

2. Peace negotiations in Africa

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.1 Negotiations in 2019: regional trends

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

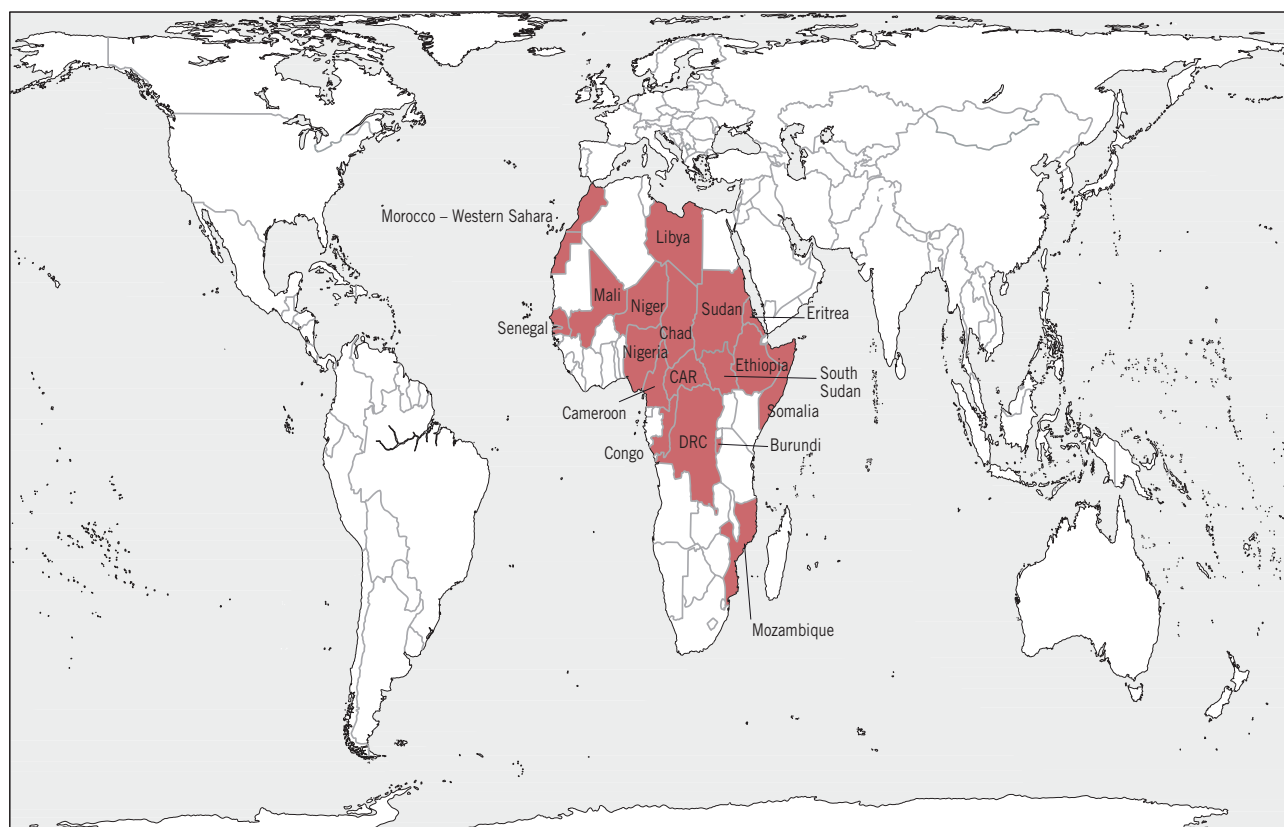
of Sudan merged the Darfur and "Two Areas" (South Kordofan and Blue Nile) peace processes into a single negotiating process in Juba for the purpose of achieving a final and stable peace for the whole country. Both processes (the post-al-Bashir transition and the negotiations with the armed groups of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

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

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

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

Map 2.1. Peace negotiations in Africa in 2019



■ Countries with peace processes and negotiations in Africa in 2019

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Progress was made in implementing the peace agreements in the Horn of Africa

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

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

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

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

2.2. Case study analysis

Great Lakes and Central Africa

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

Summary:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Gender, peace and security

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

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

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

Summary:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Gender, peace and security

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

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

Summary:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Gender, peace and security

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

South Sudan

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

Summary:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Summary:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Gender, peace and security

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

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

Summary:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Horn of Africa

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

Summary:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Summary:

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

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

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

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

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

Summary:

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

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

Ethiopian federal and regional institutions in 2019.

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

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

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

Summary:

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

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

Tension remained constant between the federated states and the federal government

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

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

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

Gender, peace and security

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

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

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

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

Maghreb – North Africa

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

Summary:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In this sense, it is worth noting that **the internationalisation of the armed conflict in Libya became even more clear in 2019, as did the involvement of different countries in support of Libyan actors on either side** through the shipment of weapons, including drones and air arsenals, logistical and technical support and military aid. Haftar's LNA continued to receive support mainly from Egypt, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia and Russia, while the GAN was supported mainly by Turkey and Qatar. The US, which continued to attack ISIS positions on Libyan soil during 2019, maintained an erratic position regarding the fight between the Libyan actors. The US Secretary of State first condemned Haftar's offensive on Tripoli in early April, but days later Donald Trump spoke by phone with the Libyan general and, according to reports, appreciated his actions as part of a counter-terrorist campaign and his protection of oil fields. Shortly thereafter, the US blocked a

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Gender, peace and security

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

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

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

Morocco – Western Sahara

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

Summary:

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

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

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

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

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

13. UNSG, *Report of the Secretary General on the situation concerning Western Sahara*, S/2019/282, 1 April 2019.

14. Fatma Mehdi, “Big Powers at the UN Are Hanging Western Sahara Out to Dry”, *PassBlue*, 5 November 2019.

15. R. Joseph Huddleston, “Can John Bolton Thaw Western Sahara's Long-Frozen Conflict?” *Foreign Policy*, 9 May 2019.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Southern Africa

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

Summary:

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

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

attacks against government troops in the centre of the country.

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

West Africa

Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West and South West)	
Negotiating actors	Government, political opposition (SDF, MRC) separatist political opposition groups
Third parties	Catholic Church, civil society organisations, Switzerland, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue
Relevant agreements	--
Summary: After Germany's defeat in the First World War, Cameroon came under the mandate of the League of Nations and was divided between French Cameroon and British Cameroon. In 1961, the two territories that made up British Cameroon held a referendum limiting their self-determination to union with the already independent Republic of Cameroon (formerly French Cameroon) or union with Nigeria. The southern part of British Cameroon (a region currently corresponding to the provinces of North West and South West) decided to join the Republic of Cameroon, whereas the north preferred to join Nigeria. A poorly conducted re-unification in the 1960s based on centralisation and assimilation has led the English-speaking minority of what was once southern	

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Gender, peace and security

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

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

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

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

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

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

Summary:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Gender, peace and security

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

