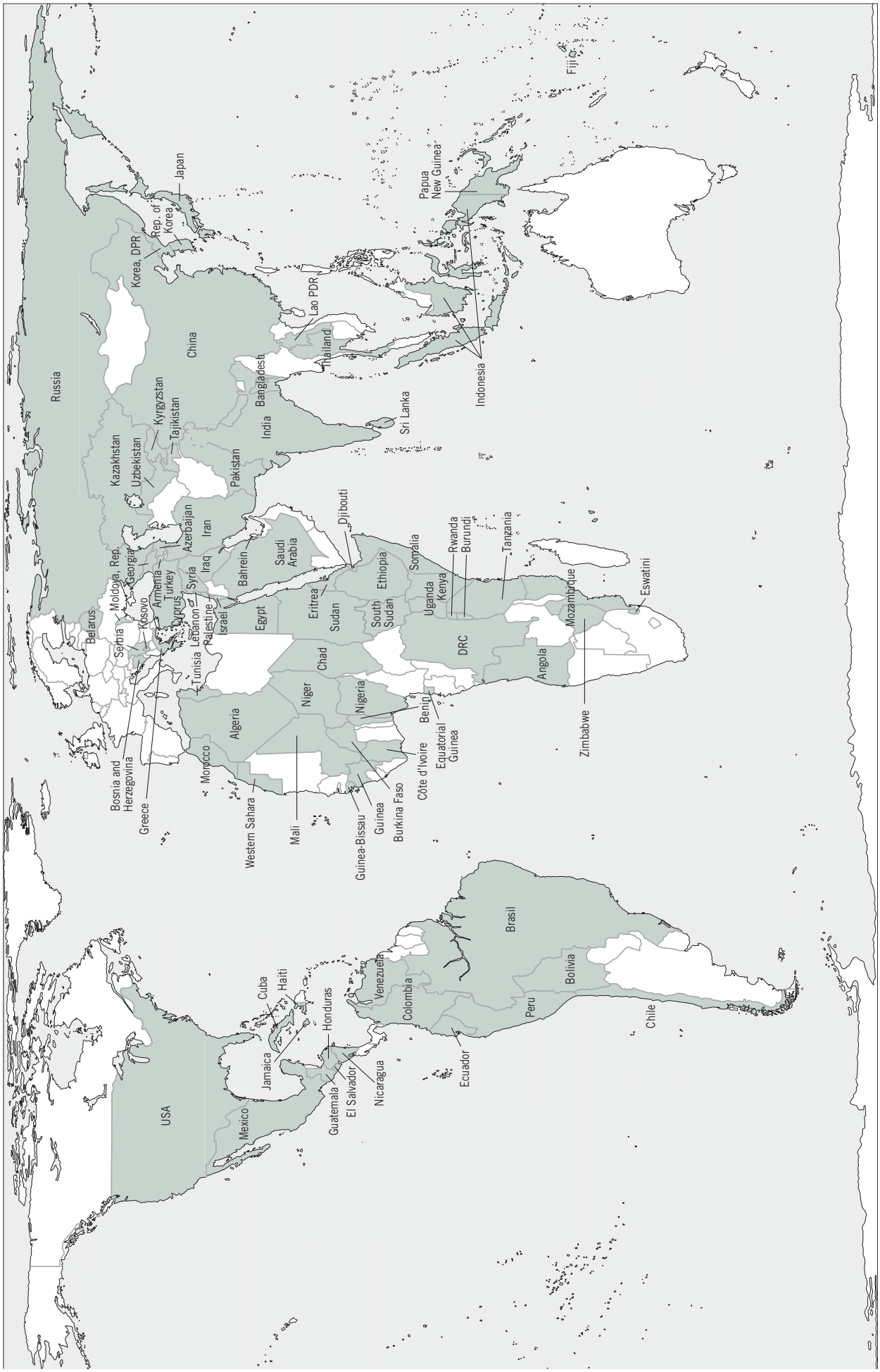
Map 2.1. **Socio-political crises**



2. Socio-political crises

- During 2022, there were 108 socio-political crises reported around the world. The crises were mainly concentrated in Africa (36) and Asia and the Pacific (33), while the rest took place in the Americas (16), Europe (12) and the Middle East (11).
- The political crisis in Burkina Faso worsened during the year, with the country suffering two coups d'état.
- The national dialogue in Chad concluded with the extension of the mandate of the Transitional Military Council, which ratified the break with the Constitution caused in April 2021 by Mahamat Déby and his military junta.
- The relationship between the DRC and Rwanda seriously deteriorated as a result of sporadic clashes between both countries' security forces and the DRC's accusations of Rwandan support for the group M23.
- At the end of the year, a transitional framework agreement was reached in Sudan in which the military promised to relinquish much of its political power, though tension remained over the formation of a unified army.
- The Haitian government requested the immediate deployment of an international force that could halt the violence carried out by many armed groups and reduce the humanitarian consequences.
- In Ecuador, violence and homicides related to drug trafficking increased dramatically among widespread protests and an attempt to remove the president.
- The dismissal and arrest of President Castillo, accused of trying to carry out a self-coup, prompted some of the largest protests in recent years in Peru.
- Border tension between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan rose, with incidents during the year and a military escalation that caused hundreds of deaths.
- Political tension in Sri Lanka resulting from the economic crisis escalated to the point of causing the fall of the president and prime minister.
- International concern worsened over the drastic rise in the number of missiles launched by North Korea and the resumption of its nuclear programme.
- The situation between Armenia and Azerbaijan around the disputed enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh was fragile and a military offensive launched by Azerbaijan claimed the lives of more than 280 people and wounded around 500.
- Demonstrations in Iran were considered one of the greatest challenges to the regime since 1979 and the authorities' crackdown had caused the death of around 500 people by the end of the year.

The present chapter analyses the socio-political crises that occurred in 2022. It is organised into three sections. The socio-political crises and their characteristics are defined in the first section. In the second section an analysis is made of the global and regional trends of socio-political crises in 2022. The third section is devoted to describing the development and key events of the year in the various contexts. A map is included at the start of chapter that indicates the socio-political crises registered in 2022.

2.1. Socio-political crises: definition

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

Table 2.1. **Summary of socio-political crises in 2022**

Conflict[1] -beginning-	Type[2]	Main parties	Intensity[3] / Trend[4]
AFRICA			
Algeria[5]	Internal	Government, military power, political and social opposition, Hirak movement, armed groups AQIM (former GSPC), Jund al-Khilafa (branch of ISIS)	2
	Government, System		=
Benin	Internationalised internal	Government, regional armed actors	2
	Government		↑
Burkina Faso	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, army sectors	3
	Government		↑
Central Africa (LRA)	International	LRA, Sudanese Armed Forces, South Sudan, DRC, CAR and Uganda, community militias and armed groups from the countries in the region	1
	Resources		↓
Chad	Internal	Transitional Military Council, political and social opposition (including the coalition Wakit Tama, which includes the party Les Transformateurs), Chadian armed groups (52 groups, including the main ones: FACT, CCMSR, UFDD, UFR), community militias, private militias	3
	Government, Resources, Territory, Identity		↑
Côte d'Ivoire	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, regional armed actors	2
	Government, Identity, Resources		↓
Djibouti	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, armed group FRUD-Armé	2
	Government		↑
Equatorial Guinea	Internal	Government, political opposition in exile	1
	Government		=
Eritrea	Internationalised internal	Government, political-military opposition coalition EDA (EPDF, EFDM, EIPJD, ELF, EPC, DMLEK, RSADO, ENSF, EIC, Nahda), other groups	1
	Government, Self-government, Identity		=
Eritrea – Ethiopia	International	Eritrea, Ethiopia	1
	Territory		=
Eswatini	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		=
Ethiopia	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, various armed groups	3
	Government		↑
Ethiopia – Egypt – Sudan	International	Ethiopia, Egypt, Sudan	2
	Resources		=
Ethiopia – Sudan	International	Ethiopia, Sudan, community militias	2
	Resources		↓
Guinea	Internal	Government, Armed Forces, opposition political parties, trade unions	2
	Government		↓

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. This column compares the trend of the events of 2022 with 2021, using the ↑ symbol to indicate that the general situation during 2022 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.
5. This tension includes the activities of jihadist groups (particularly AQIM), which in previous editions were analyzed separately.

Socio-political crisis	Type	Main parties	Intensity / Trend
AFRICA			
Guinea-Bissau	Internationalised internal	Transitional government, Armed Forces, political opposition, international drug trafficking networks	2
	Government		↑
Kenya	Internationalised internal	Government, ethnic militias, political and social opposition (political parties, civil society organisations), armed group SLDF, Mungiki sect, MRC party, Somali armed group al-Shabaab and groups sympathetic to al-Shabaab in Kenya, ISIS	3
	Government, System, Resources, Identity, Self-government		↑
Mali	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, ECOWAS	3
	Government		=
Morocco – Western Sahara	International[6]	Morocco, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), armed group POLISARIO Front	2
	Self-government, Identity, Territory		↓
Mozambique	Internal	Government, RENAMO	1
	Government, System		=
Niger	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		=
Nigeria	Internal	Government, political opposition, civil society organisations, Christian and Muslim communities, ranchers and farmers, community militias, criminal groups, IMN	3
	Identity, Resources, Government		↑
Nigeria (Biafra)	Internationalised internal	Government, separatist organisations MASSOB, IPOB (which has an armed wing, the ESN)	3
	Identity, Self-government		=
Nigeria (Niger Delta)	Internal	Government, armed groups, MEND, MOSOP, NDPVF, NDV, NDA, NDGJM, IWF, REWL, PANDEF, Joint Revolutionary Council, militias of the Ijaw, Itsereki, Urhobo and Ogoni communities, private security groups	1
	Identity, Resources		=
DRC	Internal	Government led by the Union Sacrée coalition (led by Félix Tshisekedi and made up of different political actors, including dissidents from former President Joseph Kabila's Front Commun pour le Congo coalition), political opposition (including Front Commun pour le Congo and Lamuka) and social opposition	2
	Government		=
DRC – Rwanda	International	Government of the DRC, government of Rwanda, Rwandan armed group FDLR, pro-Rwandan Congolese armed group M23 (formerly CNDP)	3
	Identity, Government, Resources		↑
Rwanda	Internationalised internal	Government, Rwandan armed group FDLR, political opposition, dissident factions of the ruling party (RPF), Rwandan diaspora in other countries in Africa and the West	1
	Government, Identity		=
Rwanda - Burundi	International	Government of Rwanda, government of Burundi, armed groups	1
	Government		↓
Senegal (Casamance)	Internal	Government, factions of the armed group Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC)	1
	Self-government		↓
Somalia (Somaliland-Puntland)	Internal	Republic of Somaliland, autonomous region of Puntland, Khatumo State	3
	Territory		↑
Sudan	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	3
	Government		↓
Sudan – South Sudan	International	Government of Sudan, government of South Sudan, community militias	1
	Resources, Identity		↑
Tanzania	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	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			
Tunisia	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, armed groups, including the Uqba bin Nafi Battalion and the Oqba Ibn Nafaa Brigades (branch of AQIM), Jund al-Khilafa (branch of ISIS), ISIS	2
	Government, System		↑
Uganda	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	2
	Government		↑
Zimbabwe	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		=
AMERICA			
Bolivia	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government, Self-government, Identity		↑
Brazil	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, organised crime groups	2
	Government		↑
Chile	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	2
	Government, Self-government, Identity		↑
Colombia	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		↓
Cuba	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government, System		↓
Ecuador	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, organised crime groups	3
	Government, Resources		↑
El Salvador	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, organised bands (drug trafficking, gangs)	2
	Government		↓
Guatemala	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, organised crime groups	1
	Government		=
Haiti	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, organised crime groups	3
	Government		↑
Honduras	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, organised crime groups	1
	Government		=
Jamaica	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, organised crime groups	1
	Government		↑
Mexico	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, organised crime groups, armed opposition groups	3
	Government, Resources, Identity		=
Nicaragua	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		=
Peru	Internal	Government, armed opposition (Militarised Communist Party of Peru), political and social opposition (peasant and indigenous organisations)	3
	Government, Resources		↑
USA	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, citizen militias	1
	Government		↑
Venezuela	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	3
	Government		↓

Socio-political crisis	Type	Main parties	Intensity
			Trend
ASIA			
Bangladesh	Internal	Government (Awami League), political opposition (Bangladesh National Party and Jamaat-e-Islami), International Crimes Tribunal, armed groups (Ansar-al-Islam, JMB)	2
	Government		↑
China (Hong Kong)	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Self-government, Identity, System		↓
China (Tibet)	Internationalised internal	Chinese government, Dalai Lama and Tibetan government in exile, political and social opposition in Tibet	1
	Self-government, Identity, System		=
China (Xinjiang)	Internationalised internal	Government, armed opposition (ETIM, ETLO), political and social opposition	1
	Self-government, Identity, System		=
China – Japan	International	China, Japan, USA	2
	Territory, Resources		↑
China – Taiwan	International	China, Taiwan, USA	2
	Territory, Resources, System		↑
China – USA	International	China, USA	1
	System, Government, Territory		↑
Fiji	Internal	Government, political opposition	1
	Government		↑
India	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	System, Government		=
India (Assam)	Internationalised internal	Government, armed groups ULFA, ULFA(I), NDFB, NDFB(IKS), ADF, RNLF, KPLT, NSLA, UPLA and KPLT	1
	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 – China	International	India, China	3
	Territory		↑
India – Pakistan	International	India, Pakistan	3
	Identity, Territory		↓
Indonesia (Sulawesi)	Internal	Government, armed group MIT	1
	System, Identity		↓
Indonesia (West Papua)	Internal	Government, armed group OPM, political and social opposition, Papuan indigenous groups, Freeport mining company	3
	Self-government, Identity, Resources		↑
Japan - Russia (Kuril Islands)	International	Japan, Russia	1
	Territory, Resources		↑
Korea, DPR	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	System, Government		↑
Korea, DPR – USA, Japan, Rep. of Korea[7]	International	DPR Korea, USA, Japan, Rep. of Korea, China, Russia	3
	Government		↑

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
ASIA			
Korea, DPR – Rep. of Korea	International	DPR Korea, Rep. of Korea	3
	System		↑
Kazakhstan	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, local and regional armed groups	3
	System, Government		↑
Kyrgyzstan	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, regional armed groups, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan	1
	System, Government, Identity, Resources, Territory		=
Kyrgyzstan – Tajikistan[8]	International	Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan	3
	Territory, resources		↑
Lao PDR	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, political and armed organisations of Hmong origin	1
	System, Identity		=
Pakistan	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	2
	Government		↑
Papua New Guinea	Internal	Government, community militias, government of Bougainville	3
	Identity, Resources, Territory, Self-governmen		↑
South China Sea	International	China, Philippines, Vietnam, Taiwan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam	2
	Territory, Resources		↑
Sri Lanka	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	3
	Government		↑
Tajikistan	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, former warlords, regional armed groups, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan	2
	Government, System, Resources, Territory		=
Tajikistan (Gorno-Badakhshan)	Internal	Government, social opposition of the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO)	2
	Identity		↑
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, Territory		=
Uzbekistan (Karakalpakstan)	Internal	Government, social opposition in the autonomous region of Karakalpakstan	2
	Self-government		↑
EUROPE			
Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)	International	Azerbaijan, Armenia, self-proclaimed Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, Russia, Turkey	3
	Self-government, Identity, Territory		↑
Belarus	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, EU, Poland, USA, Russia	2
	Government		↑
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Internationalised internal	Central government, government of the Republika Srpska, government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, High Representative of the international community	2
	Self-government, Identity, Government		↑
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	Internationalised internal	Government, political opposition, Russia	2
	Government		↑

8. In previous years, this socio-political crisis was analysed in the summary on Kyrgyzstan in this chapter.

Socio-political crisis	Type	Main parties	Intensity / Trend
EUROPE			
Moldova, Rep. of (Transdniestria)	Internationalised internal	Moldova, self-proclaimed Republic of Transdniestria, Russia	2
	Self-government, Identity		↑
Russia	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, armed opposition actors	2
	Government		↑
Russia (North Caucasus)	Internal	Russian federal government, governments of the republics of Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, armed opposition groups (Caucasus Emirate and ISIS)	1
	System, Identity, Government		=
Serbia – Kosovo	International[9]	Serbia, Kosovo, political and social representatives of the Serbian community of Kosovo, UN mission (UNMIK), NATO mission (KFOR), EU mission (EULEX)	2
	Self-government, Identity, Government		↑
Turkey	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, ISIS, organisation of Fetullah Gülen	2
	Government, System		↑
Turkey – Greece, Cyprus	International	Turkey, Greece, Republic of Cyprus, self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Egypt, France, United Arab Emirates, Government of National Accord of Libya	2
	Territory, Resources, Self-government, Identity		↑
MIDDLE EAST			
Bahrain	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government, Identity		=
Egypt	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	2
	Government		=
Iran	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	3
	Government		↑
Iran (northwest)	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, armed groups PJAK and PDKI, Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG)	2
	Self-government, Identity		↑
Iran (Sistan and Balochistan)	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, armed groups Jundallah (Soldiers of God / People's Resistance Movement), Harakat Ansar Iran and Jaish al-Adl, Pakistan	2
	Self-government, Identity		↑
Iran – USA, Israel[10]	International	Iran, USA, Israel	3
	System, 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), Iran	3
	System, Resources, Territory		=
Lebanon	Internationalised internal	Government, Hezbollah (party and militia), political and social opposition, armed group ISIS and Jabhat Fatah al-Sham (formerly al-Nusra Front), Saraya Ahl al-Sham	2
	Government, System		=
Palestine	Internal	ANP, Fatah, armed group Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, Hamas and its armed wing, the Ezzedin 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.
The socio-political crises in bold are described in the chapter.

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

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.

2.2. Socio-political crises: 2022 trend analysis

This section examines the general trends observed in areas experiencing socio-political crises throughout 2022, at both the global and regional levels.

2.2.1. Global trends

One hundred and eight socio-political crises were identified in 2022, 10 more than in 2021, in line with the upward trend in the number of socio-political crises that has been reported in recent years (25 more since 2018). Africa and Asia were the regions with the highest number of socio-political crises (36 and 33, respectively), followed by the Americas (16), Europe (12) and the Middle East (11). Regarding the variation compared to the previous year, 15 new crises were identified and another five were no longer classified as socio-political crises, most of them in Africa: The Gambia, Ethiopia (Oromia), which transitioned to an armed conflict, the DRC-Uganda, Rwanda-Uganda and Spain (Catalonia). The socio-political crises that were added to the list, for whatever reason, were mainly concentrated in Asia and the Americas: Brazil; China – USA; Korea, DPR; Ecuador; USA; Fiji; Jamaica; Japan – Russia (Kuril Islands); Kyrgyzstan – Tajikistan; Moldova; Papua New Guinea; Russia; Sri Lanka; Tajikistan (Gorno-Badakhshan) and Uzbekistan (Karakalpakstan).

One of the most outstanding aspects in analysing the socio-political crises in 2022 is that although no significant changes were observed in 32% of them and the tension fell in 18% of them compared to 2021, **half the cases identified in 2022 got worse compared to the previous year**. This was reflected in part by a **substantial rise in the number of high-intensity crises, from 19 in 2021 to 28 in 2022**: Burkina Faso; Chad; Ethiopia; Kenya; Mali; Nigeria; Nigeria (Biafra); DRC-Rwanda; Somalia (Somaliland-Puntland); Sudan; Ecuador; Haiti; Mexico; Peru; Venezuela; North Korea-USA, Japan, South Korea; North Korea-South Korea; India-China; India-Pakistan; Indonesia (West Papua); Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan; Papua New Guinea; Sri Lanka; Armenia-Azerbaijan (Nagorno Karabakh); Iran-USA, Israel; Iran; and Israel-Syria-Lebanon. In addition to the 28 high-intensity cases, which accounted for over a quarter of the total, 42% of the 108 socio-political crises were of low intensity (50% in 2021) and 32% were of medium intensity (31% in 2021). Therefore, **not only did the number of crises clearly increase in 2022, but their average intensity also grew compared to the previous year**. This growing intensity was especially concentrated in Europe (where 92% of the cases escalated) and in Asia (where 56% did).

Not only did the number of crises clearly increase in 2022, but their average intensity also grew compared to the previous year

The main **causal factors** of the crises analysed included opposition to the political, economic, social or ideological **system** of a **government**, at 71%; demands of self-determination and **self-government** and **identity-based aspirations**, at 38%; and control of **resources** or **territory** at 31%. These figures are roughly continuous with respect to those of the previous year, though crises associated with control of territory or resources increased from 21% to 31%. In a disaggregated analysis of factors, opposition to internal or international **government**

Box 2.1. **High intensity socio-political crises in 2022**

AFRICA (10)	ASIA (9)	MIDDLE EAST (3)
Burkina Faso	North Korea-USA, Japan, South Korea	Iran-USA, Israel
Chad	North Korea-South Korea	Iran
Ethiopia	India-China	Israel-Syria-Lebanon
Kenya	India-Pakistan	**AMERICA (5)**
Mali	Indonesia (West Papua)	Ecuador
Nigeria	kazakhstan	Haiti
Nigerian (Biafra)	Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan	Mexico
DRC-Rwanda	Papua New Guinea	Peru
Somalia (Somaliland-Puntland)	Sri Lanka	Venezuela
Sudan		**EUROPE (1)**
		Armenia-Azerbaijan (Nagorno Karabagh)

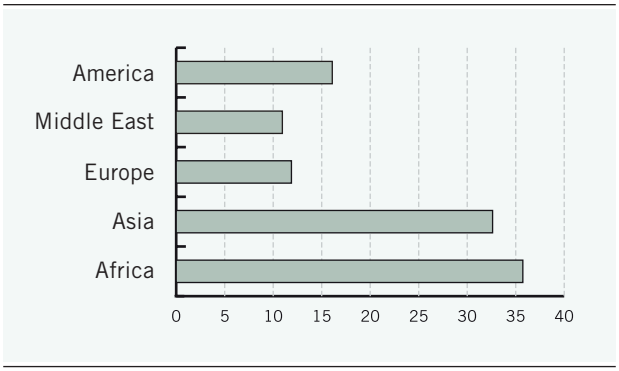
policies was the most common cause, found in 64% of the 108 socio-political crises, which was exactly the same percentage as the previous year. The second most prevalent factor was **identity-based aspirations (36%),** which was especially important in regions such as Europe (67%) and the Middle East (46%). Next, at very similar percentages, came **demands for self-determination and self-government (24%), control of resources (23%), opposition to the political, social or ideological system** of the state as a whole (22%) and control of **territory** (19%). The different factors stoking socio-political tension also oscillated widely between regions. For example, opposition to the government was behind 100% of the crises in the Americas, but only 39% of the cases in Asia. Opposition to the system or to the state as a whole fuelled 45% of the crises in Asia, but only 6% of those located in the Americas. Demands for self-determination and/or self-government were associated with 58% of the crises in Europe, but only 13% and 14% of the crises in the Americas and Africa, respectively; while identity-based aspirations were behind 67% of the crises in Europe and 25% of the crises in Africa and the Americas.

In line with the trend observed in 2021 and in previous years, approximately half the crises worldwide were **internal in nature (52%),** though with pronounced geographical variability (100% of the crises in the Americas and 17% in Europe). Approximately one fifth of the crises (21%) were **international**, but some were among the most intense in the world, such as DRC-Rwanda; India-China; India-Pakistan; North Korea-USA, Japan, South Korea; North Korea-South Korea; Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan; Armenia-Azerbaijan (Nagorno Karabakh), Iran-USA, Israel and Israel-Syria-Lebanon. Finally, more than a quarter (27%) of the crises were internationalised internal ones: those in which one of the main actors is foreign, and/or when the crisis spills over into neighbouring countries. Once again, important variations were observed between regions (58% of the crises in Asia were internationalised internal, whereas Latin America did not report any).

One hundred and eight socio-political crises were identified in 2022: 36 in Africa, 33 in Asia and the Pacific, 16 in the Americas, 12 in Europe and 11 in the Middle East

A more detailed geographical analysis shows that some of the subregions with the highest number of crises were, in this order: Central Africa and the Great Lakes (12), East Asia and West Africa (11 each); South Asia (8); South America; Central Asia; Horn of Africa; and the Gulf (7 each); Russia and the Caucasus (5); and Central America; Mashreq; Southeastern Europe and Southeast Asia (4 each). The countries with the most domestic crises or whose governments were major players in a greater number of foreign disputes were, in this order: Russia (9); China (8); USA (7); India and Iran (6); Ethiopia, Sudan and Tajikistan (5); Turkey and Uzbekistan (4); and Ethiopia, Nigeria, the DRC, Rwanda, Indonesia, Japan and North Korea (3).

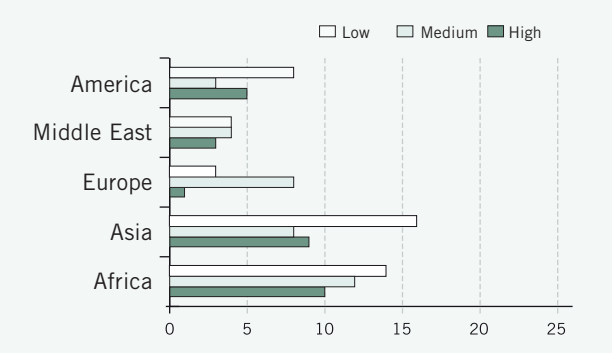
Graph 2.1. **Regional distribution of the number of socio-political crises in 2022**



2.2.2. Regional trends

As in recent years, **Africa** was the region with the highest number of socio-political crises (36), although its percentage of the total number (33%) fell significantly compared to the previous year (41%), both due to the identification of fewer crises there (since those in The Gambia, Ethiopia (Oromia), DRC-Uganda and Rwanda-Uganda ceased to be considered as such) and to the rise in cases reported in the Americas and Asia. By subregions, Central Africa and the Great Lakes was the part of Africa (and the world) with the highest number of crises (12): Central Africa (LRA); Chad; Equatorial Guinea; DRC; DRC-Rwanda; Kenya; Rwanda; Rwanda-Burundi; Sudan; Sudan-South Sudan; Tanzania; and Uganda. This was followed by West Africa (11): Benin; Burkina Faso; Ivory Coast; Guinea; Guinea-Bissau; Mali; Niger; Nigeria; Nigeria (Biafra); Nigeria (Niger Delta); and Senegal (Casamance). Next came the Horn of Africa (7): Djibouti; Eritrea; Eritrea-Ethiopia; Ethiopia; Ethiopia-Egypt-Sudan; Ethiopia-Sudan; and Somalia (Somaliland-Puntland). Tied for fourth (with 3 each) were South Africa (Eswatini, Mozambique and Zimbabwe) and North Africa-Maghreb (Algeria, Morocco-Western Sahara and Tunisia). Finally, several

Graph 2.2. **Intensity of the socio-political crises by region**



countries were involved in various socio-political crises, such as Ethiopia (5), Sudan and Rwanda (4) and the DRC, Nigeria and Uganda (3).

