

Overcoming obstacles:

Crises in peace processes

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All peace processes, without exception, have to get around a number of obstacles from the outset, and for many reasons. These problems occur as much in the first exploratory phase (pre-negotiation), as in the formal negotiation phase, and when implementing the Peace Agreements. An analysis of these obstacles in multiple processes and over several years has enabled us to affirm that there are recurring reasons for crises, and it is therefore possible to establish a certain hierarchy of obstacles on the basis of their frequency. This should at the very least be enough to serve as a general warning, in that it is feasible to foresee the kind of inconveniences that a process will need to be overcome from the outset, offering the possibility of acting preventatively by adopting precautionary measures.

A typology of the crises that have arisen in negotiations in recent years has enabled us to catalogue the same into the following sections: pre-negotiation, mediation models, ceasefire violations, negotiation context, release of detainees, behaviour of primary parties, dissidences, presence of paramilitary groups, content and nature of agreements, military aspects and implementation. The examples I shall cite hereinafter are merely a small sample of the reality, but they are sufficiently diverse to present an idea of the wide variety of reasons for crises to be generated in peace processes.

Pre-negotiation and preconditions

In Uganda, the failed attempts to enter negotiations with the LRA were conditioned, among other reasons, by the contradictory messages regarding the promise of amnesty to its leader, Joseph Kony, should arms be laid down. Later on, in 2007, the LRA stated that the charges against the main leaders of the group by the International Criminal Court were the main obstacle to the achievement of a peace agreement with the Ugandan Government. In Sudan (Darfur), the armed opposition group, the JEM, placed a precondition on negotiations that the Janjaweed paramilitary groups should disarm, as well as a ceasefire, an end to air raids and an international investigation into the crimes committed in the region. Another group, the SLM led by Abdul Wahid Mohammed Nur, stated that it would not participate in the talks held in Arusha (Tanzania) until the joint UN and AU peace mission had been deployed. In July, 2008, the Sudanese Government warned that the arrest warrant against the President of Sudan, Omar al-Bashir, issued by the International Criminal Court, would undermine the peace process. In the Central African Republic, the leaders of the UFDR group conditioned the sending of its delegates to the peace conference in 2007 to the return of exiled politicians in order for them to participate in national talks, including the former president Ange Félix Patassé, a dialogue which the participants demanded should be accompanied by a general amnesty.

In 2005, the ELN guerrillas stated that they considered there to be five obstacles to the initiation of an authentic peace process in Colombia: the Government's denial of the existence of an armed conflict; the humanitarian crisis; the social, political and economic causes of the conflict; the absence of arenas for the participation of civilian society and the false negotiation with paramilitary groups. In Afghanistan, a spokesman for the Taliban stated in 2007 that before formal negotiations could begin, the Government had to agree to withdraw the international troops from the country, and added that the imposition of Islamic Law was another requirement. In 2010, some Taliban stated that their inclusion in terrorist lists prevented them from participating in peace negotiations. In the state of Assam, in India, the People's Consultative Group, which acted as a mediator between the Government and the armed ULFA group,

conditioned its presence in the series of negotiations that were to be held in 2006 to the suspension of military actions in the region. Later, in 2010, they announced that they would only participate in the negotiations if they dealt with the sovereignty issue, as they would not accept any proposal that did not suppose independence. In the year 2000, in the Indian state of Manipur, the armed UNLF group placed three conditions on negotiating with the Government: a discussion of sovereignty, the demilitarisation of the region and the verification of the negotiations by a third country, which were not accepted by the Government. In mid 2010, the Indian leader of the APHC coalition of independent parties, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, rejected the offer of talks with the Indian Prime Minister, insisting that the leader of the Indian Government repeal the legislation on detentions, free the political prisoners and withdraw the Armed Forces from the zone.

In June 2008, the Chinese Government established a series of conditions to produce talks with envoys of the Dalai Lama; these conditions were for both the Dalai Lama and his followers to explicitly agree not to boycott the Olympic Games, the adoption of measures to put an end to the violent activities of the Tibetan Youth Congress and the opposition to any argument or activity in favour of the independence of Tibet. In the Philippines, the attempt to reopen negotiations with the NDF in November 2007, after a meeting in Oslo, failed due to the governmental demand for the negotiations to be preceded by a prolonged NPA ceasefire. In the final round of negotiations in September 2010, the Palestinian delegation imposed a precondition of Israel stopping the building of new settlements in the West Bank, whose theoretical suspension was expiring at the time.

