

Executive Summary

Alert 2024! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding is an annual report analyzing the state of the world in terms of conflict and peacebuilding based on three main axes: armed conflict, tensions, gender and peace and security. The analysis of the most relevant events in 2023 and the nature, causes, dynamics, actors and consequences of the main scenarios of armed conflict and social and political tension around the world allows for a regional comparative vision and also allows identifying global trends and elements of risk and preventive warnings for the future. Furthermore, the report also identifies peacebuilding opportunities or opportunities to scale down, prevent or resolve conflicts. In both cases, one of the main objectives in this report is to make available all the information, analyses and identification of warning factors and peace opportunities for decision-makers, those intervening for the peaceful resolution to conflicts, or those giving a greater political, media or academic visibility to the many situations of political and social violence in the world.

As for the methodology, the contents of this report mainly draw on a qualitative analysis of studies and information made available by many sources –the United Nations, international organizations, research centres, communication media or NGOs, among others– as well as on field research in conflict-affected countries.

Some of the most relevant conclusions and information in the *Alert 2024!* report are listed below:

- In 2023, 36 armed conflicts were recorded, the highest number since 2014.
- Five new cases were considered armed conflicts in 2023–Ethiopia (Amhara), Somalia (Somaliland–SSC Khatumo), DRC (west), Sudan and Israel-Hezbollah – while another case ceased to be considered an armed conflict in 2023 –Ethiopia (Tigray).
- The vast majority of cases continued to be concentrated in Africa (18) and Asia and the Pacific (nine), followed by the Middle East (six), Europe (two) and the Americas (one).
- 47% of armed conflicts were of high intensity, characterized by high levels of lethality –over a thousand fatalities annually–, in addition to serious impacts on the population, massive forced displacements and severe consequences on the territory.
- The 17 high-intensity armed conflicts in 2023 were: Ethiopia (Amhara), Ethiopia (Oromiya), Mali, Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram), Western Sahel Region, DRC (East), DRC (East-ADF), Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Myanmar, Pakistan, Russia-Ukraine, Iraq, Israel-Palestine, Syria and Yemen.
- Regarding the evolution of armed conflicts, 42% of cases worsened in 2023.
- According to UNHCR, in the first half of 2023 the global figure for forced displacement amounted to 110 million people. Of this total, 36.4 million people were refugees, 62.5 million were internally displaced, 6.1 million were counted as asylum seekers and another 5.3 million were in the category of people in need of international protection.
- Regarding the refugee population and in need of international protection, in mid-2023 more than half (52%) came from just three countries affected by armed conflicts: Syria (6.5 million people), Afghanistan (6.1 million) and Ukraine (5.9 million).
- In 2023, conflicts and violence motivated internal population movements of more than 20 million people in 45 countries and territories. Sudan, DRC and Palestine account for almost two-thirds of this total.
- During 2023, 114 socio-political crises were identified around the world, six more than in 2022, in line with the upward trend in the number of cases that has been recorded in recent years.
- Africa and Asia and the Pacific were the regions with the highest number of socio-political crises (38 and 33 respectively), followed by the Americas (20), Europe (13) and the Middle East (10).
- Half of the socio-political crises (49%) worsened in 2023 (49%).
- Approximately almost a quarter of the tensions (23%) were international: Eritrea-Ethiopia; DRC-Rwanda; Venezuela-Guyana; Afghanistan-Pakistan; China-Japan; China-Taiwan; China-Philippines; North Korea-USA, Japan, South Korea; North Korea-South Korea; India-China; Armenia-Azerbaijan (Nagorno Karabakh); and Iran-USA, Israel.
- 23 of the 36 armed conflicts that took place throughout 2023 occurred in countries where there were low or medium-low levels of gender equality. Furthermore, 46 of the 114 active tensions during the year 2023 occurred in countries in which low or medium-low levels of equality existed.
- The UN Secretary-General's annual report on conflict-related sexual violence identified 49 armed actors who were credibly suspected of having committed or being responsible for rape or other forms of sexual violence in contexts of armed conflict.

- For the second year, there was a decline in the participation of women in peace processes, according to the UN.
- 33% of the peace agreements signed in 2022 (6 of the 18 agreements reached that year) included clauses referring to women, girls or gender.
- Alert 2024! report identifies five opportunities for peace in Ethiopia-Egypt-Sudan (Nile Basin); Senegal; Thailand; Cyprus; and in relation to the United Nations Future Summit and a new Peace agenda.
- The report highlights five risk scenarios in Rwanda; Sudan; China – Philippines; Europe; and Gaza.

Structure

The report has five chapters. The first two look at conflicts globally –causes, types, dynamics, evolution and actors in situations of armed conflict or tension. The third chapter looks at the gender impacts in conflicts and tensions, as well as the initiatives being carried out within the United Nations and other local and international organizations and movements with regards to peacebuilding from a gender perspective. Chapter four identifies peace opportunities, scenarios where there is a context that is favourable to resolution of conflicts or to progress towards or consolidate peace initiatives. The final chapter studies risk scenarios in the future.

Besides these five chapters, the report also includes a foldable map identifying the scenarios of armed conflict and social-political crises.

In 2023, 36 conflict contexts were recorded, the highest number since 2014

Armed conflicts

The first chapter (Armed conflicts)¹ describes the evolution, type, causes and dynamics in active conflicts during the year; global and regional trends in armed conflicts in 2023 are analyzed, as well as the impacts of such conflicts on the civilian population.

In 2023, 36 conflict contexts were recorded, the highest number since 2014. In 2022, 33 cases had been recorded, 32 in 2021 and 34 between 2018 and 2020. Five new cases were considered as armed conflicts in 2023. In Ethiopia's Amhara region, the federal government's decision to disarm and dissolve

the Fano paramilitary militias to integrate them into the Ethiopian Army and the Ethiopian police led to serious clashes between these militias and government forces. In the Horn of Africa, hostilities between the security forces of Somaliland, a self-proclaimed independent region of Somalia whose status remains a matter of dispute, and militias of the Khatumo region, which seeks to become a new state within Somalia, even though it is part of Somaliland, escalated significantly in early 2023 and remained active throughout the year. Meanwhile, in the western part of the DRC, the conflict between the Teke and Yaka communities over land ownership that had begun the previous year in the province of Mai-Ndombe worsened and the violence spread to several neighbouring provinces in 2023. A new armed conflict broke out in Sudan, mainly pitting the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) against the paramilitary group Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The eruption of violence starting in April ended up spreading to a large part of the country and especially to the regions of Darfur, Kordofan and Blue Nile, where local armed groups became actively involved in the hostilities. Therefore, the armed conflicts in these Sudanese regions, which were previously analysed separately in this report, are analysed together in this edition as part of the broader conflict in Sudan. The last new conflict took place in the

Middle East, where intensifying tensions caused by the crisis in Gaza opened an especially significant front around the border between Israel and Lebanon. The increase in the magnitude, frequency and scope of the hostilities between Israeli and Hezbollah forces and the impacts of the violence prompted its classification

as an armed conflict in late 2023. On the other hand, there was also an armed conflict that ended in 2023: Ethiopia (Tigray). The significant reduction in violence, the withdrawal of local armed groups and foreign forces and the effective disarmament of combatants after the peace agreement was signed between the federal government of Ethiopia and the political and military authorities of Tigray in November 2022 led us to stop considering this case an armed conflict in 2023.