Although Africa was the region with the highest number of high-intensity crises (10 out of 28), its share of all crises in 2022 (36%) also clearly fell compared to 2021 (53%). As a whole, 39% of the crises were of low intensity, 33% were of medium intensity and 28% were of high intensity. Specifically, there were 10 of these high-intensity crises: Burkina Faso; Chad; Ethiopia; Kenya; Mali; Nigeria; Nigeria (Biafra); DRC-Rwanda; Somalia (Somaliland-Puntland); and Sudan. Regarding their development, 36% of the crises in Africa got worse, 39% did not undergo any fundamental changes and the remaining 25% got better. In 2021, the number of crises that escalated in Africa had been clearly higher (50%), as well as the percentage of the total crises that escalated (54% in 2021 and 24% in 2022). Some previously studied crises were no longer considered as such in 2022 (The Gambia, DRC-Uganda, Rwanda-Uganda) and others had been of a high intensity in 2021, but showed lower levels of violence in 2022 compared to 2021: Guinea and Morocco-Western Sahara.

Although Africa was the region with the highest number of high-intensity crises, its share of all crises in 2022 (36%) also clearly fell compared to 2021 (53%)

Conversely, three socio-political crises that escalated significantly in 2022 were now considered to be of maximum intensity: Burkina Faso, DRC-Rwanda and Somalia (Somaliland and Puntland), while the crisis in Ethiopia (Oromia) worsened notably and was reclassified as an armed conflict. Amidst violence and political instability in Burkina Faso, two coups d'état took place, in January and in September. The tension between the DRC and Rwanda got much worse as a result of occasional clashes between the security forces of both countries in the border area and the DRC's accusations that Rwanda was militarily supporting the offensive of the March 23 Movement (M23) armed group in North Kivu. Regarding the dispute between the self-proclaimed republic of Somaliland and the administration of Puntland (which is part of the federal state of Somalia), there was an escalation of fighting in the town of Las Anod in December between activists from Puntland and the security forces of Somaliland, which have occupied Las Anod since 2007. Las Anod is geographically located within the borders of Somaliland, though most of the clans in the region are associated with those in Puntland. The fighting caused the death of around 20 people, according to various sources. In early 2023, Somaliland withdrew its forces from the city to prevent violence from escalating.

The Americas was the region with the greatest proportion of high-intensity crises

The greatest causal factors in the region were, in this order, opposition to the government (69%); control of resources (28%), identity-related issues (25%); demands for self-government and self-determination and control of resources (tied at 14% each); and opposition to the system (11%). These percentages are somewhat consistent with those of the previous year, except for identity-related issues (which fell from 30% to 25%), opposition to the government (which decreased from 74% to 69%) and control of resources (which rose from 8% to 14%). Compared to globally aggregated data, some causes were clearly below average, such as demands for self-determination (14% vs. 24%), identity-related disputes (25% vs. 36%) and opposition to the system (11 vs. 22%). On the other hand, 50% of the crises were internal (60% in 2021), 28% were internationalised internal (17% in 2021) and 22% were international (23% in 2021). In all cases, these percentages were very similar to the world average.

The **Americas** reported 16 socio-political crises (15% of the total), four more than in 2021: Jamaica, USA, Brazil and Ecuador. Most of the 16 crises took place in South America (7), followed by Central America (4), the Caribbean (3) and North America (2). Overall, the average intensity of the crises in the region grew compared to the previous year. This is because even though the proportion of maximum-intensity crises was similar to that of the previous year (one third in 2021 and 31% in 2022), the lower-intensity crises fell (from 58% in 2021 to 50% in 2022) and the medium-intensity crises rose (from 8 to 19%). In comparative terms, the Americas was the region with the highest proportion of high-intensity crises (almost one third): Ecuador, Haiti, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela. While Mexico, Haiti and Venezuela had already been considered high-intensity scenarios in 2021 and in previous years, the dynamics of conflict increased significantly in Ecuador and Peru in 2022. In Ecuador, this was due to the dramatic rise in homicides and violence related to drug trafficking, as well as the major protests that took place in the second half of the year. In Peru, it owed to the huge protests that took place in December after the impeachment and arrest of President Pedro Castillo, who was accused of trying to carry out a self-coup. Though the massive demonstrations that took place in Colombia in 2021 warranted reclassifying the crisis as one of maximum intensity last year, the protests and demonstrations faded very significantly in 2022.

The 16 identified causes were linked to opposition to the government's domestic or international policies, as in 2021. Additional factors such as control of resources and identity-related issues were associated with three cases each, while dynamics linked to self-government were behind two other cases and opposition to the system

was a factor in only one case (Cuba). None of the cases in the Americas were related to disputes over control of territory. All the crises in the region were internal, which contrasts with the aggregated data at the international level, according to which approximately half the crises worldwide were of an internal nature.

In **Asia and the Pacific**, there were 33 socio-political crises, 31% of the total worldwide. Compared to 2021, there were nine additional cases: Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan; Tajikistan (Gorno-Badakhshan); Uzbekistan (Karakalpakstan); China-USA; Korea, DPR; Japan-Russia (Kuril Islands); Papua New Guinea; Fiji and Sri Lanka. By subregion, 11 of the crises were in East Asia: China (Xinjiang), China (Tibet), China (Hong Kong), China-Japan, China-Taiwan, Korea, DPR-US, Japan, Rep. of Korea and the South China Sea. Eight were in South Asia; Bangladesh, India, India (Assam), India (Manipur), India (Nagaland), India-China, India-Pakistan and Pakistan. Seven were in Central Asia: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Four were in Southeast Asia: Indonesia (Sulawesi), Indonesia (West Papua), Laos and Thailand. Finally, two were in the Pacific: Papua New Guinea and Fiji. As in previous years, some countries were involved in various socio-political crises, such as China (eight), India (six), Tajikistan (five), Uzbekistan (four) and Indonesia, Japan and South Korea (three). Almost half the crises (49%) were of low intensity, 24% were of medium intensity and the remaining 27% were of high intensity. However, the average intensity of the crises in the region increased significantly compared to 2021, since the maximum intensity crises increased from 8% to 27%, while those of low intensity dropped from 63% to 49%. Consistent with these data, 58% of the crises identified in Asia and the Pacific escalated in 2022 compared to the previous year, while only 18% of them increased in intensity. In fact, over a third of all the socio-political crises in the world that escalated in 2022 took place in Asia. Crises that were considered to be of maximum intensity especially escalated in 2022. Kazakhstan was the scene of a social and political crisis in January, with citizen protests and severe violent crackdowns on them, claiming around 200 lives, making it the deadliest in the country's recent history. The border tension between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan worsened during the year, with armed incidents and a military escalation in September that caused the death of a hundred people and the evacuation of tens of thousands. On the Korean peninsula, the dramatic increase in missile launches by South Korea compared to previous years substantially heightened international concern over Pyongyang's weapons programme and greatly deteriorated relations with Seoul, especially after the election of the new South Korean president. In Sri Lanka, massive protests in Colombo and other cities led to the resignation of the prime minister and later the president, who fled the country. In Pakistan, the dismissal of the prime minister through a vote of no confidence led to intense social protests. In Papua New Guinea, many episodes of community violence and other violence linked to the July elections killed hundreds of people and displaced tens of thousands.

In Asia and the Pacific, 58% of the identified crises escalated in 2022 compared to the previous year, while only 18% lessened in intensity

Regarding the root causes, the most important factors in the region were opposition to the state (42%); opposition to the government and identity issues (39% each factor); control of territory (36%); and demands for self-governance and control of resources (27% each). This distribution of factors is similar to that of 2021, but there was a slight decrease in the importance of opposition to the state (from 50% to 42%) and a noticeable increase in the prevalence of control of territory (from 29% to 36%). Compared to other regions, opposition to the government in Asia was much less important than the world average (39% vs. 69%) or that of some other regions, such as the Americas (100%) and Africa (69%). However, the prevalence of control of territory (36% vs. 19%) was by far the highest in the world. Similarly, 14 crises were linked to opposition to the state or the system, with a prevalence that was practically double the world average, 42% vs. 22%: China (Xinjiang); China (Tibet); China (Hong Kong); China-USA; Korea, DPR-Rep. of Korea; Korea, DPR; India; Indonesia (Sulawesi); Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan; Laos; Pakistan; Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Slightly over one fifth (21%) of the socio-political crises were internationalised internal, significantly less than the previous year, when they accounted for a third. Moreover, while internal crises were 38% of the total crises in Asia and the Pacific in 2021, that percentage rose to almost half (49%) in 2022. The remaining 30% of the crises were international, with Asia being the region with the highest percentage of them. Most of these were in the area between the Yellow Sea and the South China Sea: the dispute between China and Japan (mainly over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands); North Korea's tension with its southern neighbour and various other countries over its weapons programme; strain between China and Taiwan; the dispute between China and the US, which has one of its main theatres in East Asia; the historic dispute between Russia and Japan over the Kuril Islands; and the crisis in the South China Sea involving China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Taiwan, Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam. India was involved in two international crises with bordering countries with whom it maintains a strong historical rivalry (Pakistan and China), while the remaining international crisis was between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Twelve crises were reported in **Europe**, or 11% of the total. Compared to the previous year, two new socio-political crises were identified (Russia and Moldova, whose political dynamics were decisively influenced by

the Russian invasion of Ukraine), while another ceased to be so: Spain (Catalonia). The subregion with the highest number of active cases (5) was Russia and the Caucasus, followed by Southeastern Europe (4) and Eastern Europe (3). In addition to the two crises taking place on its soil, Russia and Russia (North Caucasus), the Russian federation was clearly the country most involved in disputes both in Eastern Europe (Belarus, Moldova and Moldova (Transdniestria) and in the Caucasus (Armenia-Azerbaijan, Georgia (South Ossetia) and Georgia (Abkhazia)). Turkey was an actor in three of the crises in the region: Turkey; Turkey-Greece-Cyprus; and, to a lesser extent, Armenia-Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh).

Eleven of the 12 crises identified in Europe worsened in 2022

Undoubtedly, the most outstanding finding from the analysis of the socio-political crises in this region is that they all worsened in 2022 except one, Russia (North Caucasus), which did not report significant changes compared to the previous year. Therefore, Europe was the region in which there was a higher percentage of cases that worsened in 2022 (92%). The deterioration was linked both to fallout from Russia's invasion of Ukraine and to other local and regional dynamics. Although 55% of the crises were of low intensity in 2021, only 25% were in 2022. Medium-intensity crises rose from 36 to 67%. As in 2021, there was only one high-intensity crisis: Armenia-Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh).

Opposition to the government and identity-related disputes were the causes of 67% of the cases each, followed by demands for self-government and self-determination (58%), opposition to the system and control of territory (17%) and, finally, control of resources (8%). Opposition to the government's domestic or international policies increased compared to the previous year (from 55% to 67%), while demands for self-government decreased in prevalence in the region (from 73% to 58%). Nevertheless, Europe continues to be the region of the world where this cause is the most important by far (the world average is 24%). Similarly, identity-related issues were more important in Europe (67%) than in any other region of the world. In any case, these elements are part of complex contexts of tension inserted in broader and internationalised dynamics in which other factors such as geostrategic disputes and the interests of external actors also have weight, as is the case of Russia in relation to Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Transdniestria and Turkey's influence over the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Fifty-eight per cent of the crises were internationalised internal, 25% were international and 17% were internal, percentages very similar to those of the previous year. The most significant part of this issue is the great disparity between the percentage of internal socio-political crises globally (an average of 52%) and in Europe (17%), with only three cases: Russia, Russia (North Caucasus) and Turkey. Likewise, internationalised internal crises were more than twice as prevalent in Europe (58%) than they were internationally (27%).

Sixty-four per cent of the crises in the Middle East were related to opposition to the government and 46% to identity-based issues

Eleven socio-political crises were identified in the **Middle East**, the same number as last year, which accounts for 10% of the total. Seven of the 11 crises identified were concentrated in the Persian Gulf and the remaining four were in the Mashreq. As happened in other regions, the average tension in the region increased compared to 2021, since medium-intensity crises went from 27 to 36% and those of high intensity from 18% to 27%. In addition to the crises that were already of high intensity in 2021 (Iran-USA, Israel and Israel-Syria-Lebanon), the case of Iran was added in 2022, where the anti-government protests that began in September, in which about 500 people had died by the end of the year, were considered one of the greatest challenges to the regime since 1979. As for the evolution of conflict dynamics, 73% of the crises did not undergo significant changes compared to the previous year, but there were three crises (27%) related to Iran that escalated compared to 2021: Iran, Iran (northwest) and Iran (Sistan Balochistan).

The causes of the crises were very similar to those of the previous year: 64% were related to opposition to the government; 46% to identity-related issues; 27% to demands of self-determination and self-government, as well as to the opposition to the system; and 18% to control of resources and territory. The most prevalent factor in relation to other regions or to the global average was identity-related aspirations (46% in the Middle East and 35% worldwide). As in 2021, 46% of the crises were internationalised internal, 36% internal and 18% international, both of which (Iran-US, Israel and Israel-Syria-Lebanon) were of high intensity.

2.3. Socio-political crises: annual evolution

2.3.1. Africa

Great Lakes and Central Africa

Chad	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government, Resources, Territory, Identity Internal
Main parties:	Transitional Military Council, political and social opposition (including the Wakit Tama coalition, which includes the party Les Transformateurs), Chadian armed groups (including FACT, CCMSR, UFR), the Nigerian armed group Boko Haram, community militias and private militias

Summary:
Often classified as one of the world's most vulnerable countries to climate change, Chad has faced a complex atmosphere of instability and violence for much of the period following independence in 1960. The country's ethnic diversity has cynically been exploited by a tradition of factionalism. French colonialism also exacerbated the animosity between the predominantly Muslim north and the more Christian and animist south, a politically exploited division at the heart of the conflict. Successive governments since 1966 have been confronted by insurgents seeking to gain power. Libya and France have historically been present in Chadian internal affairs, supporting insurgents and governments, respectively. Authoritarian President Hissène Habré (in power since 1982) was deposed by a coup in 1990 by another northerner, Idriss Déby, who has ruled ever since in a climate of repression and violence. Déby amended the Constitution in 2005, which allowed him to become one of the longest-serving leaders in power (1990-2021) but sowed the seed of an insurgency made up of people disaffected with the regime. The opposition boycotted the amendment. Other sources of tension include the antagonism between Arab tribes and black populations in the border area between Sudan and Chad, linked to local grievances, competition for resources and the expansion of the war in the neighbouring Sudanese region of Darfur since 2003. Finally, recent military interventions have been carried out in the north against Libyan-based groups, including the Front for Change and Harmony in Chad (FACT), illegal mining and Boko Haram in the Lake Chad region. The instability worsened with the death of President Idriss Déby in April 2021 and the subsequent coup d'état by a military council that installed his son Mahamat Idriss Déby as the new president. Mahamat Idriss Déby suspended the Constitution and replaced it with a transition charter. He also promised free elections in 18 months after a national dialogue was held.

Chad continued to be immersed in a serious atmosphere of instability and violence.[11] The 18-month transition period adopted in April 2021 by the military junta that seized power through a coup, suspended the Constitution and installed Mahamat Idriss Déby, son of Idriss Déby, as president after his death, has only consolidated Déby's power. During this period between April 2021 and the end of 2022, the military junta has used violence to crack down on dissent and peaceful protests calling for the return of a civilian government. **The Doha peace process and the National, Inclusive and Sovereign Dialogue (DNIS) concluded in October 2022 with the extension of the mandate of the Transitional Military Council (CMT) under the image of a new government, described as one of national unity, and with President Mahamat Déby remaining in power, which has perpetuated the break with the Constitution that began in April 2021.** The CMT's mandate was prolonged starting in October 2022 for a new 24-month period, which will be followed by elections in which Mahamat Déby will be able to run. In October, the Déby regime's continued grip on power triggered rejection of the political and social opposition and the subsequent crackdown by the security forces, causing dozens of fatalities in 2022, which demonstrated the government's authoritarian drift and the desire to silence the political and social opposition with all means at its disposal. The international community's response to the extension of the CMT's mandate laid bare its failure to prevent the authoritarian and repressive drift of the Chadian regime and sent a dangerous message to other countries in the region.

The Committee for the Organisation of the National Inclusive Dialogue (CODNI) was established in June 2021 to prepare for the national dialogue, which was to start in December 2021. However, it was delayed due to disagreements over the members of the CODNI, the inclusiveness of the national dialogue, the interference of the CMT, the participation of the different insurgent groups, the agenda of the subjects for discussion and other issues. Its delay was justified by the desire to make it easier for the insurgent groups to get involved, for which a prior peace agreement between them and the CMT was sought. Formal negotiations began in March 2022 in Doha (Qatar) under Qatari mediation, and after various rounds of negotiations, a peace agreement was reached on 7 August between dozens of insurgent groups in the country and the government. This agreement was the prior step and condition to participate in the National Inclusive and Sovereign Dialogue (DNIS) that the government had been promoting with different civil society groups, which was held between 20 August and 8 October 2022.[12]

Meetings between informal representatives of the CMT and insurgent groups in Togo, Egypt and France, held in 2021, continued with Qatar's offer to facilitate meetings in Doha with the insurgent groups, which

11. For further details on this subject, see Josep Maria Royo, Claves y retos de la transición en Chad (2) esperanzas frustradas con el proceso de paz y el diálogo nacional, Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Apunts ECP de Conflictes i Pau* No. 23, December 2022; Josep Maria Royo, Claves y retos de la transición en Chad (1) Cambio climático, inestabilidad y conflicto, Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Apunts ECP de Conflictes i Pau* No. 19, November 2022.
12. See Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2022: Report on Trends and Scenarios,* Barcelona: Icaria, 2023.

the Chadian political-military opposition praised as a step forward in the process. Previously, the CMT had approved one of the insurgents' main demands, the granting of amnesty as a condition for participating in the national dialogue. In November 2021, Mahamat Déby pardoned around 300 imprisoned or exiled insurgent leaders and political opponents.[13] This gave the CMT an image of openness. As such, the CMT had carried out a policy to win oppositional support by co-opting members of the political and social opposition, including historical opposition leader Saleh Kebzabo (appointed vice chair of the CODNI and prime minister once the DNIS had ended). After various delays, meetings finally began on 13 March 2022 between the representatives of more than 40 insurgent groups and the CMT in Doha, mediated by Qatari Special Envoy Mutlaq bin Majed Al Qahtani.[14] Among these dozens of armed actors, only four represented a real military threat to the Mahamat Déby regime:[15] the Front for Change and Concord in Chad (FACT), the Military Command Council for the Salvation of the Republic (CCSMR), the Union of Forces for Democracy and Development (UFDD) and the Union of Resistance Forces (UFR).

The objective of the negotiating process (described as a pre-dialogue in the DNIS) was to get these armed groups to participate in the DNIS. Finally, after five months of negotiations, 34 of the 52 political-military groups, including the UFDD and the UFR, signed an agreement in Doha on 7 August in exchange for the release of prisoners, amnesty and an end to the hostilities between the government and these armed factions, as well as the participation in the DNIS. Sources for the number of armed groups participating in the Doha process vary, since others cite 47, five of which did not accept the agreement, which is why the United Nations' figures are taken as a reference. The signing of the agreement was attended by regional and international actors, such as the AU and the UN. The mistrust between the parties, the suspensions and the constant deadlock, among other issues, delayed the process. Eighteen armed groups, including the FACT, rejected the agreement,[16] which was called the Doha Peace Agreement and the Participation of the Politico-Military Movements in the Chadian National, Inclusive and Sovereign Dialogue, and formed a new opposition coalition: the Cadre permanent de concertation et de réflexion (CPCR).[17] The CPCR said that it rejected the agreement due to grievances about the participation quotas in the national dialogue, the failure to release prisoners of war and the transitional authorities' ineligibility to run in the post-transition elections, according to the UN Secretary-General's report in December.[18] The FACT said that it feared that the groups participating in the DNIS would not be treated in a similar way and demanded security guarantees, the formation of a new organising committee for the DNIS, the release of the group's prisoners and a commitment from Mahamat Déby to not run in any future presidential elections. Under the agreement, the CMT and hundreds of representatives of the political-military opposition could participate in the DNIS, and the representatives of the rebel groups would have guarantees of access and armed protection. In May 2021, the AU had agreed to support the transition on the conditions that the authorities hold a presidential election within 18 months, that the transition should be completed by October 2022 and that members of the CMT be prohibited from running for election, demanding that the CMT amend the transition charter to include these clauses. However, the CMT did not amend the transition charter as promised, noting that any changes to it should be discussed during the DNIS.

The national dialogue ratified the break with the Constitution begun in April 2021 by Mahamat Déby and his military junta

The DNIS was scheduled to take place in December 2021 and the date was later pushed back to February 2022, but it was repeatedly postponed pending the successful completion of the Doha pre-dialogue to facilitate the participation of the armed groups. Finally, the signing of the Doha agreement on 7 August allowed the implementation of the DNIS. On 20 August, more than 1,400 representatives of political-military movements, representatives of the transitional government, representatives of political parties, civil society organisations, including women's and youth organisations, traditional leaders, diaspora figures, provincial authorities, security forces and state institutions and unions launched the DNIS in N'Djamena with regional and international actors attending. The DNIS was scheduled to last three weeks and was expected to discuss the implementation of institutional reforms and a new Constitution, which should be submitted to a referendum. The FACT, the Wakit Tama coalition of civil society organisations, the opposition party Les Transformateurs and others boycotted the DNIS. The Episcopal Conference of Chad withdrew from the DNIS because it did not consider the dialogue process real.[19] This announcement stoked

13. France24, Chad gives amnesty to hundreds of rebels and dissidents, meeting opposition demand, 29 November 2021.
14. AFP, Qatar takes up mediation role in Chad talks: officials, rebels, *al-Monitor,* 25 March 2022.
15. Toulemonde, Marie, Chad: Mapping the rebellion that killed Idriss Déby, *The Africa Report,* 29 April 2021.
16. Mills, Andrew, Chad signs peace pact with rebels, but main insurgents stay out, *Reuters,* 8 August 2022.
17. Madjissembaye Ngarndinon,Tchad : les groupes armés non signataires de l'accord de Doha mettent en place un cadre commun de lutte, *Tchad Infos,* 8 August 2022.
18. UN Security-Council, The situation in Central Africa and the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, S/2022/896 of 1 December 2022.
19. Atemanke, Jude, Catholic Bishops Withdraw from Chad's National Inclusive Dialogue, Cite Lack of "dialogue", *ACI Africa,* 4 September 2022.

the frustration of various political and social actors who viewed the evolution of the DNIS with concern. They staged various peaceful protests against the DNIS that were harshly put down, as reported by Human Rights Watch and others.

However, on 1 October, the participants in the DNIS approved the recommendations on the path to follow for the transition, including steps to dissolve the CMT and appoint the president of the CMT to lead a 24-month "second transition", to hold a referendum on a modified version of the 1996 Constitution and the form of the state, to double the number of seats in the National Transitional Council and to establish a second chamber of Parliament. In particular, the DNIS recommended that all Chadians who meet the legal requirements be able to run in the next elections (to be held in 2024), including members of the transitional institutions. On 10 October, the president of the CMT, Mahamat Déby, was sworn in as the president of the transition. Days later, he appointed a national unity government headed by former opposition leader and former CODNI Vice Chair Saleh Kebzabo,[20]which included other opposition figures and members of the political-military groups that signed the Doha agreement, such as Tom Erdimi, the leader of the UFR.[21] Various generals close to Déby in the CMT held strategic portfolios.

The 18-month period ended on 20 October, after which CMT President Mahamat Déby was supposed to return power to the civilian authorities. The political and social opposition called for mass protests on 20 October as a consequence of the extension of the mandate of the CMT and its president. The government banned the protests announced for 20 October.[22] The violent crackdown on the protests killed at least 50 people, including at least 10 police officers, and injured around 100, according to the country's new Prime Minister Saleh Kebzabo. A curfew was announced in N'Djamena and three other locations and several political parties were ordered to cease activity. Mahamat Déby accused foreign forces of being behind the protests. The international community condemned the government crackdown and called for respect for human rights and dialogue with the political opposition, but no sanctions were imposed against the Chadian government. According to unconfirmed estimates, more than 100 people may have been killed and hundreds wounded. The violent crackdown on the protests also worsened relations between Qatar and Chad, as Qatar was reluctant to defend the Chadian regime on the international stage.[23] As the main supporter of Mahamat Déby and the main actor in monitoring the implementation of the agreements, Qatar had tried to include the FACT in the agreement, but the events clouded relations between N'Diamena and Doha.

The international community's response to the serious situation in Chad carries a message with serious implications for other countries in the region undergoing processes similar to Chad, such as Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso and even Sudan

The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), which had endorsed the recommendations of the DNIS before the events of 20 October, appointed its president, Congolese national Félix Tshisekedi, to facilitate the Chadian transition and appointed a committee of inquiry. This announcement clashed with the position of the African Union, whose chair, Chadian national Moussa Faki Mahamat, presented a report highly critical of the transitional authorities, in which he demanded that the AU condemn the murder, torture, arrest and arbitrary imprisonment of hundreds of civilians, denounce the "bloody repression", demand "the immediate release of all political prisoners", open an investigation and take action for breaking the promises made, which would include suspending Chad from the bodies of the AU. Moussa Faki noted that such actions were a requirement consistent with the AU's ongoing position in relation to the other four cases of unconstitutional changes of government currently under way in Africa (in Sudan, Mali, Guinea and Burkina Faso).[24]

However, the AU Peace and Security Council, which met on 11 November to study the situation in the country, did not reach the necessary quorum to suspend Chad from the organisation. A trial was held between late November and early December that did not meet international standards, according to the Chadian Bar Association, and sentenced 262 people to prison in relation to the events of 20 October. In early December, another 139 people were released for not receiving prison sentences or for not having been found guilty at trial. The ECCAS commission of inquiry into the events of 20 October visited the country to begin its work on 14 December and the Chadian Bar Association questioned its independence and called for the participation of other international organisations such as the AU and the UN.

20. Olivier, Mathieu, "Tchad : pourquoi Mahamat Idriss Déby Itno a nommé Saleh Kebzabo Premier ministre", *Jeune Afrique,* 12 October 2022.
21. Olivier, Mathieu, "Nouveau gouvernement au Tchad : Mahamat Saleh Annadif aux Affaires étrangères, Tom Erdimi à l'Enseignement supérieur", *Jeune Afrique*, 14 October 2022.
22. *RFI*, "Le Tchad interdit les manifestations marquant la fin initiale de la transition", 20 October 2022
23. *Africa Intelligence*, Communications between N'Djamena and Doha break down, 10 November 2022.
24. *Le Journal de l'Afrique*, Chad: between Moussa Faki and Mahamat Idriss Déby, has war been declared?, 11 November 2022.

