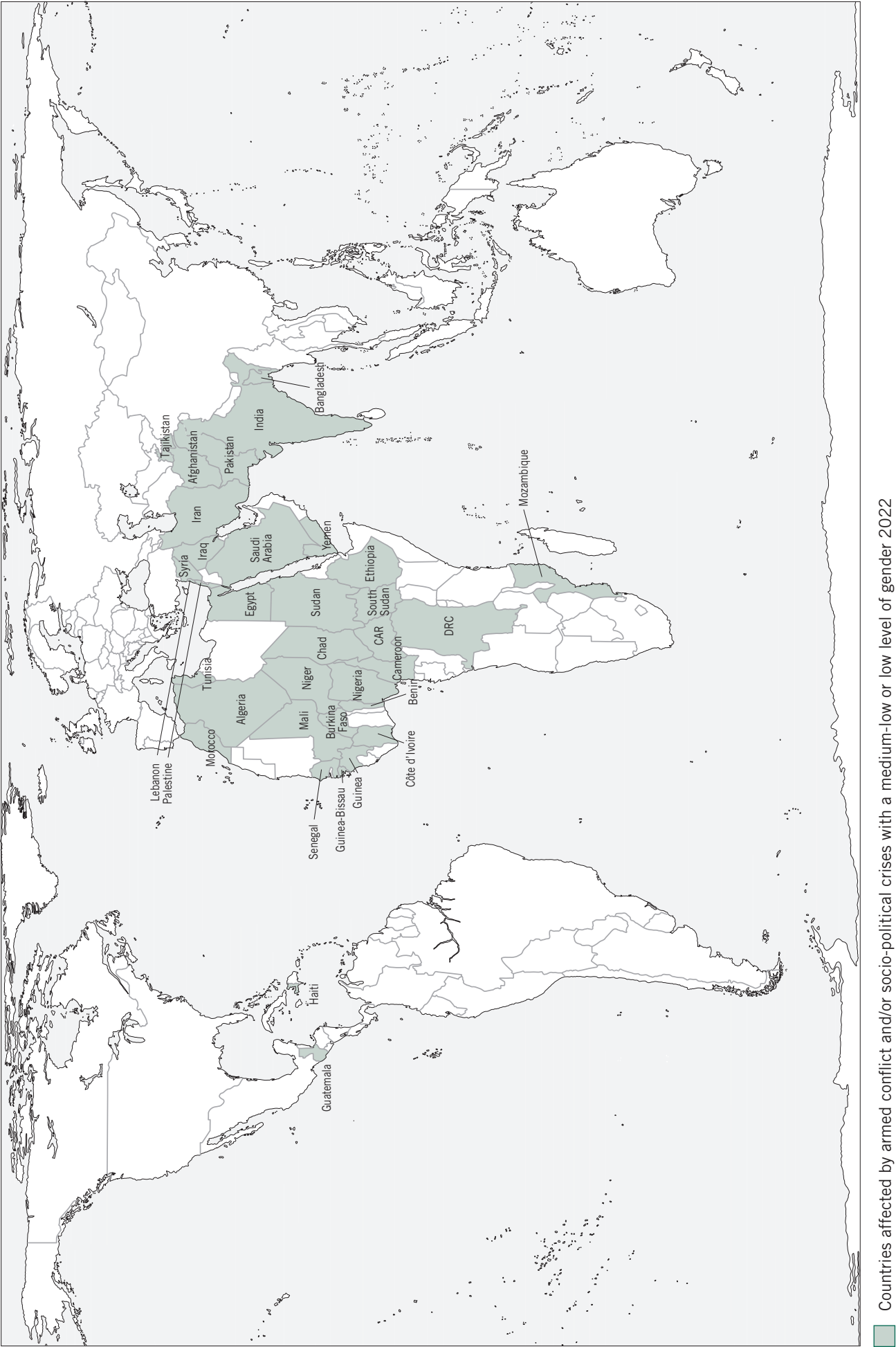


Map 3.1. Gender, peace and security



3. Gender, peace and security

- 23 of the 33 armed conflicts that took place in 2022 occurred in countries with a low level of gender equality, while three occurred in countries with a medium-low level of gender equality.
- 24 of the 33 ongoing armed conflicts occurred in countries where ILGA had documented the implementation of legislation or policies criminalising the LGBTIQ+ population.
- The use of sexual violence was documented in places including Ethiopia (Tigray), South Sudan, Ukraine and Haiti.
- In Afghanistan and Iran, women led intense social protests against restrictive, harmful legislation and policies that violated their rights.
- In Ukraine, there were reports of sexual violence by Russian forces against women, men and girls, as well as multiple forms of gender-based violence, exacerbating pre-existing inequalities, while women's organisations called for the prevention of re-victimisation.
- The United Nations stated that the majority of the more than 81,000 murders of women and girls that occurred in 2021 were motivated by gender.
- The Women, Peace and Security agenda remained underfunded, and women's organisations highlighted barriers such as lack of flexibility and adaptation to the circumstances of conflict settings and excessive bureaucratisation.

The Gender, Peace and Security chapter analyses the gender impacts of armed conflicts and socio-political crises, as well as the inclusion of the gender perspective into various international and local peacebuilding initiatives by international organisations, especially the United Nations, national governments, as well as different organisations and movements from local and international civil society.¹ In addition, a follow-up is made of the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda. The gender perspective brings to light the differentiated effects of the armed conflicts on women and men, but also to what extent and in what way both women and men are participating in peacebuilding and the contributions that women are making to peacebuilding. The chapter also analyses the consequences of conflicts on lesbian, gay, trans, bisexual, intersexual and queer (LGBTIQ+) population and their participation in peacebuilding initiatives. The chapter is structured into three main sections: the first provides an assessment of the global situation with regard to gender inequalities by analysing the Gender Development Index; the second analyses the gender dimension in armed conflicts and socio-political crises; and the final section is devoted to peacebuilding from a gender perspective. At the beginning of the chapter, a map is attached that shows those countries with serious gender inequalities according to the Gender Development Index. The chapter conducts a specific follow-up of the implementation of the agenda on women, peace and security, established after the adoption by the UN Security Council in 2000 of resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.

3.1. Gender inequalities

To evaluate the gender inequality situation in countries affected by armed conflicts and/or socio-political crises, the data provided by the UNDP's Gender Development Index (GDI) has been used. This index measures disparities in relation to the Human Development Index (HDI)² between genders. The value of the Gender Development Index is

1. Gender is the analytical category that highlights that inequalities between men and women are a social construct and not a result of nature, underlining their social and cultural construction in order to distinguish them from biological differences of the sexes. Gender aims to give visibility to the social construction of sexual difference and the sexual division of labour and power. The gender perspective seeks to show that the differences between men and women are a social construct, which is a product of unequal power relations that have historically been established in the patriarchal system. Gender as a category of analysis aims to demonstrate the historical and context-based nature of sexual differences. This approach must be accompanied by an intersectional analysis that relates gender to other factors that structure power in a society, such as social class, race, ethnicity, age, or sexuality, among other aspects that generate inequalities, discrimination and privileges.
2. The Human Development Index (HDI) is a summary measure of average achievement in three key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life (longevity), being knowledgeable (education) and having a decent standard of living (income per capita). For more information, see the UNDP's *2021/2022 Human Development Report. Uncertain Times, Unsettled Lives: Shaping our Future in a Transforming World*, UNDP, 2022.

Table 3.1. Countries affected by armed conflict with a medium-low or low level of gender equality³

| Low level of equality | | |
|---|--|---|
| Afghanistan Cameroon (2) Cameroon (Ambazonia/Northwest and Southwest) Lake Chad Region CAR Chad Lake Chad Region DRC (2) DRC (east) DRC (east-ADF) Egypt Egypt (Sinai) | Iraq India (2) India (Jammu and Kashmir) India (CPI-M) Mali (2) Mali Western Sahel Region Niger (2) Lake Chad Region Western Sahel Region Nigeria Lake Chad Region | Palestine Israel-Palestine Pakistan (2) Pakistan Pakistan (Balochistan) South Sudan Syria Sudan (2) Sudan (Darfur) Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile) Yemen |
| Medium-low level of equality | | |
| Burkina Faso Sahel Region | Ethiopia (2) Ethiopia (Oromia) Ethiopia (Tigray) | Mozambique Mozambique (north) |

calculated based on the ratio of HDI values for women and men.⁴ The GDI divides countries into five groups by absolute deviation from gender parity in HDI values.