Mediators and mediation models

The questioning of mediators or the mediation model is possibly the most recurrent reason for crises in negotiations. In the Côte d'Ivoire in 2005, there was a crisis due to the rejection by the Forces Nouvelles of the mediation being undertaken by South Africa, and this organisation's desire for it to be substituted by the ECOWAS and the African Union, while the president of the country, L. Gbagbo did not accept the ECOWAS because he considered that some of the member states had been involved in the rebellion that started in September 2002. In 2006, the peacemaking work undertaken by the UNOCI over the previous three years was brought into question and the criticism intensified of some sectors of the International Work Group that was attempting to mediate the conflict, who were accused of being an instrument of the former colonial power, France. In Sri Lanka in 2005, the Norwegian mediation was questioned due to the lack of progress since 2003, and the possibility was studied of it being substituted by India. The Eritrean president also refused to accept the offer of mediation by the Libyan leader, Muammar al-Gaddafi, who had proposed an initiative to resolve the dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and he also rejected a visit by an investigational mission or a special representative of the UN secretary general, who offered his good offices to resolve Eritrea's dispute with Djibouti. In 2003, the Sudanese JEM (Darfur) criticised Chadian mediation and refused to negotiate with the Government. Later, in 2004, Chad suspended its participation as a mediator in the peace negotiations because it felt that the Sudanese Government was supporting members of Chadian armed opposition groups. Later, there was tension in the ongoing negotiations in Nigeria due to the presence at a meeting of representatives of the governments of Chad and Eritrea, which were rejected both by the armed groups and by the Sudanese Government.

In Burundi in 2005, the Forces Nationales de Liberation (FNL) rejected the mediation of the South Africa vice president and official mediator, Jacob Zuma (who they accused of not being neutral and taking sides with the Burundi Government), and also of the Ugandan president and the leader of the Regional Peace Initiative, Yoweri Museveni. In 2007, South Africa was once again accused of being biased and a change of mediation was requested. The Burundi Government, meanwhile, feared that the Tanzanian mediation was not impartial because several FNL leaders had often sought refuge in that country. In Mali, Algeria temporarily abandoned its role as mediator with the Tuareg after being heavily criticised by the Malian media and given the increasing interest of Libya in facilitating the mediation.

In 1995 in Ethiopia, the Government rejected the talks offered by the “elders” to resolve the conflict with the ONLF armed group. Three years later, the Government and ONLF held secret meetings to find a solution, but the meetings ended when the ONLF demanded the presence of an external mediator, preferably the USA. The Government also killed one of its negotiators and captured another, who died in prison. In Somalia, one of the obstacles to holding negotiations between the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), in 2006, was the co-management of the facilitation by Kenya, a country that the ICU accused of not being neutral and favouring the interests of the TFG. Later, in 2008, the talks between the TFG and the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS) were temporarily suspended when the ARS rejected the special representative of the UN secretary general, Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, who was acting as an intermediary. In Sudan (Darfur) in 2006, the choice of Libya as the venue for peace talks was criticised, as it was not considered a neutral country in the conflict. In 2008, the Sudanese armed opposition group JEM associated its return to the negotiations taking place in Doha (Qatar) to the return of the NGOs that were expelled from Darfur and rejected the peace initiatives of Egypt and Libya, signalling that these initiatives only aimed to prevent the Sudanese president from being judged by the International Criminal Court.

In the dispute over Western Sahara, the delegation of the Polisario Front disagreed in the third quarter of 2008 with the opinion of the personal envoy of the UN secretary general, Peter van Walsun, who unreservedly supported the Moroccan proposal for autonomy in the region, which led to the request for him to be replaced. In April 2010, the leader of the Polisario Front, Mohammed Abdelaziz, also sent a strong and critical letter to the UN secretary general in which he expressed his disappointment with the institution and the lack of leadership to comply with its mandate of organising a referendum. Shortly after, the Polisario Front suspended its contact with the MINURSO, the United Nations peacekeeping force for Western Sahara, as it considered it to be legitimating the occupation of the territory by Morocco. In Chad in 2008, the rebel groups did not support the governmental mediation initiative of the Libyan leader, Muammar al-Gaddafi. In the dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the region of Nagorno-Karabakh, the president of Azerbaijan was repeatedly critical of the mediation by the OSCE and the role of the UN. Moreover, he has always been opposed to the negotiations involving the participation of any representatives of the self-proclaimed Nagorno-Karabakh Republic.