DRC-Rwanda	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government, Identity, Resources International
Main parties:	Government of the DRC, government of Rwanda, Rwandan armed group FDLR, pro-Rwandan Congolese armed group M23 (formerly CNDP)

Summary:
The tense relations between the DRC and Rwanda date back to the early 1990s, when Zairian Marshal Mobutu Sese Seko supported the Rwandan regime of Juvenal Habyarimana to stop the offensive of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), an insurgent group led by Paul Kagame, who after the 1994 genocide succeeded in overthrowing the genocidal regime and seized power in Rwanda. In 1996, a rebellion led by Congolese General Laurent Kabila, supported by Rwanda and Uganda, penetrated the DRC to dismantle the refugee camps fleeing the Rwandan genocide from where members of the former Rwandan government and Rwandan Army were being reorganised, and to start the war against Mobutu Sese Seko, the head of the government of Zaire at the time. This rebellion became the First Congo War (1996-1997), which brought Laurent Kabila to power. Later, in 1998, the neighbouring countries that had promoted Kabila withdrew their trust and organised and promoted a new rebellion to try to overthrow the new Congolese leader, both directly and indirectly through armed groups operating from the same countries, especially Rwanda and Uganda. This second stage of the conflict is known as Africa's World War (1998-2003). The signing of various peace agreements between 2002 and 2003 led to the withdrawal of foreign troops, mainly from Rwanda. They argued that they were in Congolese territory to eliminate insurgent groups there, given the Congolese Armed Forces' lack of will to dismantle them, while they also exercised control and plundered the natural resources of the eastern part of the country, directly or through armed groups supervised by them, especially Rwanda. The continued existence of enemy insurgent groups from Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi and of the root causes of the conflict in the DRC at its multiple levels, as well as the failed implementation of the agreements to demobilise these groups, led to the emergence of the M23 in 2012, supported by Rwanda. Despite the signing of a new peace agreement in December 2013, the group reorganised again with Rwandan support in 2021.

During the year, the relationship between the DRC and Rwanda seriously deteriorated as a result of sporadic clashes between the security forces of both countries in the border area and accusations levelled against Rwanda for militarily and logistically supporting the offensive of the armed group March 23 Movement (M23) in North Kivu. The M23's offensive, which it launched in late 2021, may have had Rwanda's support, as the UN said in August, and together with the cross-border bombings and incursions by soldiers from the DRC in Rwanda and from Rwanda in the DRC caused an escalation of tension between the two countries and regional efforts to de-escalate the conflict and to promote contacts leading to peace negotiations between the DRC and the M23 and between the DRC and Rwanda.[25] In August, the UN Group of Experts indicated that it had solid evidence on Rwanda's support for the M23, a group that resumed its activities in November 2021 after practically a decade of inactivity and has conducted a strong offensive, expanding its presence and control of territory in the province of North Kivu since May 2022. Rejected by Rwanda, the report stated that the Rwandan Army had launched military interventions on Congolese soil since November 2021, providing military and logistical support to the M23's actions.

The attempts of the countries of the region to de-escalate the dispute and promote dialogue between the parties were constant, led by Angola under the mandate of the AU. In April, the EAC countries, including the DRC (which joined the organisation in March) approved the deployment of a military mission in eastern DRC starting in August to combat the armed group M23 and to support the government in putting an end to the violence due to the resumption of hostilities by the M23, a decision ratified in June.[26] The deployment became partially effective in November, though with several questions about the members, coordination with MONUSCO, financing and mandate. The DRC vetoed Rwanda's participation in the mission.

Faced with the escalation of the M23 offensive in October, the Congolese government expelled the Rwandan ambassador. On 31 October, thousands of people demonstrated in Goma, the capital of North Kivu, against Rwanda, demanding weapons to fight due to concerns that the armed group could occupy the capital, as it did in 2012, expressing their frustration at international passivity and demanding sanctions from the international community against Rwanda for supporting the M23. Congolese President Félix Tshisekedi and Rwandan Foreign Minister Vincent Biruta later participated in a mini summit on peace and security in the eastern DRC in Luanda on 23 November, calling for an immediate withdrawal of the M23 from the occupied areas in North Kivu and agreeing to a ceasefire that was to come into effect on 25 November, though the M23 did not respect it. The M23 continued to expand its territorial control, committing serious violations of human rights. The actions of the M23 were unanimously condemned by the international community and many countries demanded that Rwanda end its support for the armed group, including the US, France and the EU. The report of the UN Panel of Experts on 16 December found "substantial evidence" that the Rwandan Armed Forces had entered Congolese territory since January 2022, either to reinforce

25. Report of the Secretary-General, Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework Agreement for the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Region, UN Security Council, 4 October 2022.
26. Sam Mendick and Claude Muhindo, East African military force met with scepticism in DR Congo, *The New Humanitarian,* 25 November 2022.

the M23 rebels or to carry out military operations, although Kigali denied the accusations.

At the end of the year, different actions took place that revealed the volatility of the situation. As the M23 persisted in its offensive, a Congolese SU-25 fighter penetrated Rwandan airspace on 7 November and briefly landed at Rubavu Airport in Western province. Kigali did not respond militarily, but it did accuse Kinshasa of provocation. Rwandan troops later killed a Congolese soldier who had crossed the border into Rubavu district on 19 November. On 28 December, Rwanda said that the DRC had once again violated its airspace by flying a jet fighter over its territory. On 24 January 2023, the Rwandan Armed Forces fired missiles at a Congolese jet fighter for allegedly violating Rwandan airspace yet again, urging Kinshasa to stop its aggression. Kinshasa denied that its plane had violated Rwandan airspace, calling the incident an act of war.

Sudan	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↓
Type:	Government Internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition

Summary:
Sudan is immersed in a chronic conflict stemming from the concentration of power and resources in the centre of the country. Apart from the conflicts in the marginalised regions of Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile, the rest of the country also suffers from governance problems stemming from the authoritarian regime of President Omar al-Bashir who came to power in a coup d'état in 1989 and who exercises tight control and repression of dissidents through state security apparatuses. The tense situation in the country was exacerbated by the separation of Southern Sudan in 2011, as it severely affected the economy of the country which was 70% dependent on oil sales, mostly from the south. The Sudanese state's coffers saw their income drastically reduced by the loss of control over the export of oil and, later, by the failure to reach an agreement with South Sudan for its transportation through the pipelines that pass through Sudan. An economic situation with high inflation and the devaluation of the currency contributed to the start of significant protests in the summer of 2012 in several cities in the country that, in early 2019, led to the fall of the al-Bashir regime and the opening of a transitional process.

One year after the military coup of 25 October 2021, which overthrew the transitional government and provoked broad popular protest against the military junta, at the end of the year a framework agreement was reached in which the military promised to give up much of its political power. However, the year began with a new political crisis caused by the resignation of Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, leaving the military in full control of the transition and sparking massive protests that were harshly put down. In response to the crisis, on 8 January the UN Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) announced talks between the parties to try to salvage the transition. Meanwhile, separate negotiations had begun with the parties that signed the 2020 Juba Peace Agreement, civil society organisations and political groups, including factions of the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC) political coalition and the Resistance Committees in the state of Khartoum. However, the country's main pro-democracy alliance, the Forces for Freedom and Change-Central Command (FFC-CC), boycotted the negotiations due to continued police repression. On 10 March, UNITAMS, the African Union and the regional bloc Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) announced a joint intra-Sudan peace initiative to mediate between the military junta and the political opposition to resolve the governance crisis in the country. Known as the Trilateral Mechanism, the initiative was launched in mid-May. Alongside the Trilateral Mechanism, US and Saudi diplomats started informal talks between the military junta and the FFC-CC in June, in what became known as the Quad mediation effort (which includes the US, UK, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates). These additional talks drew criticism from the Trilateral Mechanism, which complained of "outside interference" and accused the Quad countries of publicly supporting it, while undermining it through the parallel negotiating process.

After months of impasse and tensions between the parties, including between the chief of the Sudanese Army and head of the de facto state, General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, on the one hand and the leader of the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), General Mohamed "Hemeti" Dagalo, on the other, talks were resumed in September after the Sudanese Bar Association presented a new draft constitution that provided for the restoration of civil authority during a transition period. Finally, after months of negotiations, on 5 December a framework agreement was reached between the military junta and the main civilian political parties and other civilian forces mostly structured under the main civilian opposition block FFC-CC. In the agreement, the military promised to give up much of its political power and create a civilian transitional government with elections in two years. The transition period will begin with the appointment of the prime minister, nominated by civilians, after the conclusion of the second stage of the negotiations scheduled for early 2023. In that stage, five particularly sensitive issues are expected to be addressed: transitional justice, the reform of the security sector (including the integration of former rebel groups and the RSF into a unified army), the Juba Peace Agreement, the dismantlement of the former regime of Omar al-Bashir and the crisis in eastern Sudan.

Although the new framework agreement was an important step towards ending the political crisis in the country, it continued to pose significant challenges as public opinion and the opposition remained divided; the grassroots Resistance Committees refused to sign it and promised to support the protests in the capital;

three armed groups that had signed the 2020 Juba Peace Agreement rejected the new agreement due to language suggesting that part of the peace agreement could be renegotiated; and other rebel groups that had not signed the Juba Peace Agreement, SLM/A-AW, led by Abdulwahid al-Nur (Darfur) and SPLM-N, headed by Abdulaziz al-Hilu (South Kordofan), also refused to sign the new agreement. Meanwhile, tensions grew between the Sudanese Army and the RSF.

Horn of Africa

Ethiopian	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government Internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition, various armed groups

Summary:
The Ethiopian administration that has governed since 1991 is facing a series of opposition movements that demand advances in the democracy and governability of the country, as well as a greater degree of self-government. The government coalition EPRDF (Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front) is controlled by the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF) party, of the Tigrayan minority, that rules the country with growing authoritarianism with the consent of the Amhara elite. There is discontent in the country with the ethnic federal regime implemented by the EPRDF which has not resolved the national issue and has led to the consolidation of a strong political and social opposition. Along with the demands for the democratization of the institutions, there are political-military sectors that believe that ethnic federalism does not meet their nationalist demands and other sectors, from the ruling classes and present throughout the country, that consider ethnic federalism to be a deterrent to the consolidation of the Nation-State. In the 2005 elections this diverse opposition proved to be a challenge for the EPRDF, who was reluctant to accept genuine multi-party competition, and post-election protests were violently repressed. The following elections (2010, 2015) further limited democratic openness by increasing the verticality of the regime and the repression of the political opposition. The 2009 Counter-Terrorism Act helped decimate the opposition. The attempt since 2014 to carry out the Addis Ababa Master Plan, a plan that provided for the territorial expansion of the capital, Addis Ababa, at the expense of several cities in the Oromiya region, and the organization of the development of the city generated significant protests and deadly repression in the Oromiya region, which contributed to increased tension. Social protests contributed to the resignation of Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn in early 2018 and the appointment of Abiy Ahmed, who undertook a series of reforms –including dissolving the EPRDF coalition and refounding it in December 2019 into a new national party, the Prosperity Party (PP), which shunned ethnic federalism, making the TPLF not want to join– aimed at easing ethnic tensions in the country, promoting national unity and relaxing restrictions on civil liberties. However, the changes introduced by the government of Abiy Ahmed caused tension in the federation, especially between the federal government controlled by the PP and the TPLF, which culminated in the outbreak of an armed conflict between the Ethiopian security forces and the security forces of the Tigray region. This conflict took on regional dimensions due to the involvement of Eritrea. Meanwhile, there was an escalation of violence by the armed group OLA and an increase in repression by security forces in the Oromia region in 2022.

The country remained mired in a serious situation as a result of the impacts of the war between armed actors in the Tigray region and the federal government and its allies,[27] whose intensity decreased as of December as a result of the peace agreement. However, there was a persistent escalation of violence in the Oromia region,[28] as well as recurring outbreaks of intercommunal violence in different parts of the federation, incursions by the Somali armed group al-Shabaab in eastern Ethiopia and growing tension in various regions linked to secessionist movements. Finally, there was a notable improvement in the situation in the al-Fashaga region, on the border with Sudan, as a result of the relaxed relations between Ethiopia and Sudan following months of serious tension.

The political dialogue initiatives announced by the government in early 2022 and welcomed by the international community, which included the release of prominent opponents such as one of the founders of the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front, Sebhat Nega, the leaders of the Oromo Federalist Congress, Jawar Mohammed and Bekele Gerba, and journalist and opposition leader Eskinder Nega, which UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres described as a confidence-building measure, had little effect due to the boycott of different separatist political movements in the country, such as the political parties Oromo Federalist Congress, Oromo Liberation Front and Ogaden National Liberation Front. Meanwhile, the intercommunity violence that periodically shakes different regions of the country was aggravated by the conflict in the Oromia region and its spread to other regions, as well as the growing activities of secessionist groups and counterinsurgency actions by security forces, like in Gambella, Benishangul-Gumuz and other regions. The Gambella Liberation Front, a rebel group from the Gambella region, collaborated with the Oromo Liberation Army armed group in actions against regional security forces. Members of the Oromo community in other regions of the country faced outbreaks of violence and persecution against them, such as in the Southern Nations and Nationalities region (SNNPR), as reported by different local and international human rights organisations. There were also sporadic clashes between the Gumuz People's Democratic Movement and the federal Ethiopian Armed Forces in the Benishangul-Gumuz region. During the year, there

27. See the summary on Ethiopia (Tigray) in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts).
28. See the summary on Ethiopia (Oromia) in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts).

were also sporadic outbreaks of violence and reprisals between groups linked to different religions in different parts of the country.

Another source of tension that has affected Ethiopia in recent years has been the regional dispute linked to the construction of the **Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam** (GERD). In February, Ethiopia said it had started hydroelectric power production in the GERD and in August, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed announced that it had completed the third filling of the reservoir, which had begun in 2020.[29] These announcements were rejected by Sudan and Egypt and Egypt issued a statement to the UN Security Council in late July protesting against Ethiopia's unilateral decisions that could trigger an escalation of tension with serious regional consequences. Finally, the Somali armed group al-Shabaab entered Ethiopia's Somali region in July. The authorities announced the death of over 200 of the group's fighters in different operations. According to various analysts, al-Shabaab is trying to expand its range of action outside Somali territory.

Finally, **in relation to the border dispute between Sudan and Ethiopia, a cause of instability and of sporadic clashes between the two countries since the start of the war in Tigray, relations between Khartoum and Addis Ababa** improved as a result of the meeting between the Ethiopian prime minister and Sudan's de-facto president, General al-Burhan on 15 October in the Ethiopian city of Bahir Dar. Both countries had historically disputed the border region of al-Fashaga (an area of Sudan east of the Atbara River and south of the Tekeze River). Ethiopia never signed a treaty with Sudan about the territory because the government argued that the region fell under Ethiopian control when Sudan declared independence in 1956. Ethiopia had abandoned all claims to al-Fashaga in 2008 as long as Sudan allowed Ethiopian farmers and armed and unarmed activists to remain in the area. With the outbreak of the Tigray War, the tension between Sudan and Ethiopia intensified. Since then and during 2022, there have been sporadic clashes between the Ethiopian and Sudanese security forces and militias on their shared border, which caused dozens of fatalities, as well as Sudan's occupation of disputed territories. After this meeting in October, various meetings were held that culminated in the signing of a cooperation and security agreement on 15 December to resolve the border dispute.

Kenya	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government, System, Resources, Identity, Self-Government Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, ethnic militias, political and social opposition (political parties, civil society organisations), SLDF armed group, Mungiki sect, MRC party, Somali armed group al-Shabaab and al-Shabaab sympathizers in Kenya, ISIS

Summary:
Kenya's politics and economy have been dominated since its independence in 1963 by the KANU party, controlled by the largest community in the country, the Kikuyu, to the detriment of the remaining ethnic groups. Starting in 2002, the client process to succeed the autocratic Daniel Arap Moi (in power for 24 years) was interrupted by the victory of Mwai Kibaki. Since then, different ethno-political conflicts have emerged in the country, which has produced a climate of political violence during the different electoral cycles. The electoral fraud that took place in 2007 sparked an outbreak of violence in which 1,300 people died and some 300,000 were displaced. After this election, a fragile national unity government was formed between Mwai Kibabi and Raila Odinga. A new presidential election in 2013 was won by Uhuru Kenyatta, who was tried by the ICC in connection with the events of 2007, though the court dropped the charges in 2015. In parallel, several areas of the country were affected by inter-community disputes over land ownership, also instigated politically during the electoral period. In addition, Kenya's military intervention in Somalia triggered attacks by the Somali armed group al-Shabaab in Kenya, subsequent animosity towards the Somali population in Kenya and tensions between Kenya and Somalia over their different political agendas, posing added challenges to the stability of the country.

Ethiopia remained mired in a serious situation as a result of the impacts of the wars in Tigray and Oromia across the country

The year was marked by a growing climate of tension and polarisation linked to the electoral process held in August, as well as by ongoing attacks by the Somali armed group al-Shabaab in the east and northeast and the rise in intercommunity violence and crime mainly in the north and centre-north, linked to structural disputes over the use and ownership of land aggravated by the extreme drought resulting from the consequences of climate change. According to data collected by ACLED,[30] 440 violent events (battles, violence against civilians and improvised explosive devices) were reported across the country during 2022, which cost 498 lives. These events were primarily linked to intercommunity violence and attacks by al-Shabaab. If violence connected to protests and riots is added to this figure, there were 1,660 violent events with 698 fatalities, highlighting the instability linked to the electoral process.

29. See "The Nile Basin: cooperation or conflict?" in chapter 5 (Risk Scenarios for 2021) in Escola de Cultura de Pau. *Alert 2021! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding.* Barcelona: Icaria, 2021.
30. ACLED, online. [Viewed on 31 January 2023.]

Clashes and political mobilisation between supporters of President Uhuru Kenyatta, an ally of presidential candidate Raila Odinga, and supporters of fellow presidential candidate Vice President William Ruto were on the rise and reached very worrying levels of violence during the year leading up to the elections in August. Election day was mostly peaceful and electoral observation missions such as that of the EAC confirmed that the process had taken place transparently and freely, though a dozen violent incidents were reported. In the election, William Ruto and his United Democratic Alliance (UDA) party alliance beat Raila Odinga and the Azimio la Umoja coalition, which included outgoing President Uhuru Kenyatta's Jubilee party. Raila Odinga did not accept defeat and announced that he would take all legal action available to him and stage protests and demonstrations throughout the country to challenge the results. The Supreme Court upheld Ruto's victory. Despite the criticism and demonstrations, the new President William Ruto managed to consolidate his power and Uhuru Kenyatta, who was appointed special envoy for the Great Lakes, confirming Ruto's continuity in Kenya's foreign policy, announced that he would facilitate the transfer of power. In October, Ruto dismantled an elite police unit, the Special Service Unit, which had been accused of committing extrajudicial killings. Amnesty International welcomed the decision.

Furthermore, the Somali armed group al-Shabaab continued to carry out attacks against security forces and civilians throughout the year, including with improvised explosive devices against military convoys, mainly in the northeastern and eastern counties (Mandera, Wahir, Garissa and Lamu), killing dozens. In August, the armed group reiterated that it would continue to conduct attacks until the Kenyan troops left Somalia.[31] However, some attacks allegedly carried out by al-Shabaab were in response to intercommunal disputes that had been used cynically for political purposes due to the election. This was the case in Lamu, where although the government blamed al-Shabaab for the violence, local sources said that tension between the Kikuyu and Swahili communities vying for the county governorship was aggravating structural tensions in the county around disputes over land ownership and uses.

The extreme drought affecting the Horn of Africa was highlighted in Kenya by the severity of the humanitarian situation and the deterioration in security resulting from competition for scarce resources. The WFP warned in April that three million people suffered from severe food insecurity as a result of the drought. The northern and north-central counties have seen persistent inter-community disputes over access to land, water and pasture, as well as the proximity of the 2022 general election, which political parties traditionally orchestrate for their own benefit. Cattle rustling, attacks by community militias, reprisals and intervention by security forces were constant throughout the year in Marsabit, Isiolo, Baringo, West Pokot, Elgeyo-Marakwet, Samburu, Turkana, Garissa and Wajir counties. The seriousness of the situation led authorities to declare a curfew in May in Marsabit and Isiolo counties, which was extended for several months and expanded in July to parts of Baringo, Elgeyo-Marakwet and West Pokot counties in an attempt to deal with criminality and intercommunity violence. The Ethiopian insurgent group Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) may also have been using Marsabit county as a support base for its operations in Ethiopia, according to International Crisis Group. The OLA reportedly addressed the government of Kenya, demanding neutrality in the conflict between the OLA and the Ethiopian authorities.[32]

The extreme drought affecting the Horn of Africa was highlighted by the seriousness of the humanitarian situation and the deterioration of the security situation resulting from competition for scarce resources

North Africa – Maghreb

Morocco – Western Sahara	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↓
Type:	Self-government, Identity, Territory International[33]
Main parties:	Morocco, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), armed group POLISARIO Front

Summary:
The roots of the conflict can be traced to the end of Spanish colonial rule in Western Sahara in the mid-1970s. The splitting of the territory between Morocco and Mauritania without taking into account the right to self-determination of the Sahrawi people or the commitment to a referendum on independence in the area led to a large part of the territory being annexed by Rabat, forcing the displacement of thousands of Sahrawi citizens, who sought refuge in Algeria. In 1976, the POLISARIO Front, a nationalist movement, declared a government in exile (the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic - SADR) and launched an armed campaign against Morocco. Both parties accepted a peace plan in 1988 and since 1991 the UN mission in the Sahara, MINURSO, has been monitoring the ceasefire and is responsible for organising a referendum for self-determination in the territory. In 2007 Morocco presented the UN with a plan for the autonomy of Western Sahara but the POLISARIO Front demands a referendum that includes the option of independence.

31. Mohammed Dhaaysane, Al-Shabab Militants Issue New Threats Against Kenya, *VOA*, 28 August 2022.
32. Finfinne News Network, OLF-OLA sends an open letter to the Kenyan government, 11 May 2022.
33. Although Western Sahara is not an internationally recognised state, the tensions between Morocco and Western Sahara are classified as "international" and not internal as this is a territory which is awaiting decolonisation and which is not recognised as belonging to Morocco either under international law or in any United Nations resolution.

After the intensification of tension around Western Sahara in 2021, the violence subsided in 2022. **The ceasefire held on during the year, as it had been in force from 1991 to 2020, and no progress was observed in the search for a negotiated solution to the dispute, despite the diplomatic efforts made by the new UN special envoy for Western Sahara,** Staffan de Mistura.[34] According to the UN Secretary-General's report released last quarter and covering the period from October 2021 to October 2022, the situation in Western Sahara was characterised by low-intensity hostilities between Morocco and the POLISARIO Front. Informal counts based on media reports suggest that the violence could have caused the death of around 20 people in 2022. The dynamics of the dispute continued to be affected by regional tensions between Morocco and Algeria and the change of position of the government of Spain in 2022, which openly aligned itself with the Moroccan initiative to address a political solution to the conflict. The United Nations mission, MINURSO, acknowledged that it could not independently verify the number of violent episodes or the locations where the various exchanges of fire took place (the data is often questioned), but indications suggest that most of the incidents along the berm were concentrated in the northern part of the territory, in the vicinity of Mahbas. Various attacks by Moroccan forces using drones east of the berm were reported throughout the year. According to media reports, drone attacks caused the deaths of three Mauritanian civilians and four members of the POLISARIO Front in January. In April, another similar offensive near the Mauritanian border caused the deaths of three more civilians, two Mauritanians and one Algerian. After this latest episode, the Algerian government accused Morocco of carrying out "selective assassinations" and "repeated acts of terrorism" and warned that the possible collateral effects on Algerian soil of what it described as "warmongering" by Morocco would be considered a casus belli. MINURSO documented 18 attacks by Moroccan forces east of the berm since September 2021, one of which reportedly killed the head of a POLISARIO Front high military command in July. The POLISARIO Front claimed that it had killed a dozen Moroccan soldiers in a series of operations in early February. The UN mission said that the lack of access to the areas near the berm posed great challenges to its observation activities and to the possibilities of verifying the facts on the ground.

These events occurred against a background of reactivation of the diplomatic efforts promoted by the UN after several years in which the post of special envoy for Western Sahara was vacant. Diplomat Staffan de Mistura took office at the end of 2021 and throughout 2022 he made two rounds of visits to the region. De Mistura met with representatives of Morocco, the POLISARIO Front, Algeria and Mauritania. At the same time, he maintained contacts with various international actors interested in and/or with the capacity to influence the evolution of the dispute. At the end of the year, however, the parties remained in their distant positions. Morocco insisted that its autonomy plan is the only possible starting point for a negotiating process. Rabat reaffirmed its availability to resume contacts in a round table format, with the participation of Algeria and Mauritania, as happened in 2018 and 2019 under the auspices of the previous special envoy, Horst Kohler. This format, however, has been expressly rejected by Algeria, which does not want a framework that purports to present the situation as a regional conflict. The POLISARIO Front reiterated its commitment to the self-determination of the Saharawi people through a referendum and stressed that the political blockade and the indifference of the international community had led to the resumption of hostilities and the abandonment of the ceasefire agreement. In addition, during 2022, Spain joined the countries that have publicly expressed their support for Morocco's approach to address the dispute. In May, in a letter addressed to the King of Morocco, the Spanish president stated that the Moroccan autonomy initiative was "the most serious, credible and realistic basis for resolving the dispute", thus opting for an approach that excludes independence as a way to channel the self-determination aspirations of the Saharawi people. The change in position was harshly criticized by the POLISARIO Front and generated a diplomatic crisis between Madrid and Algiers. On the contrary, the Spanish decision made it possible to unfreeze relations with Morocco, deteriorated after the crisis generated in 2021 by the reception in Spanish territory of the leader of the POLISARIO Front to be treated for COVID-19, a fact that then led to diplomatic reprisals by Rabat.

Human rights violations in Western Sahara continued to be a matter of concern in 2022. **Various NGOs reported the mistreatment and torture of Saharawi activists and filed complaints against Morocco before the United Nations Committee against Torture.** For the seventh year in a row, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights was unable to visit to the region, despite many requests and the need to investigate various complaints, such as the disproportionate use of force against demonstrations calling for self-determination, the arbitrary arrest of activists and harassment, threats and violence against human rights defenders, including several women. There was also a warning about a worsening humanitarian situation in the Saharawi refugee camps. A joint report by UNHCR, UNICEF and the UN World Food Programme (WFP) warned of the risks of severe food insecurity and malnutrition as a result of problems in funding aid programmes, the effects of COVID-19 and the global rise in fuel and food prices, including the effects of the war in Ukraine. The UN reported that underfunding had forced the WFP to cut food rations in the Tindouf refugee camps by 80%.