According to the GDI, the gender equality level was medium-low or low in 46 countries, most of which were located in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. The analysis that results from cross-referencing the data from this index with the index of countries experiencing armed conflicts reveals that **23 out of the 33 armed conflicts that took place in 2022 occurred in countries with a low level of gender equality** – Cameroon (Ambazonia/Northwest and Southwest), Mali, Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram), Western Sahel Region⁵, CAR, DRC (east), DRC (east-ADF), Sudan (Darfur), Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile), South Sudan, Afghanistan, India (Jammu and Kashmir), India (CPI-M), Pakistan, Pakistan (Balochistan), Egypt (Sinai), Iraq, Israel-Palestine, Syria, Yemen – **or a medium-low level of gender equality** – Ethiopia (Oromia), Ethiopia (Tigray), and Mozambique (north). **There was no data available on Somalia, a country currently experiencing an armed conflict. Regarding the intensity of conflicts**, 12 of the 17 high-intensity armed conflicts in 2022 (70%

of cases) took place in countries with low or medium-low levels of gender equality (in the case of Somalia, there was no data from the GDI). Furthermore, in eight other countries in which one or more armed conflicts were taking place, the level of discrimination was lower: according to the GDI, the level of equality in Libya, Colombia, Philippines, Thailand, Russia, Ukraine and Israel was high, while Myanmar showed a medium level of equality. Meanwhile, **47 of the 108 socio-political crises that were active in 2022 occurred in countries with a low or medium-low level of gender equality.**

3.2. The impact of violence and conflicts from a gender perspective

This section addresses the gender dimension in the conflict cycle, especially in reference to violence against women. The gender perspective is a useful tool for the analysis of armed conflicts and socio-political crises and makes it possible to give visibility to aspects generally ignored in this analysis both in terms of causes and consequences.

- Table compiled from the data gathered by the School for a Culture of Peace on armed conflicts and from the data on countries with low and medium-low levels of gender equality according to the UNDP's Gender Development Index, as indicated in the 2021/2022 Human Development Report. The country is highlighted in bold and the armed conflict(s) active in the country in 2022 are listed below the country. In countries where there is more than one armed conflict, the number of conflicts is indicated in brackets.
- To establish the different levels of inequality in countries, the classification proposed by UNDP has been used, in which countries are divided into five groups by absolute deviation from gender parity in HDI values. Group 1: countries with a high level of equality in terms of achievements in HDI between women and men (absolute deviation below 2.5%); Group 2: countries with a medium-high level of equality in terms of achievements in HDI between women and men (absolute deviation between 2.5% and 5%); Group 3: countries with a medium level of equality in terms of achievements in HDI between women and men (absolute deviation between 5% and 7.5%); Group 4: countries with a medium-low level of equality in terms of achievements in HDI between women and men (absolute deviation between 7.5% and 10%); and Group 5: countries with a low level of equality in terms of achievements in HDI between women and men (absolute deviation from gender parity exceeding 10%).
- The conflict in the Western Sahel Region has been included as one of the 23 armed conflicts in countries with low levels of gender equality. This conflict involves three countries with low levels of gender equality (Mali, Côte d'Ivoire and Niger) and one country with a medium-low level of equality (Burkina Faso).

Table 3.2. Countries affected by socio-political crises with a medium-low or low level of gender equality⁶

| Low level of equality | | |
|---|--|---|
| Algeria Bangladesh Benin CAR (2) CAR Central Africa (LRA) Chad Côte d'Ivoire DRC (3) DRC DRC – Rwanda Central Africa (LRA) Egypt (2) Egypt Ethiopia – Egypt –Sudan Guinea Haiti | India (6) India India (Assam) India (Manipur) India (Nagaland) India – China India – Pakistan Iran (4) Iran Iran (northeast) Iran (Sistan and Baluchestan) Iran – USA, Israel Iraq Iraq (Kurdistan) Lebanon Lebanon Israel – Syria –Lebanon Mali Morocco Morocco – Western Sahara Niger | Nigeria (3) Nigeria Nigeria (Biafra) Nigeria (Niger Delta) Palestine Pakistan (2) Pakistan India – Pakistan Senegal Senegal (Casamance) South Sudan (2) Sudan – South Sudan Central Africa (LRA) Sudan (5) Sudan Sudan – South Sudan Central Africa (LRA) Ethiopia – Egypt –Sudan Ethiopia – Sudan Syria Israel – Syria –Lebanon |
| Medium-low level of equality | | |
| Burkina Faso Ethiopia (3) Ethiopia – Egypt –Sudan Ethiopia – Sudan Eritrea – Ethiopia | Guatemala Mozambique Saudi Arabia | Tajikistan (3) Tajikistan Tajikistan (Gorno-Badakhshan) Kyrgyzstan – Tajikistan |

3.2.1. Sexual violence in armed conflicts and crises

As in previous years, during 2022 sexual violence was present in a large number of active armed conflicts.⁶ Its use, which in some cases was part of the deliberate war strategies of the armed actors, was documented in different reports, as well as by local and international media.

In April, the UN Security Council held its yearly open discussion on sexual violence in armed conflict and the UN Secretary-General presented his annual report on the issue. The debate returned to its in-person format after the previous edition took place in virtual format

**23 of the 33
armed conflicts
that took place in
2022 occurred in
countries with a
low level of gender
equality**

due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The debate focused on the issue of accountability as a preventive tool and involved the participation of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the UN on Sexual Violence in Conflict, over 70 government representatives, and three civil society representatives: Nadia Murad, Nobel Peace Prize laureate and Goodwill Ambassador for UNODC; Mariana Karkoutly, co-founder of the Syrian civil society group Huquqyat;

and Hilina Berhanu, an Ethiopian civil society representative. Additionally, Sweden spoke on behalf of the United Nations LGBTI Core Group, an informal group established in 2008, composed of member states and co-chaired by Argentina and the Netherlands, with the aim of promoting the rights of LGTBQ+ persons.

6. The UN considers sexual violence related to conflicts to be “incidents or patterns of sexual violence [...], that is, rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancies, forced sterilisation or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity perpetrated against women, men, boys or girls. These incidents or patterns of behavior occur in situations of conflict or post-conflict or in other situations of concern (for example, during a political confrontation). In addition, they have a direct or indirect relationship with the conflict or political confrontation, that is, a temporal, geographical or causal relationship. Apart from the international nature of the alleged crimes, which depending on the circumstances constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity, acts of genocide or other gross violations of human rights, the relationship with the conflict may be evidenced by taking into account the profile and motivations of the perpetrator, the profile of the victim, the climate of impunity or the breakdown of law and order by which the State in question may be affected, the cross-border dimensions or the fact that they violate the provisions of a ceasefire agreement”. UN Action Against Sexual Violence In Conflict, Analytical and conceptual framework of sexual violence in conflicts, November 2012.

Table 3.1. Armed actors and sexual violence in conflicts⁷

The UN Secretary-General's report on sexual violence in conflicts, published in March 2022, included a list of armed actors who are suspected of having committed systematic acts of rape and other forms of sexual violence or of being responsible for them in situations of armed conflict, which are subject to examination by the Security Council.⁸

| | STATE ACTORS | NON-STATE ACTORS |
|--------------------|---|---|
| CAR | National armed forces | Coalition des patriotes pour le changement (CPC) – former President François Bozizé; Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation – General Bobbo; Anti-balaka Mokom-Maxime Mokom; Anti-balaka Ngaïssona-Dieudonné Ndomate; Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique – Noureddine Adam and Zone Commander Mahamat Salleh; Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique – Mahamat Al-Khatim; Union pour la paix en Centrafrique-Ali Darrassa; Lord's Resistance Army; Ex-Séléka factions; Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain – Abdoulaye Miskine; Révolution et justice |
| DRC | Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Congolese National Police | Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain-Janvier; Allied Democratic Forces; Bana Mura militias; Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda; Force de résistance patriotique de l'Ituri; Lord's Resistance Army; Nduma défense du Congo; Nduma défense du Congo-Rénové faction led by "General" Guidon Shimiray Mwissa and faction led by Commander Gilbert Bwira Shuo and Deputy Commander Fidel Malik Mapenzi; Mai-Mai Kifuafua; Mai-Mai Raia Mutomboki; Mai-Mai Apa Na Pale; Mai-Mai Malaika; Mai-Mai Yakutumba; Nyatura; Coopérative pour le développement du Congo; Twa militias; Union des patriotes pour la défense des citoyens; Forces patriotiques populaires-armée du peuple |
| Iraq | | Da'esh |
| Mali | | Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad, part of Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad; Ansar Eddine; Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, part of Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin; Groupe d'autodéfense des Touaregs Imghad et leurs alliés, part of Plateforme des mouvements du 14 juin 2014 d'Alger |
| Myanmar | Tatmadaw, including integrated Border Guard | |
| Nigeria | | Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups, including Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad and Islamic State West Africa Province. |
| Somalia | Somali National Army; Somali Police Force (and allied militia); Puntland forces | Al-Shabaab |
| South Sudan | South Sudan People's Defence Forces, including Taban Deng-allied South Sudan People's Defence Forces; South Sudan National Police Service | Lord's Resistance Army; Justice and Equality Movement; Sudan People's Liberation/Army in Opposition – pro-Machar |
| Sudán | Sudanese Armed Forces; Rapid Support Forces | Justice and Equality Movement; Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid. |
| Syria | Government forces, including the National Defence Forces, intelligence services and pro-government militias | Da'esh; Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham; Army of Islam; Ahrar al-Sham. |

