Executive summary

Peace Talks in Focus 2020: Report on Trends and Scenarios is a yearbook that analyses the peace processes and negotiations that took place in the world during 2019. The examination of the development and dynamics of negotiations worldwide allows to provide a comprehensive overview of peace processes, identify trends and comparatively analyse the various scenarios. One of the main objectives of this report is to provide information and analysis to those who participate in peaceful conflict resolution at different levels, including parties to disputes, mediators, civil society activists and others. The yearbook also aims to grant visibility to different formulas of dialogue and negotiation aimed at reversing dynamics of violence and channelling conflicts through political means in many contexts. Thus, it seeks to highlight, enhance and promote political, diplomatic and social efforts aimed at transforming conflicts and their root causes through peaceful methods.

Methodologically, the report draws mainly on the qualitative analysis of studies and information from many sources (the United Nations, international organisations, research centres, media outlets, NGOs and others), as well as on experience gained during field research. The report also cross-cuttingly incorporates a gender perspective in the study and analysis of peace processes.

The report is divided into six chapters. The first presents a summary and map of the 50 peace processes and negotiations that took place in 2019 and provides an overview of the main global trends. The next five chapters delve into the peace processes and negotiations from a geographic perspective. Each of them addresses the main trends of peace negotiations in Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East, respectively, and describes the development and dynamics of each case in those regions. At the beginning of each of these five chapters, a map is included indicating the countries where peace processes and negotiations have occurred in 2019.

Peace processes and negotiations in 2019

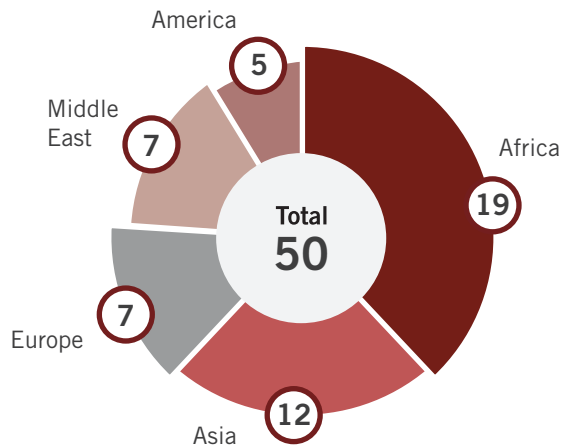| AFRICA (19)	ASIA (12)	EUROPE (7)
Burundi Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West and South West) CAR DRC Eritrea – Ethiopia Ethiopia (Ogaden) Ethiopia (Oromia) Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram) Libya Mali (north) Morocco – Western Sahara Mozambique Nigeria (Niger Delta) Rep. of the Congo Senegal (Casamance) Somalia South Sudan Sudan[1] Sudan – South Sudan	Afghanistan China (Tibet) DPR Korea – Republic of Korea DPR Korea – USA India (Assam) India (Nagaland) Myanmar Papua New Guinea (Bougainville) Philippines (MILF) Philippines (MNLF) Philippines (NDF) Thailand (south)	Armenia–Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh) Cyprus Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia) Moldova (Transdniestria) Serbia – Kosovo Spain (Basque Country) Ukraine
	AMERICA (5)	**MIDDLE EAST (7)**
	Colombia (ELN) Colombia (FARC-EP) Haiti Nicaragua Venezuela	Iran (northwest) Iran (nuclear programme) Iraq Israel-Palestine Palestine Syria Yemen

Negotiations in 2019: global overview and main trends

A total of 50 global peace processes and negotiations were identified in 2019: 19 in Africa (38% of the total), 12 in Asia (24%), seven in Europe (14%), another seven in the Middle East (14%) and five in the Americas (10%). There was a slight increase in the number of peace processes and negotiations worldwide compared

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1. In 2019, the three peace processes and negotiations that were taking place in Sudan in 2018 were merged into one, due to the completion of the national dialogue between the government and the opposition after the formation of a transitional government, in addition to the combination of the peace negotiations in Darfur and "Two Areas" (South Kordofan and Blue Nile) into a single process. Both processes (the transition following the ouster of Omar al-Bashir and the negotiations with the armed groups in Darfur and South Kordofan and Blue Nile) are studied together in the chapter.