34. See the summary on Morocco-Western Sahara in chapter 2 (Peace negotiations in Africa) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2022: Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2023.

Tunisia	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government, System Internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition, armed groups including the Uqba ibn Nafi Battalion or the Oqba ibn Nafaa Brigades (branch of AQIM), Jund al-Khilafa (branch of ISIS), ISIS

Summary:
From its independence in 1956 until early 2011, Tunisia was governed by only two presidents. For three decades Habib Bourghiba laid the foundations for the authoritarian regime in the country, which Zine Abidine Ben Ali then continued after a coup d'état in 1987. The concentration of power, the persecution of the secular and Islamist political opposition and the iron grip on society that characterised the country's internal situation stood in contrast to its international image of stability. Despite allegations of corruption, electoral fraud and human rights violations, Tunisia was a privileged ally of the West for years. In December 2010, the outbreak of a popular revolt exposed the contradictions of Ben Ali's government, led to its fall in early 2011 and inspired protests against authoritarian governments throughout the Arab world. Since then, Tunisia has been immersed in a bumpy transition that has laid bare the tensions between secular and Islamist groups in the country. At the same time, Tunisia has been the scene of increased activity from armed groups, including branches of AQIM and ISIS.

The authoritarian drift of President Kais Saïed got worse over the course of 2022 as he took a series of actions to strengthen his control over Tunisia and its institutions. These actions sparked demonstrations of discontent and critical reactions from opposition groups throughout the year, despite the government's persecution off dissidents. **In March, Saïed dissolved Parliament for good** (after having suspended it in July of the previous year). Afterwards, the MPs held an online plenary meeting in which they called for the revocation of presidential decrees that have granted almost total authority to the president since 2021. Saïed described the events as a coup and a conspiracy and ordered an investigation against the MPs. The Tunisian president also tightened his control over the judiciary. In February, he had dissolved the High Judicial Council, the body charged with appointing magistrates and overseeing the independence of judges, under accusations of bias and corruption. This council was replaced by a temporary new entity, a part of whose members were appointed directly by the president. Saïed also extended the state of emergency in February until the end of the year, appointed three of the seven members of the new electoral authority in April and dismissed over 50 judges, sparking new protests and strikes in the judiciary. The new Constitution was voted on in this context, following the road map devised by Saïed in 2021. In the opening months of the year, the president had promoted an online consultation on the reforms, which were very limited in scope, then a national dialogue that was boycotted by the main political groups, including the Islamist Ennahda party and the powerful trade union UGTT. The new text, prepared by a panel nominated by the president and made public only three weeks before the vote, was approved on 25 July with 94.6% of the votes and a turnout of 30.5%, though the opposition claimed that real public participation had been even lower. **The new Constitution establishes a presidential system similar to the one that existed in the country before the revolt against the regime of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in 2011** and reduces the power of Parliament.

Parliamentary elections were scheduled for the end of the year, as had been announced in 2021. Three months before they were held, Saïed reformed the electoral law without any kind of discussion or debate, reducing the number of MPs from 217 to 161 and allowing for individual candidates to compete for votes instead of lists. This was interpreted as an attempt to reduce the power and influence of the political parties. **The legislative elections were held on 17 December with a turnout of just 11.2% after many political forces had called for a boycott**. Throughout the year, periodic protests and demonstrations against the government were staged by civil society activists as part of the "Citizens against the coup" movement, by the Islamist party Ennahda and by various other kinds of parties. In April, the formation of a new conglomerate of opposition forces was announced, the National Salvation Front, which brought together five political parties (including Ennahda) and five civil society organisations.

After the December elections, this alliance stressed the president's lack of legitimacy, repeated its rejection of the new Constitution and demanded an early presidential election and the formation of a new government. During 2022, many local and international NGOs, the UN Human Rights Office and some governments blasted the actions taken by Saïed and voiced their **concern about the deteriorating human rights situation in the North African country**. This included restrictions on free speech and the repression of critics and political opponents, including travel bans, arrests and judicial prosecution, in some cases in military courts. Ennahda leader and former speaker of Parliament Rachid Ghannouchi had to appear in court and was charged with various offences, including money laundering and inciting violence. Critics also denounced the security forces' excessive use of force to prevent and/or break up demonstrations and the president's issue of a decree that establishes crimes related to information and communication and that provides for prison sentences of up to 10 years for people convicted of spreading fake news. The NGO Reporters Without Borders said that the decree threatened freedom of the press and was intended to create a climate of fear.

West Africa

Burkina Faso	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition, sectors of the Army

Summary:
A former French colony, Burkina Faso has faced several military coups and many socio-economic challenges since winning independence in 1960. A landlocked country, it Socio-political crises is vulnerable to volatility in global prices for materials like cotton. The period under President Blaise Compaoré, who came to power through a military coup in 1987 and won successive elections, gradually faced numerous sources of tension linked to the lack of human rights, allegations that the country had participated in conflicts in neighboring countries, rising prices, a worsening quality of life for the population and criticism of the president's attempts to remain in power. Protests increased in 2011 and there were several military mutinies, generating a serious crisis of confidence between the government and various groups. In late 2014, Compaoré stepped down amidst widespread public protests against his plans to eliminate presidential term limits and after the Army seized power. Given society's rejection of the military coup, it gave way to a transition process under shared leadership including the Armed Forces. At the end of 2015, after the elections, the country closed the transitional period and returned the institutions to the citizenship. However, the activities of the armed Islamist militancy in the north of the country have escalated in recent years. The deterioration of the security situation in the country due to the regionalisation of the armed conflict that began in northern Mali in 2012 has helped to amplify the political crisis. In this context, Burkina Faso has been hit by various coups in recent years.

The political crisis in Burkina Faso worsened during the year and the country suffered two coups d'état. The year began with a military coup on 24 January that ousted the government headed by Roch Marc Christian Kaboré. He was deposed by Lieutenant Colonel Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba, the leader of the Patriotic Movement for Safeguarding and Restoration (MPSR). Damiba, who had been promoted by Kaboré to the commander of Burkina Faso's third military region just a month earlier, announced that he was dissolving the government and the National Assembly, suspending the Constitution and closing the country's borders. As in other neighbouring countries that had suffered coups, such as Mali and Guinea, the unconstitutional change of government prompted mixed reactions inside and outside the country. Domestically, unlike what happened after a coup attempt in the country in 2015 that sparked major protests, this time there were no demonstrations to defend democratic institutions, largely due to the enormous discontent with the economic situation and the deterioration of security. Internationally, however, it was condemned by the AU, ECOWAS, the UN, the US, France and other actors.[35] The AU and ECOWAS suspended Burkina Faso's membership in their bodies, though they did not impose sanctions, and ECOWAS sent a mediation mission to the country. In February, the military junta approved a three-year transitional period before the elections were held and Lieutenant Colonel Damiba was sworn in as president. The threat of sanctions by ECOWAS forced the military junta to shorten the transition timetable to 24 months starting from 1 July, scheduling a constitutional referendum for late 2024 and general elections for February 2025.

Burkina Faso suffered two coups d'état during the year

The deteriorating security situation in the country[36] and the military junta's inability to contain the violence provoked a second coup d'état months later, on 30 September, which defeated the junta led by Damiba. The leader of the coup, Captain Ibrahim Traoré, the head of an artillery unit of the Burkina Faso Armed Forces, justified it due to the worsening security situation in the country. The coup leaders seized control of state television, closed the borders, imposed a night curfew, announced the dissolution of the transitional government and suspended the Constitution, accusing Damiba of failing to de-escalate the violence rising across the country since took power. Different French buildings were attacked by protesters during the coup, including the French embassy and institutional buildings in Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso, as the protesters accused France of protecting Damiba. On 2 October, Damiba, who had allegedly taken refuge in a French military base, announced that he was officially resigning from office and went into exile in Togo. In response to the new unconstitutional change of government, ECOWAS condemned the coup and called for a return to constitutional order, although again without imposing sanctions against the country. On 5 October, Traoré announced that he would stick to the transition plan established by the previous regime. Later, on 14 and 15 October, the new military junta held a national forum with the representatives of the junta in which Traoré was appointed transitional president and decreed that the country would restore its constitutional order with elections on 2 July 2024. Instability continued in the country until the end of the year and on 1 December the military junta claimed that the Burkinabe Army had blocked a coup attempt.

35. Bajo, Carlos, "Turbulencias en el Sahel: entre los defectos de la democracia y la reivindicación de la soberanía", Actualidad Africana, *El Salto,* 4 February 2022.
36. See the summary on the Western Sahel in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts).

Mali	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	=
Type:	Government Internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition

Summary:
Since its independence from France in 1960, Mali has lived through several periods of instability, including the coup d'état in 1968, a popular and military rebellion in 1991 and the Tuareg insurgency and uprisings since independence, demanding greater political participation and the development of the north of the country. Mali held its first multi-party elections in 1992, although since then several elections have taken place amid opposition criticism concerning the lack of democratic guarantees. The army's influence was apparent in a new attempted coup d'état of 2000, which was foiled. The instability increased once again in 2012 when control of the north was seized by Tuareg and Islamist groups and the government was ousted by a coup d'état. From that moment on, the country's successive governments have faced multiple political, economic and security challenges, with violence persisting in the northern part of the country and spreading to the central region. There was a significant increase in popular protests and demonstrations in 2019, which were followed in 2020 by a coup d'état and the formation of a new transitional government in the country.

The political crisis in the country after the 2020 coup d'état continued during the year and diplomatic relations between the Malian military junta and its traditional allies continued to deteriorate due to discrepancies in the transition period regarding the transfer of power to civilians and the security strategy in the region. The year began with the military junta's announcement that it was postponing the transitional process for five years and scheduling a constitutional referendum for January 2024, legislative elections for November 2025 and a presidential election for December 2026. The announcement was criticised by a coalition of 100 political parties and 60 civil society groups, which called on the interim authorities to respect the September 2020 transition agreement. The West African bloc (ECOWAS) responded by imposing new economic sanctions on the country, froze Mali's assets in the central banks of its member states, stopped financial assistance and announced the closure of the borders between the ECOWAS countries and Mali. The EU also slapped sanctions on the country, in line with decisions made by ECOWAS, while Russia and China blocked the UN Security Council from approving a French-drafted statement endorsing the sanctions. During the year, different demonstrations took place in the capital (Bamako) to protest the French presence and the ECOWAS sanctions and in support of the junta, though there were also protests against the changes in the transition schedule imposed by the military. After various negotiations between the military junta and ECOWAS[37], in June the transitional president, Colonel Assimi Goïta, unilaterally announced a two-year transition period in which a constitutional referendum is expected to be held in March 2023 and a presidential election in February 2024. ECOWAS again questioned the unilateral decision, announcing that it would uphold the talks. In July, at the organisation's summit, the members agreed to lift the economic and financial sanctions against Mali while keeping the individual and diplomatic ones in place and forbade any member of the transitional government from running in the 2024 presidential election. In October, the commission in charge of drafting a new Constitution presented the preliminary draft, which must be submitted to a referendum in March 2023. The text was questioned by a coalition of opposition parties that demanded that the Fundamental Charter be drafted by a democratically elected civilian government.

Another source of political tension in the country was directly related to the **deterioration of the diplomatic relations between the military junta and Mali's former Western allies**, mainly the French government.[38] This deterioration in relations also reflects the Malian government's announcement of a military cooperation agreement with Russia, deploying in the country between 300 and 400 Russian instructors at the beginning of the year. The interim authorities denied any links to the Russian private security company Wagner Group. The most outstanding episodes during the year in the diplomatic crisis included the order to expel the French ambassador from the country; the suspension of military collaboration agreements with France; the termination of the broadcasting permits of the French media outlets RFI and France24; the end of the anti-terrorist Operation Barkhane in the country; the country's withdrawal from Europe's Takuba Task Force; the suspension of the EU missions in Mali (EUCAP and EUTM); tensions with the UN peacekeeping mission (MINUSMA); the withdrawal from Mali of all G5 Sahel bodies, including the joint military force; the ban on French and French-financed NGOs from operating in the country; and the military junta's accusation of having blocked a coup attempt between 11 and 12 May, supposedly orchestrated by a western country.

Nigeria	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Identity, Resources, Government Internal
Main parties:	Government, political opposition, Christian and Muslim communities, livestock and farming communities, community militias, criminal gangs, IMN

37. See Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2022: Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2023.
38. See the summaries on Mali and Western Sahel chapter 1 (Armed conflicts).

Summary:
After gaining its independence in 1960, the inability of the country's successive governments to address issues associated with citizenship, ethnicity, religion and resource distribution has aggravated perceptions of grievances and discontent, leading to the rise of separatist demands in various regions. Moreover, since 1999, when political power was returned to civilian hands after a succession of dictatorships and coups, the government has not managed to establish a stable democratic system in the country. Huge economic and social differences remain between the states that make up Nigeria, due to the lack of real decentralisation, and between the various social strata, which fosters instability and outbreaks of violence. Moreover, strong inter-religious, inter-ethnic and political differences continue to fuel violence throughout the country. Political corruption and the lack of transparency are the other main stumbling blocks to democracy in Nigeria. Mafia-like practices and the use of political assassination as an electoral strategy have prevented the free exercise of the population's right to vote, leading to increasing discontent and fraudulent practices. At the same time, the actions of criminal groups in the northwestern part of the country, caused by different factors, have multiplied since 2018.

There was a rise in political violence and criminal violence in Nigeria, primarily as a consequence of the upcoming presidential and legislative elections in February 2023 and the persistent increase in violence in 2022 by criminal groups in the northwestern part of the country, while the conflict in that region and in the Lake Chad basin maintained levels of violence similar to those of 2021.[39] Added to this was the ongoing intercommunity violence between ranchers and farmers in the central belt of the country, as well as the continuous fighting and insurgent activity in the state of Biafra.[40] The 2023 elections mark 24 years of uninterrupted democracy, the longest period since independence, though they will take place amid a general atmosphere of insecurity and violence committed by multiple actors across the country. Around 20 of the 36 federal states in the country were seriously affected by this violence in 2022. Research centres like International Crisis Group and ACLED indicated that there were more than 10,000 fatalities linked to the criminal and insurgent violence across the country in 2022. Massive vote buying would deeply compromise the integrity of the election and undermine confidence in the result, the International Crisis Group stated in December.[41]

In their efforts to disrupt government actions, such as elections, which they view a Western imposition, the armed Islamist groups BH, Ansaru and ISWAP established enclaves in various parts of the states of Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna and Niger, where they increasingly carried out armed actions in 2022.[42] In the northwest, there were also over a hundred criminal gang groups engaged in kidnapping, looting and arson to undermine the Nigerian government. In previous years, the federal government had carried out initiatives that failed, such as ground and air military operations against the bases of these criminal groups, telecommunications blackouts and restrictions on access to fuel and food supplies, as well as limitations on the movement of livestock and moves to slash hours or close markets as ways to put pressure on criminal groups. Faced with the failure of actions taken in previous years in Zamfara, one of the states most affected by the violence, the authorities tried to promote peace agreements, pardons and other incentives, such as an agreement with the powerful warlord Bello Turji, formerly a rancher, though the results were mixed. This violence increased during the year, following the trend of previous years, and was exacerbated as the upcoming elections grew nearer due to the cynical use of criminal and political violence by the contending actors. Furthermore, according to various analysts, the possibility of criminal and Islamist groups coordinating to disrupt or at least hinder the elections remains high, and both groups already work together when doing so is of mutual interest.[43]

As violence and insecurity escalated in Nigeria, various pro-government non-state armed actors emerged that could be used politically in the context of the upcoming elections

Various pro-government non-state armed actors emerged under the pretext of addressing insecurity, claiming that they wanted to maintain law and order. Some, such as Amotekun in the southwest, Ebubeagu in the southeast and the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in the northeast were backed by the government and its governors.[44] According to various analysts, these groups were poorly trained and could be used politically in the context of the upcoming elections. At the end of the year, complaints arose about abuse by these militias and pro-government paramilitary groups, such as acts of intimidation. The use of paramilitary groups and self-defence militias funded or organised by governors and local politicians has been a historical constant in Nigeria.

In the four northwestern states of the country (Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna and Niger), acts of violence caused 4,480 deaths, according to ACLED (though the figure would rise to 4,655 if Sokoto were included). However, this death toll must be relativised given the difficulties in distinguishing the actions of these groups of criminal gangs from other dynamics of violence due to the many different actors, including criminal groups, security forces, armed jihadist actors, groups linked to ranching communities and civilian self-defence militias.

39. See the summary on Lake Chad (Boko Haram) in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts).
40. See the summary on Nigeria (Biafra) in this chapter.
41. International Crisis Group, Countdown Begins to Nigeria's Crucial 2023 Elections, 23 December 2022.
42. See the summary on the armed conflict in the Lake Chad region in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts).
43. Idayat Hassan, The insecurity ahead of Nigeria's 2023 elections is unprecedented, *African Arguments,* 21 December 2022.
44. Op. cit.

Nigeria (Biafra)	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	=
Type:	Identity, Self-government Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, MASSOB separatist organisations, IPOB (which has an armed wing, the ESN)

Summary:
After winning its independence in 1960, Nigeria has faced the challenge of bringing together the different ethnic nationalities. The most paradigmatic example was the civil war between the government and the self-proclaimed Republic of Biafra (1967-1970), in which between one and three million people died. After three decades of military rule, the advent of democracy in 1999 gave rise to new expectations that the various identities could be accommodated and demands for political restructuring that have not come true, fuelling separatist grievances. In this context, demands for self-determination have resurfaced in the southeastern part of the country—known as Biafra by separatist movements—through nonviolent organisations, mainly with the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), created in 1999, then by other secessionist movements, including the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), created in 2012. The rise to power of Muhammadu Buhari in 2015, perceived as a threat in the southern regions, has contributed to a rise in tension. The imprisonment in 2015 of IPOB leader Nnamdi Kanu caused an increase in demonstrations that were harshly repressed by the Nigerian security forces, which have since launched a campaign of violence and extrajudicial executions. This situation worsened with the banning of the IPOB in 2017 and the increase in violence in the second half of 2020, especially in light of the IPOB ban.

Clashes between Nigerian security forces and insurgents continued in southeastern Nigeria, in addition to military operations that killed dozens. The armed wing of the IPOB independence movement, the Eastern Security Network (ESN), continued to carry out armed actions throughout the year. According to the ACLED research centre, there were 703 violent events in 2022 (battles, violence against civilians and improvised explosive devices) that claimed the lives of 985 people in the 10 states that make up the Biafra region (Enugu, Anambra, Ebonyi, Imo, Abia, Rivers, Bayelsa, Akwa Ibom, Delta and Cross River, though most of the deaths linked to the conflict occurred in the first five, where the Ibo community forms the majority). This figure included the violence linked to the armed conflict in Biafra between the government and armed pro-independence groups, as well as the many attacks in that state committed by criminal groups and intercommunity clashes over land use and ownership and access to water, which killed hundreds.

The atmosphere of instability and the recurrence of military operations that killed dozens during the year, as well as attacks against police stations and military detachments, were a serious obstacle to the development of the presidential and parliamentary elections in February 2023, since the ESN was behind the attacks against staff and infrastructure of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Notably, on 13 October, the Abuja Court of Appeal dropped all charges against IPOB leader Nnamdi Kanu. Kanu had sued the public prosecutor and President Buhari over his arrest in March. The court found that procedural irregularities had taken place and ruled that his arrest and extradition were illegal. Kanu had been arrested in June 2021 in Kenya and extradited to Nigeria on charges of sedition, incitement to ethnic hatred and treason. Since then, protests and demonstrations demanding his release intensified, in addition to different complaints of human rights violations by the Nigerian Security Forces (NSF). Nevertheless, the government appealed the ruling on 19 October and Kanu remained in police custody.

2.3.2. America

North America, Central America and the Caribbean

El Salvador	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↓
Type:	Government Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition, organised crime groups

Summary:
After the end of the Salvadoran Civil War (1980-1992), which claimed around 75,000 lives, the situation in El Salvador has been characterised by high levels of poverty and inequality, the proliferation of gangs of youths and other organised crime structures and high homicide rates that have made the country one of the most violent in the region and the world. A truce with the gangs was achieved during the government of Mauricio Funes (2009-2014), which led to a significant drop in the homicide rate, but the inauguration of Sánchez Cerén in 2015 was followed by a tightening of security policies and a substantial rise in levels of violence, resulting in a crisis of defencelessness and the forced displacement of thousands of people.

The Salvadoran government reported the lowest number of homicides in the country's recent history, but some civil society organisations questioned the veracity of such figures while also complaining that the imposition of the state of emergency since late March had led to many human rights violations, including the arrest of over 61,000 people. In late December, the government said that 495 homicides were reported in 2022 and that the homicide rate per 100,000 inhabitants was 7.8. According to official statistics, the homicide rate was 106.3 in 2015. Since then, it has gradually fallen until reaching a record low in 2022, well under the rate of 18.1 in 2021. The Salvadoran government claims that the implementation of its plan to fight the gangs

(called "Territorial Control") has helped to substantially bring down the homicide rate after Nayib Bukele came to power in mid-2019, since it dropped from 53 in 2018 to 38 in 2019. At the end of the year, the government stated that its application of the fifth stage of the "Territorial Control Plan" had not only drastically driven down the number of homicides, but had also greatly weakened the main gangs in the country by the end of 2022, especially Mara Salvatrucha or MS13, to include the seizure of thousands of weapons and the arrest of around 900 gang leaders. However, various civil society organisations and the media questioned the homicide rate published by the government and the reasons behind the drop in crime rates in the country. According to them, the Bukele government has shown little transparency regarding official crime data in El Salvador and has changed the definition of homicide for its own benefit, excluding alleged gang members and suspects of crimes killed in clashes with the security forces or in prison from the official count. During the year, there were also significant discrepancies between the State Prosecutor's Office and the Institute of Legal Medicine regarding the statistics of corpses found in mass graves and the government denied access to such data to the media. Along the same lines, the government militarised the Institute of Legal Medicine in June. As a result, during the second half of the year the institute's data on homicides in the country were murky, despite traditionally being one of the most reliable sources on the matter. Some organisations and analysts in the country said that the nationwide drop in crime was not mainly due to the effectiveness of government operations against the gangs, but rather to clandestine negotiations between the government and certain organised crime leaders to achieve better prison conditions and the release or non-extradition of certain gang leaders to the US. In this regard, several media outlets continued to publish regularly about the alleged links and contacts between government officials and the country's main gangs during the year. For example, media outlets reported that some organised crime groups had been burying corpses in mass graves with the government's knowledge. Finally, **some civil society organisations reported a dramatic rise in the number of disappeared persons** and warned that the number of disappearances in El Salvador since 2019 was higher than the number of homicides. For example, Central American University's University Observatory of Human Rights said that according to police data, there had been 4,060 disappearances between January 2020 and June 2022, of which only 1,309 were still under investigation. Along the same lines, organisations that are members of the Working Group for Disappearances declared that 577 people had disappeared in the first five months of the year alone. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights also deplored this increase in the number of disappearances and urged the government to take action to prevent them.

Over 61,000 people were detained in El Salvador after a state of emergency was imposed in late March

The issue that sparked the greatest number of protests in the country and international complaints was the imposition of the state of emergency in late March and its monthly extension throughout the year after 87 homicides were reported on two consecutive days. In late December, **the government acknowledged that over 61,300 people had been arrested since then** and that around 3,300 had been released, as there was no proof that they had been involved in any crime. In August, the Institute of Legal Medicine declared that 73 people had died in police custody since late March, while Central American University's Observatory of Human Rights said that it had received complaints of 306 cases of torture in the same period. In early October, the Ombudsman's Office declared that it had received nearly 4,800 complaints for human violations and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the United Nations Committee against Torture reported many cases of arbitrary detention. Despite the criticism and complaints against the state of emergency, it was renewed monthly throughout the year. In September, Nayib Bukele announced that he would run for re-election in 2024, making him the first president to do so since the restoration of democracy. Until now, the Salvadoran Constitution had prohibited two consecutive presidential terms, but in 2021 the Constitutional Court, which had been appointed by the ruling party, ruled that Bukele could run for re-election. This decision sparked some protests during the year, though they were not massive, as well as criticism from some civil society organisations that believe that Bukele is leading the country towards authoritarianism.

Haiti	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition, organised crime groups

Summary:
The current crisis affecting the country, with mass protests and numerous episodes of violence recorded in 2019, is linked to the accusations of corruption, electoral fraud and negligence in the action of the Government of President Jovenel Moïse. However, the situation of institutional paralysis, economic fragility and socio-political crisis began to worsen after the forced departure from the country of former President Jean Bertrand Aristide in February 2004, who avoided an armed conflict with the rebel group that had taken over much of the country. Since then, the deployment of a Multinational Interim Force and later of a UN peacekeeping mission (MINUSTAH, replaced by MINUJUSTH in 2017 and by BINUH in 2019) and the greater involvement and coordination of the international community in normalising the situation in the country have led to progress in certain areas of its governance, but have

not succeeded in achieving political, social and economic stability, nor have they reduced the high levels of corruption, poverty, social exclusion and crime rates, or completely eliminated the control held by armed gangs in certain urban areas of the country.

The political crisis and institutional impasse gripping Haiti, the unprecedented rise in violence, the growing geographical control of parts of the capital by many different armed groups and a cholera outbreak that affected more than 20,000 people in two months caused a serious humanitarian crisis and led to a discussion at the United Nations about possible military intervention. In December, the United Nations noted that several of the estimated 200 armed gangs operating in the country controlled 60% of the capital, where one third of Haiti's population lives. The United Nations warned that this had exacerbated the economic and humanitarian emergency, estimating that 90% of the population lived on less than seven dollars per day, that half the population suffered from food insecurity and that around 20,000 people faced the risk of starvation or famine. According to the United Nations, around 155,000 people had been forced to leave their homes in 2022 due to violence and insecurity, which also caused the massive closure of schools (at the end of the year, only approximately half were operating) and disrupted health services. In late 2022, it was estimated that the cholera outbreak that was detected in early October had affected over 20,000 people and caused the death of 376. More than 800,000 cases and 9,000 deaths from cholera were reported between 2010 and 2019. Faced with this situation, in mid-November the United Nations made an emergency appeal for 145 million dollars.