The annual report submitted in 2022 by the UN Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence identified 49 armed groups which were strongly suspected of having committed or having been responsible for rapes or other forms of sexual violence in armed conflict settings on the agenda of the UN Security Council.⁹ Most of the actors identified by the United Nations in its annex were non-state armed actors (37), with an additional 12 being government-sponsored armed actors, across a total of 10 settings (CAR, DRC, Iraq, Mali, Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria and Nigeria). According to the United Nations, 70% of the identified actors in conflict were considered persistent perpetrators, since they had been included in the UN annex for five or

more years. Beyond the list of perpetrators of sexual violence, the Secretary-General's report addressed the developments in 18 settings. Twelve of the 18 armed conflicts¹⁰ that were analysed in the UN Secretary-General's report experienced high levels of intensity in 2022 – Ethiopia (Tigray), Ethiopia (Oromia), Mali, the Lake Chad region (Boko Haram), Western Sahel region, DRC, DRC (East-ADF), Somalia, Sudan (Darfur), South Sudan, Myanmar, Iraq, Syria and Yemen –, topping 1,000 fatalities during the year and producing serious impacts on people and the territory, including conflict-related sexual violence. Six of these also saw an escalation of violence during 2022 compared to the previous year – Ethiopia (Oromia), Mali, Western Sahel region, DRC

7. This table uses the names of the armed actors as they appear in the Secretary-General's report, so they do not necessarily coincide with the ones used in chapters 1 and 2 of this yearbook.

8. UN Security Council, *Conflict-Related Sexual Violence. Report of the United Nations Secretary-General*, S/2022/272, 29 March 2022.

9. Ibid.

10. The countries analysed in the Secretary-General's 2022 report are: Afghanistan, CAR, Colombia, DRC, Iraq, Libya, Mali, Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. Additionally, post-conflict situations in BiH, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, as well as cases of particular concern in Ethiopia and Nigeria, are examined. In some countries covered in the UN Secretary-General's report, there were multiple armed conflicts according to the definition of the School for a Culture of Peace. The complete list of armed conflicts in the countries included in the Secretary-General's report is as follows: Ethiopia (Tigray), Ethiopia (Oromia), Libya, Mali, Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram) - including Nigeria -, Western Sahel Region (including Mali), CAR, DRC (east), DRC (east-ADF), Somalia, Sudan (Darfur), Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile), South Sudan, Colombia, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen.

(east), Somalia and Myanmar. Most of the armed actors identified by the Secretary-General as responsible for sexual violence in armed conflict were non-state actors, some of whom had been included on UN terrorist lists.

The United Nations documented the use of sexual violence in **Haiti** by armed groups with the aim of intimidating the population and expanding their control over key areas of the capital city, Port-au-Prince. In fact, by August 2022, these armed groups had gained control over large segments of the city where at least 1.5 million people resided. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) released a joint report¹¹ indicating that women, girls and boys, and to a lesser extent, men, had been victims of rape, gang rape and other forms of sexual violence as a way of destroying the social fabric of the community. Women who had been abducted for ransom purposes, thereby providing a source of funding for the armed groups operating in the capital, were also subjected to this violence. The report emphasised the impunity surrounding this violence and how the lack of prosecution and punishment, along with access to high-calibre weapons and ammunition smuggled from abroad, enabled the armed groups to commit acts of sexual violence and other human rights violations. Structural deficiencies within the police forces, which were unable to adequately deal with this violence, as well as shortcomings in healthcare and psychosocial support services, further exacerbated the crisis in a context of severe violence and lack of access to essential goods and services.

Serious human rights violations, including sexual violence by various armed actors, were reported in the armed conflict in the **Ethiopian region of Tigray**. The human rights organisation Amnesty International called on the African Union to increase pressure on the Ethiopian government to ensure access to justice for thousands of victims. The appeal came after the conflicting parties reached an agreement mediated by former Nigerian leader Olusegun Obasanjo. Despite the agreement, providing access to justice for victims of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the armed conflict, especially between 2020 and 2021, including sexual violence against women and girls, remained pending. Human rights organisations also denounced the especially vulnerable situation of Eritrean refugee women who had been displaced to this Ethiopian region in previous years. Furthermore, the International Commission of Experts on Human Rights

in Ethiopia¹² presented its report,¹³ documenting the use of sexual violence by various armed actors and indicating that the victims attributed the violence to the Ethiopian National Defence Forces, the Eritrean Defence Forces and Fano (an Amhara militia). The Commission stated that over 1,000 women and girls had been victims of sexual violence, but the report acknowledged that the actual number could be much higher, according to local sources who had provided assistance to the victims. In addition to rape, including in the presence of family members, incidents of abduction and sexual slavery were also reported. The consequences of this violence include the impact of sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS, psychological trauma and unwanted pregnancies, all occurring in a context where access to sexual and reproductive health services or psychosocial support is extremely challenging.

The Human Rights Commission in **South Sudan**, established by the UN Human Rights Council, reported that armed groups throughout the country were committing widespread sexual violence.¹⁴ This commission was established by the UN Human Rights Council in 2016 and has been renewed annually since then. Its mandate is to determine, document and preserve evidence, as well as to clarify responsibilities for grave violations of human rights, including sexual and gender-based violence, with the aim of contributing to ending impunity. Although there are no official figures on the impact of this violence on the country's civilian population, a report by the commission stated that sexual violence was being used as a tactic to displace and terrorise rival communities. The report highlighted that forced marriage and sexual slavery were chronic practices, and that significant challenges and difficulties existed for survivors to access support services. The report also emphasised the issue of impunity surrounding these crimes, pointing out that the sexual violence committed in the context of this armed conflict has been instrumentalised as a form of “reward and entitlement” for men, including young men, who participate in conflicts. The commission stated that this violence has served to build ethnic solidarity, as a form of revenge, and as a way of destroying the social fabric of the community, including through forced displacement, causing severe impacts on the victims. The report noted that the Human Rights Commission has managed to generate a significant archive documenting different forms of sexual violence, such as rape, gang rape, sexual slavery, forced marriage, torture, a variety of sexually degrading cruel and inhuman acts and beatings.

The use of sexual violence was reported in Haiti, the Ethiopian region of Tigray, South Sudan, and in Ukraine in the context of the Russian invasion

11. United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Sexual violence in Port-au-Prince: A weapon used by gangs to instil fear*, BINUH and OHCHR, October 2022.
12. The Commission is composed of three human rights experts appointed by the Office of the President of the Human Rights Council: Kaari Betty Murungi, Chairperson (Kenya), Steven Ratner (USA) and Radhika Coomaraswamy (Sri Lanka).
13. *Report of the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia*, A/HRC/51/46, General Assembly of the UN, 5 October 2022.
14. Human Rights Council, *Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Against Women and Girls in South Sudan*, A/HRC/49/CRP.4, 21 March 2022.

The commission also lamented the lack of progress in implementing the 2018 peace agreement, thus prolonging the climate of armed conflict in which sexual violence is perpetrated. In this respect, the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security (NGO WGWS), a platform of international organisations, highlighted in March the need for efforts to ensure the participation of diverse sectors of civil society in the peace process, including women from various communities, as well as their representation in various government spheres, which is currently below the 35% quota included in the agreement. The NGO WGWS urged all parties to prioritise accountability through the establishment of a hybrid tribunal alongside the Truth, Reconciliation and Healing Commission and other transitional justice mechanisms of the peace agreement, and for these to be designed and deployed with substantive participation and leadership of women, a gender focus and adequate resource allocation.

