3 |
| | Identity, Territory | | ↑ |
| Indonesia (West Papua) | Internal | Government, armed group OPM, political and social opposition, indigenous Papuan groups, Freeport mining company | 3 |
| | Self-government, Identity, Resources | | ↑ |
| Korea, DPR – Rep. of Korea | International | DPR Korea, Rep. of Korea | 1 |
| | System | | ↓ |
| Kazakhstan | Internationalised internal | Government, political and social opposition, local and regional armed groups | 1 |
| | System, Government | | ↑ |
| Korea, DPR – Rep. of Korea | International | DPR Korea, Rep. of Korea | 1 |
| | System | | = |
| Korea, DPR – USA, Japan, Rep. of Korea ⁷ | International | DPR Korea, USA, Japan, Rep. of Korea, China, Russia | 2 |
| | Government | | ↑ |
| Kyrgyzstan | Internationalised internal | Government, political and social opposition, regional armed groups, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan | 1 |
| | System, Government, Identity, Resources, Territory | | ↓ |
| Lao, PDR | Internationalised internal | Government, political and armed organisations of Hmong origin | 1 |
| | System, Identity | | ↑ |
| Pakistan | Internal | Government, political and social opposition, armed opposition (Taliban militias, political party militias), Armed Forces, secret services | 2 |
| | Government, System | | = |
| South China Sea | International | China Philippines, Vietnam, Taiwan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam | 1 |
| | Territory, Resources | | ↑ |
| Sri Lanka | Internal | Government, political and social opposition, Tamil political and social organizations | 3 |
| | Self-government, Identity | | ↑ |

7. This international socio-political crisis affects other countries that have not been mentioned, which are involved to varying degrees.

| Socio-political crisis | Type | Main parties | Intensity |
|---|--|---|-----------|
| | | | Trend |
| Europe | | | |
| Tajikistan | Internationalised internal | Government, political and social opposition, former warlords, regional armed groups, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan | 2 |
| | Government, System, Resources, Territory | | = |
| Thailand | Internal | Government, political and social opposition | 1 |
| | Government | | = |
| Uzbekistan | Internationalised internal | Government, political and social opposition, regional armed groups, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan | 1 |
| | Government, System | | ↓ |
| Europe | | | |
| Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh) | International | Armenia, Azerbaijan, self-proclaimed Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh | 2 |
| | Self-government, Identity, Territory | | ↓ |
| Belarus | Internal | Government, political and social opposition | 1 |
| | Government | | = |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | Internationalised internal | Central government, government of the Republika Srpska, government of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Federation, high representative of the international community | 1 |
| | Self-government, Identity, Government | | = |
| Cyprus | Internationalised internal | Cyprus, self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Greece, Turkey | 1 |
| | Self-government, Identity, Territory | | ↑ |
| Georgia (Abkhazia) | Internationalised internal | Georgia, self-proclaimed Republic of Abkhazia, Russia | 1 |
| | Self-government, Identity, Government | | ↑ |
| Georgia (South Ossetia) | Internationalised internal | Georgia, self-proclaimed Republic of South Ossetia, Russia | 1 |
| | Self-government, Identity | | ↑ |
| Moldova, Rep. of (Transnistria) | Internationalised internal | Moldova, self-proclaimed Republic of Transnistria, Russia | 1 |
| | Self-government, Identity | | = |
| Russia (North Caucasus) | Internal | Russian federal government, governments of the republic of Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, armed opposition groups (Caucasian Emirate and ISIS) | 1 |
| | System, Identity, Government | | ↓ |
| Serbia – Kosovo | International ⁸ | Serbia, Kosovo, political and social representatives of the Serbian community in Kosovo, UNMIK, KFOR, EULEX | 2 |
| | Self-government, Identity, Government | | = |
| Spain (Catalonia) | Internationalised internal | Government of Spain, Government of Catalonia, political, social and judicial actors of Catalonia and Spain, Head of State | 1 |
| | Self-government, Identity | | ↑ |
| Turkey | Internationalised internal | Government, political and social opposition, ISIS, Fetullah Gülen organization | 2 |
| | Government, System | | = |
| Middle East | | | |
| Bahrain | Internal | Government, political and social opposition | 1 |
| | Government, Identity | | = |
| Egypt | Internal | Government, political and social opposition | 3 |
| | Government | | = |
| Iran | Internal | Government, political and social opposition | 3 |
| | Government | | ↑ |
| Iran (northwest) | Internationalised internal | Government, armed group PJAK and PDKI, Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) | 2 |
| | Self-government, Identity | | ↓ |

8. The socio-political crisis between Kosovo and Serbia is considered “international” because even though its international legal status remains unclear, Kosovo has been recognised as a state by over 100 countries.