Regional distribution of peace negotiations in 2019

to previous years, since 49 cases were studied in 2018 and 43 were analysed in 2017. The increase in peace processes in 2019 reflected the higher number of cases in Asia, the Middle East and the Americas. In Europe, there was the same number of peace processes as the previous year, while in Africa the number of processes fell. This decrease was due to the normalisation of relations between Djibouti and Eritrea, which in previous years had been involved in political negotiations analysed in the report, and the end of the president of Ghana's mediation in the internal crisis in Togo. Additionally, the three peace processes and negotiations that were taking place in Sudan in 2018 were merged into a single process in late 2019. Five new negotiating processes and initiatives began in Cameroon in 2019, with the intention of addressing the conflict involving the English-speaking majority regions of the country; in Haiti, with various initiatives to promote a national dialogue between the government and the opposition; in Papua New Guinea, where the Autonomous Bougainville Government and the authorities began talks after the referendum on self-determination held in 2019; in Iraq, the scene of massive anti-government protests in 2019, with exploratory and relatively uncertain initiatives; and in Iran, amidst the tension involving Kurdish political and armed actors in the northwestern part of the country.

Once again, almost all **actors involved in the peace processes and negotiations** were central or state governments in which the conflicts and/or socio-political crises occurred. The governments of the respective states held direct or indirect negotiations with various kinds of actors according to the particular aspects of each context that generally ranged from non-governmental armed groups (individually or as a group) to a more complex combination of armed actors and opposition politicians, opposition groups or political platforms, foreign governments, in the case of interstate disputes, representatives of territories seeking to secede or win recognition as independent and more.

While in many cases it is possible to clearly identify the **third parties involved** in mediation, facilitation

and accompaniment activities, at other times they are carried out discreetly and away from the public eye. According to the analysis of cases in 2019, in the vast majority of cases (40 of 50, corresponding to 80%), a third party was found to participate in facilitation or mediation efforts. This includes internal negotiations with third-party participation (29 cases), interstate negotiations with third parties (seven), national dialogues with third parties (two) and other formats (two). The processes in which no third party was involved or in which contacts were established directly or bilaterally were mostly found in Asia (see the table "Internal and interstate peace processes/negotiations, with and without third parties in 2019"). In practically all processes with mediating actors (35 out of 40) there was more than one mediator. There were many different types of actors involved in mediation or facilitation efforts, though intergovernmental organisations stand out, especially the UN, which was involved in 22 of the 50 processes identified during the year, as well as states, religious organisations and NGOs (See the table "Intergovernmental organisations as third parties in peace processes in 2019").

As for the **negotiating agendas**, we must consider the specific aspects of each peace process and the fact that not all the issues under discussion were made public. Nevertheless, it is possible to verify that, as in previous years, one of the most salient issues in the negotiations on all continents was the search for truces, ceasefires and cessations of hostilities. This topic was especially relevant in armed conflicts, such as in Ethiopia (Oromia and Ogaden), Libya, Mali, the CAR, Sudan, South Sudan, Colombia, Afghanistan, the Philippines, Myanmar, Israel-Palestine, Syria and Yemen. Other important issues on the negotiating agendas were related to the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of combatants, such as in Mali, Mozambique, Ethiopia (Oromia and Ogaden), South Sudan and the Philippines; the status of territories in dispute, in contexts such as Serbia-Kosovo, Moldova (Transdniestria), Cyprus, Georgia (Abkhazia and South Ossetia), Armenia (Nagorno-Karabakh), Ukraine, the Philippines (MILF and MNLF), China (Tibet), India (Assam and Nagaland), Myanmar, Papua New Guinea (Bougainville) and Thailand (south); and issues related to the distribution of political power, which was reflected in debates on electoral issues (in Venezuela, Nicaragua and Palestine, for example), in attempts to form unity governments (as illustrated in Yemen after the Riyadh agreement) and initiatives to define new constitutional frameworks (such as in the negotiations over Syria). Another topic discussed in some negotiations was control of nuclear proliferation, specifically in Iran and in the process between North and South Korea.