Regarding **Russia's** invasion of **Ukraine** and the armed conflict, sexual violence was reported, with most cases attributed to Russian forces. These incidents were documented by various bodies. Firstly, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine – established by the Human Rights Council through Resolution 49/1 in March 2022, consisting of three experts and in coordination with OHCHR – documented cases of sexual violence and gender-based violence in nine regions of Ukraine, as well as in Russia. The violence affected women, men and girls aged between 4 and 82 years old. The commission concluded that Russian forces had committed sexual violence primarily in two types of situations: during house searches and in situations of confinement. As regards sexual violence during house searches, this type of violence was mainly documented in the Kiev region, as well as in Chernihiv, Kharkiv and Kherson, particularly during the first two months of the war, mainly targeting women. According to the commission, the rapes were carried out at gunpoint, with extreme brutality and acts of torture, and sometimes with threats to murder the victims or their family members if they resisted. In some cases, the perpetrators also executed husbands and male relatives. Furthermore, family members, including minors, were sometimes forced to witness rapes.¹⁵ In respect of the second type of violence, the commission documented numerous cases of sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated by Russian authorities during situations of illegal confinement in the regions of Donetsk, Kharkiv, Kherson, Kiev and Luhansk, as well as in Russia. According to the commission's

Local and international organisations documented sexual violence in Ukraine, primarily committed by Russian armed forces against women, men and girls

documentation, this type of sexual violence primarily affected men – both civilians and prisoners of war – and was perpetrated with the aim of extracting information or confessions, coercing cooperation, and punishing, intimidating or humiliating individuals or groups. The commission collected evidence of the use of sexual violence as part of the torture inflicted by Russian forces, employing methods such as rape, electric shocks to the genitals and mutilation, among others. Additionally, the commission documented cases in which Russian forces imposed forced nudity during detention, at checkpoints, and at so-called filtration points (where forced inspections of citizens took place). Prolonged forced nudity can be considered a form of sexual violence, as highlighted by the commission. Overall, the commission concluded that some members of the Russian armed forces have committed war crimes of rape and sexual violence, which may amount to torture.

Meanwhile, the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU)¹⁶ documented 133 cases of conflict-related sexual violence between February 2022 and 31 January 2023, mostly occurring in Ukrainian territory occupied by Russia. The majority of these cases (109) were committed by Russian armed forces, Russian police authorities or Russian prison staff.¹⁷ The documented sexual violence by HRMMU affected 85 men, 45 women and 3 girls. This sexual violence mainly occurred in detention settings and residential areas, as well as during the “filtration” processes carried out by Russian armed forces.

Furthermore, as reported by the OHCHR, the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine reported that by the end of January 2023, investigations had been initiated regarding 155 cases of conflict-related sexual violence committed by Russian armed forces. These cases had affected 106 women, 38 men and 11 girls since the beginning of the invasion on 24 February 2022.¹⁸ Of these 155 cases, 65 (42%) were reported in the Kherson region, followed by 52 cases in the Kiev region (34%). The remaining cases were distributed as follows: Donetsk (17 cases), Kharkiv (9), Zaporizhzhia (6), Chernihiv (4), Mykolaiv (1) and Luhansk (1). The OHCHR acknowledged the efforts of the Ukrainian government in integrating a victim-centred approach in its investigations and in providing assistance to survivors. Assistance to victims of gender-based violence, sexual violence and human trafficking was one of the areas covered in the new Action Plan for the implementation of Resolution 1325, adopted in

15. Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, *Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine*, Human Rights Council, A/HRC/52/62, 15 March 2023.

16. Mission deployed in 2014 in Ukraine, with a focus on documenting violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law by all parties to the conflict since the beginning of the invasion.

17. OHCHR, *Report on the human rights situation, 1 August 2022 to 31 January 2023*, OHCHR, 24 March 2023.

18. Ibid.

December 2022. Additionally, women's organisations in Ukraine have denounced the use of sexual violence by Russian forces as a weapon of war in occupied areas, pointing out that the reported cases may just be the tip of the iceberg. The Ukrainian branch of the NGO La Strada, which works in the field of gender equality promotion and prevention of gender-based violence, reported that during the first month of the invasion and war, their helpline and support services through social platforms received 10,000 calls or messages, mostly from the Kiev region.¹⁹ At the same time, La Strada-Ukraine called for the non-victimisation of Ukrainian women. The Ukrainian Women Lawyers' Association "JurFem" also highlighted the need for media outlets, public officials and activists to report on this issue using gender-inclusive information criteria in order to avoid causing further harm to those who have been subjected to this violence.³⁰

International NGOs, such as Human Rights Watch (HRW), also documented cases of sexual violence.²¹ HRW raised concerns about the challenges survivors of sexual violence faced in accessing assistance, including emergency medical care. They highlighted various obstacles to accessing medical, psychosocial, legal and socioeconomic services, such as armed hostilities, occupation, forced displacement, the destruction or absence of medical facilities, and a lack of medical supplies.²²

Furthermore, sexual violence by Ukrainian forces was also documented, albeit on a smaller scale. Between 24 February 2022 and 31 January 2023, the OHCHR documented 24 cases of sexual violence in areas under the control of the Government of Ukraine, affecting 18 men and six women.²³ All of these incidents took place between March and July 2022, and mostly involved threats of sexual violence by Ukrainian security forces during the early stages of detention. According to the OHCHR, many cases also involved the forced nudity of individuals who were alleged to have violated the law, perpetrated by civilians or members of territorial defence forces.

3.2.2. Response to sexual violence in armed conflicts

Throughout the year there were different initiatives to respond to sexual violence in the context of armed

conflicts, as well as to fight against impunity in different judicial bodies. Some of these are described below.

In relation to the **United Nations' response to sexual exploitation and abuse by personnel serving under its mandate**, the strategy promoted by UN Secretary-General António Guterres since 2017 continued to focus on four areas of action: prioritising the rights and dignity of victims; ending impunity by strengthening reporting; collaborating with states, civil society and associated actors; and improving communications. In 2022, the strengthening of the position of Special Coordinator was announced in order to improve the United Nations' response to sexual exploitation and abuse. The position was elevated to the level of Under-Secretary-General, with

Two peacekeeping missions, MONUSCO and MINUSCA, accounted for 90% of the allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse

an increased allocation of resources, aimed at improving work in this area. However, reports of sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations personnel persisted. The Secretary-General's report noted that there were 79 allegations in 2022 related to peacekeeping operations and special political missions, compared to 75 reported in 2021.²⁴ The report indicated that 116 victims had been identified, of whom 90 were adults and 26 were minors. The allegations implicated 115 perpetrators, including 46 men in 61 cases related to child paternity and support. Of particular concern was the fact that two peacekeeping missions accounted for 90% of the allegations, with MONUSCO reporting 48 allegations and MINUSCA reporting 24 of them. The remaining allegations were attributed to the missions UNMISS (South Sudan), MINUSMA (Mali), UNFIL (Lebanon), the former MINUSTAH (Haiti) and UNAMA. The report highlighted an increase in the number of allegations involving military and civilian personnel, and a decrease in allegations against police personnel. The Secretary-General's report stated that the fight against impunity remains a priority. However, it did not specify the measures taken against perpetrators of violence, but rather it only referred to training initiatives to improve investigations related to sexual violence and exploitation.

Regarding **Russia's** invasion of **Ukraine** and reports of sexual violence, as well as of other human rights violations, various organisations responded by documenting and investigating sexual violence. The Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) initiated the collection of evidence in March 2022 for an investigation into past and ongoing allegations of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide in Ukraine since 2013. Forty-three countries

19. EUAM, "Alyona Kryvulyak: "La Strada hotline is witnessing a trauma which might destroy a generation", EUAM, 13 May 2022.

20. UN Women, "In the words of Larysa Denysenko, Ukrainian legal expert: "Sexual violence is a tactic of intimidation, torture and humiliation", 17 June 2022.