The dismissal of a facilitator is the reason for crisis in some contexts, as occurred in Somalia in 2006, when the Transitional Federal Government dismissed the president of the Transitional Federal Parliament, Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden, a decision that meant the closure of the door to dialogue with their adversaries in the Islamic Courts Union, as the president of the Parliament had attempted to build bridges between the parties. In Colombia, during the negotiations that the Government held with the ELN in 2005, this group finalised the facilitation by a Mexican ambassador due the disqualification made by the Mexican Government by voting against Cuba in the UN Commission on Human Rights.

The demand for an external mediator has also been the cause for tension in some negotiations. In 2009, the armed group that operates in the Niger Delta, the MEND, demanded the supervision of a respectable international mediator as a condition for disarming. In April 2008, the MEND asked the Government of Nigeria to accept the mediation of former US president Jimmy Carter, who had already attempted to facilitate negotiations in 1999. However, the Nigerian Government opposed this request, claiming that it was an internal conflict. Two months later, the Government accepted the mediation of Ibrahim Gambari, who had to resign a month later when his neutrality was questioned by different representatives of the armed groups and civilian organisations in the Niger Delta region.

There have sometimes been crises due to differences of opinion concerning the venues for meetings. In Sri Lanka in 2005, the Government rejected the LTTE’s proposal to hold new negotiations in Oslo, after almost two and a half years without direct negotiations, as it insisted

that they should be held in the country. In 2007, the LRA announced that it was abandoning its peace negotiations with the Burundi Government, unless the mediation team was substituted along with the venue for the negotiations, as a consequence of the comments made by the Sudanese president, Omar al-Bashir and the South Sudanese president, Salva Kiir, who stated that if no peace agreement was reached, the Sudanese Government would expel the LRA from its territory. The LRA asked the president of Kenya, Mwai Kibaki, who also presided over the regional organisation IGAD, to save the process by establishing a new arena for dialogue in a neutral country, such as Kenya. In Somalia, both the peace process and the establishment of the institutions of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) stalled in 2005 due to the division in the TFG between those in favour of holding it in the city of Jowhar and those in favour of holding it in the capital, Mogadishu. Also in Somalia, the Conference on Peace and Reconciliation held in 2007 was boycotted by the Islamists, who demanded that it be held in a neutral country and not in Somalia, for otherwise this would legitimise the Ethiopian occupation. In the Central African Republic in 2007 the APRD armed group refused to hold political talks in the capital, Bangui, and demanded they should take place in Libreville (Gabon), under the auspices of the president of that country.

The level of representation of the delegations can also be a cause for crisis. This happened in Sri Lanka in 2006, when the LTTE withdrew from a meeting of the ceasefire Monitoring Mission, as it considered the profile of the governmental delegation to be too low. In the DR of Congo, the peace talks held in Kenya in 2008 between the CNDP armed group and the Government, under the auspices of the United Nations and its special envoy, Olesegun Obasanjo, stalled after three days due to the rebel delegation not having any decision making powers. In the Indian state of Nagaland, in January 2010, the NSCN-IM armed group rejected the invitation by the Minister of the Interior for negotiations to be held because it announced it would only accept interlocution by the Prime Minister.

Obstacles hindering the work of mediators can also be a source of problems, such as in 2008 when the Government of Sri Lanka rejected Norway's request to visit zones under Tamil control, stating that any resumption of negotiations would depend on these groups disarming and adapting to a schedule. With respect to the dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea, in 2005 the latter placed restrictions on the United Nations Mission (UNMEE), by refusing to allow said mission to involve representatives of the USA, Canada and European countries. In Somalia in 2005 difficulties arose regarding the countries that were to make up the African Union peacekeeping force, with particular rejection of the presence of troops from Ethiopia and other countries in the region.