In terms of their **development**, the peace processes analysed in 2019 confirmed a great diversity of trends. Some positive developments were identified in some contexts. In Africa, this was the case in Mozambique and Sudan-South Sudan, which led to agreements signed by

Internal and interstate peace processes/negotiations with and without third parties in 2019

Peace processes	INTERNAL					INTERSTATE	
	Direct negotiations without third parties (8)	Negotiations with third parties (29)	National dialogues without third parties (3)	National dialogues with third parties (2)	Other formats (2)	Direct negotiations without third parties (2)	Negotiations with third parties (7)
AFRICA							
Burundi		x					
Cameroon (Ambazonia/ North West-South West)		x	x				
CAR		x					
DRC		x					
Eritrea-Ethiopia							x
Ethiopia (Ogaden)		x					
Ethiopia (Oromia)	x						
Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram)	x						
Libya		x					
Mali		x	x				
Morocco – Western Sahara							x
Mozambique		x					
Nigeria (Niger Delta)	x						
Republic of the Congo	x						
Senegal (Casamance)		x					
Somalia		x					
South Sudan		x					
Sudan[2]		x		x			
Sudan – South Sudan							x
AMERICA							
Colombia (ELN)		x					
Colombia (FARC-EP)		x					
Haiti			x				
Nicaragua				x			
Venezuela		x					
ASIA							
Afghanistan					x		
China (Tibet)	x						
Korea, DPR –Korea, Republic of						x	
Korea, DPR – USA						x	
India (Assam)	x						
India (Nagaland)	x						
Myanmar		x					
Papua New Guinea (Bougainville)		x					
Philippines (MILF)		x					
Philippines (MNLF)	x						
Philippines (NDF)		x					
Thailand (south)		x					

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

Peace processes	INTERNAL					INTERSTATE	
	Direct negotiations without third parties (8)	Negotiations with third parties (29)	National dialogues without third parties (3)	National dialogues with third parties (2)	Other formats (2)	Direct negotiations without third parties (2)	Negotiations with third parties (7)
EUROPE							
Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)							x
Cyprus		x					
Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia)[3]		x					
Moldova (Transdniestria)		x					
Serbia – Kosovo[4]							x
Spain (Basque Country)					x		
Ukraine (east)[5]		x					
MIDDLE EAST							
Iran (northwest)		x					
Iran (nuclear programme)							x
Iraq		x					
Israel-Palestine							x
Palestine		x					
Syria[6]		x					
Yemen		x					

the government and RENAMO in the former process and a border delimitation pact in the latter (See table "Main agreements of 2019"). Real progress was also made in the negotiations in Afghanistan, the Philippines (MILF) and Ukraine, where sturdier new ceasefire agreements were reached and forces were withdrawn from various areas. Other processes faced many difficulties. A good example of this were the processes in the Americas, which were marked by fragility and mistrust towards other parties and facilitating actors. Various obstacles to peace processes and negotiations were also observed on other continents, such as in Africa (Burundi, Cameroon, Mali, Libya, Somalia and South Sudan), and some scenarios were characterised by stagnation and little or no progress, such as in Moldova (Transdniestria), Serbia-Kosovo, Israel-Palestine, Western Sahara and other contexts.