21. HRW, "Ukraine. Events of 2022", World Report 2023. HRW, 2023.

22. Ibid.

23. OHCHR, *Report on the human rights situation, 1 August 2022 to 31 January 2023*, OHCHR, 24 March 2023.

24. United Nations Secretary-General, *Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. Report of the Secretary-General*, A/77/748 16 February 2023.

called on the ICC to investigate possible war crimes. Although Ukraine is not a party to the Rome Statute, it has for the second time accepted the jurisdiction of the court for the investigation of crimes committed on its territory since 2013. Russia is not a party to the Rome Statute either. Moreover, investigations were conducted by the Office of the Prosecutor General of the Government of Ukraine regarding sexual violence and other human rights violations. The European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation provided support in coordinating with various international investigations initiated by different states. The United Nations' Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU), operated by OHCHR, as well as the International Independent Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine established by the Human Rights Council, documented cases of sexual violence. Local and international NGOs also participated in the response.²⁵

Furthermore, the Government of Ukraine developed the Strategy for the Prevention and Response to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence with support from the HRMMU and UN Women. Additionally, the Government of Ukraine and the United Nations (through the Secretary-General and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict) signed a cooperation framework in May 2022 with the aim of strengthening prevention and the response to conflict-related sexual violence in the context of the invasion.²⁶ The agreement outlined 16 areas of action and called on the international community and donors to provide financial and technical support to the Government of Ukraine in implementing its updated National Action Plan on Resolution 1325, which includes measures for the prevention of and response to conflict-related sexual violence. Meanwhile, in June, the Ukrainian government adopted and ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), which came into force in November. Its adoption had been a key demand of women's human rights organisations and activists in the country. The Istanbul Convention, which applies in times of peace and war, recognises violence against women as a violation of human rights and aims to protect against all forms of violence, as well as to prevent, prosecute and eliminate violence against women and domestic violence. It also aims to contribute to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and to promote real equality, including the empowerment of women, among other goals. The treaty covers violence in domestic settings as well as other forms of violence, including physical and psychological

The Iranian government severely suppressed protests by women throughout the country who were demanding greater freedoms and recognition of their rights

violence, sexual violence including rape, harassment, forced marriages, female genital mutilation, sexual harassment, forced abortions, forced sterilisations and crimes allegedly committed in the name of "honour". The NGO La Strada - Ukraine described the ratification as a historic moment and expressed hope that it would contribute to reducing domestic violence against women in Ukraine, a problem exacerbated by the context of armed conflict.²⁷ Amnesty International described the ratification of the Istanbul Convention as a historic victory for women's rights in Ukraine.

3.2.3. Other gender violence in contexts of crisis or armed conflict

In addition to sexual violence, armed conflicts and socio-political crisis had other serious gender impacts. Impunity for human rights violations continued to be a recurrent element.

In **Iran**, the protests that began in the country in September 2022, following the death of a young Kurdish woman in police custody, were strongly focused on demanding women's rights and freedoms. These mobilisations, which formed part of a broader, long-standing political and social discontent in the country, were characterised by the extraordinary participation and leadership of Iranian women. Their demands, enshrined in the slogan "Woman, Life, Freedom" – originally a Kurdish slogan – garnered widespread support from both men and women, transcending generational and ethnic differences. The rebellion against the compulsory hijab as a symbol of the state's refusal to recognise women's self-determination fuelled broader discussions on gender, ethnic, social, economic and political issues. In this respect, the protests highlighted the interconnectedness of various grievances, types of discrimination and forms of oppression. It is worth noting that women – many of them young and minors – played a significant role in carrying out highly symbolic actions to challenge the codes and conventions imposed by the regime, such as burning their headscarves, cutting their hair or dancing in the streets. In line with previous incidents, the regime responded to the mobilisations with severe repression, which was carried out by the police forces and pro-government militias. Up until the end of 2022, it was estimated that over 500 people had died in the context of the protests, including 100 women. Thousands of others were injured due to government repression, in which the deliberate use of violence against women

25. Horne, Cynthia M. "Accountability for atrocity crimes in Ukraine: Gendering transitional justice", *Women's Studies International Forum* 96 (2023).

26. Government of Ukraine and Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, *Framework on cooperation between the Government of Ukraine and the UN on prevention and response to conflict-related sexual violence*, May 2022.

27. Semeryn, Khrystyna, "Russian Invasion Overshadows Domestic Violence in Ukraine", *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, 11 July 2022.

was identified. NGOs and medical personnel reported a higher prevalence of women among those injured in the face and genital area. At the end of the year, reports began to surface of cases of poisoning of girls in schools. These poisonings were attributed to sectors that wanted to punish the minors for their involvement in the protest movement.²⁸

Turning to the MENA region, it is also worth highlighting a string of **femicides** that occurred in Egypt, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which sparked outrage among activists and feminist groups in the middle of the year. The cases, which occurred within a few days of each other in June, shared a similar pattern. In the first case, which took place in Egypt, a 21-year-old woman was murdered by a man after rejecting his marriage proposal. The incident occurred in broad daylight on the outskirts of the university where the young woman was studying. A few days later, another young female student was shot at a university in Amman, the Jordanian capital, by a man whom she had refused to marry. A third case, which received less media attention than the previous two, involved another young Jordanian woman who was killed in the UAE. Following these gender-based murders, messages of anger and sorrow multiplied on social media, along with demands for justice and safety for women. Activists and organisations called on the authorities to address sexism and misogyny, and to provide substantive responses to the high levels of violence against women in the region. In response to other similar cases of femicides and other forms of sexist violence in the region, feminist organisations staged a transnational protest on 6 July to denounce the patriarchy and control over women's bodies and lives, to demand structural and legal changes, and to urge institutions to fulfil their obligations and guarantee women's right to life and safety.

In **Afghanistan**, the Taliban government approved new restrictions on women's rights at various points of the year. These included the imposition of a strict dress code that required women to be fully covered, except for their eyes, in public spaces, and not to leave their homes "unless absolutely necessary" and only if accompanied by a man. Although the government announced that girls would be allowed to resume secondary education, it failed to implement the measure, arguing that security conditions would need to be changed or that uniforms and infrastructure elements would be needed to ensure full segregation.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban government implemented new restrictions on women's rights during the course of the year, including denying access to education for teenage girls and young women

The widespread return of girls to classrooms did not materialise; there was only a partial return in some areas of the country. Meanwhile, in December 2022, the Minister of Education issued an order banning women from accessing all universities in the country, both public and private. The denial of access to education for girls and young women continued to be the main obstacle for any official recognition of the Taliban regime by other governments. Indeed, the regime has not yet received any governmental recognition. These prohibitions came on top of the barring of women from virtually all paid employment and their complete exclusion from the governmental and political sphere. Furthermore, all public demonstrations organised by women to protest against the violations of their fundamental rights, which occurred at different times during the course of the year, were violently put down. These protests occurred in order to demand the reopening of secondary education for girls and to denounce violations of women's rights,

such as their exclusion from paid work or political participation, and the imposition of face coverings in public spaces, among other measures.

Russia's invasion of **Ukraine** plunged the latter country into a situation of grave emergency with a gender dimension. As highlighted by UN Women, in addition to conflict-related sexual violence, multiple forms of gender-based violence were reported, including domestic violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment and economic abuse, thus exacerbating situations that existed prior to the war.²⁹ According to a report by the OHCHR, the number of domestic violence reports filed with the police decreased in 2022 compared to the previous year due to armed hostilities, forced displacement and the occupation.³⁰ In fact, a report by UN Women and CARE in May 2022 indicated that the interviewed individuals identified an increase in domestic violence. However, the shift in priorities within the context of war had reduced access to protection and support in this area.³¹ According to this report, which covered the initial stage of the invasion, women faced difficulties in accessing support services, experienced loss of livelihoods and struggled to meet the basic needs of dependents. The report also highlighted that the war was exacerbating pre-existing gender inequalities and discrimination, including against Romani women and men, and the LGTBQ+ population. However, the interviewed LGTBQ+ persons noted that their current priorities were focused on survival in the face of the war, prioritising immediate concerns over other issues.³² In an analysis conducted in April 2022,

28. 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 Conflictos i Pau*, No.27, March 2023.

29. UN Women, *Securing gender equality in Ukraine amidst the war*, 2023.

30. OHCHR, *Report on the human rights situation, 1 August 2022 to 31 January 2023*, OHCHR, 24 March 2023.

31. CARE and UN Women, *Rapid Gender Analysis of Ukraine*, 4 May.

32. Ibid.

the NGOWG on Peace and Security highlighted the impacts on older women, who constitute the majority of elderly persons in Ukraine. It also noted the effects on access to healthcare and single-mother families, among other issues.³³ Another impact of the invasion was the forced displacement of people. By the end of 2022, it was estimated that there were 5.9 million internally displaced persons, 7.9 million individuals registered as refugees in Europe, and 4.9 million Ukrainian refugees registered for temporary protection in Europe or other similar national protection mechanisms. The martial law imposed by Ukraine in February 2022 prohibited Ukrainian males between the ages of 16 and 60 years old from leaving the country, with some exceptions. According to the UNHCR, around 90% of the displaced individuals were women and minors. Organisations in Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Hungary working in the field of sexual and reproductive rights, along with international organisations and networks, denounced the restrictions on access to essential sexual and reproductive health services in these destination and transit countries for displaced Ukrainian women and women from other backgrounds. These restrictions included limited access to emergency contraception and other contraceptive methods, access to abortion, prenatal care, post-exposure prophylaxis, and treatment for sexually transmitted infections.³⁴ Furthermore, the invasion exacerbated pre-existing forms of discrimination against certain population groups, such as Roma people, intersecting with gender discrimination and other dimensions. The Minority Rights Group highlighted forms of discrimination such as the segregation of the Ukrainian Roma population in refugee reception centres in countries such as Moldova, as well as increased difficulties in accessing livelihoods, among other challenges.³⁵ It also highlighted how issues such as lack of documentation were impacting access to humanitarian assistance and asylum. This NGO also echoed the complaints voiced by the Roma Women Fund “Chiricli” about the barriers faced by Roma women and children in crossing the border to Moldova, Poland and Hungary in search of asylum.