The format of the mediation has also been a cause of permanent controversy in the conflict in Transnistria (Moldova), as Moldova has normally favoured talks using its proposed 5+2 format (Moldova, Transnistria, OSCE, Russia and Ukraine, with the USA and EU as observers), while Transnistria has preferred a 2+1 format (Moldova, Transnistria and Russia).

There has sometimes been external interference in the facilitation process. This happened, for example, in October 2006, when the Commission of Guarantors of the negotiation process with the ELN held a press conference at which it presented its "route sheet" for 2007, which was criticised by the High Commissioner for Peace, Luis Carlos Restrepo, for not being debated beforehand by the parties (Government and ELN), as it dealt with negotiation issues that should have been covered in the following round of negotiations. In Afghanistan in 2010, the Taliban second in command, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, who had held secret meetings with the Afghan Government, was detained by the USA in Pakistan and the arrest was therefore interpreted as a boycott in the negotiations.

Ceasefire violations

Ceasefire violations are the cause of crisis in many negotiations, both by armed opposition groups and governments. It is a never-ending list. This happened in Burundi with the FNL and

the Government between 2005 and 2008, to the extent that in 2007 said group abandoned its ceasefire monitoring team, arguing that it did so for insecurity reasons and amongst rumours that said group was rearming. In Sri Lanka, from the first negotiations in 1993 to the breakdown of the peace process in 2009, both the LTTE and the Government accused each other on numerous occasions of violating the ceasefire. In the peace process in Lebanon, in 2008, Israeli aircraft bombarded Lebanese territory on numerous occasions. In Nigeria (Niger Delta), the first ceasefire in 2003 between the Ijaw and Itsekiri communities and the Armed Forces was followed by confrontations that have continued over the years, along with attacks on oil companies. In Sudan, there have been numerous repetitions of the ceasefire violations by the Government and the SLA and JEM since 2003. In Spain, ETA put an end to the peace process initiated in 2006 by the Spanish Government by committing a mortal attack in the midst of the permanent ceasefire in late 2007.

Negotiation context

The existence of US or EU terrorist lists have been a factor of crisis on several occasions as these have caused problems for the mobility of negotiators and have upset armed groups. This happened with the LTTE in Sri Lanka when it was included in the EU lists in 2006, which led to the demand for the Danish, Swedish and Finnish members of the ceasefire Monitoring Mission (SLMM) to be expelled from the country. The situation had already intensified when the EU forbade any trip by the LTTE delegation to the European Union. In Sri Lanka, the LTTE also once abandoned the negotiations after the USA prohibited the presence of the group at the preparatory meeting for the donor conference that was to be held in Washington. In Colombia, both the FARC and the ELN demanded many times to be withdrawn from the EU terrorist lists as a confidence measure that could lead to negotiations. In the Philippines, the inclusion of the NPA guerrilla in the UN and EU terrorist lists led to a deadlock in the ongoing negotiations. In Turkey, the inclusion of the PKK in the EU terrorist lists in 2002 led to the posterior arrest of people close to the PKK that were exploring negotiations with the Turkish Government. From then on, the Turkish Government also intensified its feeling that it could not negotiate with “terrorists”.

In 2005, the FNL in Burundi announced that they did not recognise Pierre Nkurunziza’s executive, as they considered it to be a Government that had been imposed by the international community, and reiterated their historical demand to negotiate directly with the Tutsi community. In similar fashion, in July 2005 the NDF (the political wing of the Philippine NPA guerrilla) did not feel it was worth continuing to negotiate with the Philippine Government as it considered it weak and illegitimate, and demanded a new transitional government.

The internal crises and political disputes of a country have also affected different processes. This happened in Sri Lanka in 2005, and stalled the process. In Cyprus, one of the minority partner parties in the Greek Cypriot Government, the social-democrat EDEK, left the Government in February 2010 accusing President Christofias of making too many concessions to the negotiations to reunify the island.