As for the geographical distribution of the armed conflicts in 2023, the vast majority continued to be concentrated in Africa (18) and Asia and the Pacific (nine), followed by the Middle East (six), Europe (two) and the Americas (one).

These various armed conflicts were of an internal, internationalised internal and/or international nature. Although most armed conflicts continued to be

1. In this report, an armed conflict is understood as any confrontation between regular or irregular armed groups with objectives that are perceived as incompatible, in which the continuous and organised use of violence: a) causes a minimum of 100 fatalities in a year and/or has a serious impact on the territory (destruction of infrastructure or of natural resources) and on human safety (e.g., injured or displaced people, sexual violence, food insecurity, impact on mental health and on the social fabric or the disruption of basic services); and b) aims to achieve objectives different from those of common crime normally related to:

- demands for self-determination and self-government or identity-related aspirations;
- opposition to the political, economic, social or ideological system of a state or the internal or international policy of a government, which in both triggers a struggle to seize or undermine power;
- the control of resources or land.

Armed conflicts in 2023*

AFRICA (18)	ASIA (9)	MIDDLE EAST (6)
Burundi -2015- Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West and South West) -2018- CAR -2006- DRC (east) -1998- DRC (east-ADF) -2014- DRC (west) -2023- Ethiopia (Amhara) -2023- Ethiopia (Oromia) -2022- Ethiopia (Tigray) -2020- Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram) - 2011- Libya -2011- Mali -2012- Mozambique (north) -2019- Somalia -1988- Somalia (Somaliland – SSC Khatumo) -2023- South Sudan -2009- Sudan -2023- Western Sahel Region -2018-	Afghanistan -2001- India (CPI-M) -1967- India (Jammu & Kashmir) -1989 Myanmar -1948- Pakistan -2001- Pakistan (Balochistan) -2005- Philippines (NPA) -1969- Philippines (Mindanao) -1991- Thailand (south) -2004-	Egypt (Sinai) -2014- Iraq -2003- Israel – Hezbollah -2023- Israel – Palestine -2000- Syria -2011- Yemen -2004-
		EUROPE (2)
		Türkiye (south-east) -1984- Russia – Ukraine -2022-
		AMERICA (1)
		Colombia -1964-

* The start date of the armed conflict is shown between hyphens

internationalised internal ones, following the trend of previous years, the number of internal and international conflicts increased in 2023. Seventeen per cent of the armed conflicts were considered internal in 2023, more than in the previous year. Whereas there were four conflicts of this type in 2022, there were six in 2023. Five armed conflicts were international in nature. This was also more than in previous periods, climbing from three in 2022 to five in 2023. The rest of the cases (equivalent to 69%, or 25 of 36) were internationalised internal in nature. There were significantly less of these than in previous years, as they accounted for 79% of the armed conflicts in 2022 and 81% in 2021. Though part of the dynamics of these armed conflicts are internal, some of the warring parties are foreign, the armed actors in the conflict have bases or launch attacks from abroad and/or the fighting has spilled over to neighbouring countries. In many conflicts, this internationalisation involved third parties as combatants, including international missions, ad-hoc regional and international military coalitions, states, cross-border armed groups, international private security companies and others.

The multi-causal nature of contemporary armed conflicts was confirmed in 2023. Following the trend of previous years, the main causes of most of the conflicts (26 of the 36, equivalent to 72%) included questioning of the political, economic, social or ideological system of the state and/or disputes about the domestic or international policies of the respective governments. In line with recent trends, disputes about the system drove 19 of the 36 armed conflicts (53%) in 2023. In most cases, they were related to jihadist armed actors with political agendas based on their particular interpretation of Islamic law. These groups include Boko Haram in the Lake Chad region, the Pakistani Taliban's TTP militias and the

different groups that have claimed to be branches and/or “provinces” of ISIS beyond its area of origin in Iraq and Syria, in places such as the Lake Chad region, Somalia, Libya, Egypt (Sinai), Afghanistan, Pakistan, Pakistan (Balochistan), the Philippines (Mindanao) and Yemen. In Libya, Egypt (Sinai) and the Philippines (Mindanao), these groups’ operations have fallen significantly compared to previous years. In three other cases (Colombia, the Philippines (NPA) and India (CPI-M)), disputes about the system were associated with other kinds of insurgencies, ideologically linked to communism and Maoism. Fourteen of the 36 armed conflicts (39%) were caused by the domestic or international policies of the respective governments, leading to struggles to erode or access power. One such case was the armed conflict in Libya, which continued to feature power struggles between rival governments. Others included the conflicts in the CAR, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen.

Armed conflicts were also primarily caused by disputes over identity and/or demands for self-government. These were behind 21 of the 36 armed conflicts in 2023, or 58%. In line with previous years, identity-related disputes were more significant than demands for self-government, as the former were identified in 22 conflicts (61% of the total), compared to 14 for the latter (39%). Identity-related aspirations were relevant in new armed conflicts in Africa in 2023. For example, they were linked to Amhara nationalist claims in Ethiopia, to the interest of the SSC-Khatumo administration to become a new state of Somalia as part of the historical dispute over border regions between Somaliland and Puntland and to the clashes and power struggles between the Teke and Yaka communities in the DRC (west). Other armed conflicts related to self-government and/or identity took place in Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West

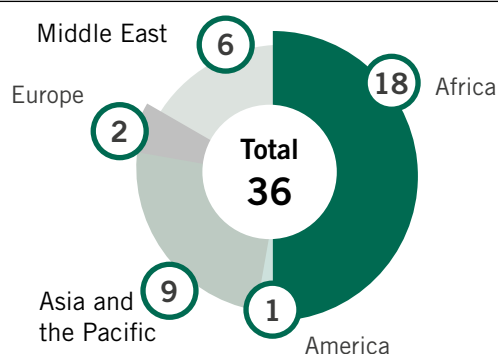
and South West), Ethiopia (Oromia), Ethiopia (Tigray), Mali, Mozambique (north), the Western Sahel region, the DRC (east), Sudan, the Philippines (Mindanao), India (Jammu and Kashmir), Myanmar, Pakistan (Balochistan), Thailand (south), Türkiye (south-east), Iraq, Israel-Palestine, Syria and Yemen.

Finally, many armed conflicts were mainly caused by control of territory and/or resources. These factors were identified in 15 of the 36 conflicts (42%). Between the two, struggles for resources were more important, as they were behind one third (33%) of the armed conflicts in 2023. In line with previous years, the conflicts that involved disputes over resources mainly took place in Africa, though this factor also had an indirect effect in many conflicts in other regions, perpetuating violence through war economies. Throughout 2023, disputes around these issues were relevant in the conflict in the Lake Chad region, Libya, DRC (west), CAR or Pakistan (Balochistan).