The Haitian government requested the immediate deployment of an international force that could end the violence carried out by the armed groups and mitigate its humanitarian consequences

Both the United Nations and the Haitian government stated that the activity of the many armed groups in the country had reached unprecedented levels during 2022, substantially driving up the number of homicides, kidnappings and cases of sexual violence. For example, the United Nations warned that over 1,200 kidnappings had been reported, over double the number in 2021 (which in turn had experienced a noticeable rise compared to previous years). The government did not publish official data, but at the end of the year, the organisation Colectivo Défenser Plus indicated that there had been 2,769 intentional homicides in the capital alone. In early July, the United Nations declared that there had been 934 murders and 680 kidnappings connected with armed gang violence in the first six months of the year. Along the same lines, according to the International Crisis Group, clashes between armed groups in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area between May and July had caused the deaths of almost 500 people, most of them civilians. While there had been many anti-government demonstrations due to the high rates of insecurity in the first half of the year, they became more massive and widespread starting in late August. In mid-September, shortly after the government announced a significant drop in fuel subsidies, there were many demonstrations in most of the cities of the country that caused the massive closure of shops, some embassies and the border by the Dominican Republic, which early in the year began to build a border wall to stop the flow of undocumented people. There were also many clashes between the police and protesters, in which at least 10 people lost their lives in the first days of the protests alone. The situation became even more complex on 17 September when the main armed group operating in the capital, the G9, forcibly seized the Varreux oil terminal, which contains 70% of the country's oil reserves, and announced its intention to block its supply until Prime Minister Ariel Henry resigned. The blockade of the terminal lasted almost two months and caused fuel shortages throughout the country, triggering new protests and riots, paralysing a large part of the country and significantly disrupting the operation of hospitals and the distribution of drinking water, which in turn exacerbated the population's already fragile humanitarian situation and accelerated the spread of cholera.

Faced with this situation, in early October the government requested the immediate deployment of an international specialised armed force that could end the violence conducted by the armed groups and mitigate its humanitarian consequences. Shortly thereafter, **UN Secretary-General António Guterres asked the Security Council to temporarily deploy a rapid action force**, which would withdraw from the country once the government had regained control of its basic infrastructure, followed by the deployment of a mission to support the Haitian National Police in their fight against the armed groups. In mid-October, the UN Security Council passed a resolution that imposed sanctions, movement restrictions and a weapons embargo on the leaders and collaborators of certain armed groups. It also began discussions on a draft resolution submitted by the US and Mexico that proposed the deployment of an international mission, but not under the umbrella and mandate of the United Nations. By the end of the year, it had not been approved. In November and December, the US and Canada imposed additional sanctions on some political leaders and the prime minister of Canada even declared publicly that his country would be willing to lead an international mission. However, many political parties in Haiti were reluctant or opposed to such a proposal, with some considering it unacceptable from the point of view of national sovereignty and others because they thought that it could bolster the legitimacy of Ariel Henry's government. Many of the politicians

and civil society organisations in Haiti consider Henry's government illegal because they believe that his term should have ended on 7 February 2022, the same day that the term of former President Jovenel Moïse would have ended. Moïse was assassinated in July 2021. In fact, the country's main opposition platform, the Montana Accord, proposed a political transition in the country. Given the government's refusal to negotiate, at the beginning of the year the Montana Accord elected an alternative president and prime minister. However, Henry maintained that the only solution to the institutional impasse in the country was via new elections, which should originally have been held in October 2019, but there was no proposed date for them at the end of 2022, either due to the lack of agreement on the composition of the electoral body or to the violence and insecurity in the country.

Mexico	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	=
Type:	Government, Resources Internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition, organised crime groups

Summary:
Since 2006, when Felipe Calderón started the so-called "war on drug-trafficking", the level of violence and human rights' violations throughout the country increased substantially making the country one of the ones with most murders in the world. Since then, the number of organized crime structures with ties to drug trafficking have multiplied. In some parts of the country, these structures are disputing the State's monopoly on violence. According to some estimates, by the end of 2017, the "war against drug-trafficking" had caused more than 150,000 deaths and more than 30,000 disappearances. Also, Mexico has insurgency movements in States such as Guerrero and Oaxaca –including the EPR, the ERPI or the FAR-LP. In Chiapas, after a short-lived armed uprising of the EZLN in 1994, conflict is still present in Zapatista communities.

The number of homicides fell slightly in 2022, but many forced disappearances continued to be reported and some international organisations considered Mexico the country with the most murdered journalists and land and environmental activists. According to data from the Ministry of Security and Citizen Protection, in 2022 there were 30,968 intentional murders, a 7.1% drop compared to the previous year (33,350 homicides). According to the government, it is the third consecutive year in which the number of homicides had fallen (34,718 were reported in 2019 and 34,563 in 2020). During the term of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, there have already been over 140,000 homicides and since 2006, when Felipe Calderón started the "war against drug trafficking", there have been more than 340,000. Nearly half the homicides in the country are concentrated in six states: Guanajuato, Baja California, Michoacán, Estado de México, Chihuahua and Jalisco. According to a statement made by the president in the middle of the year, 75% of the homicides reported in the country are attributable to clashes between rival drug cartels. According to government statistics, there were 3,450 murders of women in 2022, of which 858 were classified as femicides and 2,592 as intentional homicides. Estado de México was the state with the highest number of femicides (131), followed by Nuevo León (85), Ciudad de México (70), Veracruz (63) and Chiapas (42). Meanwhile, according to a report by Reporters without Borders, Mexico was the country with the most murdered journalists in the world for the fourth year in a row. Eleven murders were reported in 2022 and 80 over the last 10 years. According to the human rights organisation Article 19, 17 communication professionals were murdered in 2022, 12 of them directly for exercising their profession, making it the deadliest year for journalists since records have been kept. Article 19 also denounced the deterioration of press freedom in the country and the high levels of impunity for this type of crime. Mexico also continued to be the country with the highest number of murders of land and environmental activists for the third consecutive year. According to a Global Witness report published in September, but with data from 2021, 54 people were murdered that year, many more than in 2020 (30). This figure is much higher than in the rest of the countries with the highest numbers of murdered environmental activists, such as Colombia (33), Brazil (26), the Philippines (19) and India (14). Half the victims in Mexico were indigenous and two thirds of the cases were linked to conflicts over land and mining. Indeed, two states with significant mining activity, Oaxaca and Sonora, accounted for approximately two thirds of the murders. The Global Witness report also noted that 19 environmental activists disappeared in 2021. As such, Mexico was also one of the countries with the highest number of forced disappearances in the world. According to the Ministry of the Interior's National Registry of Missing and Unlocated Persons, 109,516 people were missing at the end of 2022. Jalisco was the state with the highest number of cases (15,038), followed by Estado de México (11,868), Veracruz (7,438), Nuevo León (6,250) and Sinaloa (5,664). In 2022, around 9,500 disappearances were reported, which comes out to about 26 every day. This figure is somewhat lower than that of 2021 (10,400, about 28 per day), but under the government of López Obrador, 38,186 cases have already been reported, a figure that is already higher than that of the administrations of Peña Nieto (36,064) and Felipe Calderón (17,095), with two years left until the end of López Obrador's term. Given this finding, his government argues that the main explanation for the exponential increase in cases after he took office (from 419 cases in 2018 to 9,772 in 2019) is due to issues of definition and methodology and the current administration's political desire to find missing persons.

Since the registration of disappeared persons began in 1969, more than 269,000 people have disappeared in Mexico, although 98% of these disappearances have taken place since 2006, when Felipe Calderón began the "war against drug trafficking". In the same period, over 8,200 bodies have been found in mass graves, but they are not counted as homicides, because they cannot be identified (it is estimated that there are more than 52,000 unidentified bodies).

In 2022, the main acts of violence were attributed to clashes between drug cartels. López Obrador stated that the states with the highest homicide rates were those in which several different criminal groups fought to control territory, while states in which a single cartel exercised predominant control had clearly lower levels of violence. According to a report issued by the US Congressional Research Service, much of the violence in the country is due to the activity of 12 large organisations devoted mainly to drug trafficking, seven of them older (the Sinaloa Cartel, Los Zetas, the Tijuana Cartel, the Juárez Cartel (the Carrillo Fuentes Organisation), the Beltrán Leyva Cartel, the Gulf Cartel and La Familia Michoacana) and five more recently created (such as the Jalisco Nuevo Generación Cartel, created in 2011) or of a smaller territorial scope (such as Los Rojos, a Beltrán Leyva splinter group, Los Caballeros Templarios and Los Viagras). According to another report from the Centre for Economic Research and Teaching (CIDE), there are at least 150 organised crime gangs in Mexico, most of them allied or funded by the two most important: the Sinaloa Cartel and the Jalisco Nueva Generación Cartel (CJNG). According to the report, the former has a significant presence in 14 of the country's 32 states, while the latter exercises control in 23 states. According to the US congressional report, the Sinaloa Cartel controls Durango and Sinaloa and is immersed in a fierce struggle with the Juárez Cartel in Chihuahua, while the Jalisco Nueva Generación Cartel dominates Baja California Sur, Nayarit, Jalisco, Colima and Querétaro and fights with other organisations in Baja California, Sonora, Zacatecas, Michoacán, Estado de México, Morelos, Oaxaca, Veracruz, Quintana Roo and Tabasco. Moreover, according to the US congressional report, Los Zetas and the Gulf Cartel are ferocious rivals in San Luis Potosí, Nuevo León, Tamaulipas and Coahuila. After the CJNG and the Sinaloa Cartel, the criminal organisation with the third-largest territorial extent is the Gulf Cartel, active in the eastern parts of the country. Both reports state that the number of illegal armed groups operating in the country has soared since 2006. Along the same lines, the International Crisis Group research centre reports that 543 armed groups have been documented between mid-2009 and the end of 2020, the vast majority of them strictly criminal in nature and in some cases politically motivated. According to this report, 107 were splinter groups that broke off from larger or older groups and 212 had some kind of (often fragile) alliance with the largest criminal organisations. According to the UNHCR, the number of people internally displaced by violence between rival armed groups has risen dramatically in recent years. According to data from the Mexican Commission for the Defence and Promotion of Human Rights (CMDPDH), there were 28,867 new displacements due to violence in 2021, a third more than in 2020 (9,714) and 2019 (8,664). The states most affected were Chiapas, Chihuahua, Guerrero, Michoacán, Oaxaca, Tamaulipas, Zacatecas and Jalisco.

Finally, **several national and international organisations rejected what they consider to be the growing militarisation of public security by the government of López Obrador** during the year. At the end of the year, the Chamber of Deputies, the Senate and at least 20 of the 32 state congresses passed a constitutional amendment so the Mexican Armed Forces can take responsibility for public security until 2028 instead of 2024. Along the same lines, there were several protests against the government's intention to integrate the National Guard into the Ministry of Defence. López Obrador had created the National Guard to combat organised crime in 2019. However, by the end of the year, this integration had not happened because a federal judge ordered its provisional suspension on the grounds that it was unconstitutional.

South America

Ecuador	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government, Resources Internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition, organised crime groups

Summary:
In recent years, Ecuador has experienced one of the sharpest rises in violence in all of Latin America. In 2022, the government reported that the homicide rate had multiplied by almost five since 2017 and that over 80% of the murders in the country are linked to drug trafficking. Although Ecuador has historically been a transit point for illicit drugs, some analysts indicate that the country is steadily playing a more prominent role in the international drug supply chain, especially for cocaine, including more participation in the storage, processing, production and international distribution of narcotics, mainly through Pacific routes (a significant percentage of the homicides takes place in the coastal city of Guayaquil) and the Amazon, thanks to its border with Brazil. The situation has led to a substantial increase in clashes for the control of strategic places and routes between local organised crime groups (such as Los Lobos, Los Choneros and Los Lagartos), Mexican cartels (especially the Sinaloa Cartel and the Jalisco New Generation Cartel), dissident factions of the FARC (such as the Oliver Sinisterra Front and the Urías Rondón column) and international criminal organisations.

In addition to wide-ranging protests and an attempted ouster of the president, Ecuador reported the highest homicide rate in its recent history in 2022, twice as high as the previous year. Between 2020 and 2021, the number of homicides had already increased by 180%. According to official government data, there were 4,539 violent deaths and a homicide rate of 25.5 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2022. This rate has multiplied by five since 2017, when it was 5.8, and has almost doubled since 2021, when it was 13.7. Approximately one third of the homicides in the country were concentrated in Zone 8 of the province of Guayas, which includes Durán, Samborondón and Guayaquil, the second most populous city in Ecuador and one of the most economically active. The second largest focus of violence was the province of Esmeraldas, located near the border with Colombia. In the city of Esmeraldas, the homicide rate was 77 per 100,000 inhabitants, while in Guayaquil it was 46.6. At the end of the year, the government declared that there had been 273 femicides, the highest number in the country's history. According to the Latin American Association for Alternative Development (ALDEA), 1,317 women and girls were reportedly killed due to sexist violence between January 2014 and 15 November 2022.

In Ecuador, the homicide rate has multiplied by five since 2017, largely due to the increase in activity linked to drug trafficking

The government declared that 83% of the violent deaths reported in the country are related to control of the distribution and export of drugs, especially cocaine, and warned that organised crime was becoming a state within the state. According to the research centre International Crisis Group (ICG), Ecuador has historically been a major transit point for illicit drugs, but the rise in coca and cocaine production in Colombia and some changes in the global dynamics of drug trafficking have given rise to the growing participation of organised crime in the production, processing, storage and transport of narcotic drugs. According to the ICG, Mexican cartels and Colombian criminal groups have recently outsourced more of certain parts of the supply chain to Ecuadorian groups. According to official sources, over one third of the approximately 32,000 inmates in the country, which quadrupled between 2009 and 2021, belong to an organised crime network. In July, Human Rights Watch reported that drug trafficking controls a large part of the country's prison system and that many inmates, including those in pretrial detention, are forced to work or collaborate with organised crime groups for their safety. There has recently been a substantial increase in riots and clashes in the country's prisons. Although the number of inmates who died in such episodes of violence (around 100) fell in 2022 compared to the previous year, more than 450 inmates have died and several hundred others have been injured since 2022. In November, various armed gangs launched 18 simultaneous attacks in the cities of Guayaquil and Esmeraldas shortly after the government ordered the transfer of around 1,000 inmates from a prison in Guayaquil to other detention centres controlled by rival gangs. The ICG noted that half the 145 bomb attacks that had been reported across the country until mid-August had occurred in Guayaquil. On 14 August, five people died and another 17 were injured when an improvised explosive device was detonated in Guayaquil in an attack that the government blamed on organised crime groups and that the Minister of the Interior described as a declaration of war against the state. President Guillermo Lasso imposed a state of emergency for the sixth time since he took office in May 2021.

In addition to the spike in violence and the activity linked to drug trafficking, **there were protests in various parts of the country in June during which at least seven people were killed and around 650 (including more than 200 police officers and about 100 soldiers) were injured**. These protests, also known as the National Strike, were called and led by the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) to protest the high price of fuel and other products, the instability of the public health system, high levels of unemployment, high levels of insecurity and the activity of oil and mining companies in certain parts of the country. Given the magnitude of the protests, which caused many roadblocks and shortages in a large part of the country, the government decreed a state of emergency in the areas most affected by them and a curfew in the capital. During the 14 days in which the protests were most intense, and under the protection of the state of emergency, the Ecuadorian Armed Forces carried out almost 3,000 military operations in various parts of the country. In this context, on 25 and 26 June, the opposition presented a motion to dismiss Lasso in the National Assembly, but only got 80 of the 92 votes needed for it to be approved. In late June, the government and the CONAIE reached an agreement mediated by the Episcopal Conference whereby the government pledged to lower the price of fuel, restrict mining activity in certain protected areas, repeal a decree that promoted oil extraction activity in the Amazon, increase subsidies for the most vulnerable families and raise the budget for public health and intercultural education.

Peru	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	=
Type:	Government, Resources Internal
Main parties:	Government, armed opposition (Militarised Communist Party of Peru), political and social opposition (peasant and indigenous organisations)

Summary:
In 1980, just when democracy had been restored in the country, an armed conflict began between the government and the Maoist armed group Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso in Spanish) that lasted for two decades and claimed 60,000 lives. The counter-insurgency policy implemented in the 1990s pushed the state towards authoritarianism under Alberto Fujimori, who in 2000 went into exile in Japan having been deposed by congress and accused of numerous cases of corruption and human rights violations. Since 2008, the remaining Shining Path factions, renamed Militarized Communist Party of Peru, have stepped up their operations significantly in the Alto Huallaga region and especially in the VRAE region (Valley between the Apurímac and Ene Rivers). The government, which claims that the Shining Path organisation is involved in drug trafficking, has intensified its military operations in both regions notably and has refused to enter into talks of any sort. It has also intensified the political and legal struggle against its political arm, Movadef. Meanwhile, several collectives, especially indigenous groups, have organised periodical mobilisations to protest against the economic policy of successive governments and against the activity of mining companies.

The dismissal and arrest of President Pedro Castillo, accused of wanting to carry out a self-coup, led to intense protests in December in which 28 people died and more than 650 were injured. The crisis was triggered in early December when Congress tried to impeach Castillo or remove him from office, the third such action he faced since he came to power in June 2021. On 7 December, the date when Castillo was expected to exercise his right to defend himself in the impeachment process, he delivered a televised address announcing his intention to dissolve Congress and replace it with an "exceptional emergency government". He also said that he would intervene in the judiciary and the Supreme Court and call for the election of a new Congress with constitutional powers. After his address, which was considered an attempt to conduct a coup d'état by a significant part of the country's politicians and public opinion, Congress removed Castillo from office by a wide majority for "moral unfitness".

The removal and arrest of President Pedro Castillo on charges of trying to conduct a self-coup led to some of the most important protests in recent years in Peru

Much of Castillo's government resigned and rejected his plans and both the Peruvian Armed Forces and the Police issued a statement to express their opposition to any attempt to subvert the constitutional order. Castillo was later arrested on charges of rebellion and conspiracy when he was on his way to request political asylum from the Mexican embassy, which did grant it to his wife. Vice President Dina Boluarte was appointed president of the country. Immediately thereafter, demonstrations began in various parts of the country to protest Castillo's removal from power and against Dina Boluarte and to demand the shutdown of Congress and the convening of a constituent assembly, in line with the demands that the former president expressed from prison. In mid-December, the Supreme Court extended Castillo's preventive detention period to 18 months. During the protests, which mainly took place between 7 and 25 December, 28 people died and more than 650 were injured (approximately half of them police officers). Many motorways in the country were blocked (including the Pan-American Highway). The Arequipa international airport was shut down and the Cusco international airport was forced to cancel its flights. Protests were reported across the country, but they were especially intense in Cajamarca, Arequipa, Huancayo, Cusco, Puno and Ayacucho, where almost half the deaths took place. The protests became less intense around Christmas, but a second wave resumed at the beginning of the year. Several human rights organisations criticised the security forces' disproportionate use of force in containing the protests. For example, Amnesty International reported many human rights violations by the military and police forces, from the excessive use of force to torture.

Faced with these blockades and high-intensity riots, the new government announced a process of dialogue and national accord to overcome the crisis and Congress approved a plan presented by Boluarte to move the elections forward from 2026 to April 2024, ending the presidential and congressional terms early. The protests subsided in intensity coinciding with the Christmas season, but at the start of the year a second wave of protests resumed, blocking dozens of roads and resulting in the death of 18 people. Some countries and international organisations condemned the violence during the protests. Several countries justified Castillo's removal from power, but **the governments of Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia and Mexico issued a joint statement expressing concern over his ouster and detention, complained that he had suffered harassment and urged the new Peruvian authorities not to overturn the people's will**.

The ambassadors of these countries were summoned for consultations by the new Peruvian government and the Mexican ambassador was declared a persona non grata and urged to leave the country after welcoming Castillo's wife to the embassy. The crisis of late 2022 is part of a complex political, social and economic situation in recent years, as illustrated by the fact that Boluarte was the sixth head of state since 2018. Between late March and mid-April, an estimated eight people died and many more were injured during protests called by haulers against the hike in fuel prices and the actions of the Castillo government.

Venezuela	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↓
Type:	Government Internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition

Summary:
The current political and social crisis gripping the country goes back to the rise to power of Hugo Chávez in 1998 and his promotion of the so-called Bolivarian Revolution, but it became more acute during the political transition that led to Chávez's death in March 2013 and his replacement by Vice President Nicolás Maduro, which was considered unconstitutional by the opposition. The tensions rose markedly after the presidential election of April 2013, which Maduro won by a narrow margin (50.6% of the votes), with the opposition denouncing numerous irregularities and demanding a recount and verification of the votes with the support of several governments and the OAS. Amidst a growing economic crisis and recurrent and sometimes massive demonstrations, the political crisis in Venezuela worsened after the opposition comfortably won the legislative elections in December 2015, winning its first election victory in two decades. This victory caused a certain degree of institutional paralysis between the National Assembly on the one hand and the government and many of the judicial authorities on the other.

Tensions between the government and the opposition eased considerably and international pressure on the government of Nicolás Maduro eased significantly, but many social demonstrations, a high number of homicides and, according to international organisations, significant human rights violations continued to be reported. According to the Venezuelan Violence Observatory (OVV), there were 2,328 homicides in 2022, a 25% drop compared to 2021. However, it also mentioned that if the 5,799 cases of "death during investigation" (cases that have not been investigated or prosecuted) and the 1,240 cases of death during police intervention are counted, the total number of violent deaths in the country rises to 9,367, with a homicide rate of 35.3 per 100,000 inhabitants. According to the Venezuelan Violence Observatory, such a figure would surely make Venezuela the country with the second highest homicide rate in Latin America, behind Honduras. The OVV also declared that 1,370 complaints of disappearances have been reported, so the real number of homicides in the country could be even higher. In 2021, 9,437 violent deaths were reported, so the increase in 2022 was imperceptible. Caracas was the region with the highest homicide rate (89), followed by the states of La Guaira (62), Miranda (54) and Bolívar (50). The Venezuelan Observatory of Social Conflict (OVCS) pointed out that 3,892 protests were reported in the country between January and June, 15% more than in the same period in 2021. Seventy-three per cent of the protests were related to economic, social, cultural and environmental issues, especially labour rights, while the remaining 27% were related to civil and political rights and issues such as the persecution, criminalisation and detention of human rights defenders, opponents, humanitarian workers and members of civil society. Despite the rise in protests compared to the previous year, the number of demonstrations was much lower than in previous years (in 2017, for example, there were almost 10,000 protests). The OVCS also indicated that crackdowns were documented in 52 protests in 14 states, but none resulted in fatalities and that the state security forces and armed civilian bodies exhibited less repressive behaviour compared to previous years.

Nevertheless, various international bodies criticised the human rights situation in Venezuela in 2022. **In November, the public prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Karim Khan, formally requested authorisation from the Pre-Trial Chamber to continue with the investigation opened in November 2021 on the alleged commission of crimes against humanity in Venezuela since April 2017**. In April, the government asked for the investigation to be postponed, arguing that it was advancing in various investigations and trials on the matter, but at the end of the year, Karim Khan described the progress as insufficient. The International Criminal Court (ICC) had opened a preliminary investigation in 2018 into the conduct of the regime's security forces during their crackdown on anti-government protests in 2017, in which an estimated 100 people died. The government strongly opposed the ICC's observations, but it authorised the opening of an ICC office in Caracas in March. Previously, in September, the third report of the United Nations Human Rights Council's Fact-Finding Mission on Venezuela was released. Created in 2019 to assess alleged human rights violations committed since 2014, the mission's report said that serious crimes and violations of human rights continue to be committed against dissidents in Venezuela without any further investigation or punishment. According to the report, violations against humanity such as torture, sexual violence and arbitrary detention have been committed in Venezuela since 2014 as part of a plan devised and directed at the highest levels to repress the opposition. The mission's report points to both specific people (including Nicolás Maduro) and certain state structures, such as the General Directorate of Military Counterintelligence (DGCIM) and the Bolivarian National Intelligence Service (SEBIN). A few days after the report was issued, the United Nations Human Rights Council extended the mission's mandate for another two years and did not renew Venezuela's membership in the council, in a decision that several media outlets interpreted as an important wake-up call to the Venezuelan government. Along the same lines, in April the human rights organisation Foro Penal declared that there are 240 detainees in the country that it considers political prisoners, in addition to 9,414 people that it deems are subject to unfair criminal proceedings for political reasons. Moreover, the opposition reported

harassment against some of its leaders several times during the year, including Guaidó himself, during a tour of the country in June.

In addition to the human rights situation, both the opposition and civil society organisations denounced the insecure economic and humanitarian situation in the country. **As of December 2022, there were more than seven million Venezuelan migrants or refugees worldwide and, according to the IOM, 7.7 million people in the country needed humanitarian aid**. In March, the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and its member organisation in Venezuela, the Venezuelan Education Action Human Rights Programme (PROVEA), published a report detailing the serious violations of the human right to food in Venezuela and stating that 94% of the population lived in poverty and that the GDP has contracted by more than 80% in the last six years. The FIDH also reported that at least 30% of minors suffer from some form of malnutrition (half of them acute or severe malnutrition), that the distribution of drinking water has been cut back by 60% since 1998 and that the production of electricity has fallen by 74%, leading to 174,000 blackouts in the country in 2021.

The opposition did several things to improve its cohesion and internal coordination and establish a system of primaries throughout the country to select the candidate to run in the presidential election scheduled for 2024. However, in December the National Assembly, which was elected in 2015 and is considered the only legitimate body in the country according to the opposition, but was outlawed by the government, decreed the end of the interim government and the presidency of Juan Guaidó based on the understanding that he is no longer an instrument of actual change. Guaidó criticised the move, arguing that it strengthens Maduro's government, but previously there had already been some indicators that international support for Guaidó had waned. In January 2022, for example, the National Assembly had extended Guaidó's interim presidency for one year but reduced the bureaucratic structure that supported him. In October, 19 Latin American countries voted against the Guaidó government's representation of Venezuela in the OAS, but the motion did not pass because the support of two thirds of the member states was required.

2.3.3. Asia and the Pacific

Central Asia

Kazakhstan	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	System, Government Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition, local and regional armed groups

Summary:
Since gaining its independence from the USSR in 1991, Kazakhstan has experienced significant economic growth alongside largely stable political and social developments. However, the country's 30-year rule by President Nursultan Nazarbayev was also marked by democratic failings and authoritarian policies, leaving little room for the political and social opposition. After he stepped down in 2019, Nazarbayev continued to hold positions of leadership, including as Leader of the Nation and chairman of the ruling Nur Otan party. Lines of conflict include the tension between the authorities and opposition groups over governance and access to political power as well as between the authorities and sectoral groups over socioeconomic matters amid economic inequality and poor working conditions in the oil industry and other sectors. Throughout Central Asia, local and regional Islamist-inspired armed actors have staged violent incidents at various times, including in Kazakhstan, while governments in the region have also used the alleged risk of Islamist violence to justify repressive practices.