The insecurity of the negotiators is also a cause of crisis in negotiation processes. In Sri Lanka negotiations broke down for this reason in 2006. In Uganda, the Armed Forces killed several members of the LRA’s negotiating delegation. In India, the emissaries that were negotiating with the Government in the name of the CPI-M armed group in 2002 soon resigned from their positions following the assassination of the leaders of the armed group implied in the negotiations. In the Philippines, the Government suspended the immunity of the NDF negotiators, which led to a breakdown in the negotiations.

Economic reasons can also cause crisis. In Uganda, for example, in 2008, the Monitoring Team of the ceasefire with the LRA was dismantled because of the high cost. In Somalia, one of the obstacles for holding negotiations between the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), in 2006, was the presence of foreign troops in the country,

specifically Ethiopian ones. In Sudan (Darfur) in 2009, the JEM threatened to withdraw from the negotiations if the same included other armed groups, as was the intention of the Government, the facilitators (Libya and Qatar) and the joint mediator from the AU and UN, Djibril Bassolé. The JEM proposed that the armed groups that wanted to join the negotiating process should do so within the JEM or Government panel, but not separately. The JEM was also opposed to the inclusion of tribal leaders in the negotiations, owing to the complexity of dealing with the more than 80 different ethnic groups coexisting in the region. In Chad in 2009, the coalition of groups led by Timane Erdimi, the UFR, which includes eight armed groups, rejected a peace agreement achieved by the Government with three other groups because this had been negotiated separately, and they called for the establishment of an inclusive negotiations table.

In the Philippines, one of the elements of disagreements in 2005 between the MILF guerrilla and the Government was the mechanism for validating the new political entity that was to be created in Mindanao, as the MILF rejected the idea that it should be done by means of a referendum. Later, in 2007, the Supreme Tribunal decided to suspend the Memorandum of Understanding on the ancestral lands of the Moro people, which led to a breakdown in the negotiations with the MILF, after an 11-year peace process, and the dissolution of the Government's negotiation team.

The inclusion of new items on the agenda, specifically the inclusion of the Community of Navarra and the debate regarding its inclusion in the Basque Autonomous Community, was one of the reasons why the negotiations between the Spanish Government and ETA entered a terminal phase in 2007. The delayed response to a proposal was the reason in 2010 for the delay in resolving the dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the region of Nagorno-Karabakh, as Armenia did not respond to the proposal by the OSCE Minsk Group, which acts as the mediator in the conflict and had presented a document called the "Madrid Principles". In late 2008, the Israeli Minister for Foreign Affairs, Tzipi Livni, declared that she had no intention of meeting Syrian representatives to resolve the Golan Heights dispute as long as Syria continued to allow the smuggling of weapons to Hezbollah in Lebanon. Later, the Syrian Government announced the suspension of indirect talks with Israel mediated by Turkey, due to the Israeli offensive on Gaza.

Release of detainees

In Nigeria (Niger Delta), when the then vice president Goodluck Jonathan assumed the negotiations with the MEND in early 2008, this group refused to participate in the negotiations until one of its leaders, Henry Okah, who had been arrested in Angola, was released, and requested mediation by US president George W. Bush, who was touring the continent at that time. In Sudan (Darfur), the peace negotiations between the Government and the JEM armed group taking place in Doha (Qatar) were postponed for several months in 2009, due to the Government's failure to comply with its commitment to releasing prisoners. In India, the CPI-M armed group announced in February 2010 that it was willing to negotiate with the Government if it released four of its main leaders, as they would form part of its delegation to the negotiations. Also in India, the ULFA armed group demanded the freedom in early 2010 of its leader, Pradeep Gogoi, in order to negotiate. In Myanmar in 2004, the Government promoted a National Convention in 2004 to democratise the country, but the National League for Democracy (NLD) led by Nobel Prize-winner Aung San Suu Kyi conditioned its participation to the release of its imprisoned members. In Yemen in 2009, a crisis emerged in the negotiations between the Government and the al-Houthi forces, as the Government did not comply with its commitment to releasing 1,200 detainees.

Behaviour of the main parties

The Congolese president, Joseph Kabila, announced in 2008 that he would put an end to military operations with the Ugandan armed opposition group, the LRA, in order for its leader,

Joseph Kony, to sign a peace agreement with the Ugandan Government. However, Kony did not turn up for the meeting with the governmental delegation, as he had agreed, which was the fourth time in a year that Kony had failed to meet his interlocutors. In the south of Thailand, the attempts to negotiate with the insurgents have faced problems on numerous occasions due to the anonymity of their leaders.