Regarding the evolution of armed conflicts in 2023, 42% of the cases worsened. The armed conflicts that got worse were in Africa (Burundi, Ethiopia (Amhara), Mali, the Western Sahel region, the DRC (east), the DRC (west), Somalia, Somalia (Somaliland – SCC-Khatumo) and Sudan), in Asia (Myanmar, Pakistan and Pakistan (Balochistan)) and in the Middle East (Israel-Palestine, Israel-Hezbollah and Syria). In some conflicts, an escalation of violence put an end to ceasefire agreements that had been in force for years. In Mali, the ceasefire had lasted years and in Pakistan it was broken after several months. The rest of the armed conflicts were split more or less evenly between those with levels of hostilities and violence similar to those in 2022 (10 conflicts, equivalent to 28%) and those with comparatively lower levels (11 conflicts, accounting for 30%). In some of the conflicts that saw less fighting, the trend was linked to some armed actors' apparent weakening and decline in activity as a result of the dynamics of the hostilities. This was true of the conflict in Mozambique (north), where there was a notable drop in the associated death toll and in the number of attacks targeting civilians, but also in the Philippines (Mindanao) and Egypt (Sinai). In other conflicts, the decrease in fighting was linked to the impact of negotiating processes and peace or ceasefire agreements, such as in Ethiopia (Tigray), which was no longer considered an armed conflict in 2023 due to the course of events after the peace agreement was signed in November 2022, and in Yemen, where the ceasefire agreement signed in 2022 was de facto maintained and negotiating channels remained active between the main actors involved in the hostilities.

Regarding the intensity of armed conflicts in 2023, 47% of the cases were of high intensity, characterised by high levels of lethality (over 1,000 fatalities per year), in addition to serious impacts on the population,

Regional distribution of the number of armed conflicts in 2023

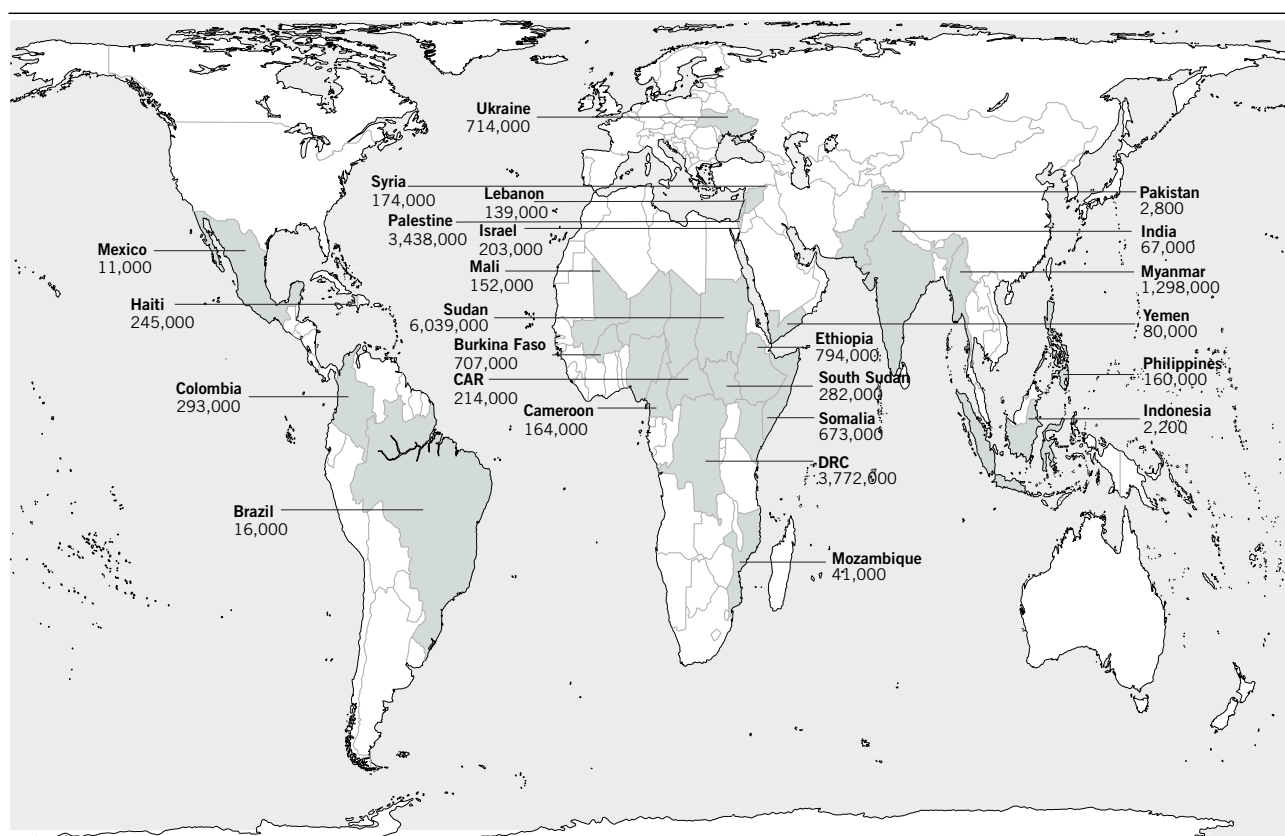


mass forced displacement and severe consequences on the ground. Of the rest of the cases, 17% were of medium intensity and 36% of low intensity. If we consider the data since 2011, high-intensity armed conflicts once accounted for less than one third of all conflicts worldwide, except in 2016 and 2017, when they stood at 40%. Since 2020, the percentage of high-intensity conflicts around the world has increased, reaching around half the total: 47% in 2020, 53% in 2021, 52% in 2022 and 47% in 2023. The highest percentage of cases of this type was concentrated in

Africa (which hosted 10 of the 17 high-intensity armed conflicts), followed by the Middle East (four cases), Asia (two) and Europe (one). The 17 high-intensity armed conflicts in 2023 were: Ethiopia (Amhara), Ethiopia (Oromia), Mali, Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram), Western Sahel region, DRC (East), DRC (East-ADF), Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Myanmar, Pakistan, Russia-Ukraine, Iraq, Israel-Palestine, Syria and Yemen. As in previous years, some of the high-intensity armed conflicts presented a pattern of hostilities and dynamics of violence that cost well above the threshold of a thousand lives per year, in addition to other serious impacts on human security and repercussions on infrastructure and on the ground. Some of the examples that, according to some estimates, would have suffered higher levels of mortality associated with war hostilities were the cases of Israel-Palestine –with more than 34,000 fatalities in just three months–, Russia-Ukraine –more than 30,000–, Myanmar –more than 15,000–, Sudan or the Western Sahel region –more than 13,000 in each case–, Somalia –almost 8,000–, Syria –more than 6,000–, Mali –more than 4,000–, or Yemen and DRC – with more than 3,000.