In 2022, 24 of the 33 active armed conflicts occurred in countries where ILGA had documented the enforcement of legislation or policies criminalising the LGBTIQ+ population, exacerbating the impacts of violence in these contexts. Fifteen of the 17 high-intensity armed conflicts in 2022 (88% of cases) occurred in countries with legislation or policies criminalising the

Fifteen of the 17 high-intensity armed conflicts in 2022 (88% of cases) occurred in countries where ILGA had documented the enforcement of legislation or policies criminalising the LGBTIQ+ population

LGBTIQ+ population, namely the conflicts in Cameroon (Ambazonia/Northwest and Southwest regions), Ethiopia (Tigray), Ethiopia (Oromia), Mali, Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram), Western Sahel Region, DRC (East), DRC (East-ADF), Somalia, Sudan (Darfur), South Sudan, Myanmar, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen. Meanwhile, experts from various fields at the United Nations warned that human rights violations and the structural vulnerability faced by the LGBTIQ+ population intensify in processes of forced displacement.³⁶ The more than 20 expert signatories stated that there were no precise figures on the number of displaced LGBTIQ+ persons, but that the number could increase in the coming years. They called for the tackling of the underlying causes of forced displacement, for public policies and for the implementation of measures to end the violence and discrimination faced by the LGBTIQ+ population.

Furthermore, they raised concerns about forms of abuse such as gender-based violence, exclusion from essential services such as safe accommodation, access to food and other basic necessities, as well as from healthcare and psychosocial support, and livelihoods, among others. They called for the establishment of programmes that take into account the specific needs of the LGBTIQ+ population in all phases of displacement; for the improvement of reception conditions, including guarantees of safe accommodation and access to healthcare services; for the guarantee of access to protection, asylum and refugee status determination; for the provision of durable solutions, including resettlement options; and for the generation of data and evidence, with collection, management and reporting following ethical procedures. Moreover, they emphasised that all measures should be aimed at the protection and guarantee of the exercise of fundamental rights, as well as at providing assistance and support in these areas.

In **Uganda**, the LGBTIQ+ population faced criminalisation and hostile rhetoric from public figures during the course of the year, as well as government repression against LGBTIQ+ rights groups and other human rights organisations. On 3 August, the National Bureau for NGOs in Uganda banned Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG), a prominent LGBTIQ+ rights organisation.³⁷ In 2021, the bureau had indefinitely suspended 54 civil society groups without due process, restricting the work of human rights groups in the country. At the parliamentary level, progress was also made on the anti-homosexuality bill, which seeks to expand the Sexual

33. NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, Gender Analysis of the Situation in Ukraine, April 2022.

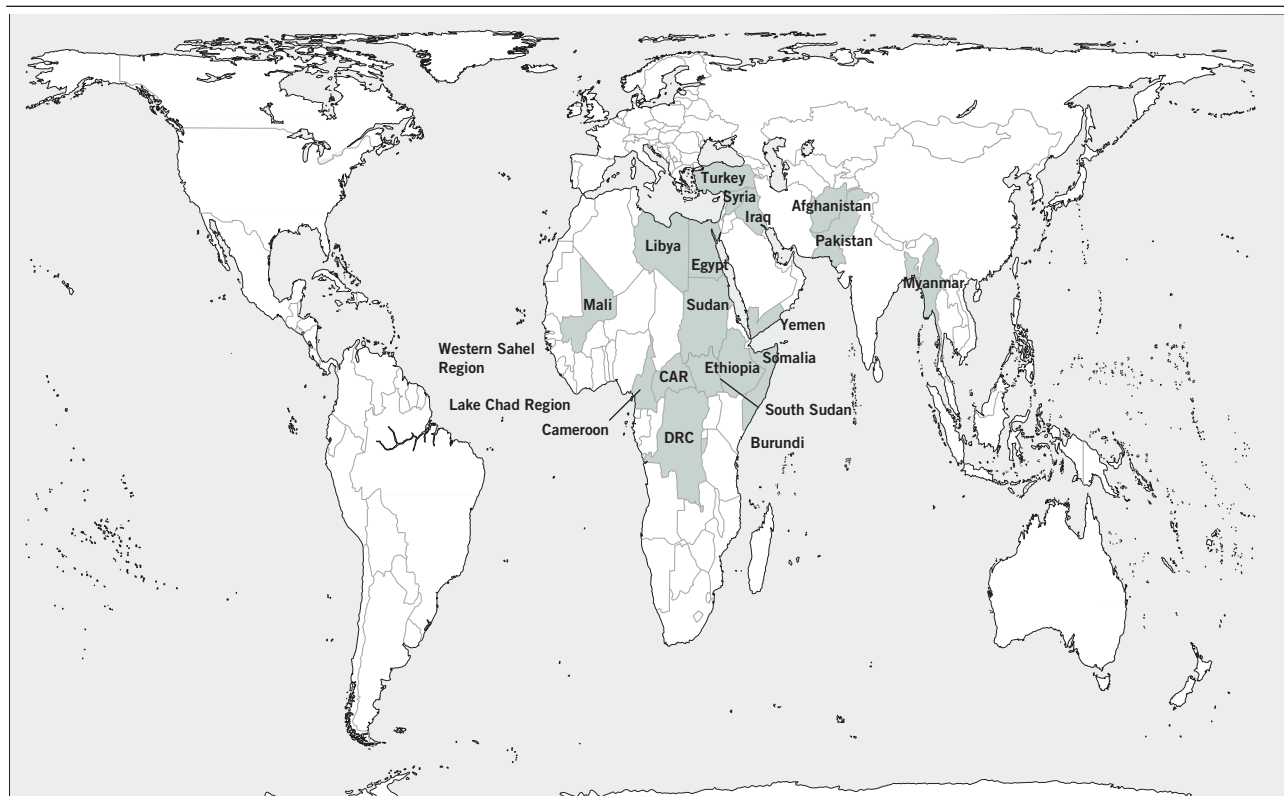
34. Various authors. “Europe: Call to Action. The sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls and marginalized populations affected by the conflict in Ukraine”, 17 March 2022.

35. Popenko, Viola, “For displaced Roma, the conflict has exacerbated existing patterns of discrimination – and left them without an income”, Minority Rights, 2022.

36. Various authors, “Forcibly displaced LGBT persons face major challenges in search of safe haven”, OHCHR, 16 May 2022.

37. Oryen Nyeko, “Uganda Bans Prominent LGBTQ Rights Group. End Harassment, Allow Group to Operate”, HRW, 12 August 2022.

Map 3.2. Countries affected by armed conflict with legislation or policies criminalising the LGBTIQ+ population



■ Countries in armed conflict with legislation or policies criminalising the LGBTIQ+ population

Table 3.4. Countries affected by armed conflict with legislation or policies criminalising the LGBTIQ+ population³⁸

| AFRICA | ASIA | MIDDLE EAST | EUROPE |
|---|--|---|--------------------|
| Burundi Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West and South West) Central African Republic DRC (east) DRC (east-ADF) Ethiopia (Tigray) Ethiopia (Oromia) Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram) Libya Mali Somalia South Sudan Sudan (Darfur) Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile) Western Sahel Region | Afghanistan Myanmar Pakistan Pakistan (Balochistan) | Egypt (Sinai) Iraq Syria Yemen | Turkey (southeast) |

Source: Prepared internally with data from Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alerta 2023! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2022; and Kellyn Botha, *Our identities under arrest: A global overview on the enforcement of laws criminalising consensual same-sex sexual acts between adults and diverse gender expressions*, ILGA World, 2021.

38. This table includes armed conflicts in 2022 in countries with legislation or policies criminalising the LGBTIQ+ population.