Dissidences

In the peace process in Burundi, after the Arusha peace agreements of 2000, dissidence arose in the CNDD-FDD and FNL groups, which complicated the negotiations with each of them. In October 2005, the FNL suffered a new dissidence, when 260 members of this group announced their rejection of Agaton Rwasa's leadership, who they accused of numerous violations of human rights and came out in support of talks with the Government. In 2009, after the peace agreements, new splits emerged among the group, including the expulsion of its spokesperson, who had played a prominent role in the negotiations. In Sri Lanka dissidence emerged in the LTTE led by Colonel Karuna. In Uganda in late 2007, dissidence was produced in the LRA, with the execution of the organisation's second in command, Vicent Otti, and disputes over the leadership. Later, in 2009, the LRA suffered a new division when several members that were opposed to the negotiations formed the Uganda People's Front. In Angola (Cabinda), the FLEC armed opposition group suffered several dissidences that did not agree to the peace agreement of August 2006. These dissidences were revived in 2010 to question the leadership of the group. In Mali, the Algiers Agreements with the Tuareg signed in May 2006 were not signed by some of the best known leaders, who formed the North Mali Tuareg Alliance for Change (ATNMC). In the neighbouring country of Niger in 2008, there was a split within the MNJ armed group through the creation of a dissident group called the Front des Forces de Redressement, which claimed that the civilian population had become the main victim of the conflict. A year later, the MNJ suffered another split when the Niger Patriotic Front came out in support of negotiations with the Government. In Sudan (Darfur) in June 2004 there was serious tension in the negotiation teams among the JEM and SLA groups, as both suffered splits and struggles for leadership. In Chad, after the agreement between the Government and the FUC armed group, this organisation started dividing into factions, creating an uncertain climate, although these groups later reached an agreement on military coordination.

In the DR of Congo, the Mai-Mai militia that participated in Inter-Congolese Dialogue of 2002 was then divided and some of them took up arms again. In the DR of Congo, when in 2005 the Community of Sant'Egidio managed to get the Rwandan FDLR to announce it was laying down its arms, something they did not comply with, the group was divided. Also in the DR of Congo, in 2006, there was a split in the FNI armed group led by Peter Karim, which was opposed to the demobilisation and continued the fighting, as occurred within the ranks of the Tutsi CNDP group in January 2009, with the announcement by the military leader of the rebellion, Bosco Ntaganda, alias "Terminator", of the expulsion of General Laurent Nkunda from the leadership of the group, for reasons of poor governance. Shortly after, the CNDP signed a peace agreement with the Government. In Myanmar in 2007, there was a split in the KNU guerrilla, leading to the formation of the KNU/KNLPAC, who signed a peace agreement with the military junta.

Presence of paramilitary groups

In 2006, the Côte d'Ivoire peace process was complicated by the attacks by the "Young Patriots" and Greater West Liberation Front pro-government militias. In Burundi in 2008 the Forces Nationales de Liberation accused the Government of inciting the pro-government militias to terrorise the civilian population. In late 2007, the efforts to deal with the insurgency in the south of Thailand were complicated by the increasing use of paramilitary groups. In Yemen, the fragile 2010 truce between the Government and the al-Houthis came into doubt due to the resumption of the confrontations between members of the armed group and the paramilitary forces of local tribes that were loyal to the Government.

Content and nature of agreements

Failure to comply with signed agreements is not only a reason for crisis but also for a return to arms. The MNJ in Niger, for example, emerged in early 2007 and returned to arms as it did not consider the 1995 agreements to have been complied with, in which the Government agreed to initiate a process of decentralising state power and investing in the north of the country the profits obtained from the uranium and oil deposits located precisely in this region. Later, in 2009, the MNJ announced that it would not surrender its weapons until its political demands were met, which were for an end to the state of emergency in the north, the integration of its combatants in the security forces and for a greater percentage of the profits from the exploitation of uranium to be destined for the development of the northern region and improving the standard of living of the Tuareg people. They later demanded an end to the state of emergency.