The civilian population continued to suffer very serious consequences from the armed conflicts in 2023. The impacts of the armed conflicts were also interrelated with other crises, such as the climate emergency, food insecurity and inequality, aggravating the violations of rights and the general situation of human security in these contexts. The annual report of the UN Secretary-General on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, published in May 2023 and analysing

Countries with the highest numbers of internal displacements due to conflict and violence in 2023



Source: Map prepared by the authors on the basis of the data provided in Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2024*, 14 May, 2024.

the events of 2022, confirmed the consequences that death, injury, forced disappearance, torture, rape and forced displacement had for civilians. The report also asserted that the destruction of essential health, power, sanitation and water infrastructure deprived many thousands of people of access to basic services to survive. The report also warned of the impact of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, with devastating effects on the civilian population. Thus, the highest number of civilian victims from these weapons in 2022 were in Ukraine, followed by Afghanistan, Somalia and Syria. The use of antipersonnel mines was also documented in the conflicts in the CAR, Colombia, the DRC, Myanmar, Ukraine and Yemen, and cluster bombs were used in Ukraine. The armed conflicts also continued to have specific impacts on some population groups. In his periodic reports on the consequences of conflicts on civilians, the UN Secretary-General warned of the disproportionate effects suffered by older people, who often cannot leave areas affected by hostilities and are forced to face increased risk of death, injury or lack of access to basic services or support networks. The UN Secretary-General's periodic report on children and armed conflict published in mid-2023, covering events in 2022, noted a rise in the number of serious violations against boys and girls. While 23,982 serious violations had been confirmed in 2021, 27,180 were documented in 2022, 24,300 of which were committed over the course of 2022 and 2,880 had been perpetrated before, but were finally verified in 2022. These

violations affected nearly 19,000 minors, most of which were boys, in 24 contexts. The report asserts that the information provided does not reflect all the violations committed against boys and girls in armed conflicts worldwide, but it does outline the trends of the most serious violations. Therefore, the most serious violations committed against boys and girls included murder, mutilation, recruitment, kidnapping and detention due to their real or imagined connection with armed groups. Gender norms shaped the minors' exposure to these impacts. As such, boys continued to be most affected by recruitment, mutilation and abduction, while girls were disproportionately affected by sexual violence related to the armed conflicts.

Forced displacement continued to be one of the most flagrant and dramatic effects of the armed conflicts, compromising the lives of millions of people around the world. According to data gathered by the United Nations agency for refugees (UNHCR), the phenomenon only worsened in 2023, once again breaking record numbers. In the first half of 2023, 110 million people had been forcibly displaced inside or outside the borders of their countries as a result of conflicts, violence, persecution and human rights violations. Of this total, 36.4 million people were refugees, 62.5 million were internally displaced, 6.1 million were asylum seekers and another 5.3 million were categorised as people in need of international protection. In mid-2023, more than half (52%) the world's refugees came from just

three countries torn by armed conflict: Syria (6.5 million people), Afghanistan (6.1 million) and Ukraine (5.9 million). Syria continued to have the largest refugee and internally displaced populations, as it has for a decade, with a total of 13.3 million people. It is estimated that 88% of the total forcibly displaced population worldwide lived in low- and middle-income countries. According to IDMC's annual report, which focuses on the situation of the internally displaced population, by the end of 2023 a total of 68 million people were living in internal displacement due to conflict and violence, a figure that has increased by 49% in the last five years. Conflicts and violence triggered 20 million new internal displacements in 45 countries and territories in 2023. Sudan, DRC and Palestine represent almost two thirds of this total.

As in previous years, sexual violence continued to be perpetrated in many armed conflicts. The annual report of the UN Secretary-General on sexual violence in armed conflicts published in 2023, which documents and analyses events that occurred in 2022, noted some especially worrying trends and warned of the serious effects of the use of sexual violence in Ukraine, Afghanistan, Mali, Myanmar, Sudan, the DRC, Ethiopia, Haiti and South Sudan. The report identified 49 actors as perpetrators of sexual violence in different conflicts, most of them non-state armed groups, although cases involving the national armed forces and security forces were also reported. The report states that 70% of these actors are considered persistent perpetrators, appearing on the list for five years or more and failing to take any corrective or reparatory action. Sexual violence was used as part of political and repressive violence in different armed conflicts and socio-political crises and was one of the causes of forced displacement. In that way, it also affected previous displaced populations given the vulnerability faced by women forced to leave their places of origin.

Half of the socio-political crises identified in 2023 (49%) worsened compared to the previous year and only 23% saw an improvement

Socio-political crises

The second chapter (Socio-political crises)² looks at the most relevant events regarding social and political tensions recorded during the year and compares global and regional trends.

There were 114 socio-political crises around the world in 2023, six more than in 2022, in line with the climbing trend in the number of socio-political crises reported in recent years (31 more crises since 2018). Africa and

Asia and the Pacific were the regions in the world with the highest number of socio-political crises (38 and 33, respectively), followed by the Americas (20), Europe (13) and the Middle East (10). Thirteen new cases were identified in 2023, concentrated mainly in Africa and the Americas: Ethiopia-Somalia; Gabon; Madagascar; Senegal; Sierra Leone; Togo; Argentina; Panama; Paraguay; Venezuela-Guyana; Afghanistan-Pakistan; China-Philippines; and Russia-USA, NATO, EU. Seven other cases were no longer classified as socio-political crises, most of them in Africa: Central Africa (LRA), Eswatini, Sudan, Somalia (Somaliland-Puntland), India, India (Assam) and Israel-Syria-Lebanon. The socio-political crises in Central Africa (LRA), Eswatini, India and India (Assam) were removed from consideration due to a drop in intensity, whereas those in Sudan, Somalia (Somaliland-Puntland) and Israel-Syria-Lebanon were reclassified as armed conflicts.

For one more year in 2023, one of the most notable aspects of our analysis of the socio-political crises is that half of them (49%) worsened compared to the previous year. In 28% of the socio-political crises there were no observable changes and in 23% the tension

eased. This was reflected in part by a rise in the number of high-intensity cases, from 28 in 2022 to 31 in 2023: Chad; Eritrea-Ethiopia; Ethiopia; Kenya; Nigeria; Nigeria (Biafra); DRC; DRC-Rwanda; Tunisia; Ecuador; El Salvador; Haiti; Honduras; Mexico; Peru; Venezuela; Venezuela-Guyana; Afghanistan-Pakistan; China-Japan; China-Taiwan; China-Philippines; North Korea-US, Japan, South Korea; North Korea-South Korea; India (Manipur); India-China; Indonesia (West Papua); Papua New Guinea; Armenia-Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh); Russia; Iran; and Iran-US, Israel. In addition to the 31 high-intensity cases, which accounted for nearly one third of the total, 39% of the 114 socio-political crises were of low intensity (in 2022 this percentage was 42%) and 33% were of medium intensity (32% in 2022). As such, the trend of 2022 was repeated in 2023, raising the number and average intensity of the socio-political crises. The intensity of the socio-political crises especially rose in Europe (where 85% of cases escalated) and in the Americas (where 75% did so). In the Middle East, 80% of the socio-political crises maintained a dynamic similar to the previous year.