Offences Act passed by Parliament in 2021, which penalises any “sexual act between persons of the same gender”, as well as anal sex between individuals of any gender, with up to 10 years in prison. It was anticipated that the new bill criminalising homosexuality with even harsher penalties, including the death penalty, would be introduced and approved in parliament in early 2023.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and UN Women published a joint report analysing **gender-related killings of women and girls in 2021**.³⁹ The report indicated that, according to global estimates, 81,100 women and girls were intentionally murdered during the course of 2021, and that most of these murders were motivated by gender. In 2021, 45,000 women were murdered by their intimate partners or other family members. The report highlighted that while men and boys continued to be the primary victims of homicides worldwide, accounting for 81% of these victims, homicidal violence in the private and family sphere disproportionately affected women and girls. The data supporting these claims indicated that 56% of the murders of women were committed in the private sphere, by their partners or family members, while only 11% of the murders of men occurred in this setting. However, the report acknowledged the difficulties in identifying gender-based violence and noted that information on approximately 10% of female homicides was unavailable, thus hindering public policy responses to this extreme form of gender-based violence. Globally, Asia had the highest number of female homicides in 2021, with 17,800 women murdered, followed by Africa in second place, with 17,200 women murdered. In third place were the Americas, with 7,500 women murdered, followed by Europe (2,500) and Oceania (300). It is worth noting that in Europe, there was a reduction in the number of female homicides committed by partners or family members, while an increase was observed in the Americas.

Accordingly, between 2010 and 2021, a decrease of 19% was observed in Europe, with variations among subregions, while an increase of 6% was noted in the Americas. There was insufficient data available in order to identify a trend in Asia, Africa and Oceania. Meanwhile, the journal *The Lancet* published a research study⁴⁰ indicating that one in four ever-partnered women aged 15 to 49 years (27% globally) had experienced physical and/or sexual violence from their partner. This percentage was 24% among women aged 15 to 19 years and 26% among women aged 19 to 24 years. The study analysed data from 161 countries, representing 90% of the global population of women and girls aged 15 years

old or older. Lower-income countries recorded higher prevalence rates of violence. The study highlighted that countries were not on track to meet the SDG of gender equality regarding the elimination of all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.

3.3. Peacebuilding from a gender perspective

In this section some of the most notable initiatives are analysed to incorporate the gender perspective into the various aspects of peacebuilding.

3.3.1. Resolution 1325 and the women, peace and security agenda

A new session of the open discussion on women, peace and security was held in October and the UN Secretary-General presented his annual report on the issue.⁴¹ The main theme of the 2022 session was the situation of human rights defenders and their protection. In his annual report, the Secretary-General highlighted the persecution faced by defenders worldwide, including being murdered for their work in defending human rights and women's rights. The Secretary-General emphasised that during the course of 2021, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) had documented 29 cases of murders of human rights defenders, journalists and trade unionists in eight conflict-affected countries, although the real number of murders is actually higher. Human rights defenders experience stigma, persecution and violence. Accordingly, the Secretary-

General urged governments to take all possible measures for their protection. As an example of the impact of this persecution, he noted that a significant proportion of women who have appeared before the Security Council in open debates on women, peace and security have been subjected to harassment.

Regarding the active participation of women in peace negotiations taking place in contexts of armed conflict or socio-political crisis, the Secretary-General's report indicated that during the course of 2021, women were involved as negotiators or delegates of the conflicting parties in all peace processes facilitated or mediated by

A group of UN experts warned that human rights violations and the structural vulnerability of the LGBTIQ+ population intensify during forced displacement processes

39. UNODC and UN Women, *Gender-related killings of women and girls (femicide/feminicide). Global estimates of gender-related killings of women and girls in the private sphere in 2021. Improving data to improve responses*, UNODC and UN Women, 2021.

40. Lynnmarie Sardinha, Mathieu Maheu-Giroux, Heidi Stöckl, Sarah Rachel Meyer, Claudia García-Moreno, “Global, regional, and national prevalence estimates of physical or sexual, or both, intimate partner violence against women in 2018”, *The Lancet*, Volume 399, Issue 10327, p. 803-813, 26 February 2022.

41. UN Secretary-General, *Women and peace and security. Report of the Secretary-General*, S/2022/740, 5 October 2022.

Table 3.5. Countries which have National Action Plans on Resolution 1325 and which are participating in peace negotiations and processes

| | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| Cameroon (2017) | Armenia (2019) |
| CAR (2014) | Azerbaijan (2020) |
| DRC (2010) | Cyprus (2020) |
| Mali (2012) | Georgia (2018) |
| Morocco (2022) | Moldova (2018) |
| Mozambique (2019) | Serbia (2017) |
| Senegal (2011) | Kosovo (2014) |
| South Sudan (2015) | Ukraine (2016) |
| Sudan (2020) | Palestine (2015) |
| Korea (2014) | Yemen (2019) |
| The Philippines (2009) | |

*In parentheses, the year that the National Action Plan was approved

the United Nations. However, in a global analysis of all peace processes, women's representation stood at 19%, compared to 23% in 2020. As for peace agreements, the report stated that in 2021, eight of the 25 peace agreements that were signed (32%) included some type of clause or provision referring to gender, women or girls. This represented a 26% increase in the presence of such provisions compared to 2020 but lays bare the fact that most peace agreements still completely fail to address gender equality and women's rights.

In 2022, 21 countries involved in peace negotiations had a National Action Plan in place to promote the participation of women in these processes. Nine of these countries were in Africa (Cameroon, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, CAR, DRC, Senegal, Sudan, South Sudan); two in Asia (South Korea and the Philippines); eight in Europe (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cyprus, Georgia, Moldova, Serbia, Kosovo, and Ukraine); and two in the Middle East (Palestine and Yemen). Neither of the two countries in the Americas with ongoing negotiations had a National Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolution 1325. Thus, in 21 of the 39 active negotiations during 2022, at least one of the negotiating government actors had a plan of action that was supposed to guide its activity in terms of inclusion of the gender perspective and women's participation. The 21 negotiations and peace processes took place in Cameroon (Ambazonia/Northwest and Southwest), Mali, Morocco–Western Sahara, Mozambique, the CAR, the DRC, Senegal, Sudan, South Sudan, Sudan-South Sudan, Korea (Republic of Korea - DPRK, the Philippines (MILF), the Philippines (NDF), Armenia-Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh), Cyprus, Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia), Moldova (Transnistria), Serbia-Kosovo, Russia-Ukraine, Palestine and Yemen. However, even if they had this tool, most peace negotiations continued to exclude women and did not include the gender perspective into their dynamics, calling into question the

effectiveness of action plans as inclusive peacebuilding tools. In the context of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Ukrainian government updated its National Action Plan on Resolution 1325 in December 2022. The existing action plan was the second plan for Ukraine (2016-2020, 2020-2025). The updated plan extends its period of action until 2025.⁴²

Regarding the funding for the implementation of the agenda, the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund presented the results of a survey conducted with the women's organisations that have benefited from its funding.⁴³ It is worth noting that despite the recommendations made in 2020 by the UN Secretary-General for at least 15% of Official Development Assistance (ODA) to be dedicated to promoting gender equality as a primary objective in countries affected by armed conflicts, including through funding women's organisations, this funding accounted for only 0.4% of total aid in 2021. Furthermore, it has remained stagnant since 2010, as pointed out by the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund. The survey, which involved representatives from over 160 women's organisations in 23 countries, revealed that 89% of the organisations considered the continuity of their work to be at moderate, high or very high risk. Additionally, over half of the organisations (57%) felt that their continuity was at high or very high risk. The region at the highest risk was the Asia-Pacific region, where women's organisations in countries such as Afghanistan and Myanmar were included, with 85% of them considering the risk to their continuity as high or very high. Almost 60% of women's organisations identified access to funding for their institutional functioning or multi-year programmes as one of their main concerns. They also pointed to the lack of flexibility and adaptation to the circumstances of conflict-affected settings and excessive bureaucratisation as major barriers to accessing this funding. Nearly half of the women's organisations in conflict-affected settings

42. Government of Ukraine, *National Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security until 2025*, 2022. More information at WILPF, "Ukraine", *National Action Plans: At a Glance*, WILPF.

43. United Nations Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF), *Civil Society Organization (CSO) Annual Survey on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and Humanitarian Action*, 13 October 2022.

had received threats as a result of their work on the women, peace and security agenda, which, combined with financial difficulties, endangered the work of these organisations.

3.3.2. Gender in peace negotiations

Several peace processes were relevant from a gender point of view during the year 2022.⁴⁴ Women's organisations demanded greater participation in different negotiations around the world as well as the inclusion of gender agendas. However, in most of the negotiating processes, significant changes were not implemented to include the participation of women in a significant way.