In Western Sahara, the 1991 Settlement Plan that stipulated that there would be a short-term referendum was stalled very shortly after by the allegations by Morocco regarding the electoral roll, although in 1997, following the Houston Agreements signed by both parties, it seemed that the negotiations could be back on the right track. Later, Morocco systematically refused to negotiate with the Polisario Front over the possibility of holding a referendum that included the option of Saharan independence. In Kosovo, the Serbian Government has never recognised the territory's declaration of independence, and so the negotiations have concentrated on lesser issues to provide confidence and security to the Serbian minority in Kosovo. In Georgia in May 2009, talks were suspended with Abkhazia, as this region's delegation felt it was unacceptable for a UN document to consider Abkhazia to form an integral part of Georgia.

The conflict between Israel and Palestine, despite the numerous attempts at negotiation, is still deadlocked over many of the items on the agenda, and especially the West Bank settlements, Jerusalem's status as capital, the return of Palestinian refugees and Israeli security.

Military aspects

In Colombia, in the eighth round of negotiations held in August 2007 between the Government and the ELN guerrilla, the parties reached no agreement on the form of assembling and verifying military personnel. The Government reiterated its demand for them to be located at one or several points, even abroad, but at previously fixed coordinates and supplying the names of all of the people assembled, but this was rejected by the ELN, which was not willing to reveal the identity of its members or to assemble in conditions that supposed a military disadvantage. In Georgia in 2007, the Government presented a peace proposal to resolve the Abkhazia conflict, but it was rejected by the leaders of this region, who considered it mere propaganda and reiterated their refusal to reinitiate the negotiation process until Georgia withdrew its troops from the Upper Kodori and a mutual agreement was signed on the non-use of force. In February 2010 the ninth round of negotiations mediated by the UN, OSCE and EU concluded without agreement between Georgia, Russia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The parties reached no agreement on the document presented by the mediators during the previous round dealing with the basic elements of a framework agreement on the non-use of force and commitments to international security. Moscow insisted on the signing of non-use of force treaties between Georgia and Abkhazia and Georgia and South Ossetia, while Georgia defended the signature of a treaty directly with Russia. In Yemen, the agreement signed in June 2007 by the Government and the al-Houthi forces came close to failure due to the failure to comply with the period for the surrender of arms and the withdrawal of the rebels from their positions.

Implementation

In Côte d'Ivoire in 2003, and despite the Linas-Marcoussis Accord and the subsequent creation of a Government of National Unity, the divergences persisted concerning the division of some ministerial manifestos, which caused several resignations from Government and ongoing

political instability. In 2005 in the same country, the situation deteriorated substantially due to the lack of collaboration between political parties and leaders in the constitution of the Electoral Commission, which prevented the holding of elections on the expected date.

In Burundi in 2008, there was a crisis in relation to the political recognition of the FNL, as the Government warned this group that it first had to change its name because the Constitution prohibited parties from having ethnic names. The FNL (made up of Hutus) was initially opposed to this demand. In negotiations with the LRA in Uganda, this group withdrew from the peace talks in 2008 after its demands for money and Government positions were refused.

Delays in the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) phase, a lack of minimum conditions for the demobilised, delays in the payment of salaries or divergences regarding the number of demobilised have caused problems in many processes. In Côte d'Ivoire, the delay in DDR lasted several years; in Burundi there was discontent concerning the conditions in demobilization camps, whose number was also a cause of controversy when it was estimated that the real figure was 3,000, as opposed to the 15,000 that the FNL claimed it had, which also barely surrendered any weapons. Later, in 2009, there were problems with delayed payments and the exclusion of many ex-combatants from the reintegration process. In Uganda, the negotiation process with the LRA faced a crisis in October 2006 when the members of this group left their cantonments because they were surrounded by Ugandan Armed Forces, and both parties accused each other of breaking the ceasefire. The same thing happened in 2008 when members of the group abandoned their cantonment on the border of Sudan and the DR of RD Congo, under custody of Sudanese SPLA troops, violating the existing truce and revealing the dissidence in the group. In the Niger Delta region (Nigeria), demobilised MEND militants demonstrated in November 2009 against the non-payment of salaries, which were claimed to be 433 dollars a month.