Regarding the **gender, peace and security agenda**, the many challenges faced by women to participate in formal processes and to incorporate a gender perspective in the negotiations were once again confirmed. Despite this general assessment, we can identify the existence and/or creation of some formats to guarantee greater female involvement in the negotiations and to integrate the gender perspective in the agreements and their

implementation. Thus, Colombia continued to be a paradigmatic and benchmark case, largely due to the role of women's organisations in implementing the 2016 peace agreement. Another peace process that enjoyed positive developments in 2019 was the one in Cyprus, where the technical committee on gender equality, which had remained at a standstill in the previous year, was reactivated and a branch of the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network was established. Other peace processes in which some progress was made in the area of gender, peace and security were in Afghanistan, where the inclusion of women in the negotiating delegations was announced, among other initiatives, and in Papua New Guinea, where women's involvement was guaranteed in the regional government team that must negotiate the political status of the island of Bougainville with the central government. In most contexts, whether alone or with the support of other local, national and international organisations, especially UN Women, women's organisations played an important role in advocating and lobbying for the start, continuation or resumption of peace processes, leading demonstrations, holding debate forums, carrying out awareness initiatives, presenting proposals to the negotiating parties and criticising the lack of women in formal political negotiations.

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3. The nature of the peace processes in Abkhazia and South Ossetia and Russia's role in those conflicts and peace processes are open to interpretation. Ukraine considers Russia a party to the conflict and a negotiating party, whereas Russia considers itself a third party.
4. The peace process between Serbia and Kosovo is considered interstate because even though its international legal status is still controversial, Kosovo has been recognised as a state by over 100 countries. In 2010, the International Court of Justice issued a non-binding opinion that Kosovo's declaration of independence did not violate international law or UN Security Council Resolution 1244.
5. The nature of the peace process in Ukraine and Russia's role in the conflict and peace process are open to interpretation. Ukraine considers Russia a party to the conflict and a negotiating party, whereas Russia considers itself a third party.
6. There are two parallel negotiating processes in Syria (Astana and Geneva). Third parties are involved in both processes, though some of them directly project their interests onto the negotiations.

Main agreements of 2019

Peace processes	Agreements
Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West-South West)	Conclusions of the National Dialogue, held between 30 September and 4 October, in Yaoundé. The main separatist political movements and the armed actors boycotted the initiative. One thousand delegates participated, representing political parties, the Catholic Church and civil society. The recommendations that emerged from the conference included changing the name of the country back to the United Republic of Cameroon, granting a special status to the two English-speaking regions, and making all legal texts available in French and English (both languages are curretly co-official, but the predominant language is French). In December, the Cameroonian Parliament approved the recommendations of the National Dialogue, though many groups considered them insufficient.
CAR	Khartoum Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation, reached in Bangui on 6 February 2019. From 24 January to 5 February, talks were held in Khartoum (Sudan) as part of the African Union Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the CAR under the auspices of the AU, hence its name. The agreement, the eighth in six years, includes the formation of an inclusive government, a truth and reconciliation commission, an investigative commission to determine the crimes committed, the creation of special mixed security units that will integrate members of the insurgencies over the course of a two-year transition period, a commitment to hold free elections and the creation of an executive committee to monitor the agreement, co-chaired by the AU, the government and armed groups.
Ethiopia (Ogaden)	DDR Agreement of 8 February 2019 between the Somali Regional State government and the ONLF. The agreement establishes the procedures for carrying out the disarmament and reintegration of ONLF fighters into the security forces and the public administration.
Ethiopia (Oromia)	DDR and ceasefire agreement. On 24 January, the regional government and the armed group OLF signed a ceasefire agreement according to which the OLF fighters also promised to gather in billetting camps in order to proceed with their disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR).
Mozambique	Maputo Peace and Reconciliation Agreement signed by the Mozambican government and RENAMO on 6 August. The points of the agreement include guarantees for holding inclusive elections, the decentralisation of the political-administrative system and the launch of the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) process for RENAMO combatants.
Sudan	Juba Declaration of Confidence Building Measures and the Preparation for Negotiation, signed on 11 September between the Sudanese transitional government and the armed groups SRF, SLM-MM and SPLM-N (Abdelaziz al-Hilu). It serves as an agreed road map for the resumption of the rounds of merged peace talks (Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile) in Juba, South Sudan.
Sudan-South Sudan	Agreement delimiting the shared border between Sudan and South Sudan, reached on 22 October at the close of the 11th Joint Border Commission between both countries, held in Khartoum. Five areas subject to new negotiations remain to be delimited: Dabba al-Fukhar, Jabal al-Muqainis, Kaka, Kefi Kenji and Hofrat Al-Nehass.
Yemen	Riyadh Agreement, signed by the internationally recognised government of Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi and southern secessionist groups united under the Southern Transitional Council (STC). The pact was signed on 5 November after the mediation of Saudi Arabia, with the intention of stopping the escalation of hostilities within the anti-Houthi side. Key points of the agreement include the formation of a government with the same number of representatives from the northern and southern parts of the country, the withdrawal of stockpiles from southern cities, the integration of STC-linked militias in the Ye-meni security forces and the inclusion of STC delegates in UN-backed spaces for dialogue and negotiation.