Kazakhstan was the scene of a social and political crisis in January, with public protests subject to severely violent crackdowns that claimed around 200 lives, making it the bloodiest episode in the country's recent history. The demonstrations began on 2 January in the western oil town of Zhanaozen (the scene of a repressive crackdown on striking workers in 2011) to protest the government's withdrawal of the limit on the price of liquified gas and the resulting price hike. The protests spread to large areas of the country and encompassed many different dimensions of economic and social discontent and political malpractice, with demonstrators gathering spontaneously against corruption, social inequality and low wages, while also calling for the democratisation of power and making other demands. One rallying motto was "Old man, get out!" ("Shal, ket!", already in use by feminist activists since 2014) against the power still held by former President Nazarbayev and his circle and against authoritarianism and vertical power, including under the government of President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. The situation turned violent in some cities, like Almaty. Some analysts said that the security forces seemingly withdrew on the night of 5 January in Almaty, accompanied by looting, vandalism[45] and possible collusion between criminal groups and the regime or Nazarbayev's circle in creating chaos,[46] as well as

45. International Crisis Group, "Behind the Unrest in Kazakhstan", *ICG*, 14 January 2022.
46. Marat, Erica and Assel Tutumlu, "Kazakhstan's Protests Aren't a Color Revolution", *Foreign Policy*, 11 January 2022.

disaffection, frustration and anger[47] in protests that were mostly popular, spontaneous and diverse in nature. On the whole, the protests were suppressed by the security forces. According to HRW, there was a disproportionate use of force against the demonstrators, as well as other human rights violations by the authorities, such as arbitrary arrest and imprisonment and the mistreatment and torture of detainees. President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev declared a state of emergency, cut off access to the Internet, ordered the security forces to shoot without warning and blamed the protests on "terrorists" and "foreign figures", despite their popular nature. On 5 January, Tokayev asked the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), a Russian-led military alliance of various former Soviet bloc countries, to intervene. In what was its first intervention in its three decades of existence, the CSTO sent mainly Russian troops and deployed them at strategic elements of infrastructure until they were gradually withdrawn between 13 and 19 January.

The protests and crackdown left at least 238 people dead. Most of those who died were protesters and the remaining 19 were members of the security forces. Nearly 10,000 people were arrested, including activists and journalists, and hundreds of detained people reported mistreatment or torture. Some analysts said that the different layers of the crisis could also contain disputes between elites. After the crackdown, Tokayev removed Nazarbayev and his allies from positions of power on security matters, including the removal of the former president from the leadership of the National Security Council. The government resigned and a new government took office, in which 11 of the 20 ministers returned. In March, Tokayev announced plans to set limits on presidential powers. A referendum in June approved constitutional amendments that, in the words of the president, changed the form of government from a "super-presidential" one to a "presidential republic with a strong parliament". Some analysts called attention to civil society's lack of participation in preparing the amendments and to how few limits were introduced to presidential powers. Tokayev was re-elected in a snap presidential election in November. The OSCE monitoring mission noted the lack of competition and the need for reforms to ensure real pluralism. One year after what was called "Bloody January" (*Qandy Qantar*), some analysts highlighted the lack of any independent investigation into the events or of any effective changes in the country aimed at guaranteeing civil and political rights and freedoms and social justice, while others stressed a greater degree of openness to participation, even if control was maintained.[48]

Kyrgyzstan - Tajikistan	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Territory, Resources International
Main parties:	Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan

Summary:
Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are engaged in a conflict over the demarcation of a part of their common border, of which around half remained undelimited since both countries won their independence following the breakup of the Soviet Union. The dispute encompasses the lack of border demarcation, intercommunity tensions over access to and the use of water and grazing areas, which sometimes escalate to intercommunity violence, and hostilities between border forces. The epicentre of the tension is the Ferghana Valley (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan), which has several territorial enclaves, access to which has been affected due to increased strain. Both countries have carried out negotiations regarding the delimitation of the border at various stages, though without reaching lasting effective agreements. In 2021, the tension increased significantly, with violent incidents that resulted in 50 people dead, another 200 injured and several tens of thousands evacuated. In 2022 there was a new escalation, with a hundred deaths and the use of heavy weapons, interpreted by some analysts as a military offensive by Tajikistan against Kyrgyzstan. The rise in militarisation in both countries adds more risks to the scenario of interstate tension.

Border tension between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan increased, with incidents during the year and a military escalation in September that killed around a hundred people, making for a greater leap in militarisation than in previous years. In January, Tajik and Kyrgyz border guards clashed between the Batken (Kyrgyzstan) and Sughd (Tajikistan) regions, causing the death of two Tajikistan civilians, injuring around 20 people from both countries, including civilians and security forces, and evacuating around 1,000. A ceasefire agreement was reached later that month. New incidents occurred in the months that followed and in September the tension increased. Shooting between border forces of both countries on 14 September triggered a military escalation days later. Both governments accused each other of using heavy weapons, including tanks, drones and multiple rocket launchers. Unlike previous crises, attacks by Tajikistan were reported against areas further away from the disputed border, such as parts of the Batken and Leilek districts in the Batken region, including shelling the regional capital Batken and its airport. The media reported mortar fire in the Osh region of Kyrgyzstan as well. Some analysts described the violence as a military offensive operation by Tajikistan against Kyrgyzstan, distinguishing it from previous series of incidents between border guards from both

47. Rowley, Thomas and Zhanar Sekerbayeva, "What really happened in Kazakhstan? A feminist perspective", *Open Democracy*, 19 January 2022.
48. See, among others, Mazorenko, Dmitriy and Paolo Sorbello, "Too little has changed in Kazakhstan in the year since 'Bloody January'", *Open Democracy*, 5 January 2023; HRW, "Kazakhstan. Events of 2022", in *World Report 2023*, HRW, 2023; Abishev, Gaziz, "Has Kazakhstan Become More Democratic Following Recent Elections?", *Carnegie*, 12 April 2023.

countries.[49] Around one hundred people lost their lives, including at least 37 civilians, of which four were children. Around one hundred additional people were injured.

Kyrgyzstan estimated that 136,000 civilians evacuated the country. HRW reported that the civilian population of at least 12 towns in both countries was affected and echoed Kyrgyzstan's allegations of Tajikistan's intentional arson and looting of many homes in the town of Ak-Sai (Kyrgyzstan) and fires and damage to more than 300 civil structures and facilities, including markets and schools.[50] HRW also repeated Tajikistan's allegations of fires set on houses on its soil and injured civilians, though there were no reports of evacuations within Tajikistan. There were several ceasefire agreements, including one reached by both presidents during a Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit on 16 September, though both sides accused each other of breaching it. Around 18 September, the Kyrgyz authorities reported that the situation at the border was stabilising, though it remained tense. On 25 September, both countries agreed to a protocol by which they agreed to withdraw each of the four border posts and to carry out border patrols on agreed routes.

Despite the de-escalation after the September crisis, the situation remained tense in the months that followed. In mid-October, both governments accused each other of deploying military forces in assault positions around disputed border areas, as well as airspace violations with drones and trench digging. Tajikistan also denounced violations of the ceasefire and harassment against the Tajik population in the Voruj enclave, which is surrounded by Kyrgyz territory, while Kyrgyzstan accused Tajikistan of training mercenaries, stockpiling weapons and ammunition and laying mines in disputed border areas. Both countries denied these accusations.

East Asia

Korea, DPR – Rep. of Korea	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	System International
Main parties:	DPR Korea, Rep. of Korea

Summary:
After the end of the Second World War and the occupation of the Korean peninsula by Soviet troops (north) and US troops (south), it was split into two countries. The Korean War (1950-53) ended with the signing of an armistice (under the terms of which the two countries remain technically at war) and the establishment of a de facto border at the 38th parallel. Despite the fact that in the 1970s talks began on reunification, the two countries have threatened on several occasions to take military action. As such, in recent decades numerous armed incidents have been recorded, both on the common border between the two countries (one of the most militarised zones in the world) and along the sea border in the Yellow Sea (or West Sea). Although in 2000 the leaders of the two countries held a historic meeting in which they agreed to establish trust-building measures, once Lee Myung-bak took office in 2007 the tension escalated significantly again and some military skirmishes occurred along the border. Subsequently, the death of Kim Jong-il at the end of 2011 (succeeded as supreme leader by his son Kim Jong-un) and the election of Park Geun-hye as the new South Korean president at the end of 2012 marked the start of a new phase in bilateral relations.

In line with the notable rise in international tension over North Korea's weapons programme, strain between Pyongyang and Seoul increased considerably in 2022. In January, Pyongyang fired six missiles (almost as many as in all of 2021) and declared that it could resume launching intercontinental ballistic missiles, suspended since 2017. In April, South Korea launched two ballistic missiles from submarines off the eastern coast of the Korean peninsula, the first such test since September 2021, and the defence minister said they could accurately hit any target in North Korea. Both Kim Jong-un and his sister, one of the top officials responsible for North Korea's policy towards its southern neighbour, have said they are willing to use nuclear weapons if North Korea is attacked. Despite the rhetoric used by both governments in the first few months of 2022, which is part of the deteriorating relations between the two countries in recent years, Yoon Suk-yeol's victory in the South Korean presidential election in March was an important turning point in the dispute between the two countries and a clear step back from the foreign policy pursued by Moon Jae-in, who often led an approach towards North Korea during his term that gave rise to several agreements and the détente of recent years.

Shortly after Yoon Suk-yeol's inauguration in May, South Korea and the United States fired two missiles in response to Pyongyang's launch of its longest-range intercontinental ballistic missile (Hwasong-17), coinciding with a trip to the region by US President Joe Biden. A few days later, in early June, South Korea and the US launched eight missiles on the east coast just hours after North Korea had launched eight short-range ballistic missiles off the same coast. In addition, a few days later, Seoul began joint military exercises with the US and Yoon Suk-yeol asked the United Nations Security Council for a coordinated response to what he called North Korea's provocations. Several media outlets explained that the new South Korean administration was trying to establish a policy of reacting and responding proportionally to any armed action by North Korea. Along these lines, during the official presentation of its

49. Sharshenova, Aijan, "More than a 'Border Skirmish' Between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan", *The Diplomat*, 19 September 2022.
50. Sultanalieva, Syinat, "Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan Border Clashes Prove Deadly for Civilians", *HRW*, 21 September 2022.

foreign policy towards its northern neighbour, Yoon Suk-yeol said that the denuclearisation of North Korea was a requirement for bringing more peace and prosperity to the region. He also announced his intention to strengthen South Korea's military capabilities, reserving the possibility of even carrying out preventive attacks in the face of the threats and risks posed by North Korea's nuclear and ballistic programme. In line with Seoul's strategic rapprochement with Washington and its intention to strengthen its deterrent military capabilities, South Korea participated in the US-led Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) military exercises from 29 June to 4 August. In late August, South Korea and the US carried out the largest joint military exercises in years. Likewise, the US and South Korea carried out new joint military exercises (in some of which Japan also participated) at the end of September, coinciding with the visit of US Vice President Kamala Harris to Seoul and the inter-Korean border.

One of the moments of greatest tension on the Korean peninsula occurred in late October, when both countries exchanged warning shots at the Northern Limit Line (NLL), the de facto yet disputed maritime border. According to several sources, a North Korean ship crossed the NLL, which Pyongyang does not even recognise, and South Korea fired several kilometres into South Korean waters to guarantee the return of the North Korean ship. The North Korean ship allegedly responded by firing 10 shells at the western coast of the Korean peninsula, near Baengyeong Island. Shortly thereafter, for two days in a row in early November, Pyongyang fired over 20 missiles, one of which landed south of the NLL, a few kilometres from the South Korean city of Sokcho, and around 100 artillery shells near the maritime border. A few days later, it launched several short-range missiles, as well as its longer-range intercontinental ballistic missile (Hwasong-17). Tensions rose again in December after North Korea managed to get five of its drones into South Korean airspace (one of them even reached the northern tip of Seoul), which could not be shot down by planes and helicopters firing many projectiles at them. A few days earlier, the North Korean government released high-altitude photos of Seoul and Incheon and declared that it had successfully launched a special rocket as part of the development of a military reconnaissance satellite, one of the country's weapon development priorities announced by Kim Jong-un for the next few years. Finally, in his New Year's Eve speech, Kim Jong-un called South Korea an enemy and ordered an exponential increase in its nuclear capabilities by 2023. The next day, the South Korean president publicly called for Seoul and Washington to intensify their collaboration on nuclear weapons, including planning, information sharing, exercises and training.

Korea, DPR - USA, Japan, Rep. of Korea[51]	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government International
Main parties:	DPR Korea, USA, Japan, Rep. of Korea, China, Russia

Summary:
International concern about North Korea's nuclear programme dates back to the early 1990s, when the North Korean government restricted the presence in the country of observers from the International Atomic Energy Agency and carried out a series of missile tests. Nevertheless international tension escalated notably after the US Administration of George W. Bush included the North Koreannregime within the so-called "axis of evil". A few months after Pyongyang reactivated an important nuclear reactor and withdrew from the Treaty on the Non Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 2003, multilateral talks began on the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula in which the governments of North Korea, South Korea, the USA, Japan, China and Russia participated. In April 2009, North Korea announced its withdrawal from the said talks after the United Nations imposed new sanctions after the country launched a long range missile.

Alongside the rise in political and military tension between North and South Korea, international concerns heightened substantially over the North Korean weapons programme in 2023, especially among the US, South Korea and Japan. Over the course of the year, North Korea launched about 95 missiles, several of them intercontinental, clearly many more than the eight launched in 2021 and the four in 2020. In addition to the dramatic increase in the frequency of such launches, several analysts also expressed concern about the type of weapons that Pyongyang tested during the year, including cruise and ballistic missiles, hypersonic weapons and long-range intercontinental ballistic missiles (such as the Hwasong-17, with a range of about 15,000 kilometres). The US and South Korean governments, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and some research centres pointed out that North Korea was reactivating the country's main nuclear test facility in Punggye-ri, which had supposedly been closed in 2018 as part of the diplomatic process with the US, and warned at various times of the year that North Korea could carry out a new nuclear test, which would be the seventh in its history and the first since 2017 (a test that, according to some analysts, was of a hydrogen bomb, much more powerful than those of previous tests). In fact, in a confidential report leaked in August, the United Nations claimed that North Korea had made preparations for a nuclear test during the first six months of 2022. Along the same lines, in early September North Korea enacted a new law specifying the conditions for the deployment and use of its nuclear

51. This international socio-political crisis relates mainly to the dispute over the North Korean nuclear programme.

arsenal and stipulating that Pyongyang will not attack non-nuclear states unless they ally with nuclear states. The law also said that the use of nuclear weapons could help to prevent the expansion or prolongation of a war or in response to an attack against the country. Even though North Korea's apparent military escalation led countries such as the US to impose new sanctions, the UN Security Council failed to approve any condemnatory resolution or new sanctions against Pyongyang due to the veto by China and Russia.

At the start of the year, North Korea accused the US of sending strategic nuclear weapons to the region, said it was willing to resume its arms activities that had been suspended since 2017, such as the launch of intercontinental ballistic missiles, and in January alone launched almost as many missiles as it had in all of 2021 (including hypersonic weapons), which prompted the US to impose sanctions. In March and April, Washington imposed new sanctions on Pyongyang for new weapons tests (with satellites and intercontinental ballistic missiles). Throughout the year, and especially after the inauguration of new South Korean President Yoon Seok-yeol, the US said it was willing to strengthen its strategic alliance with South Korea and Japan and to increase their deterrent capabilities in the region to deal with Pyongyang's military escalation. Although the US publicly dismissed Yoon Seok-yeol's demand to conduct joint military exercises with nuclear weapons, some of the largest joint military exercises in recent years between the US and South Korea (which eventually included Japan) were conducted during the year. Several times throughout the year, the US and South Korea launched missiles in response to previous missile launches by North Korea. One of the ballistic missile tests that caused the greatest concern in Washington and other countries was the launch in November (and previously and unsuccessfully, in March) of the Hwasong-17 missile. With a range of about 15,000 kilometres, the Hwasong-17 could strike US territory. However, some analysts had doubts about whether these intercontinental ballistic missiles could accurately deliver nuclear warheads to their target. The US expressed concern about Kim Jong-un's speech at the end of the year, in which he called for the exponential growth of North Korea's nuclear arsenal by 2023. Previously, in 2021, after the collapse of the dialogue between former President Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un and the end of the political rapprochement between North and South Korea, Kim Jong-un had announced a five-year plan to modernise the North Korean Army and arsenal and to develop new weaponry.

North Korea launched around 95 missiles throughout the year, several of them intercontinental, clearly many more than the eight launched in 2021 and the four in 2020

South Asia

India - China	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Territory International
Main parties:	India, China

Summary:
The border shared by China and India has been disputed since the 1950s, after the partition of India and Pakistan and the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. This border has never been formally delimited by an agreement between the two countries and there are several areas whose demarcation is a source of conflict. In the western part of the border, the dispute revolves around the uninhabited Aksai Chin area, whose territory is claimed by India, which considers it part of the Ladakh region (part of Jammu and Kashmir) and is administered by China as part of the Xinjiang region. China's announcement of the construction of a highway linking Xinjiang with Tibet through the Aksai Chin region increased tension with India, which was exacerbated after the Dalai Lama was granted asylum in India in 1959. In the years that followed, there were troop movements by both countries in the area. In 1962, a war began that ended with India's military defeat, but the issue of demarcation was left unresolved and continued to shape relations between both powers and with other countries in the region, especially Pakistan. In 1988, both governments agreed to resolve the dispute peacefully. However, since then no progress has been made in the negotiations and the military tension in the disputed areas has persisted.

Tensions escalated between India and China due to territorial disputes over the border demarcation separating the two countries known as the Current Line of Control, including the first direct clashes between Indian and Chinese troops in two years. Accusations were made throughout the year and, though there were several meetings to try to resolve the conflict between both governments, no progress was made. In these two years there had been almost 20 meetings between military commanders aimed at resolving tensions on the ground, though they have failed to achieve any significant results. The construction of infrastructure in the immediate vicinity of the border continued, which increased the risk of incidents and escalating tension. However, there were some highly interesting diplomatic rapprochements in 2022. In March, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi travelled to Delhi for the highest-ranking visit since June 2020 and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping held their first face-to-face meeting in November since the 2020 clashes. This was a courtesy meeting that did not reveal any other meeting between the two leaders and took place during the G20 summit in Indonesia. However, despite these and other rapprochement attempts, there

were finally violent clashes between soldiers from both countries in December that injured 30 Indians and an undetermined number of Chinese, though firearms were not used. Both countries accused each other of having crossed the border illegally. The fighting took place in the Tawang sector of the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, an area that China considers part of Tibet and a strategic location for both parties, which increased the severity of the clash. These were the first direct clashes in two years, since the fighting in June 2020 in Galwan Valley, although in January 2021 there had also been a clash in Sikkim. The Indian government later indicated that diplomatic contacts had taken place between both parties after the clashes and that a meeting had been held between the local commanders of both armies, but tensions between both countries remained very high. The clashes occurred even though an agreement had been reached in September to de-escalate the tension, with parties committing to a partial and gradual withdrawal to the Gogra-Hot Springs area in eastern Ladakh to create a buffer zone. However, 50,000 soldiers from each of the countries remained in the area. The September agreement came after India filed complaints in August about Chinese warplanes in the vicinity of the Current Line of Control, violating the boundaries of the containment zone.

The tension between India and China over territorial disputes over the border demarcation between the two countries worsened, with the first major clashes between Indian and Chinese troops in two years

India – Pakistan	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↓
Type:	Identity, Territory International
Main parties:	India, Pakistan

Summary:
The tension between India and Pakistan dates back to the independence and partition of the two states and the dispute over the region of Kashmir. On three occasions (1947-1948, 1965, 1971, 1999) armed conflict has broken out between the two countries, both claiming sovereignty over the region, which is split between India, Pakistan and China. The armed conflict in 1947 led to the present-day division and the de facto border between the two countries. In 1989, the armed conflict shifted to the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. In 1999, one year after the two countries carried out nuclear tests, tension escalated into a new armed conflict until the USA mediated to calm the situation. In 2004 a peace process got under way. Although no real progress was made in resolving the dispute over Kashmir, there was a significant rapprochement above all in the economic sphere. However, India has continued to level accusations at Pakistan concerning the latter's support of the insurgency that operates in Jammu and Kashmir and sporadic outbreaks of violence have occurred on the de facto border that divides the two states. In 2008 serious attacks took place in the Indian city of Mumbai that led to the formal rupture of the peace process after India claimed that the attack had been orchestrated from Pakistan. Since then, relations between the two countries have remained deadlocked although some diplomatic contacts have taken place. **Despite the persisting tension between India and Pakistan, with many diplomatic agreements and mutual accusations between the two countries, the violence improved considerably as a result of the renewal of the ceasefire agreement between them in 2021.** Only one violent incident was reported in 2022 along the Current Line of Control, the de facto border between India and Pakistan. In September, India accused Pakistan of firing in the Arnia sector, Jammu district, to which India reportedly responded militarily. There were no casualties or injuries and a meeting was later held between security officials from both sides, after which it was agreed to continue respecting the ceasefire agreement. In March, there had been an incident in which a missile was accidentally fired from India, landing in Pakistan without causing any casualties. The government apologised for what happened, reiterating the accidental nature of the event. Although there was no escalation, doubts were expressed about the mechanisms to prevent this type of incident. Thus, the trend of lowering tension on the border continued since the diplomatic rapprochement in 2021, without clashes or violations of the ceasefire agreement in force on the Current Line of Control. Some analysts said that the tension on the Current Line of Control may have led India to concentrate its military efforts in the area. After new Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's inauguration, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated him and called for a constructive relationship, to which Sharif responded by urging the resolution of the Kashmir conflict. However, mutual accusations of terrorism and support for different insurgent forces operating in each of the two countries persisted, so they made no diplomatic headway on resolving the various pending conflicts. Indian Home Minister Amit Ahah said that he had no intention of holding talks with Pakistan, but rather aimed to make Pakistan address the people of Jammu and Kashmir, repeating accusations that its government supported terrorist organisations. Thus, in December, Pakistani Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari said that there was clear evidence that India had cooperated in the attack that took place in June 2021 in Lahore. In turn, his Indian counterpart accused Pakistan of having given shelter to Osama bin Laden.

Pakistan	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government, System Internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition

Summary:
In 1999 the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was brought down by a military coup orchestrated by General

Pervez Musharraf, that avoided conviction by exiling himself in Saudi Arabia. The new military regime initially met with the isolation of the international community. There was a thawing of relations after the terrorist attacks of September 2001, when Musharraf became the main ally of the USA in the region in the persecution of al-Qaeda. The perpetuation of Musharraf in power, the fact that he simultaneously held the positions of Head of State and Head of the Armed Forces, attacks agains the judiciary, the impopularity of the alliance with de USA in a period of anti-americanism expansion, economic and environmental crisis, or the growing strength of terrorist groups in other areas of the country (beyond tribal areas), leading to growing insecurity are some of the elements which explain the fragile political situation. In 2008, Musharraf resigned as president after legislative elections and large parts of the Parliament against him. PPP's Asif Ali Zardari was voted to replace in office. In spite of the the return of democracy, and some historical milestones such as the first transfer of power from a Government (PPP) that ended is five years term to the next elected government (Nawaz's Muslim League), Pakistan continued to be an unstable country. In 2018, the PTI party, led by Imran Khan, won the general elections.

Pakistan went through a serious crisis during the year, which was added to the armed conflict in the country. The political, economic and environmental aspects of the crisis were especially acute. The political crisis worsened starting in March, when nine opposition parties led by the PPP, PML-N and U-e-I pushed for a vote of no confidence that led to the dismissal of Prime Minister Imran Khan in April. Khan had accused the parties behind the motion of acting on the dictates of a "foreign conspiracy". Prior to the vote of no confidence in early April, the speaker of the National Assembly had dissolved Parliament and appointed Khan as interim prime minister to try to prevent the vote from taking place. However, the Supreme Court declared the attempt illegal and urged the vote to be held, which took place without Khan present. Following the vote, which Khan lost, Parliament elected Shehbaz Sharif of the PML-N as prime minister. In the days that followed, Khan's supporters staged protests in several cities and clashed with police. At least 30 police officers were injured in these clashes on 25 May and many protests were repeated in the following weeks. In August, Khan was charged with terrorism, but a judge ordered a stay of his arrest and the charges were later dropped. The crisis escalated again in November when there was an assassination attempt on Khan in the province of Punjab. During a march attended by the former president along with hundreds of his supporters, Khan was shot and wounded in the leg. The attack took place after Khan had been disqualified from public office by the electoral commission. Khan accused the government, including the prime minister himself, of being behind the attack. Subsequently, protests by Khan's supporters intensified in various parts of the country. Alongside the political crisis, the country was plunged into a grave economic crisis that intensified social tensions. In August, there were also serious floods that caused the death of at least 1,700 people and significantly affected different parts of the country. More than 75% of the land in the province of Balochistan was affected by the catastrophe, attributed to the impact of climate change on the Asian country. Over 30 million people were affected by the floods and nearly eight million people had to be forcibly displaced as a result of one of the worst disasters in the country. The UN Secretary-General called for massive international support for Pakistan, saying that the affected country bore far less responsibility than others for the climate change that had led to the floods.

Sri Lanka	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government Internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition

Summary:
In 1983 the LTTE, the Tamil pro-independence armed opposition group, began the armed conflict that ravaged Sri Lanka for almost three decades. The increasing marginalisation of the Tamil population by the government, mostly composed of members of the Sinhalese elite, following the decolonisation of the island in 1948, led the LTTE to initiate an armed struggle to achieve the creation of an independent Tamil state. From 1983, each of the phases in which the conflict took place ended with a failed peace process. Following the signing of a ceasefire agreement, fresh peace talks began in 2002, mediated by the Norwegian government, the failure of which sparked a fierce resumption of the armed conflict in 2006. In May 2009 the armed forces defeated the LTTE and regained control over the entire country after killing the leader of the armed group, Velupillai Prabhakaran. Since then thousands of Tamils have remained displaced and no measures have been adopted to make progress in reconciliation. Furthermore, the government has refused to investigate the war crimes of the armed conflict, denying that they ever took place.