Regarding the main causal factors, the socio-political crises continued to be predominantly multi-causal, with two or more causes identified in 56% of the cases. Opposition to the political, economic, social or ideological system of a State, or to the internal

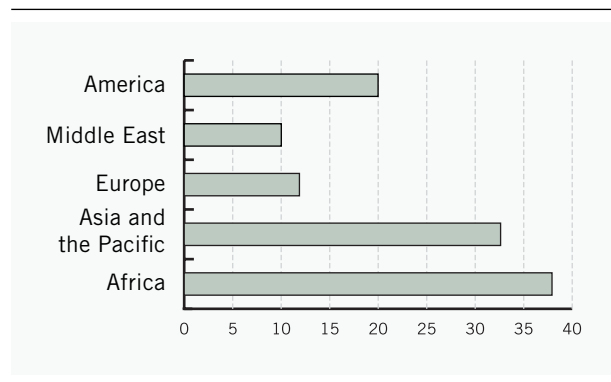
2. A socio-political crisis is defined as that in which the pursuit of certain objectives or the failure to satisfy certain demands made by different actors leads to high levels of political, social or military mobilisation and/or the use of violence with a level of intensity that does not reach that of an armed conflict and that may include clashes, repression, coups d'état and bombings or attacks of other kinds, and whose escalation may degenerate into an armed conflict under certain circumstances. Socio-political crises are normally related to: a) demands for self-determination and self-government, or identity issues; b) opposition to the political, economic, social or ideological system of a state, or the internal or international policies of a government, which in both cases produces a struggle to take or erode power; or c) control of resources or territory.

or international policy of a Government, was present in 75% of the crises analyzed; the demands for self-determination and self-government, or identity aspirations were present in 35% of the cases; and control of resources or territory in 31% of the crises. These figures maintain a certain continuity with respect to those of the previous year. In a disaggregated analysis of factors, opposition to the government's internal or international policies was once again the most predominant cause and was present in 69% of the 114 tension scenarios. In this sense, 30 cases were identified in Africa, which is equivalent to 79% of the cases in the region; 19 cases in America, which is equivalent to 95% (only in the case of Venezuela-Guyana it was not present); 14 in Asia and the Pacific (42%); nine in Europe and seven in the Middle East, representing 69% and 70% respectively. The second most prevalent factor was the claim of identity-related aspirations (33%), especially relevant in regions such as Europe (62%) or the Middle East (50%). Next, with very similar percentages, there were issues related to the control of resources (24%), demands for self-determination and self-government (22%), opposition to the political, social or ideological system of the State as a whole (20%) and control of the territory (20%). The different causal factors associated with the socio-political crises also observe a great oscillation between regions. As an example, opposition to the Government was present in 95% of tensions in America, while in Asia and the Pacific they represented 64% of cases. On the other hand, demands for self-determination and/or self-government were present in 15% of cases in America, in 29% in Africa, compared to 62% of cases registered in Europe. Almost half of the cases in Asia and the Pacific were linked (45%) to claims related to control and access to resources and territory.

Approximately half the socio-political tensions worldwide were internal in nature (49%), though with a pronounced geographic variability (90% of the crises in the Americas and 8% in Europe). Nearly one fourth of the crises (23%) were international, but some were among the most intense in the world: Eritrea-Ethiopia; DRC-Rwanda; Venezuela-Guyana; Afghanistan-Pakistan; China-Japan; China-Taiwan; China-Philippines; North Korea-US, Japan, South Korea; North Korea-South Korea; India-China; Armenia-Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh); and Iran-US, Israel. Finally, over one quarter (28%) of the crises were internationalised internal, meaning that one of the main actors is foreign and/or that the tension extends to the territory of

23 of the 36 armed conflicts that took place in 2023 occurred in countries with low or medium-low levels of gender equality

Regional distribution of the number of socio-political crises in 2023



neighbouring countries. Once again, major variations were observed between regions (62% of the crises in Europe were of this type, while only one was reported in Latin American, the socio-political crisis in Ecuador).

Gender, peace and security

Chapter three (Gender, peace and security)³ analyses the gender-based impacts in conflicts and sociopolitical, 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. In addition, a follow-up is made of the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda. 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.

23 of the 36 armed conflicts active throughout 2023 took place in countries with low levels of gender equality (Mali,

3. As an analytical category, gender makes it clear that inequalities between men and women are the product of social norms rather than a result of nature, and sets out to underline this social and cultural construction to distinguish it from the biological differences of the sexes. The gender perspective aims to highlight the social construction of sexual difference and the sexual division of work and power. It also attempts to show that the differences between men and women are a social construction resulting from unequal power relations that have historically been established in the patriarchal system. The goal of gender as an analytical category is to demonstrate the historical and situated 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.

the Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram), the Western Sahel Region, the DRC (east), the DRC (east-ADF), the DRC (west), Somalia, Somalia (Somaliland-SSC Khatumo), Sudan, Afghanistan, India (Jammu and Kashmir), India (CPI-M), Pakistan, Pakistan (Balochistan), Egypt (Sinai), Iraq, Israel-Palestine, Syria and Yemen) and medium-low gender equality (Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West and South West), Ethiopia (Amhara), Ethiopia (Oromia) and Ethiopia (Tigray). There were no data on the CAR and South Sudan, both countries in which an armed conflict is taking place. Fifteen of the 17 armed conflicts with high-intensity violence in 2023 (88%) took place in countries with low or medium-low levels of gender equality and there were no GDI data for South Sudan. In eight other countries with one or more armed conflicts, levels of discrimination were lower, in some cases with high levels of equality (Libya, Colombia, Thailand, Russia, Ukraine and Israel) or medium levels of equality (Burundi, Mozambique, the Philippines, Myanmar and Türkiye), according to the GDI. Forty-six of the 114 socio-political crises active during 2023 took place in countries with low or medium-low levels of gender equality.

The annual report 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. Most of the actors identified by the United Nations in its annex were non-state armed actors, although some state armed actors were also identified, across a total of 11 settings (CAR, DRC, Haiti, Iraq, Mali, Myanmar, Somalia, South

Sudan, Sudan, Syria and Nigeria). According to the classification system used by Escola de Cultura de Pau, 10 of the 11 contexts analysed in the UN Secretary-General's report were countries with high-intensity armed conflicts. The report by the UN Secretary-General warned of some worrying trends regarding the use of sexual violence in armed conflicts and said that the situation was deteriorating in Afghanistan, Mali, Myanmar and Sudan, where violent changes in government and coups d'état have jeopardised previous progress made in recognising women's rights and where women have been seriously affected by sexual violence. The report points to worsening patterns in the use of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Haiti and South Sudan.