Regional trends

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.

America

- Five peace processes took place in the Americas: two in Colombia, one in Venezuela, one in Nicaragua and one in Haiti, representing 10% of the negotiations that took place during 2019.
- Faced with the worsening political and social crisis, the president of Haiti tried to initiate a national dialogue process.
- The Venezuelan government and the opposition held several meetings in Norway and Barbados under the

auspices of the Norwegian government.

- The peace process between the Colombian government and the ELN was completely interrupted after an attack against a police academy in Bogota in January.

Asia

- There were 12 negotiating processes in Asia in 2019, representing about one fifth of the total number of cases around the world.
- The peace talks between the US government and the Taliban insurgency made significant progress, although President Trump cancelled the signing of the peace agreement that had been planned for August.
- Afghan women's organisations unsuccessfully asked to participate significantly in the peace negotiations and complained that their rights were not a subject of discussion with the Taliban insurgency.
- The peace process in Mindanao centred on the institutional development of the new regional framework and the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of the MILF.
- Although the leaders of the US and North Korea had two meetings during the year, the negotiating process was stalled for most of it.
- Negotiations shut down in southern Thailand between the government and MARA Patani, an umbrella organisation for several insurgent groups, but Bangkok sought to resume talks with the BRN, the main armed group in the southern part of the country.
- No formal progress was made in the peace process in Myanmar, but several meetings were held between the Government and the various insurgent groups.

Europe

- 14% of the world's peace processes in 2019 (seven of the 50) took place in Europe.
- Progress was made in the peace process in Ukraine, with the resumption of the Normandy dialogue format, more robust ceasefires and the withdrawal of forces from various areas.

- The political crisis in Moldova slowed down the negotiating process on Transdniestria, without the parties to the conflict achieving a new protocol with confidence-building measures in 2019.
- The peace process in Cyprus remained deadlocked throughout the year and the informal meetings failed to generate enough agreement for them to be formally resumed.
- The dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia remained at an impasse amidst increasing tension and respective demands.
- Armenia approved its first national action plan for the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, but this did not include specific mechanisms for participation in the peace process and focused on the security forces.

Middle East

- The Middle East was the scene of seven processes of negotiation, dialogue and exploratory contacts, accounting for 14% of all such processes in the world in 2019.
- Difficulties in implementing the Stockholm Agreement persisted in Yemen, while Hadi's government and southern separatist forces signed another accord, the Riyadh Agreement, to de-escalate the conflict within the anti-Houthi side.
- Negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis remained stagnant in 2019, although international discussions on formulas for conflict resolution were maintained.
- Obstacles to the reconciliation process between Hamas and Fatah continued in 2019, though some rapprochement was observed at the end of the year.
- The ceasefire agreements and negotiations on the conflict in Syria continued to be characterised by the prominence and influence of regional and international actors involved in the dispute.
- Women's organisations and feminist groups in the region continued to demand greater participation in formal negotiations and made specific proposals to deal with the conflicts they face.