| Socio-political crisis | Type | Main parties | Intensity |
|---|---|--|-----------|
| | | | Trend |
| Europe | | | |
| Iran (Sistan and Balochistan) | Internationalised internal | Government, armed groups Jundullah (Soldiers of God / People's Resistance Movement), Harakat Ansar Iran and Jaish al-Adl, Pakistan | 2 |
| | Self-government, Identity | | ↑ |
| Iran – USA, Israel ⁹ | International | Iran, USA, Israel | 3 |
| | System, Government | | ↑ |
| Iraq | Internationalised internal | Government, social and political opposition, Iran, USA | 3 |
| | Government | | ↑ |
| Iraq (Kurdistan) | Internationalised internal | Government, Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), Turkey, Iran, PKK | 1 |
| | Self-government, Identity, Resources, Territory | | = |
| Israel – Syria – Lebanon | International | Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Hezbollah (party and militia) | 3 |
| | System, Resources, Territory | | ↑ |
| Lebanon | Internationalised internal | Government, Hezbollah (party and militia), political and social opposition, armed groups ISIS and Jabhat al-Sham (formerly al-Nusra Front), Saraya Ahl al-Sham | 2 |
| | Government, System | | ↑ |
| Palestine | Internal | PNA, Fatah, armed group al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, Hamas and its armed wing Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades, Salafist groups | 1 |
| | Government | | = |
| Saudi Arabia | Internationalised internal | Government, political and social opposition, armed groups, including AQAP and branches of ISIS (Hijaz Province, Najd Province) | 1 |
| | Government, Identity | | = |
| 1: low intensity; 2: medium intensity; 3: high intensity. ↑: escalation of tension; ↓: decrease of tension; =: no changes. | | | |

9. This international socio-political crisis refers mainly to the dispute over the Iranian nuclear program.

About the School for a Culture of Peace

The Escola de Cultura de Pau (School for a Culture of Peace, hereinafter ECP) is an academic peace research institution located at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. The School for a Culture of Peace was created in 1999 with the aim of promoting the culture of peace through research, Track II diplomacy, training and awareness generating activities.

The main fields of action of the Escola de Cultura de Pau are:

- Research. Its main areas of research include armed conflicts and socio-political crises, peace processes, human rights and transitional justice, the gender dimension in conflict and peacebuilding, and peace education.
- Teaching and training. ECP staff gives lectures in postgraduate and graduate courses in several universities, including its own Graduate Diploma on Culture of Peace at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. It also provides training sessions on specific issues, including conflict sensitivity and peace education.
- Track II diplomacy. The ECP promotes dialogue and conflict-transformation through Track II initiatives, including facilitation tasks with different actors and on various themes.
- Consultancy services. The ECP carries out a variety of consultancy services for national and international institutions.
- Advocacy and awareness-raising. Initiatives include activities addressed to the Spanish and Catalan society, including contributions to the media.

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Peace Talks in Focus 2020. Report on Trends and Scenarios is a yearbook that analyses peace processes and negotiations that took place in the world during 2019. The examination of the development and dynamics of negotiations worldwide allows to provide a comprehensive overview of peace processes, identify trends and comparatively analyse the various scenarios. *Peace Talks in Focus 2020. Report on Trends and Scenarios* also analyses the evolution of peace processes from a gender perspective. One of the main objectives of this report is to provide information and analysis to those who participate in peaceful conflict resolution at different levels, including parties to disputes, mediators, civil society activists and others. The yearbook also aims to grant visibility to different formulas of dialogue and negotiation aimed at reversing dynamics of violence and channelling conflicts through political means in many contexts. Thus, it seeks to highlight, enhance and promote political, diplomatic and social efforts aimed at transforming conflicts and their root causes through peaceful methods.

"Negotiating peace is a process that is as arduous as it is full of hope. Having access to the accurate information provided in Escola de Cultura de Pau's yearbook allows us to analyse the various negotiation processes under way around the globe and to encourage the work of all those interested in the peaceful transformation of conflicts and in the construction of alternatives that are ethically responsible and economically sustainable for people and the planet as a whole".

María Oianguren,
Director of Gernika Gogoratuz Peace Research Center

"The rise in conflicts in today's world is seldom met with the appropriate appetite by leading political actors to intervene and ensure that a peaceful solution is found. This is why it's important that peace practitioners share in their learnings from a wide range of peace processes in order to identify trends and learn from one another so that they can continue to successfully promote dialogue and peace talks, but also to design better processes that can lead to better, more longer lasting peace agreements".

Kerim Yildiz,
Chief Executive Officer, Democratic Progress Institute (DPI)

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Andy Carl,
Consultant, adviser and co-founder of Conciliation Resources

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