The UN Secretary-General annual report on women, peace and security stated that in 2022, the year to which the data collected for the report issued in 2023 refers, 614 million women and girls lived in contexts affected by armed conflict. The report indicated that women participated as negotiators or delegates representing the parties in conflict in four of the five UN-facilitated peace processes in 2022. All these peace processes had space for consultation with women's civil society organisations and expert advice on gender was available. However, despite this representation in peace processes led or co-led by the United Nations, there was a decline in participation for the second year in a row, tumbling from 23% in 2020 to 19% in 2021 and 18% in 2022. The report also noted that 33% of the peace agreements signed in 2022 (six of the 18 agreements reached that year) included clauses referring to women, girls or gender.

Countries affected by armed conflict with a medium-low or low level of gender equality

Low level of equality		
Afghanistan Burkina Faso Western Sahel Region Chad Lake Chad Region DRC (3) DRC (east) DRC (east-ADF) DRC (west) 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	Pakistan (2) Pakistan Pakistan (Balochistan) Palestine Israel-Palestine Somalia (2) Somalia Somalia (Somaliland-SSC Khatumo) Sudan Syria Yemen
Medium-low level of equality		
Cameroon (2) Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West and South West) Lake Chad Region	Ethiopia (3) Ethiopia (Amhara) Ethiopia (Oromia) Ethiopia (Tigray)	

Countries affected by socio-political crises with a medium-low or low level of gender equality

Low level of equality		
Afghanistan Afghanistan – Pakistan Algeria Benin Burkina Faso Chad Côte D'Ivoire Djibouti DRC (2) DRC DRC – Rwanda Egypt (2) Egypt Ethiopia – Egypt – Sudan Guinea	Guinea Bissau India (4) India (Manipur) India (Nagaland) India – China India – Pakistan Iran (4) Iran Iran (North West) Iran (Sistan and Balochistan) Iran – USA, Israel Iraq Iraq (Kurdistan) Mali Morocco Morocco – Western Sahara Niger	Nigeria (3) Nigeria Nigeria (Biafra) Nigeria (Niger Delta) Pakistan (3) Pakistan Afghanistan – Pakistan India – Pakistan Palestine Rwanda (3) Rwanda Rwanda – Burundi RDC – Rwanda Sierra Leone Sudan – South Sudan Togo Uganda
Medium-low level of equality		
Bangladesh Ethiopia (5) Ethiopia Ethiopia – Egypt – Sudan Ethiopia – Somalia Ethiopia – Sudan Eritrea – Ethiopia	Lao, PDR Tajikistan (3) Tajikistan Tajikistan (Gorno-Badakhshan) Kyrgyzstan – Tajikistan	Uzbekistan (2) Uzbekistan Uzbekistan (Karakalpakstan)

Opportunities for Peace and Risk Scenarios

Chapter four of the report (Opportunities for Peace) identifies and analyzes five scenarios that are favourable for positive steps to be taken in terms of peacebuilding for the future. The opportunities identified in 2023 refer to different regions and topics:

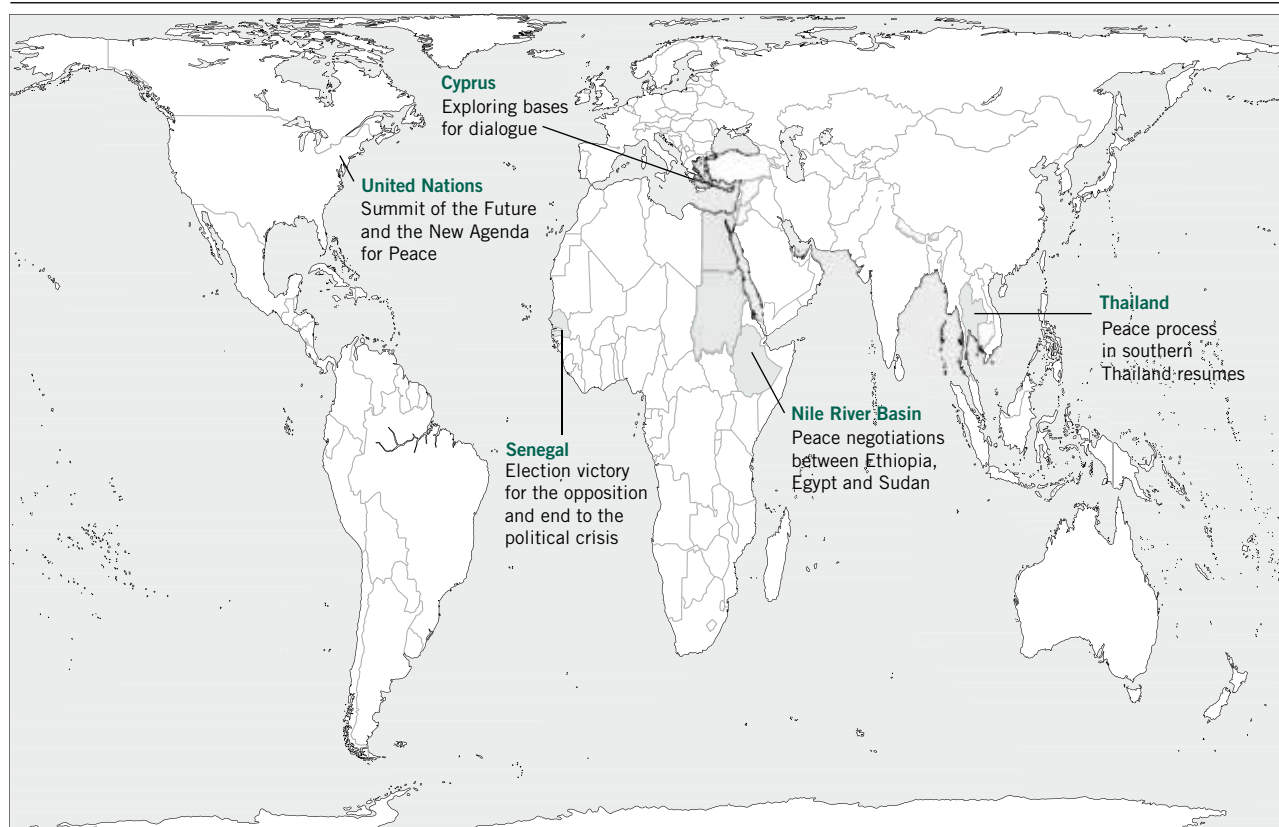
- **Egypt – Ethiopia – Sudan:** The Nile River has been at the heart of disputes in the Horn of Africa and East Africa for decades. The construction of the Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) in Ethiopia since 2011 has exacerbated the situation and the tension between Ethiopia and Egypt, and to a lesser extent, Sudan. However, direct contacts between the three countries resumed in 2023, which could present an opportunity to begin laying the foundations for resolving this historical dispute. Although the regional context gives little reason for optimism due to the armed conflicts raging in the Ethiopian regions of Oromia and Amhara, the devastating war in Sudan and the reports of ongoing genocide by Israel in Gaza, with

The report identifies and analyzes five scenarios that are favourable for positive steps to be taken in terms of peacebuilding

direct consequences for Egypt, as well as growing tensions among countries in the Horn of Africa, this same deterioration could be an opportunity that pushes these three countries to resolve a dispute that requires their joint cooperation.