The political crisis in the country escalated seriously during the year, with mass protests in Colombo and other cities and a change in government. Persistent accusations of widespread government corruption and mismanagement, the worsening economic crisis, mainly due to inflation (25% in food products and 18% overall), the shortage in the supply of basic products and fuel and the risk of famine in the country triggered mass protests in March demanding that President Gotabaya Rajapakse and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse (the president's brother) step down after everyone else in their cabinet had resigned. At least one person died in the anti-government demonstrations and three others died while queuing in front of petrol stations. The opposition tried to force a vote of no confidence due to the president and the prime minister's initial refusal to resign. Finally, in early May, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa was

forced to resign after weeks of intense protests in which at least eight people died due to violence and repression and hundreds were injured. The police forces were ordered to fire without warning to contain the protests and a national curfew was imposed. At least 40 homes of Rajapaksa supporters were set on fire and there was an attempted raid on the official Rajapaksa home. There were also violent attacks against an area where people demanding the resignation of the president and prime minister had camped. After Rajapaksa's resignation, Raniil Wickremesinghe was appointed prime minister. He had previously held the office for several terms and was tasked with leading a national unity government. The impact of COVID and the disappearance of tourism in the country had prodded the government to use foreign reserves to service its debt and pay for its imports. This led to practical bankruptcy, causing enormous fuel shortages and a lack of power supply. The government asked the IMF for help to deal with the economic crisis, considered the most serious in the country in the last 70 years. After Wickremesinghe took office, the government approved the complete restriction of access to fuel, except for essential services, given the impossibility of importing it due to the debt of the state oil company. The economic crisis gripping the country has stopped it from servicing its debt and resulted in shortages of medicines, food, fuel and other essential goods alongside an enormously serious health crisis. In July, there was a new escalation of tension after protestors assaulted the presidential residence. This forced the resignation of President Gotabaya Rajapakse, who fled the country, and led to Wickremesinghe's appointment as interim president. He declared a state of emergency after his office was also occupied by protesters. In the days that followed, the crackdown on the protests intensified. Finally, on 15 July, Wickremesinghe was inaugurated and won the parliamentary vote for his final appointment in the following days. Social protests and violent crackdowns by security forces continued in the following months amid the economic collapse and humanitarian crisis.

South-east Asia

Indonesia (West Papua)	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Self-government, Identity, Resources Internal
Main parties:	Government, OPM armed group, political and social opposition, Papuan indigenous groups, Freeport mining company

Summary:
Although Indonesia became independent from Holland in 1949, West Papua (formerly Irian Jaya) was administered for several years by the United Nations and did not formally become part of Indonesia until 1969, following a referendum considered fraudulent by many. Since then, a deep-rooted secessionist movement has existed in the region and an armed opposition group (OPM) has been involved in a low-intensity armed struggle. In addition to constant demands for self-determination, there are other sources of conflict in the region, such as community clashes between several indigenous groups, tension between the local population (Papuan and mostly animist or Christian) and so-called transmigrants (mostly Muslim Javanese), protests against the Freeport transnational extractive corporation, the largest in the world, or accusations of human rights violations and unjust enrichment levelled at the armed forces.

In line with the rise in violence that has been observed in the region since the armed group OPM declared war on the Indonesian government in January 2018, there were many clashes between the OPM and the state security forces and attacks against civilians. There was also a significant rise in protests over the government's decision to create three new provinces in West Papua. According to a report issued by the IPAC research centre, the frequency and lethality of the fighting and the territorial scope and humanitarian consequences of the conflict have risen notably since 2018. According to United Nations data made public in early March 2022, between 60,000 and 100,000 people have been forced to leave their homes due to the rise in violence since 2018. According to the research centre ACLED, while 13 OPM attacks were reported against state security forces in 2017, they doubled in 2018 and reached 137 in 2021. Along the same lines, the data compiled by IPAC show that since 2018, the frequency of violence rose from an average of 11 incidents per year between 2010 and 2017 to an average of 52 incidents per year between 2018 and 2021. Since 2018, there have been 183 clashes between government troops and combatants and 74 episodes of violence against civilians. According to IPAC, 66% of the 320 deaths caused by the armed conflict between 2010 and 2021 were reported between 2018 and 2021. In that period, 52 members of the security forces, 34 combatants and 125 civilians lost their lives (a substantial increase compared to the 53 civilians who had died between 2010 and 2017). According to an ACLED report published in October 2022, since 2018 the geographical scope of the conflict has increased significantly beyond the OPM's traditional strongholds (the Black Triangle, which includes the regencies of Puncak Jaya, Lanny Jaya and Mimika). Recently, the regencies of Intan Jaya, Puncak and Yahukimo have also been affected by violence. According to the Indonesian government, in recent years the OPM has had a much larger and more sophisticated arsenal than the rudimentary weapons it had used in previous decades, acquired due to the increasing attacks on military or police posts or the purchase of equipment from regions affected by violence such as Ambon (Indonesia), Bougainville (Papua New Guinea) and Mindanao (Philippines). Jakarta accuses the group

of obtaining large amounts of money from extortion and illegal mining activities in several of the regions where it operates. According to the IPAC report, the OPM's greater capacity for war has resulted in a change in its tactics and military modus operandi, increasing the intensity and duration of clashes with the Indonesian Armed Forces to ensure territorial control over certain regions.

According to the Human Rights Monitor, the armed conflict caused the death of 68 people between January and late November 2022, slightly more than the previous year. Compared to 2021, the main difference in the dynamics of violence was the clear increase in OPM attacks against the civilian population. Thirty-nine of the 43 civilians who died in the armed conflict in 2022 did so as a result of OPM attacks. Notable were the deaths of eight workers repairing a telecommunications tower in the Puncak district in early March, an attack on a truck in the town of Nogolai (Nduga regency) in mid-July in which 10 civilians were killed and two others were injured and an attack on a road construction site between the districts of Bintuni Bay and Maybrat that killed four civilians (and led to the disappearance of another), for which the OPM claimed responsibility. In most of these types of attacks, the OPM declared that the victims were spies or state informants. In recent years, the OPM has repeatedly called on non-Papuans to leave conflict-affected regions because their safety cannot be guaranteed. In early March, the UN special rapporteurs on the rights of indigenous peoples, extrajudicial, summary and arbitrary executions and internally displaced persons issued a statement expressing their alarm and condemnation of the human rights violations committed in the last three years by the state security forces, including torture, forced disappearance, extrajudicial execution and the denial of adequate food and health services to internally displaced persons. The United Nations also pointed out that since 2018 they had written to the government over 10 times to voice their concern, urgently request humanitarian access to the region and begin investigations into the abuses committed against the indigenous population. In the middle of the year, the OPM also called on the United Nations to intervene in Papua on the grounds that the government, which it calls colonial, is committing crimes against humanity against the local population. The government categorically denied these accusations and criticised the United Nations for expressing biased and not very rigorous opinions. Jakarta also declared that since the end of 2021, the Indonesian Armed Forces have been implementing a new security approach that not only addresses counterinsurgency operations, but also others related to development, education, health and building infrastructure. This new approach, which the government says could lead to the withdrawal of some non-organic troops from Papua, was met with scepticism and criticism from various human rights organisations, but Jakarta noted that since its implementation in 2022, the number of civilians and OPM combatants killed in the conflict have fallen significantly compared to the previous year. In late December, Indonesian President Joko Widodo supported reducing the number of troops in Papua, though he did not give any details about it and stressed the government's intention to remain firm in its fight against the OPM. In March, Amnesty International also criticised the rise in violence and human rights violations and called for the revocation of the permit to build a new gold mine in Wabu Block (Intan Jaya regency) on the grounds that it could exacerbate the conflict in the region. Along the same lines, the OPM demanded a halt to the project and the closure of the Grasberg mine, operated by the US multinational company Freeport McMoRan.

Furthermore, **there were many protests in Papua and other parts of Indonesia against Jakarta's decision to revise and prolong the 2011 Special Autonomy Law and to create three new provinces in Papua New Guinea (Central Papua, South Papua and Central Papua Highlands) in 2022**. The government claimed that the new administrative division of the region was aimed at improving governance and economic development in smaller provinces, but according to the OPM and some civil society groups in Papua, it was only intended to strengthen the government's political and military control over the region and weaken the Papuan secessionist movement. In 2003, shortly after passing the Special Autonomy Law, Jakarta's decision to divide the region (then called Irian Jaya) into two provinces also sparked protests.

The Pacific

Papua New Guinea	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Identity, Resources, Territory, Self-government Internal
Main parties:	Government, community militias, Government of Bougainville

Summary:
In recent decades, high levels of intercommunity, clan and tribal tension and violence have been reported in various regions of Papua New Guinea, a country made up of more than 600 islands and with great cultural diversity (more than 850 languages are spoken). Most of this intercommunity violence, which especially affects the provinces of Enga, Hela, Southern Highlands and Western Highlands, is linked to conflicts over land tenure (a very high percentage of which is regulated by customary law), though historically there have also been episodes of violence related to other issues, such as control of resources, family and clan rivalries and accusations of witchcraft and black magic, which have caused the death of dozens of people. Community tensions get worse around elections (as happened in 2022) and are becoming deadlier due to growing access to firearms. In addition, the regions most affected by intercommunity violence are among those that suffer from the highest rates of poverty, the lowest levels of formal education and the absence and fragility of institutions related to security, law enforcement and access to justice and conflict resolution.

In 2022, many episodes of community violence and others linked to the elections in July caused the death of hundreds of people and displaced tens of thousands. In late September, **the United Nations resident coordinator in the country estimated that election-related violence had affected around 265,000 people and displaced around 90,000 people to the Highlands region**, especially the provinces of Enga, Southern Highlands and Hela. The resident coordinator also said that around 25,000 minors were no longer attending school and that approximately 560,000 people had no (or very limited) access to basic health services due to the destruction of infrastructure, the disruption of supplies and the flight of healthcare staff. In late July, OCHA said that according to unofficial estimates, more than 300 people had been killed in the Highlands region since May, about half of them in Enga province, while warning that this figure could rise in the following weeks. In the provinces of Enga (especially in Porgara) and Hela (especially in Magarima), hundreds of houses were destroyed and many public buildings were burned down by sectarian violence that broke out in the middle of the year. Some media outlets said that the episodes of violence specifically attributable to the national elections that took place between 4 and 22 July, including the election campaign and the counting process (which lasted until early August), caused the death of about 50 people. However, the United Nations said that much of the community, tribal and clan violence that occurred in the Highlands region could have to do with reasons that are not strictly election-related, such as land disputes, but they may also have been exacerbated or accelerated due to the instability and tension associated with the elections. In the town of Porgera, for example, where much of the community violence took place, tensions date back to the closure of the gold mine in 2020, which provided approximately 10% of the country's exports, but violence only broke out when the Indonesian Army guarded the removal of ballot boxes in late July. According to local authorities, more than 20 clans in the region were involved in various kinds of clashes. During the spiral of violence, the Indonesian government documented around 70 cases of women or girls who had been raped or kidnapped. In addition, although there are no official records in this regard, the United Nations noted in April that an average of 388 cases of violence related to accusations of witchcraft occur each year in the Highlands region. For example, in the province of Enga in late July, nine women branded as witches were kidnapped and tortured, four of whom died, with three others left in critical condition. Although the country already has a law on witchcraft, at the beginning of the year a new law began to be processed to prevent and mitigate the phenomenon.

Moreover, community clashes in late October between the Kulumata and Kuboma peoples on the island of Kiriwina (eastern province of Milne Bay) caused by the death of 32 people and the disappearance of another 15. In mid-December, the police declared that 20 people had been killed in community clashes in the Koroba region of Hela province. In both cases, the government deployed additional police officers and sent mediation teams to try to de-escalate the tension and violence.

2.3.4. Europe

Eastern Europe

Moldova	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, political opposition, Russia

Summary:
Moldova proclaimed itself an independent republic in 1991 during the dissolution of the USSR. Historically, its current territory to the left of the Dniester River was part of the mediaeval principality of Moldavia, which also included parts of present-day Romania and Ukraine. It went through stages when it was under the control of different powers, including the Ottoman Empire, the Russian Empire, Romania and the USSR. During World War II and after the non-aggression pact between the USSR and Nazi Germany, Soviet Russia established the Moldovan SSR in 1940 (which would become one of the fifteen Soviet Socialist Republics that were part of the USSR) uniting part of the historical region of Bessarabia and Transdniestria, a territorial strip east of the Dniester River that was formerly part of an autonomous region of the Ukrainian SSR. Today a country of 2.6 million inhabitants with an absolute poverty rate of 24.5% (2021), Moldova is beset by tension in different intersecting areas. For instance, it has an unresolved conflict over the status of Transdniestria, an area with a Russian-speaking majority that has been de facto independent since 1992, supported by Russia and internationally recognised as part of Moldova. The country has also been affected by instability and political division, including in relation to its outlook on foreign policy, and serious corruption problems. It has maintained neutrality with respect to NATO, though it also has a cooperative relationship with the military alliance. Tension between Russia and Moldova has increased at different periods, including in the energy sphere, as Moldova has traditionally been dependent on Russian gas. Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 increased tension and uncertainty in neighbouring Moldova due to the risks of the conflict spreading.

The tension in Moldova increased, influenced by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, while the security, political, social and economic situation deteriorated and Russia exerted pressure on the country in different areas, such as energy. In terms of security, the Russian invasion of Ukraine raised alarms in the country. **Already in February the Parliament of Moldova approved the introduction of the state of emergency, in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and it was prolonged several times – the last one in November for another sixty days.** Fears increased over risks of the war spreading. In April, Russian General and Deputy Commander of the Central Military District Rustam Minnekayev declared that Russia aimed to seize control of eastern and southern Ukraine in the

second phase of the war, including the city of Odessa, and reaching as far as Transdniestria. Furthermore, at the end of the month and in May, the self-proclaimed authorities of Transdniestria reported several explosions and incidents in the territory under their control, though fortunately there were no casualties.[52] However, the risk of the war spilling over remained low, due to Ukraine's continued control of Odessa and other factors. The authorities of Moldova and Transdniestria maintained contact during the year, ruled out any expansion of the conflict and promoted a negotiated solution. However, the Russian invasion of Ukraine kept Moldova mired in uncertainty. In November, a journalistic investigation indicated that the Russian security services had received orders in June to prepare scenarios for a "second front" in Transdniestria and Moldova; and in December the Moldovan intelligence chief also said that there was a risk that Russia could try to advance militarily towards Moldova and establish a corridor with the Transdniestria region in 2023, although the Moldovan intelligence agency later clarified that he had been referring to different scenarios that Russia could try. Physical proximity to Ukraine involved various security incidents. In October, the Moldovan authorities reported that three cruise missiles fired by Russia from the Black Sea and aimed at Ukraine passed through Moldovan airspace. On several occasions, they also said that Russian missiles had landed on Moldovan soil.

Political tensions also rose in the final months of the year because opposition demonstrations, which had begun in the summer, became more widespread in September and continued in subsequent months. They took place mainly in the capital, Chisinau, and were organised by the party Shor, which has ties to Russia. The protesters demanded an end to the sanctions imposed on Russia and the resignation of Moldovan President Maia Sandu and of her government, which has a pro-EU inclination. Analysts viewed the protests as an attempt by Russia to destabilise the country through the Kremlin's ties to pro-Russian opposition parties.

Another source of tension was energy, an area in which Moldova was dependent on Russian gas (Gazprom) supplied through a transit pipeline through Ukraine, as well as electricity from Transdniestria and, to a lesser extent, from Ukraine. **Russia reduced its gas supplies to Moldova and Transdniestria in October and December. In November, it threatened to cut off all Russian gas supplies to Moldova if it did not pay Transdniestria's accumulated gas debt, which ultimately did not happen. The Moldovan authorities considered this an attempt to destabilise the country.** The cuts in gas also had negative economic impacts on Transdniestria, which declared a state of economic emergency in October. Blackouts also occurred in Moldova in November due to Russia's bombardment of the Ukrainian electrical grid. Furthermore, the power supply from Transdniestria to Moldova was reduced in October and totally interrupted in November, influenced by the lighter flow of Russian gas, on which the Cuciurgan power plant in Transdniestria depends for the production and supply of electricity to the region and Moldova. In December, Chisinau and Tiraspol reached a provisional agreement whereby all imported Russian gas will go to Transdniestria and Transdniestria will supply electricity to Moldova at an agreed price well below what is paid for alternative electricity coming from Romania. Meanwhile, Moldova took steps towards energy diversification during the year, including the synchronisation of its electricity grid with the European continental grid and the purchase of gas from the European market. Overall, the Moldovan population faced a complex socioeconomic situation during the year due to rising prices, including for food, non-food products and services, with impacts on the population in a country considered one of the poorest in Europe. International actors like the EU committed humanitarian aid, as well as financial support for energy diversification. The EU also granted Moldova EU candidate country status in June, along with Ukraine. Diplomatic contacts between international actors and the Moldovan government also intensified.

Moldova was also a country of transit and a destination for the Ukrainian refugee population, with 726,705 entries into the country between the start of the invasion (24 February 2022) and mid-December, according to UNHCR data. As of 23 December, there were 99,524 refugees from Ukraine in the country (59% were women, 48% were children and 21% were seniors). In a visit to Moldova in May, the UN Secretary-General described the country as Ukraine's most fragile neighbour.

Moldova (Transdniestria)	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↑
Type:	Self-government, Identity Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Moldova, self-proclaimed Republic of Transdniestria, Russia

Summary:
Transdniestria 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 Transdniestria over a possible unification between the independent Moldova and Romania, which have both historical and cultural links. Transdniestria 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

52. See the summary on Moldova (Transdniestria) in this chapter.

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 Transdniestria 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 Transdniestria. The issue of Transdniestria is one of the lines of tension in a broader scenario of fragility in Moldova, a former Soviet republic and one of the poorest countries in Europe, which is affected by political division running along a pro-EU and pro-Russia fault line and by a history of corruption problems. Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 increased uncertainty in the Transdniestria region and across Moldova, which borders Ukraine.

Tension rose around the conflict between Moldova and Transdniestria, influenced by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the risks that the conflict might spill over, though both the Moldovan and Transdniestrian authorities restated their commitment to dialogue to resolve the conflict over the status of the disputed region. Russia's military advances in southern Ukraine at the start of the invasion generated uncertainty about the risks of the invasion and war expanding to Transdniestria, a region bordering Ukraine where Russia maintains a military presence. One part of this Russian military presence is under the umbrella of the trilateral peacekeeping force made up of forces from Moldova, Transdniestria and Russia and the other part is a contingent of Russian forces inherited from a military unit of the Soviet Army. The second contingent remains in Moldova without the consent of its government, which has asked it to leave. Moldova declared a state of emergency in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February. Kiev closed its border crossings with Transdniestria. In April, Russian General and Deputy Commander of the Central Military District Rustam Minnekayev declared that Russia aimed to seize control of eastern and southern Ukraine in the second phase of the war, including the city of Odessa, and reaching as far as Transdniestria.

In late April, the self-proclaimed authorities of Transdniestria reported several explosions and incidents in the territory under their control. These incidents did not cause any casualties and included a rocket launcher attack on the empty headquarters of the Ministry of the Interior in the capital, Tiraspol; an alleged attack against the local air base; explosions against two radio antennas in Maiac and incidents in Cobasna (a town that maintains a Soviet ammunition depot) that allegedly involved drone flights and shooting. The Transdniestrian authorities blamed Ukraine for the incidents, raised the situation to "red alert", imposed restrictions on the movement of people and increased the number of checkpoints. Moldovan Prime Minister Natalia Gavrilita described the security incidents as provocative actions in Transdniestria aimed at destabilising the region. Moldovan President Maia Sandu blamed the incidents on pro-war factions, without specifying details, but ruled out any immediate risks of the conflict in Ukraine spreading to Moldova, at least to territory under government control. Ukraine's Ministry of Defence blamed the actions on Russia's security service. In May, Tiraspol reported new attacks against a military police station and an oil depot. Despite the rise in tension, the Moldovan and Transdniestrian authorities stayed in contact and made statements ruling out the spread of armed violence and the option of war and promoting a peaceful solution to the conflict. Various meetings took place during the year between senior political representatives of Moldova and Transdniestria, involving Moldovan Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Reintegration Oleg Serebrian and Transdniestrian chief negotiator Vitaly Ignatiev, as well as representatives of the 5+2 negotiating format. No significant agreements were reached in the process, but it was possible to maintain a fluid dialogue in a year of great uncertainty due to the war in Ukraine. Taken together, the maintenance of control of the Odessa region in Ukraine by Ukrainian forces reduced the risks of the military expansion of the conflict in the neighbouring country to the Transdniestria region. Analysts also pointed to other factors that reduced risk, such as Transdniestria's highly integrated trade with Moldova and Europe and others. Nevertheless, the tension and uncertainty continued until the end of the year. In November, a journalistic investigation indicated that the Russian security services had received orders in June to prepare scenarios for a "second front" in Transdniestria and Moldova; and in December the Moldovan intelligence chief also said that there was a risk that Russia could try to advance militarily towards Moldova and establish a corridor with the Transdniestria region in 2023, although the Moldovan intelligence agency later clarified that he had been referring to different scenarios that Russia could try.

Another line of tension was the energy issue in a context of Moldova's dependence on Russian gas and electricity coming mostly from Transdniestria and to a lesser extent from Ukraine. Russia reduced its gas supplies to Moldova and Transdniestria in October and December. In November, it threatened to cut off all Russian gas supplies to Moldova if it did not pay Transdniestria's accumulated gas debt, which ultimately did not happen. The Moldovan authorities considered this an attempt to destabilise the country. The cuts in gas also had negative economic impacts on Transdniestria, which declared a state of economic emergency in October. Blackouts also occurred in Moldova in November due to Russia's bombardment of the Ukrainian electrical grid. Furthermore, the power supply from Transdniestria to Moldova was reduced in October and totally interrupted in November, influenced by the lighter flow of Russian gas, on which the Cuciurgan power plant in Transdniestria depends for the production and supply of electricity to the region and Moldova. In December, Chisinau and Tiraspol reached a provisional agreement whereby all imported Russian gas will go to

Transdniestria and Transdniestria will supply electricity to Moldova at an agreed price well below what is paid for alternative electricity coming from Romania. Overall, the conflict between Moldova and Transdniestria was reflected by tension across Moldova in 2022, with the state of emergency decreed in February still in force at the end of the year.[53]

Russia and the Caucasus

Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Self-government, Identity, Territory International
Main parties:	Azerbaijan, Armenia, self-proclaimed Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, Russia, Turkey

Summary:
The conflict between the two countries regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh region, an enclave with an Armenian majority which is formally part of Azerbaijan but which enjoys de facto independence, lies in the failure to resolve the underlying issues of the armed conflict that took place between December 1991 and 1994. This began as an internal conflict between the region's self-defence militias and the Azerbaijan security forces over the sovereignty and control of Nagorno-Karabakh and gradually escalated into an inter-state war between Azerbaijan and neighbouring Armenia. The armed conflict, which claimed 20,000 lives and forced the displacement of 200,000 people, as well as enforcing the ethnic homogenisation of the population on either side of the ceasefire line, gave way to a situation of unresolved conflict in which the central issues are the status of Nagorno-Karabakh and the return of the population, and which involved sporadic violations of the ceasefire. Since the 1994 ceasefire there have been several escalations of violence, such as the one in 2016 which led to several hundred fatalities. The war resumed in September 2020. Around 6,800 military personnel from both countries were killed or missing, several hundred civilians were killed and around 91,000 Armenians and 84,000 Azerbaijanis were displaced. In November of that year, the parties reached an agreement that put an end to the war and represented a complete change of the status quo (Azerbaijani control of the districts adjacent to Nagorno-Karabakh and part of Nagorno-Karabakh and the deployment of Russian peacekeeping forces), but left Nagorno-Karabakh's political status unresolved.

The dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh made for a fragile situation, with a new escalation of violence caused by Azerbaijan's air strikes against Armenian targets along and south of the border that claimed over 280 lives and wounded around 500. Although there were diplomatic contacts and some success in the first half of the year with the establishment of the border demarcation commissions between both countries and the commitment to move towards a peace agreement, the situation remained tense in practice. During the year Azerbaijan affirmed its sovereignty over the region as well as the status of citizens Azerbaijan for the Armenian population in the region and ruled out addressing the situation of the Armenian population in the region with any international actor nor with Armenia. In addition, there were security incidents both in Nagorno-Karabakh and on the interstate border during the year, as well as Azerbaijani military operations in Nagorno-Karabakh and in Armenia. Baku carried out military operations and attacks that resulted in the takeover of some areas of Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia, such as in March, August and September. The Azerbaijani Army's air offensive in September against parts of Armenia on the central and southern border resulted in the deadliest interstate escalation since the 2020 war, with 207 Armenian soldiers and 80 other Azerbaijanis killed, several civilian fatalities, dozens of civilians wounded and over 2,700 Armenian civilians displaced, among other impacts. Armenia and Azerbaijan announced a ceasefire on 14 September following an earlier failed truce promoted by Russia and international calls for a ceasefire and the resumption of negotiations. Pashinyan had expressed his willingness to reach an agreement with Azerbaijan if Baku recognised Armenia's territorial integrity, including 50 km^2 of Armenia taken by Baku in 2021 and 2022, adding that Armenia in turn would recognise the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. After his announcement, a few thousand people (according to some media outlets) protested against Pashinyan in the Armenian capital, Yerevan, as well as in the capital of Nagorno-Karabakh, Stepanakert, and in Gyumri, against what they perceived as concessions. The military escalation and truce in September were followed by new diplomatic moves and international calls for dialogue. The sides agreed in October to deploy an EU civil observation mission on the Armenian side of the international border and also committed to mutual recognition of territorial integrity and sovereignty, based on the United Nations Charter and the 1991 Alma-Ata Protocol. The mission was deployed on 20 October and ended in December. On 30 October, thousands of people (40,000 according to local authorities) demonstrated in Stepanakert, the capital of Nagorno-Karabakh, rejecting the possibility of the region coming under Azerbaijani control. On that same day, the Nagorno-Karabakh Parliament, which organised the protest, issued a declaration in defence of the region's sovereignty and its right to self-determination and against any document or proposal that might question it.

The issue of the Lachin corridor, the only road connecting Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia, was a source of tension and a topic of discussion during the year. In August, Baku announced that it had completed its section of the new route that will replace the Lachin corridor according to the 2020 ceasefire agreement and accused Yerevan

53. See the summary on Moldova in this chapter.

of delaying its section. In addition to the incidents in August and the evacuation of the population from towns around the corridor, **at the end of the year tensions rose due to the blockade of the corridor in December by Azerbaijani protesters opposed to mining activity in the region**. **The blockade hindered access to basic goods and generated the risk of a humanitarian emergency**. International actors such as the US, the EU and the UN Secretary-General called for it to reopen. By the year's end, the corridor remained blocked.

South-east Europe

Serbia – Kosovo	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↑
Type:	Self-government, Identity, Government International[54]
Main parties:	Serbia, Kosovo, political and social representatives of the Serbian community of Kosovo, UN mission (UNMIK), NATO mission (KFOR), EU mission (EULEX)

Summary:
The socio-political crisis between Serbia and Kosovo is related to the process of determining the political status of the region after the armed conflict of 1998-1999, which pitted both the KLA (Albanian armed group) and NATO against the Serbian government following years of repression inflicted by Slobodan Milosevic's regime on the Albanian population in what was then a province of Serbia within the Yugoslav federation. The NATO offensive, unauthorised by the UN, paved the way for the establishment of an international protectorate. In practice, Kosovo was divided along ethnic lines, with an increase in hostilities against the Serb community, whose isolationism was in turn fostered by Serbia. The territory's final status and the rights of minorities have remained a constant source of tension, in addition to Kosovo's internal problems, such as unemployment, corruption and criminality. The process of determining this final status, which began in 2006, failed to achieve an agreement between the parties or backing from the UN Security Council for the proposal put forward by the UN special envoy. In 2008, Kosovo's parliament proclaimed the independence of the territory, which was rejected by the Serbian population of Kosovo and by Serbia.