In **Libya**, women continued to demand greater representation in negotiations and decision-making spaces regarding the country's political future, amid increasing threats and hostility towards activists and women working in the public sphere. The United Nations warned about propaganda and hate speech, which has been affecting female officials in the Ministry of Women's Affairs and activists from civil society who are pushing for more substantial participation by women in the political process, and for the implementation of the international agenda on women, peace and security. As part of the international monitoring mechanisms in the negotiating process in Libya, especially in the field of human rights, Libyan women defenders presented their vision on the challenges in this area, and experiences of international reconciliation were analysed, emphasising the lessons on the importance of ensuring the inclusion of women. Generally speaking, despite the various meetings held in 2022, negotiations in the North African country failed to break the political deadlock and deep divisions.

In the case of the dispute over **Western Sahara**, although the negotiation process remained stalled throughout the year, some events in 2022 indicated that greater attention was being paid to women's voices and their participation in efforts to achieve a political solution to the conflict. One significant example was the decision of the UN Special Envoy, Staffan de Mistura, not to visit the occupied Western Sahara by Morocco in July due to the restrictions imposed by Rabat, which in practice prevented meetings with representatives of civil society and women's organisations. The UN Secretary-General's annual report on Western Sahara explicitly stated that De Mistura's trip was called off "in line with the principles of the United Nations and, in particular, the importance given to women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security." During his visit to the Sahrawi refugee camps in September, De Mistura met with civil society groups and women's organisations, who expressed their frustration at the lack of progress towards a political

solution and their concerns about the humanitarian situation in the camps.

Turning to **Yemen**, despite their significant role in peace and security activities, Yemeni women continued to be excluded from relevant positions of power and decision-making for a political resolution to the armed conflict. During the course of 2022, Yemeni activists reiterated that the levels of participation were well below the 30% representation quota agreed upon in the Outcome Document of the National Dialogue Conference that concluded in January 2014. There were no women in the committees established after the adoption of the Stockholm Agreement in 2018 (on prisoner exchange, military security and Taiz). In the intra-Yemeni talks sponsored by the Gulf Cooperation Council, the participation of women had improved in various areas, but they remained excluded from discussions on security and counter-terrorism. The new Presidential Leadership Council, created in April 2022, which aimed to represent the different anti-Houthi factions, was formed without the presence of any women. In the 50-member Consultation and Reconciliation Commission established as an advisory body to the presidential council, the executive team included one woman among its five members. Both in Yemen and **Syria**, where negotiations were stalled in 2022, consultative spaces for women promoted by the United Nations remained active.

In **Colombia**, the Truth Commission presented its final report, entitled "There is Future if There is Truth",⁴⁵ which collected the results of the investigation into the impact of the armed conflict between 1986 and 2016. The Truth Commission incorporated an intersectional gender approach as an analytical tool to investigate the consequences of the conflict on women and on the LGBTQBI+ population. The report documented some of the gender impacts, primarily the use of sexual violence. It highlighted that all the actors involved in the conflict committed sexual violence, to varying degrees and with different patterns of victimisation. The perpetrators were predominantly men, and the main victims were women in the three main settings identified in the report: situations of helplessness such as captures or detentions; the scenario of territorial control in communities; and the context of operations and massacres. The lack of mechanisms and guarantees to report violence and the stigma surrounding it were some of the factors that reinforced the impunity of this type of violence. The report collected data from Colombia's Single Registry of Victims, which indicated that at least 32,446 individuals were victims of acts against freedom and sexual integrity, with women and girls accounting for 92% of the victims, especially in rural areas. Additionally, the report stated that most of the reported sexual violence took place between 1997 and 2005. It also highlighted the impact of the conflict on the LGBTQBI+ population.

44. For more exhaustive information on the incorporation of a gender perspective in currently active peace processes, see the yearbook of Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2022: Report on Trends and Scenarios*. Icaria editorial, 2023.

45. Truth Commission, *Hay Futuro si Hay Verdad (There is Future if There is Truth)*, 2022.

3.3.3. Civil society initiatives

Different peacebuilding initiatives led and carried out by women's civil society organisations took place in 2022. This section reviews some of the most relevant ones.

In **Lebanon**, which is affected by a severe political, economic and social crisis, around ten networks of women mediators were established during the course of the year with the support of the UN to address local disputes related to access to fuel, waste management, school violence and community violence. Some of these groups were established in the area of operations of the UN mission in the country, UNIFIL. Furthermore, the United Nations highlighted that, as part of peacebuilding efforts in the country, women from localities such as Tripoli and Beqaa led community dialogue initiatives on the legacy of the civil war and reconciliation. The UN also organised dialogues with women from traditional political parties and parties that emerged following the protests in 2019, and provided support to 450 potential female candidates for elections. However, the political representation of women remained very limited. In the elections held in May, only 118 (16.4%) of the 718 candidates were women, although this number represented an increase compared to the 86 women (13.4%) in the elections held in 2018. Ultimately, only eight women were elected out of a total of 128 parliamentary seats, including four representatives from groups that emerged after the 2019 protests, two from the Lebanese Forces, one from the Free Patriotic Movement, and one from Amal. In September, the Lebanese National Commission for Women also published a report on nationality rights and called for gender equality in this area.

In **Colombia**, women's peace organisations convened the 3rd National Summit of Women and Peace, which was attended by 100 women from across the country. The two previous national summits were convened in the context of peace negotiations between the Colombian government and the FARC, as well as dialogues with the ELN, with the aim of influencing the processes to promote women's participation in the negotiations. The National Summit is composed of the Alliance Initiative of Colombian Women for Peace; the National Association of Peasant, Black and Indigenous Women of Colombia (ANMUCIC); the Women's House; Women, Peace and Security - Thinking and Action Collective; the National Conference of Afro-Colombian Organisations; the International Women's League for Peace and Freedom; Women for Peace; and the Peaceful Women's Route. As part of the 3rd National Summit, an evaluation of the implementation process of the peace agreement between the government and the FARC (2016) was conducted, and proposals were presented to promote a new dialogue process with the armed group ELN. The participants in the summit highlighted the lack of implementation of the 2016 agreement and the delay in the process, attributing

this situation to the government's lack of political will regarding the advancement of implementation, the insufficient financial resources allocated to implementation, the legal obstacles that have hindered the work of various implementation and verification bodies, and the lack of security guarantees for human rights defenders, peacebuilders and signatories of the agreement. The final manifesto of the summit included various aspects, such as the comprehensive fulfilment of the Final Peace Agreement with the incorporation of a gender perspective, a 50% increase in resources allocated from the General National Budget to ensure compliance with the agreed-upon approach to women's and gender rights, the immediate cessation of violence against signatories of the Final Peace Agreement, and the clear inclusion of women in national public policy as part of the objectives and goals for the fulfilment of the Final Peace Agreement, among other issues.

Women in **Ukraine** mobilised in multiple community spheres in response to the invasion, including in the evacuation of civilians and support for displaced persons, in the collection and distribution of humanitarian aid, in providing support networks for women experiencing domestic violence and war-related sexual violence, in the creation of shelters and safe spaces, in gathering information to locate missing individuals, in documenting human rights violations, and in providing assistance to individuals with specific needs, including health or mobility issues, among many other areas of crisis response. These efforts were carried out through informal and self-organised initiatives, as well as through civil society organisations and in coordination with Ukrainian institutions. The active participation of women occurred within the framework of the massive response by the Ukrainian population as a whole – women, men, LGTBIQ+ persons – to the invasion and the humanitarian crisis. The LGTBIQ+ population also mobilised in providing specific mutual support in response to the invasion and in order to mitigate the risks of exacerbating other forms of pre-existing discrimination, including support in finding safe accommodation. Many women joined the armed forces and territorial defence units (expanding the approximately 32,000 women who were already part of the armed forces prior to the invasion), as well as directly supporting armed actors, highlighting the heterogeneous nature of the response to the invasion. In contrast, the negotiations between Russia and Ukraine – initiated shortly after the invasion began and held sporadically, and with many obstacles, until they stalled in around April 2022 – excluded the participation of women, with the exception of the Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine and Minister of Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories, Iryna Vereshchuk, who was involved in humanitarian negotiations (humanitarian evacuations, prisoner exchanges, among others). In turn, Ukraine's ombudsperson for human rights, Lyudmila Denisova, also supervised prisoner exchanges until May 2022, when she was dismissed and replaced by Dmytro Lubinets.⁴⁶

46. See the summary on Ukraine in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2022. Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria: 2023.