- **Senegal:** After three years of tension between the government of President Macky Sall and the opposition, which set off a major political crisis, Senegal's presidential election on 24 March 2024 was won by opposition leader Bassirou Diomaye Faye. Thus, Senegal seems to have ended one of the most difficult and controversial periods in its political history, paving the way for a new government that faces major political, economic and social challenges.
- **Thailand:** The resumption of dialogue between the Thai government and the BRN after almost a decade of rule by the military junta (2014-2019) and the government that emerged from it (2019-2023), as well as the drastic drop in violence in

Opportunities for peace



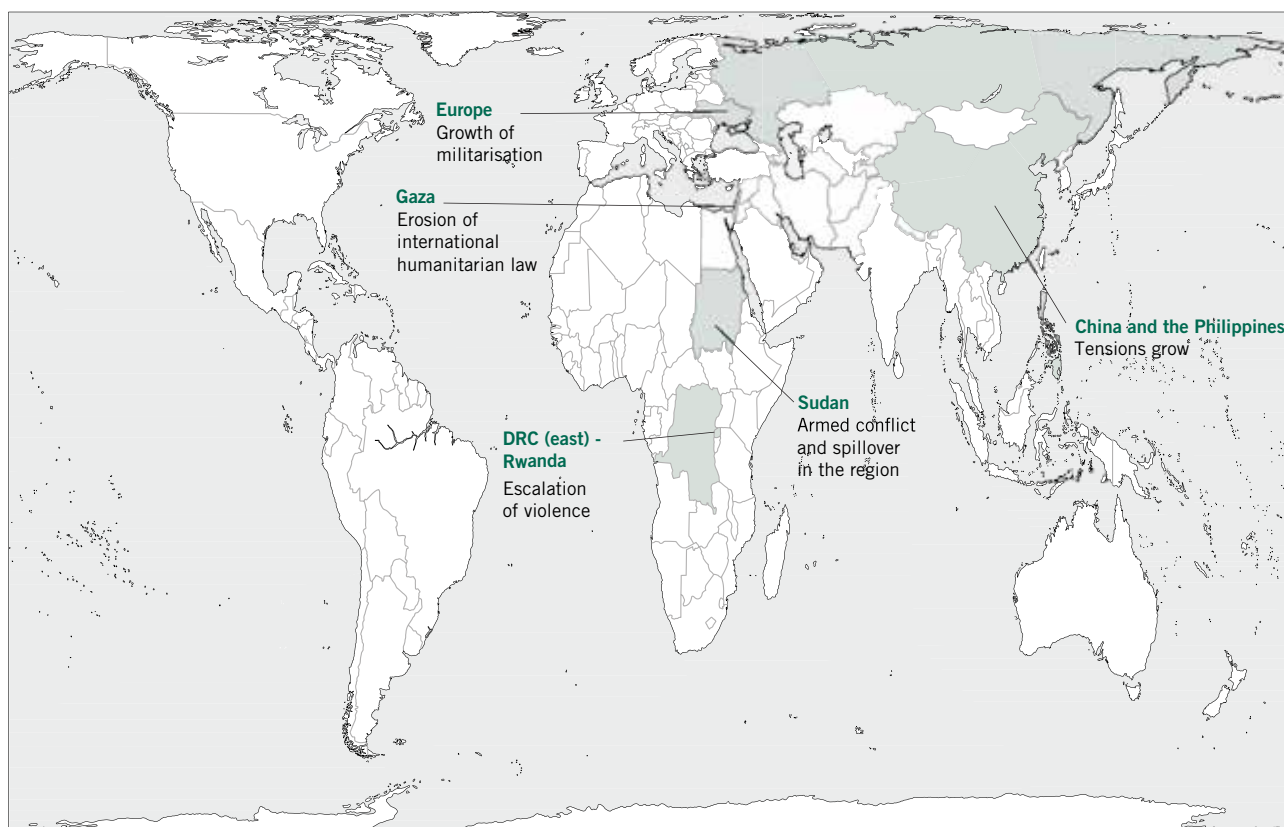
recent years and the establishment of a stable infrastructure for facilitating the dialogue (with Malaysian mediation and international support and observation), all provide some positive prospects for solving the armed conflict through negotiations.

- **Cyprus:** The dispute over the status of the divided island of Cyprus has decades of failed negotiations behind it, the last in 2017. Formal negotiations have not resumed since, and in recent years the gap between both sides' positions has widened and the regional and global contexts have become more militarised and complex. In this thorny situation, some modest opportunities have nevertheless come together, along with the UN Secretary-General's appointment of a personal envoy charged with exploring bases for an agreement to make headway in the process. Other factors include the recent rapprochement between Türkiye and Greece and the civil society actors working consistently to promote dialogue. Despite the many obstacles, local and international actors could make complementary efforts to take advantage of these opportunities that have arisen for rapprochement between the parties.
- **Summit of the Future and New Agenda for Peace:** Given several different global crises (the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the genocide in Gaza and others) and challenges

to multilateralism, the UN Secretary-General proposes an international agenda called the Pact for the Future, which could present an opportunity to give fresh impetus to multilateralism and should be endorsed by the countries attending the Summit of the Future in September 2024. The proposal includes a New Agenda for Peace.

Chapter five of the report (Risk Scenarios), identifies and analyzes five scenarios of armed conflict and tension that, given their condition, may worsen and become sources of more severe instability and violence.

- **Rwanda:** Thirty years after the Rwandan genocide of 1994, which marked African and world history and was one of the international community's greatest failures to fulfil its responsibility to guarantee peace and international security, another episode has broken out in the war rocking the Great Lakes region, pitting the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) against Rwanda through its local proxy ally, currently known as the insurgent group March 23 Movement (M23). The situation could even lead to a direct open conflict between both countries, as happened previously in 1996 and 1998.
- **Sudan:** One year after the start of the latest war in Sudan between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF)



and the paramilitary group Rapid Support Forces (RSF), the violence has spread to almost the entire country, becoming a nationwide civil war. More than 15,550 people have lost their lives and 8.6 million people have been displaced by violence, giving the country the worst forced displacement crisis in the world. The prospects are dim for containing the violence and returning to the negotiations of 2022 to achieve a peaceful transition in the country. Moreover, the instability and violence in neighbouring Egypt, Libya, Chad, CAR, South Sudan and Ethiopia, which struggle with their own armed conflicts, may be aggravated by spillover from the war in Sudan, thereby amplifying the regional crisis.

The report identifies and analyzes five scenarios of armed conflict and tension that, given their condition, may worsen

- **China – Philippines:** Since mid-2022, there has been a significant escalation of political and military tension between China and the Philippines in the South China Sea, with an unprecedented rise in the number of naval incidents, a clear strengthening of security and defence ties between the US and the Philippines and a notable boost in military spending to modernise the Philippines' ability to wage war.

- **Europe:** The situation of conflict is worsening in Europe, including setbacks in prospects for resolving conflicts and tensions through dialogue. The invasion and war in Ukraine have gone on for over two years now, with serious impacts on human and environmental security and no prospects for a short-term resolution. Meanwhile, this war and the confrontation between Russia and Euro-Atlantic actors are prompting serious militarisation in Europe and negatively influencing various conflicts and negotiating processes there, such as in Moldova. Peace negotiations and efforts to support dialogue and mediation are on the retreat in Europe, while militarisation is growing.

- **Gaza:** Of the various worrying trends in armed conflicts worldwide, one that especially stands out is the impact of violence on the civilian population and the systematic transgressions of international law and violations of human rights. The Israeli military operation in Gaza and the genocide against the Palestinian population have become a prime example of these violations, fuelling concern about the consequences of impunity and double standards for the future of international law and global order.

Conflict overview 2023

Continent	Armed conflict			Socio-political crises			TOTAL
	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low	
Africa	<i>DRC (East)</i> <i>DRC (east-ADF)</i> <i>Ethiopia (Amhara)</i> <i>Ethiopia (Oromiya)</i> <i>Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram)</i> <i>Mali</i> <i>Somalia</i> <i>South Sudan</i> <i>Sudan</i> <i>West Sahel Region</i>	<i>CAR</i> <i>Cameroon (Ambazonia/Northwest Southwest)</i> <i>DRC (west)</i>	<i>Burundi</i> <i>Ethiopia (Tigray)*</i> <i>Libya</i> <i>Mozambique (north)</i> <i>Somalia (Somaliland – SSC Khatumo)</i>	<i>Chad</i> <i>DRC</i> <i>DRC – Rwanda</i> <i>Eritrea – Ethiopia</i> <i>Ethiopia</i> <i>Kenya</i> <i>Nigeria</i> <i>Nigeria (Biafra)</i> <i>Tunisia</i>	<i>Benin</i> <i>Burkina Faso</i> <i>Côte d'Ivoire</i> <i>Ethiopia – Egypt – Sudan</i> <i>Ethiopia – Somalia</i> <i>Gabon</i> <i>Guinea</i> <i>Mali</i> <i>Morocco – Western Sahara</i> <i>Niger</i> <i>Senegal</i> <i>Sudan – South Sudan</i> <i>Uganda</i>	<i>Algeria</i> <i>Djibouti</i> <i>Equatorial Guinea</i> <i>Eritrea</i> <i>Ethiopia – Sudan</i> <i>Guinea Bissau</i> <i>Madagascar</i> <i>Mozambique</i> <i>Nigeria (Delta Niger)</i> <i>Rwanda</i> <i>Rwanda – Burundi</i> <i>Senegal (Casamance)</i> <i>Sierra Leone</i> <i>Tanzania</i> <i>Togo</i> <i>Zimbabwe</i>	
SUBTOTAL	10	3	5	9	13	16	56
America		<i>Colombia</i>		<i>Ecuador</i> <i>El Salvador</i> <i>Haiti</i> <i>Honduras</i> <i>Mexico</i> <i>Peru</i> <i>Venezuela</i> <i>Venezuela -Guyana</i>	<i>Argentina</i> <i>Bolivia</i> <i>Brazil</i> <i>Chile</i> <i>Guatemala</i> <i>Nicaragua</i> <i>Panama</i>	<i>Colombia</i> <i>Cuba</i> <i>Jamaica</i> <i>Paraguay</i> <i>USA</i>	
SUBTOTAL		1		8	7	5	21
Asia and the Pacific	<i>Myanmar</i> <i>Pakistan</i>	<i>Afghanistan</i> <i>Pakistan (Balochistan)</i>	<i>India (CPI-M)</i> <i>India (Jammu and Kashmir)</i> <i>Philippines (Mindanao)</i> <i>Philippines (NPA)</i> <i>Thailand (south)</i>	<i>Afghanistan - Pakistan</i> <i>China – Philippines</i> <i>China – Japan</i> <i>China – Taiwan</i> <i>Korea, DPR – USA, Japan, Rep. of Korea</i> <i>Korea, DPR – Rep. of Korea</i> <i>India (Manipur)</i> <i>India – China</i> <i>Indonesia (West Papua)</i> <i>Papua New Guinea</i>	<i>Bangladesh</i> <i>China – USA</i> <i>India – Pakistan</i> <i>Pakistan</i> <i>South China Sea</i> <i>Sri Lanka</i> <i>Tajikistan</i>	<i>China (Hong Kong)</i> <i>China (Tibet)</i> <i>China (Xinjiang)</i> <i>Korea, DPR</i> <i>Fiji</i> <i>India (Nagaland)</i> <i>Indonesia (Sulawesi)</i> <i>Japan – Russia (Kuril Islands)</i> <i>Kazakhstan</i> <i>Kyrgyzstan</i> <i>Kyrgyzstan – Tajikistan</i> <i>Lao, DPR</i> <i>Thailand</i> <i>Tajikistan (Gorno-Badakhshan)</i> <i>Uzbekistan</i> <i>Uzbekistan (Karakalpakstan)</i>	
SUBTOTAL	2	2	5	10	7	16	42
Europe	<i>Russia - Ukraine</i>		<i>Türkiye (south-east)</i>	<i>Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)</i> <i>Russia</i>	<i>Belarus</i> <i>Bosnia and Herzegovina</i> <i>Moldova</i> <i>Moldova (Transnistria)</i> <i>Russia – USA, NATO, EU</i> <i>Serbia – Kosovo</i> <i>Türkiye</i> <i>Türkiye – Greece, Cyprus</i>	<i>Georgia (Abkhazia)</i> <i>Georgia (South Ossetia)</i> <i>Russia (North Caucasus)</i>	
SUBTOTAL	1		1	2	8	3	15
Middle East	<i>Iraq</i> <i>Israel – Palestine</i> <i>Syria</i> <i>Yemen</i>		<i>Egypt (Sinai)</i> <i>Israel – Hezbollah</i>	<i>Iran</i> <i>Iran – USA, Israel</i>	<i>Egypt</i> <i>Iran (northwest)</i> <i>Iran (Sistan Balochistan)</i> <i>Lebanon</i>	<i>Bahrain</i> <i>Iraq (Kurdistan)</i> <i>Palestine</i> <i>Saudi Arabia</i>	
SUBTOTAL	4	0	2	2	4	4	16
TOTAL	17	6	13	31	39	44	150

Armed conflicts and socio-political crises with ongoing peace negotiations, whether exploratory or formal, are identified in italics.

*This case is considered to have been active for some months in 2023, but it was no longer active at the end of the year.