Tensions rose between Serbia and Kosovo over disputed issues such as the recognition of vehicle license plates, which led to security incidents, border closures and the placement of troops on high alert by Serbia. One of the main challenges facing the process during the year was the dispute around reciprocity measures on vehicle registrations and identity cards. The 2021 provisional agreement on license plates expired in April 2022. Both issues were addressed during the year in the EU-facilitated negotiating process.[55] In late June, the Kosovar government announced that it would require Kosovar license plates starting on 30 September, as well as temporary identity documents issued by Pristina to people with Serbian identification to enter Kosovo starting in August. The announcement received harsh criticism from Serbia and Kosovar Serb representatives and was followed by barricades and violent incidents that lasted several days. Armed individuals participated in the protests, indicated with alarm in the UN Secretary-General's report. The Kosovar government blamed the Serbian government for the blockades and protests. Amidst international calls, Pristina postponed the implementation of the identification documents to 1 September. In late August, the parties reached an agreement on the freedom of movement of people.[56] However, the dispute over the license plate issue dragged on. After Kosovo postponed implementation of the new license plate system until late October and following new incidents of violence, Kosovo issued a series of deadlines with a warning period for motorists until 21 November 2022 and the full entry into force of the new system in April 2023.

Despite the November agreement, tensions simmered in northern Kosovo. Several hundred people including Kosovo Serb politicians, mayors, civil servants and MPs resigned from their positions in the Kosovo Serb municipalities of northern Kosovo and from the Kosovo Parliament in November, complaining of non-compliance with EU-facilitated agreements between Serbia and Kosovo. The mass resignation followed the suspension of a regional director of the North Kosovo Police Service who had called for disobeying the Kosovar government over the new license plate system. Following the mass resignation, the Kosovar government planned to hold early municipal elections in northern Kosovo in December, though they were rejected by the main Kosovo Serb party, Srpska Lista. There were a few violent incidents against polling facilities and barricades were erected to protest the arrest of a Kosovar Serb policeman for alleged links to one of the attacks. The Kosovar government finally announced that the elections would be postponed until April 2023. However, the tension continued until the end of the year, with the expansion of the barricades to six towns in northern Kosovo. Serbia asked NATO for authorisation to deploy 1,000 Serbian troops in Kosovo, though the military organisation declined to provide it, and ordered the Serbian Army to prepare for the "highest level of combat readiness". Kosovo closed three border crossings due to roadblocks caused by the barricades. New diplomatic meetings took place. In late December, Serbia announced that it was dismantling the barricades and deactivating the order for the Serbian Army to remain on maximum alert. The policeman whose arrest by Kosovo triggered some of the protests was placed under house arrest. Kosovo also stated that there were no lists of Kosovo Serb citizens to

54. The socio-political crisis between Kosovo and Serbia is considered "international" since although its international legal status remains unclear, Kosovo has been recognized as a State by more than a hundred of countries.
55. See Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2022: Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2023.
56. See Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2022: Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2023.

be arrested or prosecuted for the protests and for setting up the barricades. The elimination of these lists, if they existed, had been one of the Kosovo Serbs' demands. During 2022 the tension also involved other issues, such as Kosovo's refusal to facilitate voting within Kosovo for the Kosovo Serb population with dual nationality in the Serbian constitutional referendum in mid-January and in the April general elections. Therefore, it abandoned its previous policy of allowing the OSCE to facilitate voting on its territory. At the same time, amid increased tension across Europe due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, international actors urged Kosovo and Serbia to move forward with the normalisation of relations through a Franco-German proposal. In turn, Kosovo formally applied for membership in the EU in December.

2.3.5. Middle East

Mashreq

Egypt	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	=
Type:	Government Internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition

Summary:
Within the framework of the so-called "Arab revolts", popular mobilisations in Egypt led to the overthrow of Hosni Mubarak at the beginning of 2011. During three decades, Mubarak had headed an authoritarian government characterised by the accumulation of powers around the Government National Democratic Party, the Armed Forces and the corporate elites; as well as by an artificial political plurality, with constant allegations of fraud in the elections, harassment policies towards the opposition and the illegalisation of the main dissident movement, the Muslim Brotherhood (MB). The fall of Mubarak's regime gave way to an unstable political landscape, where the struggle between the sectors demanding for pushing towards the goals of the revolt, Islamist groups aspiring to a new position of power and the military class seeking guarantees to keep their influence and privileges in the new institutional scheme became evident. In this context, and after an interim government led by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), the electoral triumph of the MB in the parliamentarian and presidential elections seemed to open a new stage in the country in 2012. However, the ousting of the Islamist president Mohamed Morsi in July 2013, when he had just been in power for one year, opened new questions on the future of the country in a context of persistent violence, polarisation, political repression and increasing control by military sectors.

In 2022, the **Egyptian government continued to receive criticism and complaints from human rights organisations for its persistent campaign of repression and silencing of dissidents and for violating various human rights**. The authorities took some actions that some critical observers considered symbolic or cosmetic and interpreted as attempts to appease international disputes, especially on the eve of the annual global conference on climate change (COP27) at the Egyptian seaside resort of Sharm El Sheikh in November.[57] Thus, for example, hundreds of prisoners were released over the course of the year, but many of them were re-arrested and there were many new arrests. **Amnesty International indicated that before COP27, the authorities released 897 people detained for political reasons, but arrested nearly three times as many others**, including hundreds of activists that called for demonstrations during the international event. Thousands of people perceived to be opponents or critics of the government remained in detention at the end of the year (according to some estimates, around 60,000, including over 20 journalists arbitrarily arrested and accused of spreading "fake news", misusing social media or terrorism. People linked to the Islamist opposition and other dissidents, such as former presidential candidate Abdelmoniem Aboulfotoh, were convicted on similar charges in proceedings denounced for their irregularities and political motivation. The authorities also detained, persecuted and harassed many human rights activists. In January, the Arab Network for Human Rights Information (ANRHI), one of the leading human rights organisations in the country, announced that it was closing after 18 years of operation due to threats, attacks and arrests by the National Security Agency and the imminent deadline (in April) to register as an NGO under a draconian law on associations approved by the government in 2019. Meanwhile, **people under police custody continued to die in suspicious circumstances and without proper investigations despite indications of torture and/or lack of care**. Security forces were also accused of subjecting hundreds of detainees to enforced disappearances, some for months, while allegations of torture and cruel treatment persisted in prisons, police stations and National Security Agency facilities. In a joint report released in April, the NGOs Egyptian Front for Human Rights and Freedom Initiative denounced security forces' and prison workers' systematic use of sexual violence to torture women, men and transgender people. International human rights NGOs also condemned the death sentences and executions of people after unfair trials.

The **government of Abdel Fatah al-Sisi**, who launched a national human rights strategy in September 2021 and declared that 2022 would be "the year of civil society", **called for a national dialogue in April with parts of the political opposition. Though various preparatory actions were reported during the year, the initiative had not been formally launched by the end of 2022**. The secretariat responsible for its promotion agreed to open the dialogue to all the political and social forces of the country, except for members of the Muslim Brotherhood,

57. For further information, see Pamela Urrutia, Emergencia climática y conflictos: retos para la paz en la región MENA, *Apunts ECP de Conflictes i Pau,* No. 22, December 2022.

and excluded possible amendments to the Constitution as a result of the talks. The work of this national dialogue will be structured around three areas (political, economic and social) and will result in non-binding recommendations, which will be sent to President al-Sisi so that he can decide which will be adopted. Parts of the political opposition, civil society and external observers expressed scepticism that this initiative could signify the beginning of genuine reforms or address the human rights crisis in the country.[58] Until late 2022, the opposition Civil Democratic Movement, a coalition that brings together around a dozen secular parties willing to participate, made its involvement conditional on the release of over 1,000 people. One of the main concerns of public opinion was the economic situation, given the serious impact of the war in Ukraine on the country. Despite complaints about the human rights situation in Egypt, France, Italy and the United States continued to sell arms to the North African country. In January, Washington announced the sale of arms for 2.5 billion dollars. However, at the same time, the decision to withhold 130 million of the 300 million dollars in military aid to Egypt approved in 2021, conditional upon progress in human rights, was upheld through 2022. In October, the US Congress raised this figure by 75 million dollars. In November, the European Parliament approved a resolution condemning the human rights situation, calling for a thorough review of the EU's relations with the country. European legislators also called on the UN Human Rights Council to investigate the situation in the country.

Israel – Syria, Lebanon	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	=
Type:	System, Resources, Territory International
Main parties:	Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Hezbollah (party and militia), Iran

Summary:
The backdrop to this situation of tension is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its consequences in the region. On the one hand, the presence of thousands of Palestinian refugees who settled in Lebanon from 1948, together with the leadership of the PLO in 1979, led Israel to carry out constant attacks in southern Lebanon until it occupied the country in 1982. The founding of Hezbollah, the armed Shiite group, in the early 1980s in Lebanon, with an agenda consisting of challenging Israel and achieving the liberation of Palestine, led to a series of clashes that culminated in a major Israeli offensive in July 2006. Meanwhile, the 1967 war led to the Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan Heights, which together with Syria's support of Hezbollah explains the tension between Israel and Syria. Since 2011, the outbreak of the armed conflict in Syria has had a direct impact on the dynamics of this tension and on the positions adopted by the actors involved in this conflict.

The decades-long tension between Israel, Syria and Lebanon, which has been influenced by the armed conflict in Syria in recent years, continued to drive periodic acts of violence that left a death toll that is difficult to determine. As in previous years, **various Israeli attacks on Syrian soil were reported throughout 2022, targeting Syrian government bases and forces linked to Iran and Hezbollah**. These attacks took place at various points in Syria, including the Damascus and Aleppo airports, and left at least 25 soldiers dead, in addition to one civilian, and injured many different people. Israeli media outlets justified some of these attacks by claiming that they were intended to prevent the transfer of weapons from Iran to Hezbollah. The leader of Hezbollah said in February that his organisation was producing drones and that with the help of Iran it would soon be able to transform them into precision-guided rockets. That same month, Israel reported that it had shot down a Hezbollah drone that had entered its airspace. Regular UN reports on the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1701, which ended the armed conflict in 2006, repeated Israel's continuous violation of Lebanese airspace in hundreds of episodes over the course of the year. **At the end of the year, an attack on a convoy belonging to the UN mission in Lebanon (UNIFIL) killed one soldier and wounded three others in Al-Aaqbya**, in the southern part of the country. In its reports, the UN found that no progress had been made on a permanent ceasefire agreement between Lebanon and Israel throughout 2022.

One of the sources of greatest tension and expectations during the year was related to the demarcation of the maritime border between Lebanon and Israel. In June, the arrival of a boat at the maritime border to prepare the facilities for the extraction of gas for Israel from the Karish field prompted Lebanese President Michel Aaoun to warn that any activity in the disputed areas while the negotiations were ongoing was a provocative and hostile act. Israeli ministers said that their priority was to protect Israel's strategic interests and that their country was ready to defend them. The Hezbollah leader called on all Lebanese political forces to unite in defence of their maritime resources and threatened to attack Israeli gas infrastructure if it started extracting gas before the demarcation agreement was concluded. In July, the Lebanese group launched several drones over Karish that were intercepted by Israel. Two days later, the Lebanese prime minister said that interference by non-state actors in the negotiations was putting Lebanon at unnecessary risk. Nevertheless, Nasrallah insisted on an armed attack if the dispute was not resolved by September, when Israel planned to start its gas exploitation.[59] **Finally, after years of intermittent US mediation, in October Lebanon and Israel reached an agreement to demarcate their maritime border.** Signed after various efforts made by US Special Envoy Amos

58. Khaled Dawoud, "Egyptian 'national dialogue' will kick off amid difficult domestic situation", Middle East Institute, 20 October 2022.
59. International Crisis Group, Time to Resolve the Lebanon-Israel Maritime Border Dispute, Alert, Middle East and North Africa, 18 August 2022.

Hochstein, many described the agreement as historic. Yet some analysts had doubts about its implementation given the political fragility in Lebanon and the rejection of the agreement by Benjamin Netanyahu, who won the November elections and returned to power in Israel at the end of the year.[60] Despite his threats to dismantle the agreement, analysts said that Netanyahu will surely prioritise its economic benefits and not antagonise the United States. After the intensification of tension in preceding months, the agreement was considered a solution that shut down the possibility of an armed conflict in the short term, though observers stressed that it is not a guarantee of long-term stability, nor does it necessarily reduce the prospects for a possible new war between Israel and Hezbollah.[61]

After years of intermittent US mediation, in October Lebanon and Israel reached an agreement to demarcate their maritime border

Lebanon	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	=
Type:	Government, System Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, Hezbollah (party and militia), political and social opposition, armed groups ISIS and Jabhat al-Sham (formerly al-Nusra Front), Saraya Ahl al-Sham

Summary:
The assassination of the Lebanese prime minister, Rafiq Hariri, in February 2005 sparked the so-called "Cedar Revolution" which, following mass demonstrations, forced the withdrawal of the Syrian Armed Forces (present in the country for three decades), meeting the demands of Security Council resolution 1559, promoted by the USA and France in September 2004. The stand-off between opponents of Syria's influence (led by Hariri's son, who blamed the Syrian regime for the assassination) and sectors more closely linked to Syria, such as Hezbollah, triggered a political, social and institutional crisis influenced by religious divisions. In a climate of persistent internal political division, the armed conflict that broke out in Syria in 2011 has led to an escalation of the tension between Lebanese political and social sectors and to an increase in violence in the country.

The situation in Lebanon remained characterised by **an enduring political impasse and a severe economic crisis with serious consequences for the living conditions of the population** and concern about the security situation. **In May, the country held the first parliamentary elections since the massive popular protests of 2019**. Human rights groups complained of vote buying, incitement to violence and abuse of power by political parties. Several incidents took place during the elections, including clashes between supporters of the Christian-based Lebanese Forces party and the Shia-based Hezbollah-Amal groups. Faced with the disagreements and power struggles between the different factions, political leaders evoked the memory of the civil war. Although independent candidates linked to the 2019 civil protest movement won 13 of the 128 seats, the vote did not significantly change the political landscape, which continued to be characterised by deadlock in the following months. Acting Prime Minister Najib Mikati secured the backing of 54 MPs (the lowest level of support since the civil war ended) and was tasked with forming a new government, but he had failed to do so by the year's end amid persistent disagreements over the allocation of different ministries to the various sectarian communities in the country. In late October, the term of President Michel Aoun also expired. Parliament held 11 unsuccessful sessions to choose his successor between September and December. The political atmosphere had an impact on the possibilities of addressing the deep economic crisis in the country, indicated by the World Bank as one of the most serious in the world since the 19th century. The crisis has caused the local currency to lose more than 95% of its value and by the end of 2022, the devaluation of the Lebanese pound had reached historic levels (47,000 Lebanese pounds per dollar). **The population, 80% of which is living in poverty, has been affected by the swift rise in prices, cutback on subsidies and serious deterioration of services, particularly in the health, education and security sectors, as well as the dearth of supplies like water and electricity.** Food insecurity increased significantly in a context also affected by the repercussions of the war in Ukraine (Lebanon imported 80% of its grain from Ukraine). According to the World Food Programme (WFP), from October 2019 to November 2022, the price of food had increased by 1,800%. The intermittent lack of bread caused incidents throughout the country during the year and there were continuous strikes, demonstrations and roadblocks to protest the deteriorating economic situation. Between August and November, around 20 banks were approached by armed people who demanded access to their deposits. The UN also warned about armed incidents and shootings attributed to "personal disputes" that killed and injured dozens throughout the year. In this context, a dozen networks of female mediators were activated to try to resolve local disputes and prevent community violence throughout the year.[62]

The deterioration of the economic situation especially affected groups in vulnerable situations, including the refugee population that the country hosts (including 1.5 million Syrians). By way of example, it is estimated that nine out of 10 Syrian refugees in Lebanon lived

60. See the summary on Lebanon in this chapter and the summary on Israel-Palestine in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts).
61. Ksenia Svetlova, The Israel-Lebanon maritime deal is an example of successful US-led mediation. Can it be copy-pasted to other Middle Eastern arenas?, *Atlantic Council,* 28 October 2022.
62. See chapter 3 (Gender, peace and security).

in conditions of extreme poverty in 2022. Several shipwrecks of boats that had been trying to reach Europe were reported throughout the year, with dozens of Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian fatalities (one shipwreck off the coast of Tripoli in April, another near the Turkish coast in August, a third on the Syrian coast in September, in addition to many others). According to the information that it had been able to access, UNHCR verified that movements at sea in this area that involved the displaced and migrant population had increased, from 31 with 1,570 people involved in 2021 to 55 with 4,629 people involved in 2022. Human rights NGOs also warned of forced returns of the Syrian refugee population. In addition, there were still many different challenges to breaking impunity. Groups like Human Rights Watch said that the political establishment continued to obstruct the investigation into the devastating explosion in Beirut in August 2020 that killed over 220 people and injured 7,000 others. It also reported that an investigation into four political assassinations in the last two years was beset by failures and negligence. A budget had still not been allocated to the independent national commission established in 2020 to investigate the whereabouts of more than 17,000 people who had gone missing during the country's civil war (1975-1990). Various security incidents between different factions in Palestinian refugee camps were also reported throughout the year, including shootings that killed at least one person and injured several others.

Lebanon continued to be affected by a persistent political impasse and by a severe economic crisis that had a special impact on groups in vulnerable situations, including the large refugee population that the country hosts

The Gulf

Iran	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government Internal
Main parties:	Government, social and political opposition

Summary:
This tension is framed within a political context that is marked by the decades-long polarisation between the conservative and reformist sectors in the country, and by the key role of religious authorities and armed forces –especially the Republican Guard– in Iran's power politics. Internal tensions rose towards the middle of 2009 when Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was re-elected in elections that were reported to be fraudulent by the opposition and that fueled the largest popular protests in the country since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The end of Ahmadinejad's two consecutive mandates and the election of the moderate cleric Hassan Rouhani in 2013 seem to have started a new stage in the country, giving rise to expectations regarding a possible decrease in the internal political tension and an eventual change in the relations between Iran and the outer world. However, internal tensions have persisted.

Tensions in Iran escalated during the last four months of the year, when **new popular demonstrations were staged against the authorities as part of a protest movement that has been considered one of the greatest challenges to the theocratic regime since 1979**. What set off the protests was the death of a young Kurdish woman, Mahsa Jîna Amini, while she was in police custody in September after being arrested for wearing her hijab (head covering) inappropriately, according to regime standards. Her death, which Tehran claimed was caused by a previous medical condition but was blamed on mistreatment by the security forces, led to mass protests that multiplied throughout the country. Over 1,600 demonstrations had been reported by early December, with high levels of participation by women, who put their rights and freedoms at the heart of their demands.[63] The protesters received crosscutting support and made their grievances and broader demands clear in social, political, economic, gender-related and other spheres. As on previous occasions, particularly the 2019 protests, the regime cracked down harshly to quell the movement through the security forces and Basij militias. **At the end of the year, various body counts indicated that nearly 500 people had died as a result of the crackdown, including around one hundred women**. Approximately 60 members of the security forces had also lost their lives in incidents after the protests began. Thousands of other people may have been injured during the regime's crackdown, which observably used excessive force and gender-based violence, such as shots fired at women that deliberately targeted their faces and genitals. Until late 2022, thousands of people (over 20,000, according to some sources) were detained and some of them were put on trial without due process, according to complaints by human rights NGOs. The penalties included death sentences and the first execution of a participant in the protests took place in early December. Human rights groups warned that the crackdown disproportionately affected minors. It was estimated that by the end of 2022, at least 58 children (46 boys and 12 girls) had been killed in actions by the security forces since September and many more children had reportedly been detained in raids that were even carried out in schools. As of November, cases of poisoning of girls in schools were also reported. The regime also took

63. For further information, see Pamela Urrutia, La revuelta de las mujeres en Irán: ¿un punto de inflexión? Claves desde el análisis de conflictos con perspectiva feminista, *Apunts ECP de Conflictes i Pau,* No. 27, March 2023.

action to try to prevent or silence the protests by cutting power and the Internet and by threatening those who told their stories to the media.

The protests were staged in a context of accumulated grievances and rising social discontent due to action taken by the government of Ebrahim Raisi, a member of the hardline conservative wing who came to power in mid-2021. Since before Amini's death, she had been complaining about the intensification of repression against social and student leaders, the reinforcement of the "moral police" and more steps taken to control and monitor women's dress codes. Protests in several provinces in the country in May 2022 due to the economic situation and cuts in subsidies had already caused the death of at least five protesters that month. **After Amini's death, the crackdown on the protests was especially intense in areas inhabited by ethnic and religious minorities** (especially in Kurdish and Balochi areas) where the demonstrations also reflected disaffection with the regime after decades of discriminatory policies limiting their cultural and political rights. The city of Zahedan, in Sistan Balochistan, witnessed the worst day since the protests began, with more than 90 deaths on 30 September after demonstrations in solidarity with the protests in the rest of the country and local demonstrations against the rape of a girl by a senior police officer. According to human rights groups, 60% of the minors who have died since the start of the protests were Kurdish or Baloch. Tehran blamed the internal protests on actions orchestrated from abroad and took several retaliatory actions against Kurdish groups based in the Kurdistan Autonomous Region (KRI) of northern Iraq, particularly against the KDPI and Komala, which in the past have fought against the regime's centralist and assimilationist policies. At least 16 people have died and dozens have been injured in these attacks, according to media reports.

Iran – USA, Israel[64]	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	=
Type:	System, Government International
Main parties:	Iran, USA, Israel

Summary:
Since the Islamic revolution in 1979 that overthrew the regime of Shah Mohamed Reza Pahlavi (an ally of Washington) and proclaimed Ayatollah Khomeini as the country's Supreme leader, relations between the US, Israel and Iran have been tense. The international pressure on Iran became stronger in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, when the George W. Bush Administration declared Iran, together with Iraq and North Korea as the "axis of evil" and as an enemy State due to its alleged ties with terrorism. In this context, Iran's nuclear programme has been one of the issues that have generated most concern in the West, which is suspicious of its military purposes. Thus, Iran's nuclear programme has developed alongside the approval of international sanctions and threats of using force, especially by Israel. Iran's approach to the conflict during the two consecutive mandates of the ultra-conservative Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (2005-2013) did not contribute to ease tensions. The rise to power of the moderate cleric Hassan Rouhani, in turn, has generated high hopes of a turn in Iran's foreign relations, especially after the signing of an agreement on nuclear issues at the end of 2013. However, the rise to power of moderate cleric Hassan Rouhani has raised expectations about a turning point in Iran's foreign relations, especially after negotiations began on the Iranian nuclear programme in late 2013 and after a related agreement was signed in mid-2015. In recent years, the withdrawal of the United States from the Iran deal in 2018 and the intensification of its sanctions policy, the progressive distancing of Iran from the commitments made in the deal and a chaotic regional backdrop have worsened tensions and made it difficult to find a way out of this dispute.

The tension around Iran's nuclear programme remained high throughout 2022 against a backdrop of oscillating negotiations and a general impasse in an attempt to restore full compliance with the 2015 agreement (JCPOA). In addition to the exchanges of threats and security incidents, which mainly involved forces from Iran, the US and Israel, the negotiating process was influenced by other events during the year, including the repercussions of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on the global stage and the impact of Tehran's crackdown on a new wave of internal protests. The year began with certain expectations, given the resumption of the negotiations of the Vienna process in the final quarter of 2021. The diplomatic process achieved some important progress in finding common ground during the first months of 2022, but the negotiating activity was slowed down and blocked by the impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the consequent rise in international tensions. Meetings between the parties that had not withdrawn from the JCPOA and indirect talks between Iran and the US, which withdrew from the agreement in 2018 under the administration of Donald Trump, were reactivated around the middle of the year, with the EU mediating, but did not lead to any agreement. After the start of the popular protests in Iran and the regime's crackdown, further meetings became difficult. According to reports, the main points of disagreement in the negotiations had to do with the sanctions imposed on Iran and particularly with the designation of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard (IRGC) as a terrorist organisation by the US in 2019. Tehran demands that the IRGC be removed from the US list of terrorist organisations, while Washington sets conditions for its removal. Iran insisted that it will not reduce its uranium reserves until sanctions are lifted, while the White House demanded a reduction as a precondition. The countries could not agree on which sanctions should be withdrawn or on the duration of any new agreement. Tehran wanted guarantees that the deal would last and not be overturned by a new US administration. Iran also

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

wanted to set a deadline for the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) investigation in the country.

In this context, in November the IAEA Board of Governors passed a resolution condemning Iran for its lack of cooperation on investigations into past nuclear activities and undeclared sites. In response, the Iranian government stepped up its atomic activities and began enriching uranium to 60%, just below what was needed to produce nuclear weapons and well above the 3.67% limit set in the nuclear deal. Previously, the IAEA had warned that Iran had already accumulated 62.3 kilos of 60% enriched uranium and that its verification and monitoring work had been severely affected by Tehran's decision to dismantle the devices installed for surveillance and supervision of the JCPOA. The UN Secretary-General called on Iran to reverse the steps that had led it away from the implementation of the agreement since mid-2019. Alongside these diplomatic tensions, friction remained evident in a series of incidents during the year. For example, **some exchanges of fire between US and Iranian forces in Iraq and Syria**, especially at the beginning of the year, coincided with the second anniversary of the death of Iranian General Qassem Soleimani in a US attack in Baghdad. In August, Washington warned of the consequences of a possible Iranian attack against US citizens after the arrest of an alleged member of the IRGC on charges of plotting to assassinate former National Security Advisor John Bolton. **Iran and the US exchanged warnings and threats during the year and there were also some episodes of tension between ships of both countries** in the Gulf of Oman and the Strait of Hormuz. Both countries approved new sanctions. **Iran also exchanged threats with Israel, which carried out several attacks against Iranian targets in Syria**.[65] Throughout the year, Tehran announced that it was dismantling an alleged network of spies collaborating with Israel who were planning acts of sabotage at the Fordow nuclear facilities (March) and another supposed group of collaborators with Mossad (July). The deaths in strange circumstances of a general and three other individuals at an Iranian military aerospace facility (June) were also linked to hostilities between Iran and Israel. During the US president's visit to Israel in July, both countries issued a joint statement repeating their commitment not to allow Iran to develop a nuclear weapon. The Israeli government emphasised that the only way to deter Tehran was to maintain a credible military threat to it. At the end of the year, Iran's foreign relations were also affected by Western countries' accusations that Tehran was responsible for the transfer of weapons (specifically, drones) to Russia for its invasion of Ukraine and was in violation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2331, which was used to support the nuclear agreement (JCPOA) in 2015.

65. See the summary on Syria in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts).